

HEAL TEEN LIBERTY NEWS

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2016-2017 Updates, Progress, and Headlines

The following includes updates, progress, and headlines related to teen liberty and institutional abuse. News reports regarding individual programs are now shared primarily on the background information/staff list pages of our website unless the program referenced was closed prior to creation of a staff/background information page or is located outside of the USA. To search our news page using a PC (not a Mac), hit "CTRL+F" and enter the name of the program then hit "enter key" or "return key". If using a Mac (not a PC), hit "Command+F" and enter the name of the program then hit "enter". The [Command key](#) on a Mac is also known as the Apple Key or Clover Key.

Commentary: Wordsworth case shows it's time to rethink 'treatment' for juveniles Updated: November 3, 2016 — 3:01 AM EDT Wordsworth Academy, a residential treatment center in West Philadelphia where a 17-year-old boy died on Oct. 13. by Mical Raz and Deborah Doroshow Mical Raz and Deborah Doroshow A 17-year-old is dead. Assaulted in his room by the very adults responsible for his safety, he uttered his last words: "Get off me, I can't breathe." He died at Wordsworth Academy, a Philadelphia institution euphemistically described as a "treatment center" for children with behavioral problems. Currently housing 82 children and youth, the majority of whom were placed there by juvenile courts, Wordsworth Academy is responsible for providing rehabilitative treatment for this challenging population. Instead, according to state reports, children at Wordsworth are housed in unsanitary crowded conditions, abused physically and sexually, and now, a child is dead. In this case, therapy has proven worse than punishment. Unfortunately, this is the case with all too many treatment centers, to which children and adolescents are referred by courts and social services agencies. This child's death is not the first to happen in such a center, and sadly, it is unlikely to be the last. This wasn't always the case. Juvenile courts were created at the turn of the 20th century in order to rehabilitate, rather than simply punish, children whose illegal behavior was thought to stem from difficult home lives, poverty, or psychological troubles. By the 1940s and 1950s, a group of child-welfare experts founded small, progressive institutions called residential treatment centers to treat so-called delinquent and troubled children. They reclassified these children as "emotionally disturbed," tracing their problems back to difficult home lives and offering them intensive inpatient therapy, and ultimately, a chance at a better life. Fifty years before Wordsworth Academy, Walton Village in Philadelphia took such an approach to juvenile delinquency. There, boys received group and individual therapy, and were encouraged to set up a peer self-governance system. When they acted out, they were offered more treatment, rather than punishment. Unfortunately, such centers were small and often inaccessible, especially to racial and ethnic minorities. Instead, many poor African American children were sent to "training schools," punitive institutions where they often experienced verbal and physical abuse. By the 1970s, child mental-health and welfare experts were faced with an exploding population of emotionally disturbed children, many of whom were African American. Youthful offenders were increasingly viewed as dangerous, rather than emotionally disturbed. This coincided with a shift in racial demographics of arrests and imprisonment. More black boys were now involved with the juvenile justice system, and they received harsher treatment than their white counterparts. Fueled by racism and an unfounded concern over an increase in violent crime, the 1990s heralded the inflammatory rhetoric of "super-predators" and harsher sentencing. Still, rehabilitation remains the stated goal of the juvenile justice system. The therapeutic model gives the court a great deal of discretion, which is an opportunity for personal bias to come into play. Punishment does not need to fit the crime. Children can be sent for indeterminate periods of time to treatment institutions of questionable benefit until they are "fixed," a term with no clear definition. They can be moved from one institution to the other for "failure to adjust," which in Pennsylvania enables the system to place a child in a secure detention center until a new placement is found. There is little accountability as to what treatment entails, and when it is complete. Treatment centers, some of which are private for-profit companies, define measures of success, and have clear incentives to fill beds. But if centers like Wordsworth aren't the answer, what is? The success of the "Missouri model," a novel approach to juvenile justice, suggests that the residential treatment movement of the past can inform how we treat juvenile offenders today. In Missouri, youth offenders are sent by juvenile courts to small residential institutions, where they sleep in comfortable dorm rooms. When they feel upset or act out, the response is not strict punishment but rather a conversation with peers. This model seems to be working. Recidivism rates are lower than in states using a more traditional approach, violence has significantly decreased, suicides of youth in custody have stopped completely, and costs are down. Unfortunately, many "treatment centers" remain prisons by another name. Until juvenile justice is reformed, children will continue to suffer abuse and even death in the very facilities designed to treat them. Mical Raz (micalraz@mail.med.upenn.edu), M.D., and Deborah Doroshow (deborah.doroshow@yale.edu), M.D., are physicians and historians of medicine. Source: http://www.philly.com/philly/opinion/20161103_Commentary_Wordsworth_case_shows_it_s_time_to_rethink_treatment_for_juveniles.html

Texas urged to end foster care group homes, limit caseworker... | www.mystatesman.com Texas urged to end foster care group homes, limit caseworker workloads [State & Regional Govt & Politics](#) By [Julie Chang](#) - American-Statesman Staff 0 Posted: 6:48 p.m. Friday, Nov. 4, 2016 Highlights The reports comes after a federal judge ruled that the Texas foster care system is unconstitutional. Court-appointed special masters issue dozens of recommendations. The special masters' recommendations include better reporting, care and caseworker retention. Court-appointed special masters Friday released dozens of recommendations on how Texas should overhaul its troubled foster care system, including eliminating the use of foster care group homes, limiting the workload of caseworkers and proposing a plan to curb caseworker turnover rates. "This is a hugely important day for Texas children because this is the next step in crucial reform of the foster care system," said Paul Yetter, a Houston attorney who is representing foster children suing the state. In December, U.S. District Judge Janis G. Jack of Corpus Christi [found the Texas foster care system](#) unconstitutional following a years-long case and suggested that foster children were better off before they entered the system. Jack ordered the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services — which oversees the foster care system — to make some immediate changes and appoint special masters to recommend further ones. Those special masters, former New Jersey Commissioner of Children and Families Kevin Ryan and Francis McGovern, a Duke University law professor, made five dozen recommendations, which Jack will review and could force the agency to implement. [READ: The entirety of the special masters' report released Friday + Jay Janner](#) Texas Department of Family and Protective Services chief Hank Whitman testifies at a Texas House Human Services Committee hearing in July. [Jay Janner](#) Texas Department of Family and Protective Services chief Hank Whitman testifies at a Texas House Human Services Committee hearing in July. Patrick Crimmins, spokesman for the state's child welfare agency, said the agency has been working to fix the foster care system, including finding more foster homes and ways to improve the health care of children, and ensuring caseworkers are spending more time with families and children. "The state of Texas has made improving foster care a priority and will continue to do so," he said. Overhauling foster care [+ Jay Janner](#) Mary Sweeney, left, is shown with her daughter Alexandria Hill, who was 2 years old when she was killed by her [... read more Jay Janner](#) Mary Sweeney, left, is shown with her daughter Alexandria Hill, who was 2 years old when she was killed by her foster mother, Sherill Small, at a Rockdale home in 2013. (Photo courtesy of Mary Sweeney) The New York-based advocacy group Children's Rights sued the state on behalf of foster children in 2011, accusing the state's child welfare agency of maintaining insufficient numbers of caseworkers, moving children too frequently and putting them at risk of abuse and neglect. Attorneys representing the state argued that Texas' caseworker turnover rate and rate of foster placements with relatives and adoptions were comparable to other states. The state is appealing Jack's ruling. Eight foster children died from abuse or neglect in foster homes in fiscal 2013, up from two the year before. In 2014, three died in foster care. Kate Murphy with the advocacy group Texans Care for Children said that the special masters' plan wouldn't fix all the problems with the foster care system. She said the federal lawsuit and the special masters' report only address children who are in foster care for at least a year and are permanently in the state's custody — 10,795 of the state's 30,000 foster care children as of Sept. 30, according to the state agency. "State leaders will have to do more to make sure that kids in foster care heal from the trauma they've already experienced and grow up healthy," Murphy said. The state agency has reported that it has spent about \$500,000 for the report. "The preparation of the report and the further billable hours it

recommends come at considerable expense to Texas taxpayers. Though the litigation has brought attention to a broken system, it will not fix foster care,” said Brandon Logan with conservative Austin-based Texas Public Policy Foundation think tank. Recommendations The masters’ recommendations call for halting the use of foster group homes within 18 months of Jack’s potential court order. Ryan and McGovern said that until then the state should limit the number of children in group homes to eight, particularly for sibling groups. Foster group homes are supposed to have up to 12 children, but Jack in her ruling said that the limit isn’t enforced. She also cited several deficiencies in group homes, including the lack of round-the-clock supervision. She required all foster group homes to have 24-hour supervision, which the special masters echoed in their recommendations Friday. McGovern and Ryan also noted that they found that “children were not timely (or ever) examined by doctors to determine if they had been assaulted. Injuries went untreated. Necessary medical follow up did not occur. Incomplete and missing health care information was a common feature in the records.” They said foster care children needed better health care management, including regular doctors’ visits and establishment of health records. McGovern and Ryan also recommended that foster care caseworkers have a standard — not a fixed — caseload of 14 to 17 cases. They want the state agency to develop a plan to reduce the turnover rate of foster care caseworkers. The Child Protective Services caseworker turnover rate, which includes foster care caseworkers, was 25.4 percent in fiscal year 2016. Retaining caseworkers Last month, the commissioner of the state’s child welfare agency, Hank Whitman, asked for more state funding [to hire 550 caseworkers and investigators](#) — 105 of them for foster care children. He also recommended a \$12,000 pay raise for them. Whitman said he was most concerned about the high numbers of children who had been reported potentially abused or neglected and weren’t seen by caseworkers in a timely manner. State Senate Finance Committee Chairwoman Jane Nelson, R-Flower Mound, has created a work group of five fellow committee members to consider Whitman’s plan and how to pay for it. “It is my strong belief that we cannot wait until the session to act,” Nelson said, referring to the legislative session that begins in January. State Sen. Kirk Watson, D-Austin, a member of the work group, said that if Jack orders the state to implement the special masters’ recommendations, lawmakers will have to find more money than what Whitman is requesting. “We have an unconstitutional system because these kids are not free of an unreasonable risk of harm. The way I hope we look at this is not with the first question being, ‘how much will it cost?’ Instead, ‘how do we protect these children?’” Watson said. Additional recommendations in the special masters’ report: Quality monthly face-to-face visits between foster care children and caseworkers. Centralized location for the child’s case records, including updated photos of the child. Better accessibility for foster children to report abuse. Better support services for children before they exit the foster care system. More transparency in investigations of foster homes. Ensuring that sexually abused or sexually aggressive foster children are separated from other children unless there is no documented safety risk. Reducing the risk of child-on-child abuse through better reporting, investigating and mental health assessments of children who have been sexually abused. Prohibiting placing unrelated children more than three years apart in age in the same room in a residential facility unless there’s a documented assessment that such a move is safe. Better tracking of the availability of foster homes that don’t have a child present. Decreasing the number of foster children who are placed outside of their home community. Submitting a plan to expand the number of foster homes. Stop placing foster children in agency offices or other unregulated facilities. Source: <http://www.mystatesman.com/news/news/state-regional-govt-politics/texas-urged-to-end-foster-care-group-homes-limit-c/ns4K5/>

Peterborough foster parent charged with sexual assault Peterborough Police Lance Anderson [next play/pause pre](#) 1/1 Peterborough This Week By [Lance Anderson](#) PETERBOROUGH — A foster parent in Peterborough is facing several sexual assault charges following an investigation involving three victims. In October 2016 the Peterborough Police Service received information regarding several sexual offences that occurred between February 2016 and October 2016. The allegations involved three victims — two females under 16 years of age and one female under 17 years of age. During all three incidents the suspect was providing foster care in the Peterborough area to the victims. On Friday, Nov. 4, officers went to the suspect’s residence where he was placed under arrest. As a result of the investigation the accused was charged with the following: · Luring person under 16 years of age by means of telecommunication for the purpose of sexual invitation · Sexual assault on a person under 16 years of age · Sexual interference with a person under 16 years of age · Sexual exploitation The accused appeared in court on Nov. 4 and was remanded in custody and was scheduled to appear again in court on Monday (Nov. 7). The suspect’s name is not being released by police in order to protect the identity of the victims involved. Source: <http://www.mykawartha.com/news-story/6951916-peterborough-foster-parent-charged-with-sexual-assault/>

Teen beaten unconscious at Dayton youth home is being relocated ODJFS: Teen beaten unconscious at Dayton youth home is being relocated Updated: Saturday, October 15, 2016 @ 11:28 AM By: Breaking News Staff 0 Share this on your timeline! From To Compose your message Thanks for sharing with your followers! ODJFS: Teen beaten unconscious at Dayton youth home is being relocated <http://www.whio.com/news/local/odjfs-teen-beaten-unconscious-dayton-youth-home-being-relocated/UXsqBguFai3QR7dJuOiZF/> UPDATE @ 6:15 p.m. (Oct. 14): Cody Davidson is being relocated to a youth home facility in Columbus, an official with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services said in a statement released this afternoon. The official also confirms that ODJFS is investigating the incident that occurred this week at Pilot House, on Salem Avenue. Davidson’s mother, Chasity Ranson, said she is continuing her campaign to get her son sent home to be with his family. FIRST REPORT (Oct. 13) A 16-year-old resident at Pilot House, a Dayton home for troubled youth, was beaten unconscious by another male resident and his mother wants to know why an employee watched the episode that left her son with a fractured skull and missing at least five teeth. Cody Davidson had been at Pilot House, on Salem Avenue, for five days when Chasity Ranson said he told her that on Monday night, people there gave him boxing gloves to spar with another young man at the facility. According to Montgomery County Children Services, the facility is a home that helps rehabilitate troubled youth. Davidson has aggression issues, according to his mother. According to Ranson, who has filed a complaint with police, the other boy took off his gloves and proceeded to beat her son as an employee looked on. Davidson was unconscious and bloody when police arrived, according to an incident report. “A shattered palette,” she told News Center 7’s Caroline Reinwald on Thursday night. “He’s missing five teeth. He’s going to have ... reconstructive surgery to replace the teeth. He needed 36 stitches to replace his outer area of his mouth,” she said. Davidson — and the boy who administered the beating — are still residents at the facility. This news organization has asked children services for comment. Ranson said she is working to get her son out of the facility. Source: <http://www.whio.com/news/local/odjfs-teen-beaten-unconscious-dayton-youth-home-being-relocated/UXsqBguFai3QR7dJuOiZF/>

Special-ed student confined 617 times in 6 months despite state laws Originally published November 12, 2016 at 6:04 pm Updated November 13, 2016 at 1:04 pm 1 of 5 Renay Ferguson, whose 10-year old son has ADHD, gave The Seattle Times school records that show her son was placed in isolation 148 times in the span of two years at two different elementary schools.... (Sophia Nahli Allison / The Seattle Times) More The effectiveness of a law limiting how often school officials physically restrain or isolate students is impossible to judge because nearly half the state’s school districts missed the reporting deadline. Share story By [Ellie Silverman](#) Seattle Times staff reporter During the first six months of 2016, staff members at Bellingham’s Sehome High School confined a student with a developmental disability alone in a room on 617 separate occasions — an average of about six times each school day. The extensive use of the approved but controversial technique occurred despite a 2015 state law that sought to limit how often school officials physically restrain or isolate students — tactics typically used to control outbursts from students with behavioral or emotional disabilities. The same law requires schools to report such incidents to state education officials, who “may use this data to investigate the training, practices, and other efforts used by schools and districts to reduce the use of restraint and isolation.” But a Seattle Times review of the fledgling attempt to collect this information found inconsistent compliance that makes it impossible to judge the effectiveness of the new legislation. Nearly half of the state’s 295 school districts missed a July 1 deadline to report incident numbers to Washington’s Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. After questions from The Times about the poor compliance, state education officials extended the deadline and this month released a report based on data provided by 217 school districts. But even the numbers that state officials successfully compiled — showing 20,115 incidents over a six-month period — give no real insight into whether the restraint or isolation techniques were only used in an emergency where someone was likely to get seriously hurt, as the law requires. Therapeutic hold: Technique that pins a student’s arms across the chest or... State Rep. Gerry Pollet, D-Seattle, who sponsored the legislation, called the response rate by districts “dismal.” He said school districts resisted the new legislation from the beginning and as a result, he is still hearing “horror stories” from parents who consider the restraint and isolation techniques barbaric. “I have to say, we’ve got a long way to go to implement this properly,” Pollet said. “I don’t expect us to change the world by having the governor sign the legislation, but I think this has been tougher sledding than I had hoped for.” Linda Mullen, the communications director for the Washington Education Association, the state’s largest teachers union, said implementing the new requirements has been difficult because state lawmakers included no funding for training. “When I talk to teachers and paraprofessionals, they want their kids to be safe and they want to be safe,” Mullen said. “They want support from the district and the state to make sure they have the tools needed to do their jobs, which is to teach our kids.” Pollet said that if districts feel they need more resources to meet the requirements of the law, OSPI should assess the

cost of adequate training and present a funding proposal to the legislature. However, education funding is already a contentious issue given the Washington state Supreme Court's 2012 ruling in *McCleary vs. State of Washington* that the state has neglected its financial obligations to schools. Several of the Puget Sound region's largest school districts — including Seattle, Bellevue, Lake Washington and Edmonds — complied with the reporting requirements. Issaquah and Pasco were two of the largest school districts in the state to miss the initial reporting deadline, but both have since reported their data to the state.

ADVERTISING inRead invented by Teads Shelton is among the 78 districts that failed to report its incident numbers. Pam Farr, the executive director of teaching and learning at the Shelton School District, blamed unfamiliarity with the new requirement and noted that her district has undergone some staff turnover in the last few months. "It unfortunately was an oversight," Farr said. The district is working to finish data collection now to either submit it late or prepare for next year, she said. Doug Gill, OSPI assistant superintendent for special education, said in August he did not know specific consequences for districts that did not report the data. But he expects districts to comply with the law limiting restraint and isolation techniques to emergency situations. "It is OSPI's responsibility to help provide resources for districts to adjust practices, but it's the responsibility of the district" to follow the law, Gil said. "I don't think you can expect OSPI to monitor every classroom in the state." The Sehome High School student with 617 isolation incidents stood out as the most extreme example in the OSPI data. The number was three times greater than a Valley View Middle School student whose 155 isolation incidents in the Snohomish District were the second most reported to the state for a single student. Michael Haberman, Bellingham's special-education director, said the district does not restrain or isolate students outside of emergency situations. He said privacy laws prohibited him from commenting on the Sehome High student, but Haberman confirmed that the tally is accurate. "It's not what we want to see," Haberman said. "I don't want to see any student restrained or isolated at all. There should be light shined on this." New limits on techniques Federal law requires school districts to provide disabled students with a "free appropriate public education," so a student in special education has specific academic and behavioral programs tailored to the individual's needs. State data shows that 13.5 percent of Washington's almost 1.1 million students have a special-education designation, and prior rules allowed teachers to include the use of restraint or isolation in their programs to correct disruptive behavior, even if it was not an emergency. Washington state's [House Bill 1240](#), which passed in 2015, requires school districts to limit such containment tactics to situations where there is an "imminent likelihood of serious harm." The new law closely mirrors the U.S. Department of Education's [recommendation](#) that restraint and seclusion should only occur when there is "a threat of imminent danger of serious physical harm to the student or others." Washington's law joined a growing movement around the country in which several states have pushed for limits on when students can be physically restrained — either in a hold by a school staffer or with a tether — or isolated in a special auxiliary room set aside for seclusion. Children's control position: Another more aggressive hold that should only be... (Illustration by Kelly Shea) More The shift from what had been considered acceptable methods to discipline children with disabilities followed reports of injuries and even deaths of students restrained against their will. Parents, advocates and experts have also said that confining disabled students alone in a room can be a traumatic event. Renay Ferguson, whose 10-year old son has ADHD, gave The Seattle Times school records that show her son was placed in isolation 148 times in the span of two years at two different elementary schools. Each isolation incident ranged from two minutes to three hours, the records show. Ferguson's son felt like he was "going to die" when he was in the Rose Hill Elementary isolation room in Kirkland, and he would take off his clothes to relieve the feeling of suffocation, he reported to his mother and doctor. While in the isolation room April 18, Ferguson's son banged his head against the door and tied his shoelaces around his wrist and neck, according to district records. He suffered a concussion that day, according to a report from his doctor. Ferguson said she and her son no longer trust officials in the Lake Washington school district. "The school district cannot service these kids because they are different," Ferguson said. Paul Vine, the district's special services director, would not comment about Ferguson's son specifically, but he said the Lake Washington School District policy aligns with the state legislation, and officials only use restraint or isolation when there is an emergency. Incomplete picture The OSPI data shows school staff isolated about 1,400 students and restrained about 2,400 others, although the same student may have been both restrained and isolated. Roughly 60 percent of those incidents occurred in elementary schools, according to The Times review of the state's data. The data also tracks the specific method used against the student: closets for isolation, tethers for restraint, weighted blankets for calming and specific physical holds that restrict arm and leg movements. However, the data does not show what triggered the need for restraint or isolation and does not explain how it occurred in an emergency situation. In an effort to determine whether the reported incidents could all be considered an emergency, The Times obtained through the state's public records law reports for more than 5,000 restraint and seclusion incidents from 10 districts. School officials must document each incident and provide those records to the parents, but the records are not reported to OSPI along with the district data. Some of the reports obtained by The Times included details indicating that students had turned violent, punched themselves, run into traffic or attempted to hurt another student or staff member. Others were vague or just had boilerplate language, leaving it unclear whether the techniques were used, as the law allows, to prevent serious harm. But many of the incidents, at least as they were reported, did not appear to justify the need for restraints or isolation. Team control position: A more aggressive hold that should only be used when a student is a risk to himself or others. (Illustration by Kelly Shea) For example, a ninth-grader in Puyallup was placed in isolation for 48 minutes on Nov. 4, 2015, because he had been yelling and wasn't following directions, according to district records. Puyallup's Executive Director of Special Education, Karen Mool, said she could not determine whether the case was an appropriate use of isolation based on only the report. "Every situation has its different uniquenesses. Were there other incidents during the day that added on to this?" she said. "It really depends on the situation and what's happening in the classroom." A May 6 incident report shows that Kent School District staff at Ridgewood Elementary School restrained and isolated a child for 30 minutes because the student threw glue sticks. The district's report did not have more details on the incident. Chris Loftis, the district's executive director of communications, clarified by email that although the incident originated with the student throwing glue sticks, "there was significant aggressive escalation from that point" that included the student punching the principal in the stomach. The district is currently revisiting its reporting forms to include more context for each incident, Loftis said. Two training programs, Right Response and Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI), emphasize that physical restraint should be a last resort. The CPI training teaches educators to identify signs of anxiety, such as pacing, wringing hands or staring, and attempt to ease tensions by listening and giving the student some time to calm down. Two-person escort: Form of physical restraint used to move an agitated student from one location to another. (Illustration by Kelly Shea) If a student acts defensive by refusing to participate in activities or shouting, CPI advises teachers to ask the student to do something simple, such as standing up. The only time physical intervention should be used is if the student could hurt himself or others, such as hitting or self-injurious behavior, according to the training. Despite the uneven compliance with the new law, there does not appear to be widespread discontent with how education officials are using restraint and isolation techniques. State records show that OSPI completed 12 Special Education Citizen Complaint investigations concerning the techniques in 2016, with one case still pending as of mid-October. In one of those 12 cases, University Place School District staff put a first-grade student with high-functioning autism in seclusion "on a number of occasions" when there was no danger, according to OSPI files received in a public records request. The student told his mom that he "thought people hated him" when staff took him to the therapy room, according to the documents. Investigators found in that case and in four others that staff used restraint or isolation outside of emergency situations. Each time OSPI ordered school district officials to ensure its staff are properly trained, the records show. The [Office of the Education Ombuds](#), an agency within the governor's office that resolves complaints and makes policy recommendations, received a total of 34 complaints concerning the use of restraint or isolation techniques from July 2015 through June 2016, records show. Carrie Basas, director of the Ombuds office, said school district officials remain confused over how to implement changes and comply with the new law. "There's just a mix of information out there that could be better supported through greater professional-development resources," Basas said this summer. "Not everyone's on the same page." Seattle Times reporter Mike Baker contributed to this report. Mike Baker: mbaker@seattletimes.com. Ellie Silverman on Twitter [@esilverman11](#). Source: <http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/education/special-ed-student-confined-617-times-in-6-months-despite-state-laws/>

Advocate for troubled teens charged with fraud By [Phil Fairbanks](#) Published November 16, 2016 Updated November 16, 2016 [SHARE TWEET EMAIL](#) Umar Adeyola is well known for his work with at risk teens. Now he's the one in trouble with the law - again. Adeyola, head of the non-profit HEART Foundation, appeared in Buffalo federal court Wednesday to face allegations that he cheated local health insurers and a California non-profit group out of \$365,000. Charged in a multi-count indictment, he is accused of submitting 4,000 fraudulent claims to Blue Cross Blue Shield, Univera Healthcare and Independent Health over a five-year period starting in 2009. Advertisement He also is accused of cheating the Latino Coalition for Faith and Community Leadership in California and its federally-funded program to help adults and high school dropouts prepare for employment. "There are 48 counts," Assistant U.S. Attorney Maura O'Donnell said of the charges against Adeyola. "It's going to be a complex case." Adeyola, who is well-known by judges and others for his advocacy on behalf of troubled teens, was released Wednesday. U.S. Magistrate Judge Michael J. Roemer ordered him to wear an electronic monitoring device and limited his travel to Western New York. This is not Adeyola's first run in with the law. In 2001, he pleaded guilty to identity theft and admitted obtaining the

personal information of General Motors employees in the Town of Tonawanda and using those identities to obtain fraudulent consumer loans. He was sentenced to 21 months in prison. Eight years later, Adeyola pleaded guilty again, this time in a case charging him with fraud and making false statements. He was accused of defrauding a local company. [\[Related: Funds pulled from city project tied to ex-con\]](#) For Adeyola, the allegations represent a sharp contrast to his reputation as an advocate for at-risk teens and youth diversion programs. His group, the HEART (Helping Empower At-Risk Teens) Foundation, is closed now but, for years, provided services intended to support young people, many of them in the criminal justice system. Founded in 2008, HEART provided a "full range of counseling, vocational and supportive services" with the goal of empowering teens to succeed, according to its web site. The group operated out of offices on Kensington Avenue. Prosecutors say Adeyola's non-profit organization also allowed him to bill local insurers for \$228,000 worth of psychotherapy and other types of care that was never provided. They claim the defendant also cheated the Latino Coalition after the California group received \$9 million in federal funding to start a jobs training program. Adeyola's group provided counseling, mental health therapy and other clinical services to the coalition but, according to prosecutors, fraudulently billed the coalition for \$135,000 in expenses. The charges against Adeyola, which range from health care fraud to theft of government money, are the result of an investigation by the FBI, the U.S. dept of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General, and the U.S. Dept. of Labor. Adeyola's defense lawyer declined to comment Wednesday. In 2011, the Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency awarded \$2.18 million for a project to build housing for homeless veterans on Buffalo's East Side, a project that was sponsored by the HEART Foundation. The city agency [later withdrew support](#) for the project after reporters from The Buffalo News raised questions about Adeyola's background. Source: <http://buffalonews.com/2016/11/16/advocate-troubled-teens-charged-fraud/>

Parents Of Child Who Nearly Died While In Foster Care Seek \$20M From State Child Advocate Finds DCF At Fault In Near Starvation Of Infant A report by state Child Advocate Sarah Eagan finds that DCF workers assigned to the case of an infant boy placed with relatives in Groton were responsible for "staggering failure and omissions" in the child's near starvation. A report by state Child Advocate Sarah Eagan finds that DCF workers assigned to the case of an infant boy placed with relatives in Groton were responsible for "staggering failure and omissions" in the child's near starvation. [Josh Kovner Contact Reporter](#) The biological parents of the child who nearly died of starvation, broken bones and head injuries while placed in foster care by the state are seeking permission to sue the Department of Children and Families for \$20 million. In a 17-page notice filed with the state claims commissioner, the parents' lawyer, Shelley L. Graves, lays out a blistering portrayal of alleged malpractice and negligence on the part of DCF. With few exceptions, people looking to sue the state must gain permission from the claims commissioner. The foster mother, Crystal Magee of Groton, has been arrested and charged with child abuse, and the Office of the Child Advocate has issued a scathing report identifying breakdowns in care and oversight by DCF that endangered the child's life. Crystal Magee is a cousin of the boy's biological mother. The child, Dallas, was 13 months old when DCF, citing neglect, removed him and his siblings from the home of Kirsten Fauquet and John Stratzman, his biological parents, in June 2015. DCF supervisors and caseworkers placed the boy with Crystal and Donald Magee even though the Magees were not licensed foster-care parents, Donald Magee had a criminal record, and Crystal Magee had a history of child neglect, according to the notice of claim dated Thursday. The Magees also had no car to transport the child to medical appointments, neither had a job, both had significant medical problems, and Crystal Magee had a suspected substance-abuse issue, according to the claim. Many of the assertions in the parents' notice mirror the findings of Child Advocate Sarah Eagan's 64-page investigative report, released in October. After the attorney general's office files a response on behalf of DCF, Claims Commissioner Christy Scott will schedule hearings. Eagan and Associate Child Advocate Faith Vos Winkel called the DCF oversights in the case some of the most egregious they have seen. Several workers and supervisors were disciplined, and DCF Commissioner Joette Katz sent out memos that reaffirmed what appeared to be basic foster-care protocols and child-protection procedures. Dallas spent five months with the Magees – from June to November 2105, before he was removed. The lead social worker admitted in documents obtained by Eagan's office that he never saw the child awake during the times he visited the home. At one point, Crystal Magee called the Groton police and asked if she could get in trouble for allowing a child to cry nonstop for days on end. Crystal Magee also refused to allow child-development workers into the home on several occasions and the child missed medical appointments, according to the claim. Internal emails obtained by Eagan's office showed both an alarming sense of apathy about the case by some workers, and a deep concern by others about what the case said about DCF's foster-care practices in general. Under Katz, the department has emphasized placing children with relatives. Background checks and safety requirements are less stringent for relatives than they are for traditional foster-care families who are not related to the children they take in. The day after Dallas was removed from the Magee household, another foster parent rushed the boy to a local hospital. He was transferred to the [Connecticut Children's Medical Center](#) in Hartford. Doctors found an extremely malnourished boy with broken bones and other traumatic injuries. The claim, drafted by Graves, of New London, lists Dallas' injuries. They included: A fracture of his left arm caused by trauma that likely occurred up to three weeks earlier; fractures of his right forearm, caused by trauma, that likely occurred up to six weeks before; traumatic head injuries, such as bleeding of the brain and a hemorrhage of his right eye; emaciation, sagging skin, loss of muscle mass, prominent ribs, sunken eyes, and wasted temple muscles that were "the result of severe malnourishment over a prolonged period of time"; bruises over his body; balding of the back of his head due to lying down for extended periods; burn marks; extensive developmental delays; and emotional trauma. Graves noted in the claim, as Eagan's office had, that the Magees never obtained their foster-care license during the time they had Dallas in their home, and that they lied on the foster-care application. Graves also pointed out that Crystal Magee repeatedly refused to submit to a substance-abuse evaluation requested by DCF. In addition, the claim identifies significant gaps in the electronic case record. Eagan's office found that a large number of entries were added to the electronic record in November, after Dallas' removal, that related to events weeks and months earlier. Some of those events are suggestive of malpractice by DCF workers, according to the claim. For example, Graves writes that a social worker visited the Magee home on Sept. 29, 2015. He said in his notes that Dallas was asleep in his pack-and-play. But the worker "failed to assess Dallas' health at that visit, despite knowing that it had been 43 days since the worker's last visit," when Dallas was also asleep; that the Magees had been canceling medical appointments; that Crystal Magee had refused a drug-abuse evaluation; that outside counselors had expressed concerns about Crystal Magee's ability to cope; and that the Magees had failed to show up for two foster-care training sessions, which are part of the licensing process. Thirty days later, on Oct. 29, 2015, the social worker again visited Dallas, who was asleep in his pack-and-play. The worker wrote in his visit notes that he was "indeed able to confirm that Dallas was breathing," according both the claim and Eagan's report. The claim asserts that as a result of DCF's negligence, Dallas continues to suffer physical and emotional injuries and serious developmental delays. Source: <http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-dcf-abuse-claim-1116-20161115-story.html>

SUFFERING IN SECRET: Illinois hides abuse and neglect of adults with disabilities Barbara Chyette holds up a picture of her late brother, Loren Braun, a group home resident who choked to death during a supervised outing. (John J. Kim / Chicago Tribune) By Michael J. Berens and Patricia Callahan The house had no address; the dead man had no name. Illinois officials blacked out those details from their investigative report. Nobody else was supposed to learn the man's identity or the location of the state-funded facility where his body was found. The investigation was closed as it began, with no public disclosure, and the report was filed away, one of thousands that portray a hidden world of misery and harm. No one would know that Thomas Powers died at 3300 Essington Road in unincorporated Joliet, in a group home managed for adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Or that his caregivers forced a 50-year-old man with the intellect of a small child to sleep on a soiled mattress on the floor in a room used for storage. Or that the front door bore a building inspection sticker that warned, "Not approved for occupancy." Not even Powers' grieving family knew the state had looked into his death and found evidence of neglect. As Illinois steers thousands of low-income adults with disabilities into private group homes, a Tribune investigation found Powers was but one of many casualties in a botched strategy to save money and give some of the state's poorest and most vulnerable residents a better life. In the first comprehensive accounting of mistreatment inside Illinois' taxpayer-funded group homes and their day programs, the Tribune uncovered a system where caregivers often failed to provide basic care while regulators cloaked harm and death with secrecy and silence. The Tribune identified 1,311 cases of documented harm since July 2011 — hundreds more cases than publicly reported by the Illinois Department of Human Services. Confronted with those findings, Human Services officials retracted five years of erroneous reports and said the department had launched reforms to ensure accurate reporting. To circumvent state secrecy, the Tribune filed more than 100 public records requests with government agencies. But state files were so heavily redacted and unreliable that the newspaper had to build its own databases by mining state investigative files, court records, law enforcement cases, industry reports, federal audits, grant awards and Medicaid data. The Tribune found at least 42 deaths linked to abuse or neglect in group homes or their day programs over the last seven years. Residents fatally choked on improperly prepared food, succumbed to untreated bed sores and languished in pain from undiagnosed ailments. Other residents suffered forced indignities and loss of freedom, state records show. Some were mocked for their intellectual limitations, barricaded in rooms, abandoned in soiled clothing and deprived of food. A

male group home resident, accused of stealing cookies, was beaten to death by his caregiver. Employees at one home bound a woman's hands and ankles with duct tape, covered her head with a blanket and left her for several hours on the kitchen floor. For their own amusement, employees at another home repeatedly ridiculed residents to provoke outbursts, a game the caregivers called "breaking them." And, all too often, vulnerable residents' health and safety has been left to unlicensed, scantily trained employees. Front-line caregivers failed to promptly call 911, perform CPR or respond to medical emergencies that resulted in death. In hundreds of cases, the department allowed employees of group homes to investigate allegations of neglect and mental abuse in their own workplaces, the Tribune discovered. That alliance between group homes and Human Services' investigative arm, the Office of the Inspector General, is not specifically disclosed in state investigative reports. Citing patient privacy laws, state officials maintain that the addresses of the more than 3,000 state-licensed group homes are secret. Illinois officials refuse to disclose the enforcement history of any home, even in cases of fatal abuse and neglect. In contrast, Illinois nursing homes must maintain copies of investigative reports and surveys for public inspection. Additionally, state health officials publish a quarterly report detailing violations accompanied by nursing home names and addresses. There are no similar disclosure requirements for group homes. In this culture of secrecy, even seemingly benign records get shielded from sight. For example, the Tribune requested a state-funded PowerPoint presentation that included a list of needed improvements to community care programs, including group homes. The state responded. Except for the word "Recommendations," the entire slide was blacked out. Citing the Tribune investigation, Human Services Secretary James Dimas has ordered widespread reforms to improve public accountability and streamline investigations. "My concern is that too often agencies hide behind their confidentiality statutes, which makes it harder for the public to know what is going on," said Dimas, who was appointed last year. Dimas said he will push for legislative changes, if necessary, to allow public disclosure of group home enforcement histories. The shift in Illinois from large institutional facilities to less costly residential homes reflects the philosophy that these individuals, if supported, will lead fuller lives in the community, and more than 11,400 now live in group homes statewide. Known as Community Integrated Living Arrangements, or CILAs, these homes accommodate eight or fewer adults in ordinary apartment buildings or houses. The Arc of Illinois, a statewide advocacy group, reports that hundreds of people with disabilities have successfully transitioned into group homes in recent years. In 2011, a lawsuit brought by individuals who wanted to leave state-funded facilities resulted in a court decree that has forced Illinois to move more people into community settings. State officials have touted group homes as a preferred option, citing cost savings that can be used to fund more community care. The annual cost of care for an institutionalized resident is about \$219,000 compared with \$84,000 at a group home, according to state records. But Illinois has not increased reimbursement rates for group home staff wages in nearly nine years, leading to what industry leaders say are catastrophic conditions in which even the best operators are struggling to provide basic care. Illinois ranks among the five worst states for adequately funding community options, according to federal reports and studies by advocacy groups. Shirley Perez, who directs a family advocacy program for the Arc of Illinois, said: "Some of the phone calls I get from families are that they are afraid." Powers, born with a condition that led to brain damage, spent decades inside state institutions, unable to talk, unpredictable in behavior. When state officials promised him a better life in a real home and told his family he'd gain independence, Powers said yes the only way he knew how. He giggled. But this was not the life that Powers found. Nor did thousands of other adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities, left to the mercy of a system designed to be invisible. Joe Powers talks about his late son, Thomas, at his daughter Kathy's home in Aurora. (John J. Kim / Chicago Tribune) Failures of care In one Will County group home, state records show, a caregiver left a frail woman alone in the bathroom after filling the bathtub with water, unaware that it was scalding because a maintenance worker forgot to install a temperature-control valve. The woman tumbled into the tub and was severely burned. The Trinity Services caregiver put the woman to bed, later pulled socks over her peeling, bleeding skin and didn't seek medical help for more than an hour. The woman died days later. At a Springfield home owned by Sparc, a caregiver forgot to give a man his anti-seizure medication before sending him to a day program in 2013. Rather than deliver the pills, investigators found, the caregiver told a colleague to throw them into the trash. The man suffered a major seizure, turned blue and was treated at a hospital. A caregiver at a Macomb group home managed by Mosaic allowed a man to sleep with a stuffed snowman even though he had been diagnosed with pica — a disorder that compels people to eat nonfood items — and had a history of consuming stuffing, according to inspector general records. In 2012 the man tore open the snowman, ate the filling and choked to death. In case after case, group home businesses have delegated frontline care to inexperienced caregivers with negligible training, a cost-cutting combination that has led to harm, the Tribune investigation found. Indeed, when the newspaper reviewed more than 200 substantiated cases of abuse and neglect, it found the vast majority of injuries and deaths are linked to inadequate staffing levels and failure to closely monitor fragile residents. Records show caregivers trying to cover up mistakes, failing to understand dangers of missed medications and underestimating the complex nature of disabilities. Sparc's chief operating officer, Ryan Dowd, said his company fired the caregiver who directed a colleague to throw out anti-convulsant medicine, added more surveillance cameras in its group homes and switched from paper to electronic medication records so a nurse can better catch mistakes. Nancy Davis, a Mosaic vice president, said her organization dismissed the caregiver who allowed the man to sleep with a stuffed snowman, hired outside behavioral experts to address the needs of residents with pica and retrained caregivers on how to protect those individuals. Caring for adults with profound intellectual and developmental disabilities can be challenging. Some have the strength of a weightlifter with the impulsiveness of a child. In the blink of an eye, they can find themselves in crisis. Yet caregivers in group homes earn an average of \$9.35 an hour, according to the Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities. That wage is below the federal poverty level for a family of three. Low pay is a contributing factor in high staff turnover — more than 40 percent annually in some homes. "Staff turnover — it's like a cancer that affects care," said UCP Seguin of Greater Chicago CEO John Voit, who has worked in the industry since the 1970s. Group home executives complain that inadequate state funding has not allowed the industry to increase entry-level pay or raise existing salaries to retain skilled supervisors. They say caregivers can earn more money in many other industries, citing the experienced employees who recently resigned to take higher-paying jobs at Amazon warehouses. To fill vacancies, business operators said they have turned to workers whose backgrounds would have disqualified them from jobs in the past. "You're scraping the barrel," said Little City Executive Director Shawn Jeffers, whose agency's services include group homes for adults with disabilities in the Chicago area. "I have some folks who do some really dumb stuff." Responding to what group home owners call a staffing crisis, state lawmakers in both houses this summer overwhelmingly approved \$330 million in funding to boost pay for caregivers. But Gov. Bruce Rauner vetoed the measure in August, citing a lack of state funds. The Tribune also found that the group home industry is exempt from basic staffing standards required elsewhere in the state's long-term care system. Nursing homes, state institutions and other extended-care facilities are required by law to employ on-site registered nurses who can detect and react to sudden changes in patient conditions. Even low-level employees must be state-certified aides who update skills through continuing education. Group homes are not bound by these requirements. Many group home residents are not examined by a licensed nurse for weeks at a time, sometimes for many months, state enforcement records show. Instead, registered nurses often work from remote locations and supervise dozens of residents over the telephone. Some unlicensed workers also are allowed to pass out prescription medications — a practice prohibited by law at nursing homes and state-owned facilities. These and many other relaxed policies place group home residents at greater risk of undetected complications. Few daily activities underscore the dangers of thin staff or the critical role of competent caregivers like the simple act of eating. In 2014, a UCP Seguin group home resident attending the company's day program in Cicero choked to death on a marshmallow that a caregiver handed out as a treat. The victim had dysphagia, putting him at high risk of choking, and staff were supposed to give him only pureed or finely chopped foods, the inspector general found. UCP Seguin CEO Voit said his organization, one of the state's largest group home providers, has retrained staff on choking risks and revised safety protocols. That same year, a man at a Trinity Services group home in Peoria fatally choked on a cheeseburger, carrots and applesauce when a caregiver stepped away. The victim's medical files warned he often swallowed food too fast and needed close supervision, but staff members were not properly trained about his special needs, state records show. In response, Trinity Service officials said, they created a training manual for each group home that details how to monitor residents with diet restrictions and choking risks, including pictures that illustrate how to chop or puree food properly. For Loren Braun, death came from a McDonald's hamburger and an inattentive caregiver who had been hired specifically to watch him. At 61, Braun had no teeth and couldn't wear dentures. Born with developmental disabilities and diagnosed with schizophrenia, he had lived since 1997 in a North Side group home managed by Anixter Center. Braun had a history of choking. His food had to be soft and cut into tiny pieces, and someone had to coach him at every meal to eat slowly and drink water between bites. Braun's sister, Barbara Chyette, tried to protect her younger brother as best she could. Loren Braun, who had no teeth and couldn't wear dentures, choked to death on food during an outing away from his group home. (Family photo) As a former social worker at an Ohio psychiatric hospital, she saw the advantages of a small group home but feared that staffing levels were often inadequate for high-risk residents. Tapping a family foundation set up by her late father, a postal worker, she donated money to pay Anixter for an extra caregiver to shadow her brother three days a week. She also donated a van to the home for community outings. In November 2014, caregivers loaded Braun and four other residents into that van for grocery shopping, haircuts and lunch at a McDonald's. After returning to the group home, a caregiver discovered

Braun unconscious in the back seat. A Chicago Fire Department paramedic reported that he removed "almost an entire hamburger" from Braun's mouth and airway but was unable to revive him. He had choked to death. State investigators cited his personal caregiver for egregious neglect. In a wrongful death suit, Chyette alleges that Anixter failed to address his choking risk, served her brother unsafe food and didn't protect him from neglect. Anixter executives declined to comment. "Loren was like a baby," Chyette said. "Like you would have to be with a 2-year-old or 3-year-old — that's the kind of supervision that clients like Loren need. And the system does not provide that kind of supervision." The attacker next door Illinois group homes were first licensed in the 1970s as state-funded community options for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, the beginning of a civil rights movement to empty large institutions and nursing facilities. This shift offered freedom and independence to scores of people with disabilities who were inappropriately consigned to institutional care. But as state downsizing continues, group homes are also destinations for individuals with a history of profound problems, often compounded by mental illness, requiring round-the-clock supervision for their safety and the safety of other residents. A majority of group home businesses report that they cannot afford to provide that level of protection, according to industry trade groups. Fragile individuals with disabilities sometimes live alongside those who have a history of violence or sexual aggression, a risky mix that has led to injury and death, state records show. Group home owners are not required to report resident-on-resident assaults to the inspector general's office unless someone suspects that neglect was a factor, according to state law. But law enforcement and state investigative reports reveal a troubling pattern of violence at group homes since 2010, including three homicides. At a Trinity Services group home in Peoria in 2010, John Vogel, 45, was fatally beaten by a resident whose acts of violence had sent two employees and two housemates to the emergency room months earlier, according to inspector general and coroner records. At a Bolingbrook group home managed by Individual Advocacy Group, Eduardo Formanski, 30, suffocated after another resident, who weighed nearly twice as much as he did, lay on top of him during a fight in 2011, according to police, court and medical examiner records. That same year, Tramayne Yarbrough, 35, died of head injuries after a housemate pushed him down the stairs of a Palos Park group home operated by St. Coletta's of Illinois, according to medical examiner and inspector general records. The assailant had a history of physical aggression and had pushed someone else down the stairs about two months earlier, the inspector general's office found. Responding to questions about the Vogel homicide, Trinity Service officials said they had provided extensive behavioral therapy to the resident responsible for the attack. Afterward, they said, group home employees received enhanced training to better deal with aggressive residents. Addressing the death at the Bolingbrook home, an official for Advocacy Group said it was the only fatal incident in the group home's 17-year history. Attempts to reach St. Coletta's of Illinois for comment were unsuccessful. Residents have also been victimized sexually by other residents, records show. At a West Side day program operated by group home provider Habilitative Systems, a 33-year-old man had a behavior plan that addressed his history of sexually inappropriate behavior, including "engaging in sexual activity without consent." The staff was supposed to make sure he remained at least 3 feet away from program participants, and his care plan called for employees to accompany him even to the restroom. But in July 2010, the man wandered away unnoticed and entered an unlocked restroom where he allegedly persuaded a 27-year-old man to perform oral sex, according to a state report that cited a witness account by a third man who entered the restroom and discovered the pair. An investigator with the inspector general's office termed the sexual act consensual, even though the younger man had profound disabilities, wasn't able to speak and "could not provide any information for this investigation." The office did cite the business for neglect. An official for Habilitative Systems declined to comment about the case. State law allows group home providers to mix defenseless residents with those who have histories of violence as long as businesses maintain adequate supervision and staffing. It's hard to imagine anyone more vulnerable than 36-year-old Aaron Stanley. Born with cerebral palsy and excess fluid in his brain, Stanley has the cognitive capacity of a 2-year-old, his mother said. Spastic quadriplegia restricts movement of his arms and legs, so he can't propel his own wheelchair. At a Berwyn group home managed by UCP Seguin, he was fully dependent on the staff. Colleen Stanley didn't know that her son's bedroom was next to that of a man who not only had an intellectual disability but also was diagnosed with intermittent explosive disorder. A UCP Seguin employee later told police that Stanley's housemate was prone to episodes of unprovoked explosive violence and had "insurmountable strength." In October last year the housemate walked into Stanley's room during the pre-dawn hours and nearly pummeled him to death while he lay in bed — beating him repeatedly in the head with a fire extinguisher, a television and a picture frame before stabbing his face with glass from the broken frame, police records show. Stanley's swollen face was so covered with blood that first responders could not see his eyes. The sole UCP Seguin caregiver on duty that night — a woman alone in the house with seven disabled men — told police she tried to intervene but Stanley's housemate became more violent, and she was afraid he would attack her. No charges were filed against Stanley's housemate, whose psychiatrist told police the man could not comprehend his actions. Instead, Human Services admitted him to a state-run institution for individuals with developmental disabilities, police records show. Stanley, who had to undergo multiple reconstructive surgeries on his face, no longer lives at the UCP Seguin group home. His family is suing the provider for failing to protect him. Citing the lawsuit, UCP Seguin's Voit declined to comment on the specifics of the case. In a written statement he said that, in general, when a person is harmed, his organization figures out the causes, retrains staff, revises safety protocols and disciplines employees to reduce the likelihood of recurrence. "Ultimately, however," the statement said, "there are some occurrences or encounters that can neither be predicted nor prevented, even with the best of training, protocols and processes." In an interview before her death from breast cancer in August, Stanley's mother said the system has to change. "You can't put someone that's violent in the same house as someone that can't even get out of his way," she said. A suspicious death Even as a toddler, it was clear Thomas Powers would need a lifetime of care. He never learned to speak, use a toilet or hold a spoon. He could walk, even run, but he was awkward and crashed into walls and furniture. He couldn't comprehend simple gestures or words, and at times he had trouble recognizing his own family. But he loved to have his hand stroked and his back patted. And he seemed most happy when traveling in a vehicle and staring out the window, family members said. Thomas Powers as a child, front row, second from right, and as an adult with his sister Kathy at her home. (Family photos) Powers, one of nine children, had a rare inherited disorder — phenylketonuria, which can cause severe intellectual disability and medical problems. The condition is readily detected and treated today, but the test did not exist when he was born in 1960, and his disease went untreated as a child. His father, Joe Powers, 83, said the family made the agonizing decision to institutionalize Thomas at age 6, when he had become an oblivious danger to himself and others. In one of many frightening incidents, he held an infant sibling above his head and made a throwing motion. Thomas Powers spent four decades in state institutions, but in 2008 state officials pressured the family to move him because of planned downsizing at his facility, according to one of his sisters, Kathy Powers. She said they promised he would receive more individualized care. A state contractor then steered them to Trinity Services, the state's largest operator of group homes for adults with disabilities. Two years later, however, Trinity Services officials reported that Thomas Powers had become too much to handle. Caregivers complained that he was a whirlwind of motion and mayhem, running from kitchen to bedroom, tossing pans from the stove, breaking lamps, drinking water from the toilet, sometimes stripping naked to express displeasure. "He was just out of control," a Trinity Services supervisor later said in a court deposition. "He was like an animal." To better control Powers' behaviors, Trinity Services officials transferred him in May 2010 to another home, a 2,100-square-foot ranch house on Essington Road in unincorporated Joliet. Following the move, most of his daily activities would take place inside. Thomas Powers, born with a condition that led to brain damage, was found dead in 2010 in a group home in unincorporated Joliet, three days after being transferred from another group home. He was 50. (John J. Kim, Chicago Tribune) Canceled were Powers' weekday trips to a community day program where he had participated in arts and crafts projects with dozens of other people with disabilities. There would be no more of his favorite activity, riding in a transport van. When Powers arrived, three other men were living in the house, state records show. None of them should have been there. Two months earlier, a Will County building inspector had posted a "not approved for occupancy" sticker on the door after determining that Trinity Services had converted a residential property into a group home without proper permits and safety improvements. County officials charged that Trinity Services ignored that order to vacate the home. While Powers' bedroom was being renovated, he slept in a cramped room jammed with boxes of other people's belongings, according to state records. He should have never been left unsupervised with loose objects, medical records show, because he suffered from pica and indiscriminately stuffed items in his mouth. On his third day in the home, he was found dead. His caregiver told state investigators that Powers, wearing pajamas, had rested through the night on a fully assembled bed, according to police and court records. But sheriff's deputies found Powers dressed in blue jeans and belt, lying on the floor next to a mattress so stained that it was hauled away as garbage. The room was cluttered with ripped-open storage boxes, and a box spring with built-in bed frame leaned against a wall. Thomas Powers was living in a group home in unincorporated Joliet in 2010 when he was found dead lying next to a stained mattress in a cluttered room used for storage. (John J. Kim / Chicago Tribune; Will County sheriff's office) The caregiver first told deputies that she found Powers with a plastic bag "laying over his face, covering it." She later changed her description, saying "it was like a sheet of paper." Dr. J. Scott Denton, who conducted the autopsy for the Will County medical examiner's office, ruled the cause of death undetermined. But later, in a deposition, Denton testified that "it's more likely than not that something unnatural happened," citing Powers' suspicious bruises and cuts, the plastic bag or sheet, the room in disarray and other unusual circumstances. Powers' family, who

maintained close contact with group home employees, filed a wrongful death suit and reached a confidential settlement last year. "We will never know what happened for sure," said Kathy Powers. "But something wrong happened." Trinity Services CEO Art Dykstra, a former state director for mental health and disability programs, said Powers thrived for years without incident but experienced sudden and unexplained weight loss and health complications in the months before his death. Caregivers transferred Powers to the Joliet home because it had fewer residents than the home where he lived and might offer a calmer environment to counter his increasingly disruptive behaviors, he said. Most of the building code violations in the Joliet home represented renovations that were underway or completed without proper permits, Dykstra said. "Everyone at Trinity Services feels terrible about this death," he said. "We've tried our hardest to help people with complex needs like Thomas." Records show that the Office of the Inspector General took five years to close the case, issuing its report after the Powers family settled its civil suit with Trinity Services. Investigators cited the business and the caregiver for neglect, noting that residents were placed in a home with code violations and that Powers was forced to sleep on a mattress placed on the floor in a room full of debris. But the state took no further action against Trinity Services. Under Illinois law, the inspector general's office is required to send a notification letter to families or guardians if neglect or abuse is found. But members of Powers' family said they were unaware of the state's investigation until contacted by the Tribune. Inspector General Michael McCotter acknowledged that his office had failed to notify them. Last summer, the Powers family received an apology from McCotter in the mail.

mberens@chicagotribune.com pcallahan@chicagotribune.com Twitter @mberens1 Twitter @tribunetish Illinois' transition to group homes Illinois has been moving toward a group home model for decades. Here are some major factors behind that transition: Beginning in the 1970s, Illinois downsized state-funded institutions because scores of people were inappropriately confined there. In the late 1980s, state officials created a special license for group homes that provide care for eight or fewer adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. These homes were designated Community Integrated Living Arrangements, or CILAs. There are more than 3,000 such homes today. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1999 that people with disabilities have the right to live in the least restrictive setting possible. Known as the Olmstead decision, the ruling also stated that unnecessary institutionalization violated the Americans with Disabilities Act. The decision forced states to fund more community services. In 2007, Illinois launched the Pathways to Community Living program, a federally funded initiative to transfer thousands of people with disabilities into group homes or other community placements from state institutions or nursing facilities providing long-term care. In a federal settlement known as the Ligas consent decree, Illinois agreed in 2011 to fund community access for adults with disabilities who lived in private intermediate-care facilities with nine or more beds, and those who lived at home but had sought community services or placement. Also in 2011, a federal court approved a sweeping agreement — the Colbert consent decree — that required Illinois to fund more community options for Medicaid-eligible nursing home residents with disabilities. In late 2011, then-Gov. Pat Quinn announced a cost-saving plan to close multiple state institutions and move hundreds of adults with disabilities into group homes. The Jacksonville Developmental Center was closed, but state officials shelved plans to shutter the Murray Developmental Center following a court fight with parents of residents. Source: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/watchdog/ct-group-home-investigations-cila-met-20161117.htmlstory.html>

When Home Feels Like Prison: My Year In A Group Home November 17, 2016 by [Noel Anaya](#) Featured on [KQED](#) Photo by: Denise Tejada Listen Now [Download](#) Share this story: Noel Anaya spent a year in a group home when he was 12 years old. I was put into foster care when I was two years old, and I've been in the system ever since. The moment I stepped into a group home when I was 12, I felt like it was a mistake. There I was, with about a dozen other teen boys. On my very first day, I got into a fight during a basketball game. I was physically restrained by a staff member and put on "lockdown." That meant except for school, I had to stay in my room, eat alone, and keep apart from the other kids for seven days. I didn't feel like a kid in time out. I felt like an inmate. Even on a regular week, our lives were super regimented. At night, staff walked the halls with flashlights, looking into the rooms. In addition to heavy security, I met regularly with a therapist who prescribed me medication. I remember almost all the kids there were on something. We lined up for our medicine, which was given out in those little, paper, condiment cups. The drugs made me feel like a zombie. After a year, because of good behavior, I was eventually returned to my foster family. It took me a long time to adjust to normal life. Because for so long, I couldn't rely on anyone and I was always afraid of getting in trouble. We were sent to the group home to turn our lives around. But for some of us, we ended up worse off than when we started. That's the problem: group homes are supposed to be a safe haven for kids. But often, they're not. Our adolescent behavior was penalized harshly. New California law requires that starting next year, the state move away from placing teens in foster care in group homes. I have my doubts. But it's a step in the right direction to rethink how we treat kids in foster care. With a Perspective, I'm Noel Anaya. Featured on [KQED](#) Source: <https://youthradio.org/journalism/when-home-feels-like-prison-my-year-in-a-group-home/>

Investigation finds widespread abuse of the disabled in Illinois group homes THE ASSOCIATED PRESS 4 hrs ago [0](#) Getty Images prev next CHICAGO — A newspaper investigation found more than a thousand cases of abuse and neglect of Illinois adults with disabilities who were placed into private group homes. The Chicago Tribune [says](#) its investigation revealed mistreatment inside Illinois' taxpayer-funded group homes and their day programs, with caregivers failing to provide basic care while regulators conceal harm and death with secrecy and silence. The investigation found at least 42 deaths linked to abuse and neglect in group homes or their day programs over the last seven years. Residents have been humiliated and lost freedom, state records show. The Chicago Tribune's investigation also shows 1,311 cases of documented harm since July 2011 — hundreds more cases of documented harm than publicly reported by Illinois' Department of Human Services. Thomas Powers was one of those unfortunate cases. He died in a Joliet group home for adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Grieving relatives of Powers didn't know there was evidence found of neglect, which included an instance of the 50-year-old, with the intellect of a small child, being forced to sleep on a soiled mattress on the floor in a room for storage. Other incidents similar or worse than Powers' experience have also been revealed. Advertisement Play Current Time 0:00 / Duration Time 0:00 Remaining Time -0:00 Stream TypeLIVE Loaded: 0% Progress: 0% 00:00 Fullscreen 00:00 Mute Playback Rate 1 Subtitles subtitles off Captions captions off Chapters Chapters A male group resident was beaten to death by his caregiver after being accused of stealing cookies. Employees at another home abused a female resident by binding her hands and ankles with duct tape, and covering her head with a blanket and leaving her on a kitchen floor for several hours. In many of these cases, the health and safety of residents has been left to unlicensed and scantily trained employees. The death toll has risen due to caregivers failing to promptly call 911, perform CPR or respond to medical emergencies. Get news headlines sent daily to your inbox [TheSouthern.com](#) Daily Headlines Obituaries I understand and agree that registration on or use of this site constitutes agreement to its user agreement and privacy policy. The department in many instances let the group homes investigate allegations of neglect and mental abuse in their own workplaces, the Chicago Tribune found. Human Services officials retracted five years of erroneous reports after confronted with The Chicago Tribune's findings and said the department had launched reforms to ensure accurate reporting. The investigation results from the Chicago Tribune have prompted Human Services Secretary James Dimas to order widespread reforms to improve public accountability and streamline investigations. "My concern is that too often agencies hide behind their confidentiality statutes, which makes it harder for the public to know what is going on," Dimas said. Source: http://thesouthern.com/news/local/state-and-regional/investigation-finds-widespread-abuse-of-the-disabled-in-illinois-group/article_251e7d20-f09a-5dbf-9810-66fab934032.html

Man who raped 15-year-old boy gets 18 years in prison [Jeff Ramage](#), jrumage@gannett.com 8:01 a.m. CST November 23, 2016 Group home operator Jermaro Dantzler has been sentenced to 18 years in prison for second-degree sexual assault and felony bail jumping. (Photo: Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office, Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office) [CONNECT](#) [TWEET](#) [LINKEDIN](#) [COMMENT](#) [EMAIL](#) [MORE](#) Brown Deer - The group home owner who raped a 15-year-old boy at gunpoint behind bushes on Brown Deer Road in July 2015 was sentenced on Monday, Nov. 22, to 18 years in prison. Jermaro Dantzler, 38, of Brown Deer pleaded not guilty to second-degree sexual assault and felony bail jumping. In addition to the prison sentence, Dantzler was also sentenced to eight years of extended supervision. The 15-year-old victim told Brown Deer police he was walking home on July 19, 2015, when Dantzler allegedly grabbed him by the arm in the 6700 block of West Brown Deer Road. The boy said Dantzler was holding a gun, and warned him to "do exactly what I ask you," according to a criminal complaint. Dantzler led the boy behind some bushes and made him lay in the grass. He also asked the boy his name and where he went to high school, according to the complaint. After having sex with the boy behind the bushes, he gave the boy two \$20 bills. More than a month after the alleged rape, the boy told Brown Deer police that he received a Facebook invitation from Dantzler, who he recognized as the alleged rapist. Dantzler was granted a group home license in 2009 to operate Rights of Passage Living Center, 7911 W. Beechwood Ave., Milwaukee. The group home's license was revoked on April 10, 2015, due to financial improprieties, but when Dantzler appealed the revocation, he was allowed to continue to operate during the appeals process. The Department of Children and

Families shut down the group home after learning about his arrest. Source: <http://www.mynorthshorenw.com/story/news/local/glendale/2016/11/22/man-who-raped-15-year-old-boy-gets-18-years-prison/94306416/>

Lawmakers to tackle human trafficking-foster care connection By [Phil Prazan](#) Published: November 20, 2016, 9:59 pm Updated: November 21, 2016, 5:41 am AUSTIN (KXAN) – Monday, lawmakers at the capitol will tackle a growing issue in Texas, sex and human trafficking. Child advocates say a common victim are children in and out of the Texas foster care system. Steven Phenix looks through the blue prints and sketches of what will soon be “the refuge.” The longtime residential facility just broke ground and will soon house 40 teenage girls – a safe place after being rescued from the sex trade industry. “We’re failing our kids. They’re going after the most vulnerable,” said Phenix. If current statistics hold up, he says he expects three out of every four sex trafficking victim to be a product of Texas foster care. Texas is the second highest in the nation for number of calls to the National Human Trafficking Resources Center. In 2015, there were 330 cases of human trafficking in Texas. Most of the victims were women and more than one hundred were minors. “It’s easier for them to grab a kid off the street who’s just run away, who’s run away from four, five, six times already from four or five, six different types of abuse – not as many people are out there looking for that kid unfortunately. So that’s the reason they are a target,” said Phenix. Texas’s child welfare system has been in the spotlight as a federal judge ruled it violated children’s civil rights. Hundreds of calls of abuse and neglect go un-responded to every day. Lawmakers hope to stem the flow of foster kids into sex trafficking circles. Phenix says more training and awareness can go far but to tackle the big picture it will take more money for more people to find vulnerable Texas children before they’re trafficked. Monday the House Human Services and the House Juvenile Justice and Family Issues committees will have a joint hearing to: “Study and evaluate the practice of youth being recruited into human trafficking. Specifically, evaluate the scope of the pipeline of potential victims from foster care, including methods and means used to lure youth into trafficking. Evaluate the types of services that are available to support children and youth in the conservatorship of DFPS who are victims of human trafficking. Make necessary recommendations to assist DFPS in identifying, recovering, serving, or caring for children and youth who are victims of human trafficking prior to placement in foster care.” Source: <http://kxan.com/2016/11/20/lawmakers-to-tackle-human-trafficking-foster-care-connection/>

Flawed investigations ignore neglect in Illinois group homes The Associated Press [LinkedIn Google+ Pinterest Reddit Print Order Reprint of this Story](#) CHICAGO A newspaper investigation has found that self-policing played a role in determining whether neglect has occurred in investigations of Illinois group homes serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Chicago Tribune (<http://trib.in/2geSVt2>) reports group home employees handled at least 550 cases and helped clear their own group home of wrongdoing in the majority of instances. Federal regulators say no other states have given caregivers at group homes full-fledged investigative powers. The examination of the state’s network of 3,000 group homes also found Illinois Department Human Services officials routinely obscured evidence of harm from the public. The inspector general’s office sealed more than 3,200 cases in the last six years in which it found some evidence of abuse or neglect. No one, including family members or even group home residents, are allowed to know the nature of those investigations, the strength of the evidence or what reforms, if any, were mandated or made. In one such case, the Tribune found, the inspector general’s own investigators overlooked obvious clues pointing to neglect and were easily misled by a group home employee who later admitted she made up her story about what had transpired. Human Services Secretary James Dimas says he’ll seek to make public the records of all unsubstantiated cases. “We’re working hard to push the envelope to become more transparent,” he said. “And we’re prepared to seek a change to the legislation if we decide that becomes necessary.” Source: <http://www.kentucky.com/living/health-and-medicine/article116242748.html>

A third of Texas foster care runaways remain missing: CPS By [Robert Maxwell](#) Published: November 21, 2016, 6:08 pm AUSTIN (KXAN) — A grim reality is adding to the [ongoing shortage of foster homes](#) in Texas. State lawmakers are now hearing a third of the children who ran away from foster care this year have not been found — some as young as 11. In Texas, 973 foster kids ran away this past year, sometimes simply because they didn’t like the house rules, others wanted to return to their parents. A third of those kids — 340 vulnerable young people — have simply disappeared. “We’re still looking for them. So that [973] was a number that was a point in time,” Angela Goodwin, director of Investigations for CPS told KXAN. “We always need the support from law enforcement to help look for [missing runaways](#).” But Goodwin says some police departments won’t add a runaway 17 year old to [missing kids’ databases](#) since the law considers them an adult. Those who are found spend an average six weeks on their own. Goodwin told lawmakers Monday at a joint hearing of the Juvenile Justice and Family Issues and Human Services House Committees. That makes the kids prime targets for child sex traffickers and lifelong trauma, advocates say. Last legislative session, a law emerged that mandates CPS to interview rescued foster runaways to find out if they’ve been abused while on the run. This past year, 32 rescued foster runaways admitted they were sexually trafficked. It’s believed the true numbers are higher since some recovered children will not want to share all of what happened to them during their flight. 32 rescued foster runaways admitted they were sexually trafficked And while CPS now assigns a special investigator to each foster runaway to scour social media channels for instance, child safety groups warn sex traffickers can be luring a wayward teen within hours – not days. Some pimps will hang out at a neighborhood convenience store, a place they know teens will gravitate, lawmakers heard. East Texas Rep. James White, R – Woodville, urged CPS leaders to do more before the new legislative session. “My local constable [or sheriff’s deputy or game warden] could act proactively and go to [that road] where the [known] human traffickers are and shut them down today.” Long road to recovery And for those who are rescued, it’s not as simple as returning them to any foster family. Child advocates say these traumatized kids need intensive help. Right now in Texas that kind of safe, therapeutic foster home does not exist – fewer still are emergency beds for rescued foster kids. [The Refuge near Austin](#) is a soon-to-open option for sex trafficking survivors along with [faith-based non-profits](#). “This is happening to the most vulnerable children in our community,” says Dixie Hairston, [Children At Risk](#), a Dallas-based non-profit. “If law enforcement goes out, they do a sting operation and they do recover a child, where they are going to take them after they recover them there are just not those places out there.” Child safety groups such as Children at Risk are asking lawmakers to further fund CPS to it can hire specialized caseworkers who deal with only foster kids who have been sex trafficked. CPS also says it has trained thousands of its caseworkers as well as DPS troopers to recognize if someone is being trafficked. The Texas Attorney General’s Office has also created [educational materials](#) for law enforcement and teachers around the state. Source: <http://kxan.com/2016/11/21/a-third-of-texas-foster-care-runaways-remain-missing-cps/>

Troy foster care agency raided | Dayton news Troy foster care agency raided Updated: Wednesday, November 23, 2016 @ 2:26 PM By: Breaking News Staff Troy Police executed a search warrant Wednesday afternoon at Isaiah’s Place, a private state-funded foster care agency. Officers removed several documents from the agency, located at 1100 Wayne St. No arrest was made, said Capt. Joe Long of Troy police. He said officers acted on an anonymous tip that as much as \$100,000 could be missing. They’ve been investigating the case for about two weeks, Long said. Source: <http://www.whio.com/news/crime-law/troy-foster-care-agency-raided/Wo6oxLcn15a4IFnUI6jTpl/>

South Carolina mother demands answers after son drowned in foster care By Nickelle Smith, WSPA Published: November 27, 2016, 10:48 am Updated: November 27, 2016, 10:52 am GREENVILLE COUNTY, S.C. (WSPA) — A South Carolina mother is demanding answers after her son drowned while in foster care. Njamena Wilcox says she still remembers getting the devastating phone call that her two-year-old son Za’Marion Wilcox drowned at a community pool in Greenville County, while under the care of foster parents. “I just kinda lost everything,” she said. “He was just full of life. He was my only little boy.” Wilcox held a press conference alongside Bruce Wilson, founder of the organization ‘Fighting Injustice Together.’ Since her son’s drowning, the Department of Social Services has been investigating what happened. “All we asked was to be included, for this investigation to be transparent so this mother can know what happened to her baby,” said Wilson. “That didn’t happen.” Media General affiliate WSPA learned the DSS investigation concluded this week and revealed Za’Marion’s death was caused by neglect due to lack of oversight by his foster parents. The foster parents are appealing that decision. “I was mad because no one called to let me know anything,” said Wilcox. “No one still hasn’t called to let me know what’s going on.” The Greenville County Sheriff’s Office is still investigating to see if charges will be filed. Wilcox now wants her 7 year-old-daughter out of DSS custody, and back with her relatives. “They’re supposed to protect your kids but then when they get your kids, stuff like this happens like what happened to my son,” she said. “I don’t know what could happen to my daughter so I want her to be with family.” The Office of Administrative Hearings will now review the DSS decision after the foster parents’ appeal. If that outcome is not reversed the foster parents will be placed on the central registry of abuse and neglect, barring them from working in childcare positions and adopting or fostering again. Source: <http://wric.com/2016/11/27/south-carolina-mother-demands-answers-after-son-drowned-in-foster-care/>

Illinois agency revokes group home provider's license The Associated Press [LinkedIn Google+ Pinterest Reddit Print Order Reprint of this Story](#) CHICAGO The Illinois Department of Human Services has revoked a group home provider’s license and cited the state-funded business for safety issues and rights

violations of individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities. On Monday, the department's chief licensing official, Felicia Stanton Gray, told Reuben Goodwin Sr. she was revoking the license for his eight group homes and daytime training program, all under the name Disability Services of Illinois, the Chicago Tribune (<http://trib.in/2fLA7zI>) reported. "I think we do a good job to make sure people are safe and that the staff is trained," said Goodwin in an interview last month. Goodwin can appeal the decision by requesting a hearing before Dec. 23, but the department will still move 45 adults to other community-living options in the next two weeks. Human Services spokeswoman Meredith Krantz said the state agency will work toward changing the way group homes "are held accountable in order to ensure individuals with disabilities receive high levels of care." The move comes after Disability Services was spotlighted in an investigation by the newspaper this month that revealed the inspector general's office mishandled a 2012 investigation into neglect allegations at Goodwin's business. The investigation found at least 42 deaths linked to abuse and neglect in group homes or their day programs over the last seven years. Residents have been humiliated and lost freedom, state records show. The probe also identified 1,311 cases of documented harm since July 2011 — hundreds more cases of documented harm than publicly reported by Illinois' Department of Human Services. Results from Chicago Tribune's investigation have prompted Human Services Secretary James Dimas to order widespread reforms to improve public accountability and streamline investigations. "My concern is that too often agencies hide behind their confidentiality statutes, which makes it harder for the public to know what is going on," Dimas said previously. The newspaper's attempts to reach Goodwin for comment were unsuccessful. Read more here: <http://www.bnd.com/news/article117933753.html#storylink=cpy>

Foster care agency funds may have been used for gambling | www.mydaytondailynews.com Foster care agency funds may have been used for gambling, vacations The director of Isaiah's Place has resigned and her brother, the financial officer, has been terminated. [Crime & Law](#) By Nancy Bowman - Contributing Writer [0](#) Updated: 8:06 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 30, 2016 | Posted: 7:42 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 30, 2016 Investigators who seized computers and boxes of documents during a Nov. 23 search of the nonprofit Isaiah's Place were looking into allegations of conversion of at least \$100,000 in agency funds for personal uses, according to court documents. Isaiah's Place at 1100 Wayne St. is a foster care agency based in Troy. No charges have been filed. Steven Justice, a Troy lawyer representing Isaiah's Place, said the financial issues at the organization came to light during the past two weeks. The agency director, Kelley Gunter, resigned since the search warrant was served and the financial officer, Matthew Gunter, was terminated, Justice said. The Gunters are sister and brother. Employee Irene Early has been named interim director as Justice and board members work with the state on ensuring the agency continues operations, the attorney said. "The others who work there are very hard working people who do a fantastic job of running the agency," Justice said. "This is a good agency. It has done good work." An affidavit filed in Miami County Municipal Court outlines allegations of an agency employee who told police in November that agency funds had been used for gambling, casino trips, home repairs, vacations, clothing and tanning sessions, among other expenses. The alleged misuse was revealed to police by an employee before an audit because the employee said the audit would disclose the problems, according to the search warrant. Isaiah's Place was founded in 2003 and is a Christian-based agency that works with foster agencies in 10 counties, according to its website. In the search warrant inventory, police reported seizing computers along with payroll and bank records, receipts, tax paperwork, board meeting information and other paperwork, according to the inventory from the search filed with the court. Troy Police Capt. Jeff Kunkleman said investigators contacted the Ohio Attorney General's Office for advice due to the amount of documents seized. Source: <http://www.mydaytondailynews.com/news/news/crime-law/foster-care-agency-funds-may-have-been-used-for-ga/ntGxW/>

Illinois agency revokes group home provider's license Published: Thursday, Dec. 1, 2016 10:27 a.m. CST [By Chicago Tribune](#) CHICAGO (AP) — The Illinois Department of Human Services has revoked a group home provider's license and cited the state-funded business for safety issues and rights violations of individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities. On Monday, the department's chief licensing official, Felicia Stanton Gray, told Reuben Goodwin Sr. she was revoking the license for his eight group homes and daytime training program, all under the name Disability Services of Illinois, the Chicago Tribune reported. "I think we do a good job to make sure people are safe and that the staff is trained," said Goodwin in an interview last month. Goodwin can appeal the decision by requesting a hearing before Dec. 23, but the department will still move 45 adults to other community-living options in the next two weeks. Human Services spokeswoman Meredith Krantz said the state agency will work toward changing the way group homes "are held accountable in order to ensure individuals with disabilities receive high levels of care." The move comes after Disability Services was spotlighted in an investigation by the newspaper this month that revealed the inspector general's office mishandled a 2012 investigation into neglect allegations at Goodwin's business. The investigation found at least 42 deaths linked to abuse and neglect in group homes or their day programs over the past 7 years. Residents have been humiliated and lost freedom, state records show. The probe also identified 1,311 cases of documented harm since July 2011 — hundreds more cases of documented harm than publicly reported by Illinois' Department of Human Services. Results from Chicago Tribune's investigation have prompted Human Services Secretary James Dimas to order widespread reforms to improve public accountability and streamline investigations. "My concern is that too often agencies hide behind their confidentiality statutes, which makes it harder for the public to know what is going on," Dimas said previously. The newspaper's attempts to reach Goodwin for comment were unsuccessful. Source: <http://www.saukvalley.com/2016/12/01/illinois-agency-revokes-group-home-providers-license/ar7kc8y/>

Our prison restraint techniques can kill children. Why aren't we using alternatives? Children's prisons use the MMPR regime which is not humane, not safe and not the only option. Our government is responsible for appalling abuses 'A risk assessment carried out by an independent medical adviser concluded that 28 of the 66 sanctioned restraints had a 40% to 60% chance of resulting in injuries.' The Guardian revealed on Tuesday that the Ministry of Justice [had been told that the restraint techniques](#) it had approved for use on children in custody could kill them. A risk assessment carried out by an independent medical adviser concluded that 28 of the 66 sanctioned restraints had a 40% to 60% chance of resulting in injuries involving the airway, breathing or circulation that could have catastrophic consequences — catastrophic being defined as "death or permanent severe disability affecting everyday life". It also revealed that many restraints are likely to result in so called "minor" or "moderate" injuries — such as fractures/dislocations and ligament/tendon damage. As well as explicitly chronicling the dangers we are subjecting our children in custody to, the risk assessment table demonstrates another important truth — that bad practice in secure training centres (STC) and young offender institutions (YOI) does not begin and end with G4S, or whichever private security firm is running them. The government itself is responsible for the appalling abuses carried out in the name of restraint because, quite simply, it sanctioned them in the first place. When [Panorama](#) and [the Guardian exposed](#) dangerous restraint techniques used in a children's prison run by G4S earlier this year, there were howls of outrage from the prison establishment. First, Panorama secretly filmed a boy being squeezed [by his windpipe by a guard](#) in Medway secure training centre shouting out that he couldn't breathe. Then [the Guardian spoke to two women](#) who had been detainees at Medway five years earlier who also said that they struggled to breathe while being restrained. A number of guards have been charged with misconduct in public office and taking photographs inside the prison. The stories you need to read, in one handy email Sign up to The Guardian Today and get the must-read stories delivered straight to your inbox each morning Read more Soon enough, the Ministry of Justice and the Youth Justice Board, which oversees the safety and security of children in detention, appeared to conclude that G4S itself was the bad apple. Having ordered the company to come up with an improvement plan to prove it was fit to run the STC, in May it announced that the private security company would be stripped of the Medway contract, and that [the government would take over its running](#). In [its final report](#), the Medway improvement board concluded that Medway's leadership team "has driven a culture that appears to be based on control and contract compliance rather than rehabilitation and safeguarding vulnerable young people". It also suggested that official figures on restraint could not be believed because of the allegation that they were being falsified downwards to ensure that G4S complied with its contract. The damning report was perfectly fair. G4S could not have made a bigger botch of running Medway. (In 2015 it also [lost the contract to run Rainsbrook STC](#) after [a joint report](#) by Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission and the chief inspector of prisons into the centre condemned it [for a series of failings](#).) But what the Medway improvement board never acknowledged was the government's role in nurturing this culture. Current Time 0:00 / Duration Time 0:00 Loaded: 0% Progress: 0% Mute This is a modal window. [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Pinterest](#) [Panorama exposes teenage prison abuse](#) Perhaps this is unsurprising. After all, until the risk-assessment table was obtained through one of the many freedom of information requests made by the indefatigable children's rights campaigner Carolyn Willow, we never knew that the government had been advised by an medical expert that its restraints could result in catastrophic injuries. Or to take one particular example, there is a 60% chance of a child being moved through a doorway while being restrained and wearing a waist restraint belt suffering injuries involving the airway, breathing or circulation that can be potentially catastrophic. The irony is that this relatively new restraint regime, known as Minimising and Managing Physical Restraint (MMPR) was only introduced in 2012 as a result of the death of two boys in secure training centres following restraints. (Fifteen-year-old [Gareth Myatt](#) choked on his vomit while being restrained by three officers; 14-year-old [Adam Rickwood](#) hanged himself after being restrained by four staff, one of whom inflicted a painful restraint on him known "nose

(distraction".) MMPR was supposed to be more humane and safe. So what did the government do when it discovered that it wasn't? It classified the risk-assessment table and heavily redacted [the MMPR manual](#) that is publicly available, concluding with absurd Kafkaesque logic that if everything about MMPR was publicly known, children would learn how to resist it and put themselves at more risk of being harmed. For four years, Willow has fought, unsuccessfully, to see the uncensored manuals. In refusing her most recent request, the MoJ wrote: "It is considered that on balance, the likely threat to the good order and security of YOIs and prisons and the safety implication of this for young people and staff in both YOIs and prisons favours non-disclosure of the unredacted version of the MMPR training manual." When we approached the Youth Justice Board about the risk-assessment table, and the fact that it had only praised MMPR without mentioning the dangers, there was much off-the-record handwringing. What's the option, it asked; tell us if a better system exists? Tough love: is this a model prison for children? Last month, 14 young people were compensated for their mistreatment in British prisons. What can we learn from a groundbreaking scheme for young offenders in Spain? Eric Allison and Simon Hattenstone find out Read more So we did. One better system already exists in England and Wales. Secure children's homes are run by local authorities rather than the MoJ, and they [house some of the country's most severe child offenders](#) as well as some of the country's most vulnerable non-criminal children. MMPR is banned in secure children's homes (yet shockingly private security guards taking children to and from them can use it). They are expensive to run, but have low children to staff ratios, are learning-focused and are regarded as the closest this country has to model institutions for children in custody. Advertisement Meanwhile, Spain offers an even more impressive model. In 2014 we visited children's prisons in Spain run by a non-profit organisation [Diagramma](#). Some of the buildings we saw were frankly terrifying – old-fashioned Victorian prisons surrounded by barbed wire. But the attitude of staff within them could not be more different to that too often found in the YOIs and STCs of England and Wales. In Spain, the prison officers are called educators, they all have degrees, are relatively well paid, and all have the children's best interests at heart. There were guards on site, but they were rarely called to action. The educators and detainees called each other by first names, ate with each other and treated each other with respect. Love, even. Whereas there is an alarmingly fast turnover of staff in children's prisons in the UK, in Spain we were told that staff rarely left. We asked the director of one institution we visited when restraint had last ended in injury, and he looked at us as if we were mad. Never, was the answer. In fact, he could not remember the last time restraint had been used, full stop. The way in which the staff in these prisons transformed dangerous and feckless youths into responsible young adults looking forward to a bright future was astonishing. If Spain can achieve something so miraculous, there is no reason why we can't. Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/dec/06/prison-approved-restraint-techniques-kill-children-alternatives-prisons-mmpr>

Dozens rally against plans to create joint Hennepin/Ramsey juvenile facility About 100 people disrupted a meeting in Richfield, holding signs with slogans such as "No Cages for Kids." The meeting ended with several people yelling. By [Kelly Smith](#) Star Tribune December 6, 2016 — 9:47pm Kelly Smith, Star Tribune About 100 protesters came to Tuesday night's meeting in Richfield, the fourth of seven community input meetings on Hennepin and Ramsey counties' plans for a joint juvenile treatment center. Dozens of protesters rallied Tuesday against plans for a juvenile facility for teenage criminal offenders in Hennepin and Ramsey counties, saying they preferred to place the youths in community-based programs instead. About 100 people disrupted a meeting in Richfield, holding signs with slogans such as "No Cages for Kids." The meeting ended with several people yelling, ripping up poster boards and chanting "Foster us, don't criminalize us." Advertisement: Replay Ad Ads by ZINC 3 "We know this program doesn't work," said Tonja Honsey, who helped start a local campaign called Youth Prison Blockaders. "The systems are old. We need to start taking care of these youth." Tuesday's meeting was the fourth of seven community input meetings the counties are holding on the proposed joint facility. County leaders say that no final decision has been made on a new facility, where it would be located or whether there would be only one building. A final vote from both county boards isn't expected until April, when a final report will be released. The [next public meeting](#) will be held in January, followed by ones in February and March. The joint facility would replace the Hennepin County Home School in Minnetonka and Ramsey County's Boys Totem Town in St. Paul, which Honsey's organization and other activists want shut down in favor of more community-based programs for young offenders. Activists have referred to the counties' residential treatment centers as "super juvenile prisons" or "youth prisons." Community input meetings • 6 to 8 p.m. Jan. 10, Arlington Hills Community Center, 1200 Payne Av., St. Paul. • 6 to 8 p.m. Feb 7, Hennepin County Home School, 14300 County Rd. 62, Minnetonka. • 6 to 8 p.m. March 7, Neighborhood House, 179 E. Robie St., St. Paul. But Chet Cooper, Hennepin County community corrections director, said that's a major misconception. He said that the nonsecure facilities, which provide therapy and behavioral treatment, are needed to help a small group of teens who have committed violent or sexual assaults make their way back to the community. "We've heard loud and clear that a big infrastructure, prison-like environment ... is not what the community wants and that's not what we want," Cooper said of community input. "We are not a youth prison ... we are a treatment facility." For more than a century, courts have ordered juveniles committing felonies to attend the Home School and Totem Town. Both state-licensed facilities have aging infrastructure and have seen demand for their services decline as more juvenile offenders have been shifted to in-home treatment. Cooper said that it isn't realistic to get rid of such facilities just yet. "Public safety is still No. 1," he said. "We still have a small number of our youth that need a facility." But he said that community input so far has resulted in helping the counties scale down plans and aim for a campuslike model with no more than 100 teens. IN Equality, which advocates for police and court reform, in November presented the Ramsey County Board with 1,000 postcards signed by people opposing the joint facility. The group is concerned about the disproportionate number of children of color who are sentenced, as well as Hennepin County's 49 percent recidivism rate. In Ramsey County, District Judge Patrick Diamond is one of the juvenile court judges who see the same teens return. "It's not working," he said of a large residential treatment center. "It's frustrating at times there aren't more and better alternatives available." Source: <http://www.startribune.com/dozens-rally-against-plans-to-create-joint-hennepin-ramsey-juvenile-facility/405127716/>

Baldwin County group home teens asked neighbor for help By Grace Tennyson Thursday, December 8th 2016 SBALDWIN COUNTY, Ala. (WEAR) — No criminal charges have been filed against a boys group home in Baldwin County but the sheriff's office is now involved. The Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) [removed 25 boys from Blessed Hope Boys Academy](#) over the weekend. All the boys are from out-of-state. A neighbor told the news she alerted authorities after two teenagers from the academy came to her for help. "They had to do exercises some days up to 9 hours if they were bad," said Tina Boyington. "They weren't allowed to tell their parents anything negative over the phone or their phone call would get cut off." DHR investigates allegations of abuse or neglect but the department has not provided any details on this investigation. The sheriff's office met with the department on Wednesday, no information has been released from them either. Source: <http://wear.tv.com/news/local/baldwin-county-group-home-update>

Teen says foster parents locked him in basement for months, poured salt on his open wounds - The Washington Post Teen says foster parents locked him in basement for months, poured salt on his open wounds The inside track on Washington politics. Be the first to know about new stories from PowerPost. Sign up to follow, and we'll e-mail you free updates as they're published. You'll receive free e-mail news updates each time a new story is published. You're all set! Sign up *Invalid email address Got it Got it By [Travis M. Andrews Morning Mix](#) December 8 at 7:16 AM Alabama teen says he was locked in basement and tortured for months Embed Copy Share Play Video0:34 Last month, a 14-year-old boy was found close to death after being locked in an Alabama basement for months. The boy's brother Eddie Carter spoke out about similar abuse from their foster parents, who are now both in jail. (Reuters) Last month, a 14-year-old boy was found close to death after being locked in an Alabama basement for months. The boy's brother Eddie Carter spoke out about similar abuse from their foster parents, who are now both in jail. Eddie Carter, the brother of a teen found close to death in a Helena, Alabama basement, says he too suffered abuse from his foster parents. (Reuters) "It gets to that point where you're like an animal. You feel like an animal." These are the words of Eddie Carter, an 18-year-old reflecting on the years of abuse he [told](#) AL.com that he suffered, years during which he claims his parents would lock him in the basement, sometimes for several months straight. He spoke out to the news organization after his foster parents, Richard and Cynthia Kelly, were charged with aggravated child abuse for keeping his 14-year-old brother trapped in the basement of their Alabama home for much of two years. When the boy was found, he weighed 55 pounds. That's half of the average weight of a 14-year-old boy, 110 pounds, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). The Associated Press [reported](#) the boy was in critical condition on Nov. 15, and the Helena Police Chief Pete Folmar called it the "worst case of neglect" he's ever seen. The two will appear in court on Dec. 14 and 15 for preliminary hearings. They have not yet entered a plea. But Eddie Carter said he too was mistreated. The teenager was his younger brother, and Carter alleged that the couple once held him in the basement as well. He [told](#) AL.com that he and his brother were two of five siblings born to a woman in Huntsville, who eventually lost parental rights to all of them for reasons he did not explain. The five were passed around from foster home to foster home, but Carter and his brother were never separated. "I took care of him a lot, changing his diapers and stuff, making sure he was eating. When he was sleeping, I'd check his chest to make sure he was breathing," Carter told the newspaper. "My little brother was like my golden egg. I just had to keep him safe. It was my main goal not to be separated ever." When was 11 years old and his brother was 7, a Christian adoption agency brought them to the Kellys. Carter

remembered feeling excited at the time. "It's a big shot to get adopted," he said. "It's really exciting." It didn't take long for that to change, though. "Like people say, the true colors came out," Carter said. "The honeymoon cycle is over and, after that, everything went to crap." He claimed the couple sent him down to the basement as a punishment after about 18 months, where there was a bed but no bathroom. The light-switches didn't work — they were controlled from the outside. The door to the outside world was locked, and the door to the house was equipped with a motion sensor, prepared to alert the family should he try to leave. Sometimes, he alleged, he would be locked down there for months at a time. If he needed to use the bathroom, he'd do so in a corner of the room, on the floor. "The room stank like piss," he said. "It was really horrible." Sometimes, they would feed him vegetables, which he hated, down there. Sometimes, they would only give him bread and water. "They would say, 'Jesus survived off bread and water, so you can too,'" he said. "It was like a torture method. They were upstairs eating pizza and Chinese, and I'd be eating bread and water." He began chewing his lips until they would bleed, and he claimed the couple would pour salt on the open wounds as punishment. Eventually, he would show his anger. "I would bang on the walls just to keep people awake in the house," Carter [told](#) AL.com. "I got aggressive, like, 'I'm not about to stay down here. Hell no. I wasn't having it, and think I said I was going to do something to somebody.'" Wearing a hooded letter jacket and a baseball cap in his recorded interview with the newspaper, Carter said, "I felt like a wild animal at any type of affection, after a while. I didn't really trust anybody." In 2013, Arizona rapper Nick Carter, who goes by Murs, adopted Carter. But not his brother. "I thought about him every single day," Carter said. "At that point, I was blaming myself for getting sent away." But there wasn't much he could do, so he "prayed it didn't happen to him." But more was rotten in Carter's life. A year after his adoption, Murs returned him to the foster care system after he claimed the boy filed false claims of neglect and abuse against him and his wife. "Nothing was substantiated," Murs [told](#) Contact Music. "We definitely were able to clear it up once we went to court and they came to the house and also saw the damage he did to my property, and they quickly changed their tune." Added Murs, "Even though he filed a false claim on us, I know he's just angry, I tell him, 'When you hit rock bottom, I'm there for you so call me.'" Now, Carter lives alone in Arizona. Murs and his wife remain Carter's legal parents. The couple bought him a planet ticket to fly from Arizona to Alabama after his brother was found. The Kellys were not arrested for any of these allegations, but for the alleged child abuse of his brother. The arrest warrants [alleged](#) he was "subjected to forced isolation for extended period of time." Two days after the teenager was found, a prayer vigil was held for the boy. Eighty people came to pray on a baseball field in the Helena Sports Complex. "We wanted to raise awareness to the unknown things that are going on in our community," Amanda Shannell told the paper. "When we come together and pray together, miracles can happen." For Carter, it seemed as if one did. Sadly, the same couldn't be said for his brother, who WHNT [reported](#) remains hospitalized at Children's of Alabama. Richard and Cynthia Kelly are both being held at the Shelby County Jail, their bonds set at \$1 million each. Source: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/12/08/teen-says-foster-parents-locked-him-in-basement-for-months-poured-salt-on-his-open-wounds/>

Boot camp failures scored by judge [Michael Moser](#) [Michael Moser](#) Dec 8, 2016 Timothy Joel Boles pleaded guilty to methamphetamine selling charges and theft of property of more than \$1,000 in January of this year and was supposed to four years in prison. In July, Boles was released to boot camp probation by the Tennessee Department of Corrections. He met with TDOC probation officer Chad McCaleb on July 6. Boles tested positive for meth — and admitted taking meth — on July 14. Assistant Public Defender Ellie Putman represented Boles in a probation violation hearing Friday and argued that he had completed the boot camp program and that most of his probation violations were "technical" ones. She asked that if his probation were to be revoked, that he be placed under house arrest supervision of community corrections and allowed to remain free. Assistant District Attorney Amanda Worley countered that Boles agreed to the four-year sentence when he pleaded guilty and that he "had weeks to get his problem in check." Judge Gary McKenzie agreed with Worley, commenting Boles "was obviously in violation." The judge then shared his feelings about the TDOC's boot camp program. "It is my experience that the boot camp program doesn't work ... I have very little faith in it," McKenzie added that his concern was that the boot camp program "is setting people up to failure." The judge then revoked Boles' probation and ordered him to serve the balance of his four-year sentence. A similar hearing was held for Douglas Keith Jackson, who pleaded guilty on Jan. 27 of this year to possession of more than .5 grams of meth and received an eight-year sentence. Jackson also had a misdemeanor probation violation in Roane County where he served 30 days in jail. Jackson, too, was released into the TDOC's boot camp program. Once released from boot camp, Jackson failed to report regularly to his probation officer and on one occasion, refused to let his house or room be searched by deputies, despite knowing the refusal could cause his probation to be revoked. Putman argued that Jackson allowed a personal search but did not grant a search of the house or the room in which he was staying because the house belonged to another family member. Putnam asked he be allowed to remain on probation. McKenzie noted that Jackson signed a form before being released from prison stating he understood all the rules and requirements of probation. While failure to report is a low standard in probation violation hearings, McKenzie said it was important that all rules be observed at all times. "All you have to do is report," McKenzie said. He then ordered Jackson to serve the balance of his eight-year sentence. Michael Moser may be reached at mmoser@crossville-chronicle.com Source: http://www.crossville-chronicle.com/news/local_news/boot-camp-failures-scored-by-judge/article_946dcb16-bd85-11e6-8371-1b13a257ab09.html

News Opinion Op-Eds No study needed to know DJS shackling of children is inhumane Susan Villani Op-ed: Md. child psychiatrist urges DJS to end shackling requirement. Here's why. The state Department of Juvenile Services says it is collecting data in order to determine whether the inhuman procedure of shackling children every time they're transported should continue. This strikes me as absurd. I work as a child psychiatrist at a residential treatment center for boys who are in the custody of DJS. These youth most commonly come from detention centers where they have spent months waiting for a determination of what should happen next. Some are released back to the community after serving their time, others are referred on for intensive treatment. Our residents have had numerous evaluations with many pages of reports to convince the court that treatment in a residential treatment center is warranted. By the time they are ordered to a treatment facility, the crime they have committed is months in the past. This is not to minimize the fact that many youth have been involved in significant criminal activity, such as breaking and entering, stealing a car, taking a gun to school, robbing someone with the use of a weapon, and assault and battery. And their criminal records are often not just made up of one offense, but a string of charges occurring over the preceding two to three years. However, when they come to us, they have agreed to participate in treatment. They will live for months on our campus and move daily between locked buildings, their residence, the cafeteria and school, while accompanied by staff. After a period of time of safe behavior, being compliant with the rules of living together, and being respectful to staff and each other, they earn the privilege to go off grounds for staff supervised activities. After weeks of consistent good behavior and family participation in therapy, they can earn passes home, to test how they do with less supervision and to bring back examples of stressful times in order to further examine and work on them in therapy. Family members are also participating in therapy in order to have their children return home. Residents may also need to go to appointments elsewhere. This brings me to the most recent example of shackling. A 15-year-old youth came to us with court ordered testing for fetal alcohol syndrome. He has a court date to review his progress and the status of the testing. Here is an abbreviated version of discussion from a treatment team meeting: Me: How is JD doing this week? Therapist: He has had a good week. No aggression, compliant on the unit and doing well in school. Mother is requesting a pass home before his court date. If he comes home, she can take him to court, and he won't have to be transported by DJS in shackles. Me: What? Why shackles? Therapist: Oh, it is department (DJS) policy that whenever they transport, the kid has to be in shackles. This is when my ire comes up. The youth has been walking to and from the cafeteria, to and from school, going on staff supervised outings and going home on passes home without shackles. Now in order to be transported by DJS to and from court, he would be put in shackles. I sat there wondering about the irony that as his treating psychiatrist, I approve that he is safe enough to go off grounds with staff and sign pass requests for him to go home with family, but to go to court, he needs to be shackled. Each time the youth is shackled, the message he is receiving is that he is unsafe and cannot be trusted. We are saying that we are concerned that he might run away. We are saying that the only way to prevent this is to lock his ankles together in heavy metal shackles. But the treatment team working with him has already decided differently. We have observed his behavior, worked with him to develop trust and are sending him out into the community safely. The purpose of policies within organizations is to have consistent practices that ensure safety. But shackling a youth for transport to and from court from a treatment facility where there is a treatment team assessing safety is unnecessary. No study is needed to determine this. DJS can and should change their shackling policy today. Dr. Susan Villani is a board certified child and adolescent psychiatrist and a fellow of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry; her email is vsusanvillani@gmail.com. Source: <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/oped/bs-ed-djs-shackling-20161213-story.html>

Special needs Texas teens rescued from home released from hospital (File) Updated: Tue 12:58 PM, Dec 13, 2016 HOUSTON (AP) Seven special-needs teenagers found living in isolation amid squalid conditions at a Houston-area home have been released from a hospital after a nearly three-week stay. Tiffani Butler, a spokeswoman for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, says the teens were released Tuesday and will be kept together under the

state's care. The children aren't related, but were adopted by 54-year-old Paula Sinclair and her former husband in 2003 and 2004. Butler says the lengthy hospitalization was due to hospital staff wanting to monitor their eating habits and also to time it took to arrange housing that could keep them together. Sinclair and her husband, Allen Richardson, 78, remain jailed on charges that include causing injury to a child. Online jail records don't indicate whether they have attorneys. A 7-year-old special-needs child died at the same home in January 2011, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services spokeswoman Tiffani Butler told The Associated Press Tuesday. She declined to discuss the circumstances. She said the other seven children were in the home at the time, but were not removed. Butler told AP that no charges were filed in the younger child's death. Investigators determined that all seven of the malnourished children removed from the home last month stayed in one room in the home and that when Sinclair took Richardson to see a doctor, all seven were locked in a closet that measured roughly five feet by eight feet that was filled with clothes and boxes, leaving even less room for the children. "Quite often the adults were gone so long that the children would urinate on themselves," the press release said. "The larger room smelled of urine and feces and the children wore shabby clothes. One of the children suffers from Down syndrome and was wearing a dirty diaper when he was removed from the home," the press release said. Investigators determined that all seven children have learning disabilities and that none had ever attended school. Sinclair was also operating a group home for adults in the same house and three men lived downstairs, authorities said. Investigators went to the home on Nov. 23, Nehls said. Sinclair and Richardson were arrested Saturday. Sinclair and her husband were described as the adoptive parents of the seven children, but the husband did not live in the home and has not been charged, authorities said. The children were removed from the home and were taken to the Fort Bend County Children's Advocacy Center in Rosenberg for interviews and then were transferred to a Houston hospital for treatment. Source: <http://www.kwtx.com/content/news/Special-needs-Texas-teens-rescued-from-home-released-from-hospital-406326525.html>

Sexual Battery at Bradenton Group Home: More Charges Filed The Manatee County Sheriff's Office says two men accused of sexually battering people at a group home also had a 15-year-old male victim. By [Sherri Lonon \(Patch Staff\)](#) - December 14, 2016 12:23 pm ET BRADENTON, FL — As the Manatee County Sheriff's Office continues its investigation into alleged sexual misconduct at a Bradenton group home for special needs people, the two men arrested in the case face more charges. According to the agency, a 15-year-old male victim has been identified. Both men arrested in the case now face additional charges, as a result. Jeremiah Damsgaard, 25, was charged with four additional counts of lewd and lascivious battery on a victim age 12 to 16 on Tuesday night. David Makynen, 30, now faces one additional count of lewd and lascivious battery on a victim age 12 to 16, the agency reported in a Wednesday email to media. The investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct began on Nov. 14. That investigation led to the initial arrest of Damsgaard on Nov. 17. At that time, Damsgaard was charged with one count of lewd and lascivious battery on a victim age 12 to 16. He was also charged with four counts of lewd and lascivious molestation on a victim age 12 to 16. Deputies added a count of sexual battery on an adult victim on Monday, Dec. 12. According to the sheriff's office, Damsgaard's initially identified victims are both males, ages 14 and 29 years. Damsgaard, sheriff's office spokesman Dave Bristow said, is friends with Makynen, who worked at several group homes over the past 12 years as a contractor for the State of Florida. Makynen, the sheriff's office said, worked as a support coach for special needs adults. Deputies say Makynen provided Damsgaard access to his alleged victims. Makynen was initially arrested Monday, charged with three counts of sexual battery on adult victims. The victims the sheriff's office originally identified were all men, ages 25, 29 and 50. The two men are also under investigation by the Florida Attorney General's Office's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, the sheriff's office noted in a Tuesday email to media. Additional charges against both men are pending. The sheriff's office is not releasing the name or location of the group home involved to protect the identity of the victims. Both men are from Bradenton. Bristow confirmed the home where the batteries allegedly occurred is also in Bradenton. Anyone with information about the case or possible additional victims is asked to contact the sheriff's office at 941-747-3011 or Crime Stoppers at 866-634-TIPS. Both Makynen and Damsgaard remained in the Manatee County Jail Wednesday. Booking photos of Makynen and Damsgaard courtesy of the Manatee County Sheriff's Office Source: <http://patch.com/florida/bradenton/sexual-battery-bradenton-group-home-more-charges-filed>

Former Hope House employee accused of raping teen in his care by WRGB Staff ALBANY, NY (WRGB) An Albany man, once employed as a Respite Worker at Hope House in Albany, is accused of raping a teenage girl in his care, according to authorities. The Special Prosecutor for the NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs says that James Whetstone is accused of having sex with a resident under the age of 18 while working an overnight shift at the Hope House. "People receiving treatment at residential centers are there to recover from chemical addictions and dependencies," said Special Prosecutor Gunning. "Employees who abuse these individuals for their own sexual gratification, especially by targeting a teenager who is trying to get help for addiction, are not only breaking the law but they risk undermining and causing a setback to a person's recovery. For such misconduct, they have to be held accountable." Whetstone was arraigned in Albany City Court, accused of Felony rape, Sexual Abuse and Sexual misconduct. Error OK Error OK LEARN MORE Officials say Whetstone was terminated from his position prior to his arrest. BELOW IS THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT FROM HOPE HOUSE Upon learning of the alleged incident, Hope House notified the New York State Justice Center and the Albany City Police. The employee was suspended immediately, and subsequently terminated. Hope House has cooperated with the Justice Center's investigation, and continues to do so, and provided counseling and emotional support to the resident. Hope House submitted the individual's name for a pre-employment background check through the Justice Center and the state Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services and there were no allegations that would disqualify him for employment. "The safety, security and well-being of our residents is our utmost priority, and we have further expanded our oversight with additional cameras in group rooms and common areas," said Kevin Connally, Executive Director of Hope House, which treats individuals with substance abuse addictions through programs including a residential treatment facility. Mr. Connally went on to add, "Hope House treats any allegation of impropriety extremely seriously and we work cooperatively with the Justice Center and NYS OASAS to do what we can to ensure the safety and well being of our clients." Source: <http://cbs6albany.com/news/local/former-hope-house-employee-accused-of-raping-teen-in-his-care>

Hennepin, Ramsey facility for troubled youth is no more after public outcry By [Sarah Horner](#) | shorner@pioneerpress.com PUBLISHED: December 15, 2016 at 8:48 pm | UPDATED: December 15, 2016 at 9:38 pm Hennepin and Ramsey counties are abandoning plans to build a joint center for delinquent youth following public outcry that the proposal was not in the best interest of teens and ignored the will of the community. Members of an executive committee comprised of staff and commissioners from both counties met last Wednesday and agreed that halting the building discussion was the right move for all involved. Hennepin and Ramsey will continue to discuss how they might collaborate on programs to better serve area juveniles who run into legal trouble, Ramsey County commissioners said. The decision came a week after a tense and loud public meeting held in Richfield on the proposed merger. Some in the audience held signs and chanted slogans articulating their opposition to the process and discussion to date. Several threatened to shut down future public meetings scheduled across both counties as well. [Hennepin and Ramsey officials have been meeting for the past couple years](#) on how they might work together to improve and broaden services for delinquent teens in the metro area. Part of the discussion included building a joint facility to replace Ramsey County's Boys Totem Town facility and Hennepin's Home School. No final decision had been reached on the merger or where such a facility might be built, but an architect had been hired to begin pre-design work. That roughly \$240,000 contract will now be terminated. "I wasn't at the Richfield meeting, but the feeling around the table (Wednesday) was that, unfortunately, the messaging around this (merger) ... wasn't focused on what it should be, which is how to provide the best continuum of services for our kids," said Ramsey County Commissioner Rafael Ortega. Ramsey County Commissioner Jim McDonough said the building had become "a distraction" to the counties' broader intent on how to get best help for kids in the community while keeping the public safe. McDonough added that intense emotions and misinformation about the plans complicated the ability to have productive public discussion. "I had people telling me not to build a 160-bed prison. Well, no one was ever thinking anything like that ... but that was one of the perceptions out there," he said. McDonough added that both counties are committed to doing a better job of taking care of juveniles who wade into the criminal justice system and that talks to date between Hennepin and Ramsey will still help both do that. **OPPONENTS OF MERGER CELEBRATE** Damon Drake, a vocal opponent of the building merger and a past employee at Totem Town, called the decision to abandon building plans "great news." Drake is also a member of In Equality, [a community group that had mobilized against the plan](#). "Throughout this whole process, we were told our efforts were a nonstarter, that we should just get used to this and that this facility was going to be built, ... so, for me, this is a very big win for the community," Drake said. The biggest flaw with the plan was that the community wasn't included early enough in the discussion, Drake continued. He said any plans for changes to the local juvenile system need to address the disproportionate rate of kids of color within it, do a better job of keeping teens close to their communities and make sure that juveniles are not treated the same as adults. Drake added that it never made sense for the counties to build a larger facility given the decline each has seen in the number of youth served. He also pointed out that the collective narrative coming out

of the research community is that detaining kids in locked facilities often just leads to reoffending. Ramsey County Commissioner Janice Rettman has been against the merger since the outset. Rettman cheered the news last Wednesday and said she hopes it can be a lesson to both counties about the importance of public engagement. "It's easy to say we read this report or we've done that or we're going to look at that other thing and then we'll take it all to the community to see what they think. ... No, community first, people come first," Rettman said. "They should be a part of the solution at the outset not after some groundwork has been laid about where somebody wants to go." FUTURE OF JUVENILE SYSTEM UNCERTAIN Ramsey County Commissioner Toni Carter said best outcomes for juveniles was always the driver for her and her colleagues on the board but that somehow that mission and commitment got lost in translation. "We may have been having one conversation about services and alternatives to prevent out-of-home placement, but if we ... (were) unable to connect that with the other conversation about replacing an outdated and inadequate facility then we need to listen to our community and find a different way to have that (discussion)," Carter said. "So that is what we are doing." None of the commissioners reached said they know what comes next for Totem Town in light of the development or when its ultimate fate will be decided. Some said it still undoubtedly needs to be replaced; one said it should at least be updated. The building, located on more than 80 acres in St. Paul's Highwood Hills neighborhood, is more than 100 years old and has significant maintenance needs, staff have said. Hennepin's counterpart, Home School, also needs repair. That reality, combined with gaps each county has in its youth programming, propelled the merger discussion. Hennepin's program, for example, serves girls and sex offenders, while Totem Town offers after-care and day treatment options. By combining, the thinking was, the two counties could offer a broader spectrum of services to all area-youth instead of sending some out of the region or state to get their needs met. Ramsey County sent more than 100 kids outside the county for services in 2016, according to county data. Those discussions on how the two can work together to plug holes in the system will continue, commissioners said. The Ramsey County Board is expected to receive a report on those findings in the weeks to come, staff and commissioners said. From there, the county will likely decide its next steps. Source: <http://www.twincities.com/2016/12/15/plans-to-build-a-shared-facility-for-troubled-youth-in-hennepin-and-ramsey-counties-scrapped/>

Report: Foster care has unhappy ending for many By [Linda Conner Lambeck](#) Updated 6:17 pm, Thursday, December 15, 2016 1 [Ronaelle Williams](#) was 16 when she entered the state's foster care system. She wasn't thinking about anything but getting through high school as she bounced from placement to placement, four in all. "It was really scary, because I didn't know what I didn't know," said Williams, who ended up being one of the lucky ones. Now 20, she's living with a friend and her family in New Haven and making her way through college. Most foster children aren't as lucky, and continue to need significant support once they turn 18 years old and leave the system, a report released Thursday by [Connecticut Voices for Children](#) says. More Information What the future looks like for foster care youth In 2016, 79 percent of those who aged out of foster care had a high school diploma, compared to 90 percent of all Connecticut adults. Only 42 percent leave care with a job, and half of those are working just part time. On average, only 15 percent will go on to get a vocational certificate or licensure. More than 13 percent leave care pregnant or parenting at least one child. Follow-up with youth who age out found at least 29 percent had been incarcerated between the ages of 19 and 21. Source: Connecticut Voices For Children. At least half of the aged-out youth rely on public assistance, one in five leaves the foster care system without a high school diploma and only 11 percent go on to earn an associate or bachelor's degree. "The state needs to do more to prepare them to be self-sufficient," said [Nicole Updegrove](#), an associate policy fellow at Connecticut Voices for Children, and one of the study's authors. The report suggests that though some progress has been made in recent years, it is not enough. The state [Department of Children and Families](#), Updegrove said, now manages to keep more children with their families or relatives. More, however, needs to be done when such arrangements can't be made, the study says. Cut loose at 18 or 21 Over the past five years, 1,374 youths have aged out of the state's foster care system. For many, the cut-off age for receiving services is 18. Those who are still in school, or who meet specific guidelines can stay to age 21. Most who age out leave without a job. By age 21, only 16 percent are working full-time. This year, 565 foster care recipients are enrolled in some post-secondary program. DCF Commissioner [Joette Katz](#), who participated in a youth forum Thursday at the [State Capitol](#), said the success of foster children once they leave the system is perhaps the most important measure of how well the agency is serving youth. "Nationally, we know that the outcomes for children who leave foster care are not good," Katz said. "(There is) lower educational achievement, greater poverty and homelessness, less success in employment, and greater involvement in adult mental health and criminal justice systems. Unfortunately, Connecticut foster care faces these challenges as well," Katz said the state needs to build on existing strengths. "We need to continue to work to engage youth, to listen to them, and to remove barriers to their success," she said. Also during the public forum, several lawmakers said they are focused on making the system better. Strengthening protections State Sen. [Dante Bartolomeo](#), D-Meriden, said a law passed in the last session could begin to address some concerns. "It has three components that will be effective as of Jan. 1," Bartolomeo said. The law gives children age 12 and older a stronger voice during hearings, requires youth advisory councils at certain child care facilities, and will survey foster children exiting the system to better recruit, train and retain high-quality foster parents. Williams, who knows the foster care system from the inside, said there needs to be a safety net for young people like her. "I constantly felt I was bothering people, taking up their time when I had questions," she said. "You feel like a burden sometimes when you don't want to be." Williams, who is in the process of transferring from Gateway Community College to the [University of Connecticut](#) to study human development, said foster youth need more help to prepare for their future and to maintain connections. She also wants access to someone who can answer questions, even for those who have officially exited the system. "so we don't freak out," she said. "There may be something we forgot to ask." The Voices report recommends that DCF adopt innovative policies in case planning, and better educate youth about post-secondary policies and support once they leave the system. The group recommends a guaranteed 90-day transition period, homelessness prevention and better data collection so those aging out don't "face an abrupt cliff once they become legal adults." Source: <http://www.ctpost.com/local/article/Foster-care-an-unhappy-ending-for-many-10799389.php>

2016 Baltimore Sun pictures of the year News Maryland Sun Investigates Maryland state agencies stop sending youths for treatment to Good Shepherd, group home [Erica L. GreenContact Reporter](#) The Baltimore Sun State agencies put a moratorium on youth care at Good Shepherd, group home. Two state agencies have placed a moratorium on sending youths in their custody to Good Shepherd Services, a Baltimore County residential treatment center cited by regulators for not providing proper supervision after one patient reported being sexually assaulted and others showed signs of overdose after taking medicine stolen from a medical cart. The Department of Juvenile Services contracts with Good Shepherd, a nonprofit organization, to provide intensive mental health services to young offenders who have been committed. Agency officials said the program failed to comply with departmental policies and standards. The Department of Human Resources, which oversees the state's child welfare system, including foster care, declined to say what prompted their moratorium but noted that the agency "strives to ensure that each program complies with applicable laws and regulations designed to protect children." Lack of supervision and other problems were documented by the state Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, which regulates residential treatment centers, according to public records obtained by The Baltimore Sun. Regulators investigated a number of incidents this year, interviewing staff members and residents and reviewing surveillance video from the facility. In the case of one resident who reported to staff that she was sexually assaulted on two occasions by another resident, the regulators noted in a report that "failure to enforce facility policies and procedures designed to protect residents may have put [a resident] at risk for the alleged assaults." [Maryland task force recommends limits to juvenile shackling policies Erica L. Green A legislative task force on Thursday recommended limiting the situations in which juveniles accused of crimes in Maryland can be bound in restraints, but it stopped short of proposing sweeping reforms that would drastically curtail the controversial practice. The group of 19 — comprising state... A legislative task force on Thursday recommended limiting the situations in which juveniles accused of crimes in Maryland can be bound in restraints, but it stopped short of proposing sweeping reforms that would drastically curtail the controversial practice. The group of 19 — comprising state... \(Erica L. Green\)](#) After three residents exhibited signs of overdose and surveillance video showed that one of them had raided a medicine cart, the regulators concluded that "the facility staff failed to safely store medications, which affected the health and safety of all residents on the unit." In another incident, several youths attacked other residents who were on a "hit list," according to a report. Michele Wyman, president and CEO of Good Shepherd Services, declined to discuss the incident reports but said her staff is highly trained and that the center has taken steps to address the problems. The coed treatment center houses as many as 75 young people, ages 13 to 21, who are suffering from severe emotional and behavioral problems. [Juveniles in Maryland's justice system are routinely strip-searched and shackled Erica L. Green The Baltimore girl, 15, stood in front of the judge that spring day two years ago. She'd stolen toilet paper, laundry detergent and clothes because her grandmother was sick and they had little money. The judge said it was time for the serial shoplifter to learn a lesson. He ordered a weekend stay... The Baltimore girl, 15, stood in front of the judge that spring day two years ago. She'd stolen toilet paper, laundry detergent and clothes because her grandmother was sick and they had little money. The judge said it was time for the serial shoplifter to learn a lesson. He ordered a weekend stay... \(Erica L. Green\)](#) "We consider ourselves a learning organization," she said, "which means you look at

any kind of deficiency as an opportunity to examine and improve." The departments of juvenile services and human resources also imposed moratoriums on sending youths to Mary's Mount Manor therapeutic group home in Anne Arundel County. State officials declined to specify problems there. Health department officials, who respond to complaints at residential treatment centers and group homes, said no incident reports have been filed this year at Mary's Mount. The group home, which houses up to eight teenage girls, is under contract to house and provide counseling to young offenders and foster children. Chloe Perez, CEO of the nonprofit Hearts and Homes for Youth, which runs Mary's Mount Manor, declined to comment on the moratoriums. Youths at both facilities have been diverted to other locations. State officials declined to say how long the moratoriums would last. Both programs are part of a network of treatment centers and group homes that care for young people who have been committed in the juvenile justice system or are in foster care. There are about 5,000 children in the state's foster care system. An average of 575 juvenile offenders are committed on any given day, many of whom are placed in group homes or residential treatment centers for long-term commitments. Group homes are designed to provide a family-like setting and are regarded as an alternative to institutionalization. Residential treatment centers provide psychiatric and psychological treatment for adolescents who need 24-hour-supervision and a restrictive environment. These centers have come under increasing scrutiny nationwide from children's advocates and government agencies that are demanding better outcomes and lower costs, a group of trade associations for residential treatment centers acknowledged in a statement earlier this year. The group said it would work to identify best practices. "The consensus view is that kids with behavior issues can and should be treated in their own homes, or somewhere else in the communities," said Ira Burnim, legal director of the Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, a Washington-based group that advocates for adults and children. Burnim said the treatment centers often keep children away from their homes by putting them in places with a potential for abuse and where they can learn unhealthy behavior from other teens. He also said many have insufficient and untrained staff. "The situation often devolves into a battle for control," he said. In Maryland, residential treatment centers cost an average of \$423 a night, and therapeutic group homes cost an average of \$255 a night, according to state data. Debbie St. Jean, director of the Juvenile Protection Division of the Maryland Office of the Public Defender, said some residential centers don't provide adequate treatment, noting that juvenile offenders get about 45 minutes a week in individual counseling sessions. "It isn't as though these kids are in a milieu that is therapeutic," St. Jean said. Lucienne Parsley, managing attorney at Disability Rights Maryland, said that many of the agency's clients report not feeling safe at Good Shepherd and other residential treatment centers because of incessant fighting and violence. Residential treatment centers are required to send Disability Rights Maryland, formerly the Maryland Disability Law Center, reports of any incidents resulting in serious physical injury. Under federal law, the organization has statutory authority to conduct investigations of suspected abuse and neglect of individuals with disabilities in such facilities. Parsley said that Good Shepherd has not been complying with the documentation requirement. For example, she said, an incident in which a child was taken to the hospital did not result in a serious-incident report to the agency. "We're looking into rectifying that," she said. Wyman defended the center's programs, saying it provides as much counseling as a youth may need beyond the once-a-week sessions, and that it tries to "do normal things for kids." She said youths committed there have extensive treatment programs that are reviewed every 28 days. The residents also have a family advocate, and the goal is for them to be reunited with their families. She said that her philosophy as a leader is that "transparency is always the best approach." She said, "We do not hesitate to properly report each and every injury deemed serious. In our environment, we believe even one physical altercation is too many, and we are focused on creating the safest setting possible," she added. "Because of the complexity of illness seen in our population, we do sometimes have pockets of volatile behavior that is not dissimilar from other institutions across the country caring for similar populations." Wyman noted that many of the young people "bring histories which are filled with persistent aggression as well as fractured relationship issues that are replayed in a new setting." But she said they learn new skills through the program to reduce aggression. She also acknowledged that in some cases, juvenile offenders would be better served in less restrictive programs. "We all recognize that there's a level of trauma that comes with this setting," she said. "When a child can be managed in the community, they absolutely should be." Several "statement of deficiency" reports filed by state health regulators this year detailed conditions at Good Shepherd. According to the records, the alleged sexual assaults were reported to police, but staff didn't document them in the resident's record for six days, potentially delaying support and services for the victim. The three residents who showed signs of overdose required medical care in the emergency department, and one stayed there overnight for observation, records show. The records also detail several altercations between residents. In one case, a resident was thrown against the wall and hit her head in Good Shepherd's school, which didn't have video surveillance. Staff members didn't investigate the incident, according to the records. Staff members also failed to intervene when one female resident walked into a classroom that wasn't her own, threatened another teen and hit her in the head, landing the victim in the hospital, records show. In another incident, two residents made a hit list and beat two other residents, who suffered concussions. "The facility staff were unable to provide sufficient safeguards in the school to prevent the injuries," the records state. Wyman said a moratorium is "serious." "But it is an opportunity for everyone to pause and evaluate," she said. egreen@baltsun.com Source: <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/investigations/bs-md-juvenile-girls-moratorium-20161216-story.html>

More woes for troubled Wordsworth as former staffer is charged with sexually assaulting three girls Updated: December 17, 2016 — 1:07 AM EST The exterior view of **Wordsworth Academy** in West Philly. by Nancy Phillips, Staff Writer Nancy Phillips Staff Writer A former staffer at Wordsworth, a residential treatment center for troubled children and teens, has been charged with sexually assaulting three girls in the program, luring them to the basement of the now-shuttered facility for sex and forcing them to take naked photographs of themselves with his iPhone. Isaac Outten, 37, repeatedly had sex with three girls, ages 15 to 17, while they were living at the West Philadelphia center last year, police said. He lured the 15-year-old into performing oral sex and having intercourse in exchange for a promise of money for diapers and milk for her 1-year-old child, they said. He promised another girl, 17, that he would help her with a criminal case in exchange for sex and naked selfies, according to police. And he led the third girl, also 17, to the basement for sex after a counselor left her alone with him, police said, and warned her not to tell anyone because that would get him into trouble. Outten, who was fired after the allegations came to light late last year, faces charges of institutional sexual assault, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, corruption of minors, endangering the welfare of children, and other crimes. He was being held at the Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility on \$200,000 bail in each of the three cases. His arrest Tuesday was the latest setback for Wordsworth, which was ordered to close in October after a 17-year-old boy died in a fight with staffers who had come to his room in search of a stolen iPod. The staffers flipped over the boy's bed and tossed the furniture around, and he grew agitated, according to a report prepared by state officials. As staffers attempted to restrain him, one held the boy's legs as another punched him repeatedly in the ribs, the report said. The boy began gasping for breath, at one point yelling, "Get off me. I can't breathe," according to the report. Then, it said, the room fell silent. No one has been charged in connection with the death, which is being investigated by Philadelphia police and the state Department of Human Services, which regulates Wordsworth. Shortly after the boy's death on Oct. 13, DHS revoked Wordsworth's license and ordered it to close, citing "gross incompetence, negligence and misconduct in operating the facility." Wordsworth officials have appealed the decision. Among the violations cited by state officials in justifying closure were the three girls' allegations that Outten had sexually assaulted them. DHS had ordered Wordsworth to appoint a security manager to ensure the safety of children who live there, strengthen staff training, and make clear that abuse would not be tolerated. In an inspection of the facility four days after the boy's death, state officials reported that Wordsworth had made "inadequate progress" in carrying out those actions. A spokesman for Wordsworth said Outten was immediately suspended when the girls reported the assaults and was fired soon after. She declined further comment, citing pending litigation. Outten's lawyer did not return a phone call seeking comment. In addition to its residential treatment facility, Wordsworth offers educational programs, mental health services, and foster care, and does case-management work for the city Department of Health and Human Services. Those programs are unaffected by the closure order. nphillips@phillynews.com 215-854-2254@PhillipsNancy Staff writer Chris Palmer contributed to this article. Source: http://www.philly.com/philly/news/20161217_More_woes_for_troubled_Wordsworth_as_former_staffer_is_charged_with_sexually_assaulting_three_girls.html

'Spiritual warfare,' 'demonic attacks.' The role religion played in home for sex-trafficking victims Jenny Williamson, photographed at Courage House in 2015. The Sacramento-area home for teen sex-trafficking victims closed in June. Williamson has vowed to reopen and is raising funds. Lezlie Sterling Sacramento Bee file i Jenny Williamson, photographed at Courage House in 2015. The Sacramento-area home for teen sex-trafficking victims closed in June. Williamson has vowed to reopen and is raising funds. Lezlie Sterling Sacramento Bee file By Marjie Lundstrom and Sam Stanton mlundstrom@sacbee.com Twitter Facebook Email Share Two weeks before the [voluntary shutdown](#) this year of [Courage House](#), a licensed group home for young sex-trafficking victims near Sacramento, a ritual was performed on a teenage girl. According to findings in a state investigation, the girl's forehead was anointed with oil, a religious verse was recited and the teen was told she would have to be a Christian, or at least denounce Satan, to continue living in the home. Crosses then were handed out to the other girls to wear. Courage House founder Jenny Williamson later would explain that the girl had multiple personalities and posed a danger to herself

and others. "She worshipped Satan, and she practiced animal and human sacrifice," she told The Sacramento Bee in August. Williamson told regulators in a June 18 memo responding to the state's unannounced visit that the girl had been the victim of satanic ritualistic abuse and told staff she had "participated in human sacrifice when she was an alter personality." Williamson said the girl terrified staff by announcing that "this week was a blood sacrifice week." The California Department of Social Services did not accept the group home's explanation and issued Courage House a "Type A" citation, the most severe penalty for violations considered serious enough to have an immediate impact on clients' health, safety or personal rights. In its investigation, the state found that the girl had an interest in satanism but did not threaten to perform sacrifices and, instead, had "made a general statement that she enjoyed drawing some of the images" of satanic practice, a state licensing official wrote. Courage House appealed the citation twice, losing again in November, arguing in its appeals documents that the state's investigation was "grossly inadequate" and that "the resident was adamant that she wanted to pray to become a Christian." In addition, her condition left her with frequent amnesia, preventing her from being able to recount "full events," two Courage House officials wrote Oct. 6 in their second appeal to the state. "There was never any pressure given, or ultimatums discussed with her," wrote former program director Melissa Herrmann and clinical director Angela Chanter, who participated in the episode. "She was told she could not perform human and animal sacrifices, or drink the blood of any person there, but she was never told she could not worship Satan nor was she told she had to become a Christian." The clash underscores the tension that can arise between faith-based service providers and government officials – each held accountable for the health and safety of vulnerable clients. Over the last decade, child sex trafficking has become a hot-button topic, spawning new programs and multiple new funding streams. Christian organizations in particular have rallied to the cause, organizing conferences, engaging communities and embarking on worldwide missionary work. Some Christian-based groups, such as Courage House and its nonprofit parent organization, Courage Worldwide Inc. of Rocklin, have gone a step further, establishing their own facilities to house and treat young victims. As the new year approaches, the once-vaunted program is struggling to reopen its Northern California facility for six girls, ages 11 to 17, while undergoing scrutiny from the state – including accusations it has violated children's right to religious freedom. Because Courage Worldwide accepts government money – \$9,100 a month per child at the time the group's Sacramento-area home closed in June – the program must stay within regulatory boundaries and not favor one religion over another, or press children to participate. If it is able to reopen, it would be eligible for about \$12,000 a month per girl under a new state system in effect next year. Courage Worldwide officials maintain they have found the appropriate balance. "State funds do not mean you cannot be a Christian home – state funds and license mean you cannot force a child to practice any religious ritual, and Courage House does not," said Gil Stieglitz, a board member for Courage Worldwide Inc. and pastor at Bayside Church in Roseville, in an emailed response. From the time Courage Worldwide opened its Sacramento-area group home in 2011 on 52 acres north of the city, the organization has been steeped in Christian beliefs and practices, according to a Bee examination of state licensing records, dozens of internal Courage Worldwide emails and interviews with 17 former employees, business associates and a former client. The group opened a second Courage House around that same time in the east African country of Tanzania that it says now has 12 beds. Over and over, Williamson has publicly recited the story of how God spoke to her in church and directed her to build a home for her "daughters." The organization's major benefactors – and recruiting grounds for volunteers and donations – have included Christian churches in the Sacramento region and other states. Email exchanges in 2012 among corporate executives, obtained from a source, show spirited and sometimes frenetic discussions about "demonic attacks" on the girls and the "spiritual warfare" necessary to counter the threat. "October is a hideous month where the evil one is worshipped daily by his followers and those on our team (and some of our girls in Africa and Nor Cal) that have come out of SRA or witchcraft (satanic ritual abuse) are experience (sic) relentless demonic attacks," employee Stephanie Midthun wrote in an October 2012 email to staff. Midthun and her husband, Joel, are key figures in the Courage Worldwide organization. Joel, the pastor of Elk Grove's Living Water Church, is on the board of directors. Stephanie has served in various roles since 2008, including creative director, chaplain, spiritual adviser and community relations director. A July 2011 email Williamson sent to her staff and supporters warned: "We are at war! We are under great attack and need your prayers ... If you have a personal relationship with the girls – any time this week – morning, noon, afternoon evening please go out to Courage House to pray and prophecy over them, please, please do so!" In a March 2012 email, Herrmann, the former program director, discussed the possibility of taking a young client being discharged from a hospital directly to a hotel room in Elk Grove "while she goes through a more intense deliverance and prayer process before transitioning her back" to Courage House. For years, Williamson has touted an ambitious expansion plan for Courage House Northern California that includes as its centerpiece a shimmering chapel with a large cross, according to architectural renderings. The architect's plan, which also envisions 10 new cottages for 60 girls, describes the chapel "as the most important building on the campus." Despite aggressive fundraising around those plans – and a \$300,000-plus kick start in 2011 from Bayside Church – the organization has yet to break ground. She was told she could not perform human and animal sacrifices, or drink the blood of any person there, but she was never told she could not worship Satan nor was she told she had to become a Christian. Courage House officials, in response to state citation Williamson and other Courage Worldwide officials vehemently deny there is any pressure to practice Christianity at Courage House, and said that girls are free to attend services of their choice as staffing levels permit. "We are in full agreement with the state to provide access to religious services when the girls request it, if provided sufficient notice in advance so that we can properly staff for such requests," Courage Worldwide officials said in an emailed statement to The Bee. The state licensing file includes a sample of a "Courage House religious participation form," which allows girls to check a box indicating their preferences. Choices range from no participation to weekly church services to worship nights and other spiritual events. Even so, the state leveled a Type B citation against Courage House in December 2015, finding that the girls were required to attend the Midthuns' church – a concern shared by some staff members. DeAnne Brining, a former therapist at the home, said the girls felt awkward and conspicuous at the church because the congregation knew who they were. "The girls did not want to be known as Courage girls," she said. "Everybody at that church knew they were trafficked." Courage Worldwide officials disputed the state's findings, telling The Bee the Elk Grove church was the girls' "consensus choice." The citation was the first of two issued to Courage House by the department's Community Care Licensing Division for violating children's religious freedom. That in itself is unusual: Citations regarding religious freedom are so rare in California group homes that only nine other group homes out of 1,500 statewide – regardless of size – have been written up for this violation in the last five years, according to an analysis of statewide data, which includes facilities that operated during this period but are now closed. Courage Worldwide's conflicts with the state have extended beyond matters of religious freedom. In the last five years, Courage House has been cited 36 times for regulatory violations, according to the data released to The Bee in early December. That's more than three times the average for citations at the 300 facilities statewide of similar size and classification level. Only 14 facilities in California of similar size and classification logged more citations during that period. Courage Worldwide officials, in their emailed response, noted that while some deficiencies have been about policy, others involved "paperwork issues." "No deficiency has been over an issue that the state viewed as serious enough to shut our facility, as it has at other facilities," the email stated. "Battle worship" and witchcraft A former life coach and motivational speaker, Williamson founded her nonprofit a decade ago, originally under the name Courage To Be You Inc. The organization started with a social mission of empowering people to "fulfill their God-given purpose," then refocused in 2008 to sex trafficking, eventually changing its name to Courage Worldwide to reflect its global aspirations. In recent years, the organization has gained favor in Sacramento's philanthropic community, collecting millions in donations while promoting the grandiose vision of expansion. This year, though, the organization's fundraising practices uncorked a controversy when Williamson and her board quietly decided to close the Northern California facility, a move they say is temporary. The four remaining girls were given seven-day notices and the home closed June 13, with most of the staff laid off over the summer. The organization told regulators in June it needed a temporary "pause" to prepare for next year's overhaul in how the state handles placements of troubled youths, which aims to phase out long-term group homes in favor of more family-based care. However, Courage Worldwide made no public announcement about its pause and continued to actively solicit money. The Bee's investigation into Courage House and its closure prompted several major donors to withdraw or curtail their pledges. From the start, the organization has been open about the role Christianity plays in its mission, and its reliance on fundraising from churches. The Courage Worldwide website now includes a blog post entitled, "Churches are Rising Up to Stand with Courage Worldwide" that lists 25 pastors supporting the group. Documents and emails obtained by The Bee illustrate how staff operations at times have been intertwined with religious pursuits. The Midthuns often were at the center, along with former program director Herrmann, urging prayer sessions and "battle worship nights" to defeat evil. "We are calling for a corporate fast for Courage Worldwide for the following tuesdays in October (October 9, 16, 23 and 30th) as well as a special 'Battle Worship Night' October 31, Halloween night (location TBA)," Midthun wrote to staffers, board members and supporters in October 2012. Midthun warned of a "strategic attack against our reputation" and the finances of the organization, as well as the private business run by Williamson and her husband, Mike. The email does not explain the source of those perceived attacks. "We feel the only way to reverse these spiritual battles or assignment against CWW is on our knees in prayer and working as hard as we can," Midthun wrote. Stieglitz of Bayside Church conducted one such service at the group home, according to an email a week later. "Dr. Gil led the

leadership of Courage Worldwide in prayer at Courage House to battle the demonic strongholds at the home in Nor Cal and we all sensed it was very much connected to all over our homes," Midthun wrote. "We came together on our knees with confession and communion, with prayers, tears and worship to battle for our home, our staff and the girls. We sensed a breakthrough in the spirit." In February 2012, Herrmann announced that Midthun and her husband, Joel, had been appointed as "Courage House Spiritual Directors" and that staffers should "pray for extra protection, strength, discernment AND that God would continue to reveal himself to all the girls at Courage House!" Courage House also offered to underwrite the cost of prayer sessions with a pastor it brought in for "individual prayer counseling sessions with staff, volunteers, families and our girls!" according to a January 2012 email from Herrmann with the subject line "Pastor Joe Appointments." "Pastor Joe normally charges \$100 for individual prayer counseling sessions," Herrmann wrote to staff. "Courage to Be You is willing to cover 25% of the cost of an appointment with Pastor Joe. "Please pay the \$75 to him directly ...". The fight against evil also extended to Courage Worldwide's home in Tanzania, where Courage House officials wrote in an Oct. 24, 2012, email after a trip there that the girls "are still experiencing a lot of demonic attacks." "During this trip we have found out quite a bit about some significant amount of witchcraft that was done on the property previously over a number of years (prior to Courage House). We have also been spending time praying with the girls and brought in some local experts in the area of witchcraft to help pray with them individually." A prayer for rescue Even former employees of Courage House who identified themselves as people of deep faith said they viewed the corporate culture as overbearing and some of its practices as inappropriate for the girls. Arlicia Lorentty, a former social worker at Courage House, said the organization's religious convictions initially were part of the attraction to work there, but that she later came to believe Williamson was "misusing faith" with her dramatic fundraising appearances aimed at "pulling at people's heartstrings." "As a person who is a Christian, and very much believes God has a heart for this population, I don't think this is what he meant," said Lorentty, who left in 2015. "The use of God's name for fundraising – that's the other part that really, really bothers me," she said. "... She's exploiting our faith, she's exploiting these people's generosity." Several former staff members said that the religious intensity continued as the organization grew – along with its pool of government contributions. Today, Courage Worldwide boasts on its website that its therapeutic trauma program for girls is administered by psychologist Benjamin Keyes of Regent University, a private school in Virginia founded by conservative Christian minister and broadcaster Pat Robertson. Courage Worldwide explains that the program is a "Christian therapeutic model" known as Healing Emotional Affective Responses to Trauma (H.E.A.R.T.). Lauren Conklin, who worked at Courage House for four years, said she was uncomfortable with some of her bosses' expectations. At one staff meeting last year, she said, Williamson wanted to wash her employees' feet, symbolic of Jesus' gesture to his disciples. "I said 'no,'" she said. Linda Fiore, the group home administrator at the time the home closed, said she was not at work when the ritual with the oil and crosses occurred. But she said she attended a staff meeting later at which Courage House officials recounted the event and described their success at driving out evil forces. "I was just shocked," said Fiore, who went out on medical leave in June and later was laid off. "It was very uncomfortable just being there." As a person who is a Christian, and very much believes God has a heart for this population, I don't think this is what he meant ... She's exploiting our faith, she's exploiting these people's generosity. Arlicia Lorentty, a former social worker at Courage House Faith-based groups in California and elsewhere are continuing to forge relationships with government to help sex-trafficking victims. Many say they are well aware of the boundaries. Last year, officials announced that the Alameda County District Attorney's Office was teaming up with Catholic Charities of the East Bay to create a safe home in the Bay Area for girls recovering from sex trafficking. Mary Kuhn, Catholic Charities communication director, said the home is "on path" to open in 2017 and will seek to become licensed by the state. "It will be our obligation to meet those requirements," she said. "We do not discriminate. Our services are not about proselytizing," she said. "Our services are about meeting the needs of people." Mandy Porter, who coordinates a faith-based alliance to help trafficking victims, said Christian groups and volunteers must be extremely careful not to thrust their faith upon this population, or be perceived as trying to control or manipulate them. "The idea of choice is so important when treating a trafficking victim because they've had so many choices taken away," said Porter of the Faith Alliance Against Slavery and Trafficking. "... We don't want to be another form of coercion, another thing they have to do in order to belong." Courage House officials say they believe they are in good standing with the state, and that they're working to reopen in early 2017. Fundraising efforts continue. A Dec. 9 fundraising letter posted on the Courage Worldwide website and sent to supporters includes a "giving card" that asks recipients to make a choice: a one-time financial gift; a set monthly contribution; or a commitment to "praying for more children to be rescued out of sex trafficking." Marjie Lundstrom: [916-321-1055](tel:916-321-1055), MarjieLundstrom Read more here: <http://www.sacbee.com/news/investigations/the-public-eye/article121546637.html#storylink=cpy>

Keeping foster kids with local families may be the fix Texas needs Filed under [Child Protective Services](#) at 12 hrs ago Share [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Email](#)
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MINERAL WELLS — Texas foster care is in crisis, but there is hope for a homegrown, grassroots solution. The current system is discombobulated, with no one really in charge. Worse, it regularly rips kids from their home communities and sends them to live with strangers far away. When Texas foster children turn 18, they often emerge in sorrier shape — distrustful, emotionally scarred, behind their age cohort in school — than when they entered state care, a federal judge says. U.S. District Court Judge Janis Graham Jack of Corpus Christi, the [Dallas Morning News Texan of the Year](#), is demanding that the state do better in response to [a class-action lawsuit](#). Thanks to an experiment called "foster care redesign," it is. A Fort Worth nonprofit is leading the effort, and it's generating excitement in child welfare circles. However, it's not clear that the Texas Legislature will fully embrace -- and fund -- the new procurement method when it meets next year. That's in spite of appeals by many advocates. They say redesign could be a partial answer in a court battle over foster care that so far, the state is losing. Foster Care with a local approach Palo Pinto county's foster care system did not allow for children within CPS to be close to their homes. ACH Child and Fa... h The effort's mottoes are simple, if profound: Get involved. Make decisions locally. Wayne Carson, chief executive of lead vendor ACH Child and Family Services, has honed a civic pride argument. He makes it regularly to audiences at town meetings called "foster care strategy sessions" in Tarrant County and six counties to its south and west. Don't let distant protective-services officials in Austin decide the fate of your local children whom Child Protective Services has removed from dysfunctional and destructive families, Carson says. Because the state faces a severe shortage of foster beds, the children face strong odds they'll be shipped halfway across Texas and live a lonely existence, he warns. The meetings effectively are pep rallies. They are designed to touch the hearts and consciences of local residents. Some will take the momentous step of signing up to be foster parents. Others will play supportive roles as volunteers. Mike Allen, mayor of Mineral Wells, spoke at a Palo Pinto County foster care strategy session at Holiday Hills Country Club in Mineral Wells in August. Nathan Hunsinger/Staff photographer Palo Pinto County, the most rural of the pilot area's counties, had the biggest need in September 2014, when ACH took charge of placing all foster children in the seven counties. Then, Palo Pinto had only three foster homes. Meanwhile, CPS had removed and placed into foster care 89 of the county's children. "Very few of them are here," Mineral Wells Mayor Mike Allen said of local foster kids, speaking at an August strategy session in his town, the county seat. "They're in Houston, Sherman, all over." Residents are concerned and bighearted but knew nothing about their county's shortage of foster homes, he said. What's different in buying a place to stay and services for 92 percent of the state's 17,000 foster children, the state uses "open enrollment" procurement. At CPS, conservatorship caseworkers and placement specialists send email blasts to vendors about their need for a home for a child. The first one to respond often gets the kid. Experts, though, have said that kind of shotgun approach fails to match children well with caregivers. They said that's why at least 40 percent of initial placements fall apart. In redesign, one vendor agrees to be responsible for placing all the children in a geographic area. The contractor also agrees to make sure supply fits demand. ACH, the lead contractor, considers one of its key jobs to raise awareness about local needs — and provide practical ways for people to help, Carson said. Wayne Carson, ACH Child and Family Services chief executive, touted foster care redesign during a Palo Pinto County strategy session in Mineral Wells in August. Nathan Hunsinger/Staff photographer After two years of sophisticated marketing and persuasion — but chiefly aided by a kind of religious revival ignited through collaboration with a local ministerial alliance — ACH is crowing about a turnaround in Palo Pinto County. There, about 30 families have started the process of becoming licensed as foster parents. Others stepped up by pledging to provide babysitting and prayer for the new foster parents. Several empty nesters volunteered to be "court-appointed special advocates." After undergoing training, they befriend the children and appear in court on their behalf. "It's flexing your faith," said J.R. Patterson, a fabrication shop owner who with wife Sheree has been a CASA volunteer for six years. "I'm a God-fearing Jesus freak, OK?" he explained as a panelist at the August session, which drew about 60 people to a country club in Mineral Wells. After learning more about the diaspora of local foster kids, Patterson said he felt a religious conviction that he and Sheree should become foster parents. Still, he worried it's "too big, too tough" a task. Not until further recruitment meetings, which yielded other adults willing to all be trained together, did the Pattersons feel comfortable enough to sign up, he recalled. "You better get ready and own it," he told fellow townspeople at the Holiday Hills Country Club. "They're not broken kids, they're our kids." ACH has culled two of its 44 regional providers for poor

performance and has improved communication with those who still take and treat kids, Carson said. The lead vendor tries to remove obstacles that frustrate current and prospective foster families, he said. Early on, it soothed complaints by working with the Department of Family and Protective Services to speed approvals of state-paid day care for foster children under the age of 5, he said. Then Carson learned that the system was losing rural adults, many of whom said they couldn't complete their required 30 hours of training if they had to drive as far as Fort Worth or Arlington. He put out a bid that lured four child-placing agencies to offer the courses in Palo Pinto and Parker counties. Early results promising Early data show good results, though there are challenges because a higher percentage of children coming into Texas foster care are considered "high needs." Across all seven counties in what the department designates as "Region 3B," more children are staying closer to their hometowns. Eighty-three percent are within 50 miles of home, compared with 71 percent before the redesign's launch. In Palo Pinto, the number of foster kids staying in the county has increased sixfold. Backpacks and school work are highly organized at Mineral Wells foster parent Angela Cook's house. (Nathan Hunsinger/Staff photographer) More children are participating in their court cases. More take part in designing their therapies. Eighty-four percent take classes intended to help them "age out" of foster care successfully, compared with 71 percent in the old system. Region 3B, though, still lacks a residential treatment center. The centers, which are numerous in metro Houston but rare in Dallas-Fort Worth, are used to house children with the most severe medical, behavioral and intellectual-development problems. When Texas leaders first kicked around redesign as a concept in early 2010, the geographic imbalance in treatment centers was a big impetus to shake things up. Asked at a town meeting in Cleburne whether and when ACH could lure a provider to start a center in the region, Carson said that if the state improves reimbursements, it could happen within a year. To keep more of the most troubled children closer to home, ACH has created a new category of specially trained "therapeutic" foster parents. Carson has 127 therapeutic foster homes in Region 3B. Two are in Palo Pinto. Elevating one local vendor to be the lead caretaker and spokesman for abused children in a region has helped improve foster children's visibility, he said. "Now, child welfare is at the table. They know who to call," he said of providers, local governments and area mental-health and criminal-justice officials. Before and during the August strategy session in Mineral Wells, Carson huddled with George Cannata, who heads CPS in all of Region 3, and Gretchen Fehrm, a former Plano CPS supervisor who now is the Region 3 redesign administrator. Soon, Carson announced they'd been making calls to child placing agencies, looking for a home for a 17-year-old girl who was a victim of human trafficking. They succeeded, he said, beaming. "In the old system, the state would've called and I would've said no, she's too risky," he said. "She probably would've slept in a conference room [at a CPS office] tonight. In the old model, decision-makers were in Austin. Now, we've got the people who make decisions in this room." Funding prospects, future rollout murky For state GOP leaders, one of the allures of redesign was that it would eradicate perverse financial incentives for providers to let kids linger for years in foster care, especially in group homes or institutions. The state also intends to pay based on good outcomes for children. But while ACH has been building IT systems that track kids more closely and connect all of its subcontractors, performance pay won't begin for a few more years, Carson said. The experiment, meanwhile, has been threatened by state underfunding from the start, most GOP leaders now agree. Former state Family and Protective Services Commissioner Anne Heiligenstein, who helped promote redesign, acknowledged recently that "it certainly costs more than the state is investing today." Amid recession-driven budget cuts in 2011, Heiligenstein said she barely fended off cuts in foster-care reimbursements in the old system. She had to sell the untried procurement method as feasible without a big new cash infusion. EditTouchShare But the placement, capacity building, data gathering and other duties that the lead vendors assume from the state have cost far more than was estimated, Carson said. For years, he's been cajoling the department and lawmakers to provide more funds. Slowly, they have. But ACH, a venerable Fort Worth institution that started in 1915 as a collaboration of Protestant church ladies eager to help the destitute, has had to spend about \$5.6 million of its \$50 million endowment to make the effort work, he said. Startup costs ran about \$3 million more than the state estimated, Carson said. And operating costs -- about \$54 million a year of state and federal funds -- are running about \$1 million short of actual expenses, he said. In September, current Commissioner Henry "Hank" Whitman asked for additional money in the next two-year budget cycle for redesign in the Fort Worth region and the next area it will be tried, a 30-county swath of West Texas from Abilene to Wichita Falls. Experts have said Whitman appears to have asked for enough to make it a break-even proposition for the lead vendors. But lawmakers, who face a tight budget, still must act. Wayne Carson, chief executive of ACH Child and Family Services Nathan Hunsinger/Staff photographer "I do not have board approval to continue to subsidize the contract," Carson said, noting that ACH's deal with Texas ends Aug. 31. "This model works and ... deserves to be fully funded." Sen. Charles Schwertner, a Georgetown Republican who is the Senate's chief social services policy writer, agrees that redesign is working well in Region 3B and deserves more money. But Schwertner, who's also a key budget writer, said he's wary of the department's push to speed its use in other parts of the state. Whitman wants to take the revamped procurement to eight more regions over two years. That may be too fast, Schwertner said. He noted that in 2013, a for-profit company launched redesign in 60 West Texas counties only to pull out 13 months later, complaining of inadequate state payments and the sprawling region's "unique conditions." Some lawmakers and child advocates say that next year, the Legislature should dramatically increase spending on redesign -- both on reimbursements and a faster rollout. That might help convince the federal judge, Jack, that the state is acting in good faith to remedy shortcomings. Next month or in early February, she is expected to issue a final order in the class-action suit. Schwertner has filed a bill to exclude for-profit vendors. The number of new regions will be decided by budget writers, he said. "As good as ACH has been, do we have eight more ACHs across the state? Are they going to step up?" he said. "My concern is that we fall flat on our face." Staff writer J. David McSwane contributed to this story. Foster care redesign successes Region-wide: 0 - Number of kids who slept in a CPS office in year two (Oct. 1, 2015-Sept. 30, 2016) In county shortest on capacity, Palo Pinto County: 4 - Palo Pinto County foster children placed in home county, September 2014 25 - Palo Pinto County foster children placed in home county, October 2016 95.5 -- Percent placed out of county, September 2014 77.7 -- Percent placed out of county, October 2016 3 - Licensed foster homes in Palo Pinto County as of September 2014 27 - Licensed foster homes in Palo Pinto County as of December 2016 Statewide: 71.5 - Percent of foster children placed in a family setting Across all of Region 3B: (Erath, Hood, Johnson, Palo Pinto, Parker, Somervell and Tarrant counties) 79 - Percent of foster children placed in a family setting ACH chief Wayne Carson regularly holds town meetings, such as this one in Mineral Wells. He talks up foster care redesign and tries to touch people's hearts -- and consciences -- about the need for more foster parents. (Nathan Hunsinger/Staff photographer) Before redesign: 82 - Percent of Region 3B children who have monthly contact with aunts, uncles, grandparents and other approved visitors Redesign, year two: 93 - Percent of Region 3B children having such monthly contacts NOTE: For this measure, visits from caseworkers, therapists and members of a child's immediate family don't count. Innovations that other areas may copy: "Step down" Through a step-down process that provides additional supports, the lead redesign vendor is trying to move very troubled foster kids out of residential treatment centers and into what it calls therapeutic foster homes, which can provide a greater intensity and scope of services. 68 - Percent of the 57 youth in Region 3B treatment centers were successfully moved to family settings, as of Sept. 30 "Turning Point" To prevent family foster placements from breaking down when kids act out, lead vendor ACH Child and Family Services of Fort Worth and Texas Medicaid's behavioral health managed care provider, Cenpatco, have created a 14-day respite program. It moves the child to a group home where he or she gets intensive services. Meanwhile, the foster parents receive counseling. 108 - Number of youths served 89 - Percent who were successfully diverted from entering a psychiatric hospital 88 - Percent who returned to the same, family-style placement after respite care Challenges remain 65 - Percent of sibling groups placed together, year two 64 -- Percent of sibling groups placed together, before redesign 177 - "Therapeutic level" kids who entered foster care, year one 221 - "Therapeutic level" kids who entered foster care, year two NOTE: In redesign lingo, a "therapeutic level" child is one who in the rest of state would be "specialized" or "intensive." Those designations of very needy children trigger higher reimbursements to providers. In redesign, Texas' four gradations of foster children's neediness have been compressed to two: "standard," which encompasses "basic" and "moderate" in the rest of the state; and therapeutic. SOURCES: Texas Department of Family and Protective Services; ACH Child and Family Services Inc.; Dallas Morning News research Source: <http://www.dallasnews.com/news/child-protective-services/2016/12/23/foster-kids-local-owning-may-fix-texas-needs>

New Law Set To End Group Homes As Foster Care Option December 20, 2016 6:42 PM Filed Under: [Contra Costa County](#), [Foster Care](#), [Group Home](#), [New Law](#) CONTRA COSTA COUNTY (CBS SF) — Next month, a new state law kicks in to phase out group homes for foster care. KPIX 5 spoke with a former foster child who is hopeful the law will create a more family-like atmosphere for foster kids, especially during the holidays. Contra Costa County has about 1,100 kids in the foster care system. About 100 of those live in group homes, which are essentially private businesses that house up to 6 kids at a time. Onetime foster kid Justice Woods says Christmas in a group home holds little magic. "You wake up, they give you your stuff and then, that's about it, said Woods. You go on with your day, do your chores and then sit around the house and do nothing." Justice is 19 now and on his own, but he has never really had anyone who could care for him for long. He thinks group homes do more harm than good and it seems the State of California agrees with him. In January, a new law will require the phasing out of group homes, which has counties scrambling to recruit enough new foster parents to fill the void. "We want people who really care about children, who want to help them succeed in life, who want to keep them in our community and open up their heart and home to these kids," said Kathy

Marsh, the Interim Director at Contra Costa Children and Family Services That's what Katie and Ron Cisco did. They took in Amelia and her little brother Trace, who really didn't even know each other. It wasn't easy at first. It took a while for everyone to bond. But now these four are happy. And with an adoption on Friday, they are a family. "Open your home. It's doable. It's worth it, said Katie Cisco. They matter. The kids need a chance." The county says it's not looking for perfect parents, just people with room for one more in their homes. Justice says he never really had that, but he still believes that's where the magic is at Christmas or any other time of year. "I feel like, you just come in with open arms and the foster youth, you guys will have a connection," said Woods. "Just like a son and a father or a mother and daughter, you know?" The new state law gives counties two years to end the use of group homes for foster care. Contra Costa County has already hired two full-time recruiters to find people to be foster parents. Source: <http://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2016/12/20/new-law-set-to-end-group-homes-as-foster-care-option/>

In the rush to close institutions, Illinois ignored serious problems in group homes Mark Winkeler needs 24-hour care and has lived his entire adult life at Murray Developmental Center. His mother, Rita, and others sued when the Quinn administration sought to close Murray and move residents into group homes. (John J. Kim / Chicago Tribune) By Michael J. Berens and Patricia Callahan Adults with mild disabilities were the most coveted. In April 2012, as Illinois moved to close several state institutions and relocate adults with disabilities into the community, representatives from group home businesses gathered inside the Jacksonville Developmental Center for a hastily organized auction. A state official read aloud medical histories of residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities, prompting group home officials to raise their hands for desired picks. Group home operators knew that then-Gov. Pat Quinn wanted to empty Jacksonville quickly — before any serious union or community opposition could be mounted — but some were taken aback by what they saw as a dehumanizing approach. "We were appalled by the auction," said Art Dykstra, executive director of Trinity Services, the state's largest group home provider. The problems with Quinn's rapid-deployment plan, however, went beyond mere awkwardness. Officials from the Illinois Department of Human Services promised residents that group homes offered a new beginning — one that would bring them more independence, safe and compassionate care, even a private bedroom. But those promises obscured evidence found in the state's own investigative files that revealed many group homes were underfunded, understaffed and dangerously unprepared for new arrivals with complex needs, a Chicago Tribune investigation found. In the five years preceding the auction, Human Services' inspector general substantiated more than 600 cases of abuse and neglect in group homes, an analysis of state data shows. State investigators tracked an additional 1,420 cases that uncovered evidence of harm or deficiencies but did not result in formal findings. [The Tribune's "Suffering in Secret" investigation](#), first published in November, uncovered a system where caregivers often failed to provide basic care while regulators cloaked harm and death with secrecy and silence. Some cases of neglect found by the Tribune involved individuals who had been relocated to group homes from state institutions. Among the most startling: A man transferred from a state developmental center to a series of group homes died under suspicious circumstances in 2010 after he was forced to sleep on a soiled mattress on the floor of a cluttered room used for storage. With adequate funding and social supports, adults with disabilities fare best when mainstreamed into the community, widely accepted research studies show. Spurred by court decrees and a growing disability-rights movement, most states have closed some or all of their institutions and shifted funding to community-based residences like group homes. But in Illinois, not enough money has followed the people, the Tribune found. Group homes have gone nearly nine years without an increase in reimbursement rates for staff wages. Overall, Illinois consistently ranks among the lowest five states for financial commitment to community care, federal records show. "We've said all along the community system is grossly underfunded," said Zena Naiditch, CEO of Equip for Equality, Illinois' federally empowered disability-rights watchdog. "It's been grossly underfunded for decades." Instead of opening doors to independence, dozens of financially strapped group home businesses reduced or eliminated community activities as too expensive or time-consuming, according to investigative files from multiple state agencies. Complaints of food rationing were common. One home budgeted \$1.22 per meal, limited servings to 4 ounces of protein and prohibited second helpings. Even the state's promise of a private bedroom proved illusory. Though group home operators agreed not to admit more than four residents per home, hundreds of providers have routinely bunked up to eight people with disabilities into tight quarters, an analysis of state licensing files and advocacy group reports shows. At the time of the Jacksonville closing, Human Services characterized the state's aging institutions as an antiquated and costly system with a long history of harm and inadequate care. By contrast, state officials described group homes as adequately funded and staffed. But when group home providers were surveyed in 2012 to gauge support for Quinn's plan, they complained of pervasive problems, according to records obtained by the Tribune. Several providers charged that Illinois routinely failed to fully disclose behavioral histories of state developmental center residents who represented a threat to themselves or others. Without that information, group homes can't take the steps necessary to keep all residents safe. Providers also said state funding was inadequate to cover staffing costs, diminishing the quality of care inside group homes and decreasing residents' independence. Other group homes railed against the state's inability to fund necessary levels of nursing care, with one provider writing: "Typically, an individual is funded for approximately one hour per month for nursing oversight." Instead of boosting funding overall or slowing down relocations, however, Human Services officials adopted an extraordinary tactic to obscure problems. They required group home executives accepting transfers to sign a pledge of loyalty, extracting a vow to "not do anything to inhibit, diminish, or undermine" the state's closure plans, the Tribune found. Failure to sign, Human Services officials warned, would restrict access to the Jacksonville auction and result in no referrals of developmental center residents to fill empty beds. To avoid being shut out, at least 67 businesses signed the one-page pledge, state records show. But one group refused to be silent about the state's plans: parents of individuals in institutions who worried their children would not get the care they need in a group home. And in the town of Centralia, about an hour east of St. Louis, a battle was brewing. READ THE SERIES: [Part One - Illinois hides abuse and neglect of adults with disabilities](#) [Part Two - Flawed investigations ignore victims of neglect](#) [Part Three - In the rush to close institutions, Illinois glossed over serious problems in group homes](#) [Read full series and continuing coverage](#) Rita Winkeler ties her son Mark's shoelace at Murray Developmental Center. Murray parents were apprehensive about a transition to group homes because they feared many did not offer adequate skilled nursing care. (John J. Kim / Chicago Tribune) Parents fight back Rita Winkeler's 32-year-old son Mark has lived his entire adult life at Murray Developmental Center. His modest private room, equipped with a television and DVD player, is covered with family pictures and Chicago Cubs and St. Louis Cardinals memorabilia. Because of severe developmental and intellectual disabilities, he requires 24-hour care; he needs to be fed, diapered and bathed. Winkeler believes her son is happy and well cared for at the center. But after emptying Jacksonville and moving most of its 180 residents to group homes, the Quinn administration set its sights on Murray. This time, though, parents and guardians of the residents banded together and orchestrated public events to rally support from the community, state labor unions and lawmakers. Soon "Save Murray" signs blanketed Centralia. In a city of just 13,000 people, nearly everyone knew someone who had a connection to the center through a resident, employee or contractor. The potential closure represented a cataclysmic event for the rural community, located about 275 miles south of Chicago. Beyond the economic impact, the battle for Murray centered on choice. For many parents and guardians, Murray was a haven — a place where the staff outnumbered residents, where a registered nurse was never more than a few steps away. In early 2013, 11 parents and guardians of adult children who lived at state institutions, including Winkeler, filed a federal lawsuit to halt the state's plan. Murray's cinder-block buildings border a 120-acre grassy oval crisscrossed by walkways that lead to an outdoor shelter with picnic benches and gardens, a gymnasium and outdoor pool. Built in 1964, Murray resembles an aging community college. But inside it has the look of a nursing home. Its six residential buildings, sheltering about 40 residents each, are dominated by a central desk with hallways branching out to rooms. At the time of the lawsuit, there were 274 residents and 547 staff members, an enviable ratio made possible by a \$41 million annual operating budget. Winkeler, a former third-grade teacher and head of the decades-old Murray Parents Association, said Murray families were not opposed to the group home concept. Indeed, Winkeler serves as guardian for her 58-year-old brother, who she said thrives in a group home setting. "Group homes are great for some people like my brother," she said. "But the state wants to fit everyone into the same-size shoe." Rita Winkeler talks about her son, Mark, who lives at Murray Developmental Center, an institution downstate. Mark, 32, has profound developmental disabilities and has lived at the center for his entire adult life. (John J. Kim / Chicago Tribune) Following the lawsuit, the battle lines hardened. Murray supporters alleged the state had used deceitful tactics to steer vulnerable adults into substandard group homes as a way to save money. In 2012, state officials calculated the annual cost of care for an institutionalized resident was about \$219,000, compared with \$84,000 at a group home. The Arc of Illinois, a nonprofit advocacy group, emerged as a chief proponent for closure, referring to parents as misguided, describing residents as "incarcerated" and exhorting the public in a web blog: "Free our people!" "There's no doubt that the state institutional model is a relic that should have been closed down in Illinois and other states long ago," Tony Paulauski, the group's director, told the Tribune. As part of the court case, Human Services officials said most of the guardians of Jacksonville residents who responded to a state-funded survey were satisfied with the new homes. But Murray parents noted that nearly two-thirds of the guardians didn't answer the survey, which was conducted by the University of Illinois at Chicago. Meanwhile, Human Services tracking records from April 2012 through March 2013 show a total of 84 admissions to hospitals or emergency rooms, 18 psychiatric admissions and 29 police encounters involving

transferred Jacksonville residents. All sides understood that the outcome of the court case could dictate the near-term future for how Illinois cared for people with severe disabilities. For the last decade, prodded by a U.S. Supreme Court decision and federal consent decrees, Illinois has worked to transfer hundreds of people with disabilities who had been inappropriately institutionalized. Many of Illinois' now-closed institutions had a long history of horrific conditions. At Murray, a staff member was accused last year of forcing a resident to take a shower as a punishment. The resident, who was deaf and blind, choked in the shower and later died at the hospital. But Murray families argued that residents with severe disabilities who moved into group homes were unlikely to receive the 24-hour assistance they needed. Instead of funding that help, the state has used a cumbersome approval process to authorize extra staffing, typically for a limited number of hours each day. Group home owners said they were forced to guess in advance when the resident might be in the most need of care and oversight. Families who toured prospective group homes said they observed thinly staffed shifts of inexperienced caregivers who acknowledged that they didn't know how to deal with aggressive behaviors or a medical crisis except to call 911, according to court records. Murray parents also expressed fears that many group homes did not offer adequate skilled nursing care — fears that were warranted, a Tribune analysis of state investigative records shows. At one group home business — United Cerebral Palsy Land of Lincoln — the Human Services inspector general cited four nurses for neglect involving three unrelated deaths between 2012 and 2015. Records from one of those cases reveal that two nurses were responsible for 52 residents from Springfield to Bloomington. Since the deaths, CEO Brenda Yarnell said the group home business has hired a director of nursing to oversee two nurses to improve supervision of resident care. Salaries of two nurses are paid through private fundraising efforts, she said, because Human Services won't pay for additional nursing care. Echoing written complaints to Human Services by many providers over the years, Yarnell said state reimbursement rates for nursing are inadequate, often covering costs of just one nurse. "It's been really hard," she said. "The expectation is impossible." New home a bad fit D Despite the pending lawsuit and known problems in the group home industry, Human Services officials in mid-2013 began to move out Murray residents whose state guardians did not oppose the closure. A longtime Murray resident named Carl was among the first to be relocated, but he didn't go far. His new private group home, a 1,300-square-foot ranch house, was across a county road from Murray. In his wheelchair, he could stare out the window at his old life. A Murray resident named Carl was moved across the street to this group home. Murray caregivers complained to officials that Carl's challenges made a group home the wrong fit. He was moved back after multiple hospitalizations. (John J. Kim / Chicago Tribune) Murray caregivers complained to their supervisors and to the governor's office that Carl's severe medical, intellectual and physical challenges did not make him a good candidate for a group home where he would be limited in movement and have less contact with other people, according to court records. Carl has poor vision and must use a wheelchair, though he can walk a few steps with a walker or staff assistance. He understands the concept of yes or no and has a small vocabulary — he can say "cookie" or "food," for instance — but he wears diapers and requires help for the most basic activities, such as bathing, dressing or using the restroom. At his new group home, run by Support Systems & Services, his wheelchair barely fit down the narrow hallway, according to witness accounts in court and state records. A Murray staffer who visited him described Carl as being "like a giant in a dollhouse." According to a written report by a court-appointed guardian, Carl suffered his first seizure in three years after his anti-convulsant medication ran out and he received none for three days. In addition to complaining about the home's size, Murray staffer Lorre Winter wrote a series of emails in July 2013 to Richard Starr, then director of Murray, stating that she was "seeing problems that weren't being addressed." "There is more involved than just placing them in a house and feeding them," she wrote in the emails, which surfaced in the lawsuit against the state. Starr wrote that Winter should "stick to objective concerns rather than subjective." Winter, who had worked with Carl when he was at Murray, responded: "Someone has to speak up for these people and if that is what I have to do then I will and deal with the consequences later." The Tribune verified Carl's identity and the home's location through government records and state emails. After months of discussions, the Illinois Office of State Guardian confirmed that Carl was a state ward. The Tribune is not using Carl's full name, as he is not capable of giving consent. David Jaques, chief executive of Support Systems & Services, told the Tribune that Carl thrived at the home and improved his mobility after a physical therapist trained the home's staff to help him. Jaques attributed the initial lack of anti-convulsant medication for Carl to a billing problem at the pharmacy related to the transition from Murray. While Carl was living in the group home, a federal district judge ruled in July 2014 that guardians of Murray residents could not stop the state from closing the facility. A three-judge appellate court panel later affirmed that decision and called Illinois a "laggard outlier" in the national movement to transition residents from institutions into the community. But the Murray parents found an unexpected supporter in Republican gubernatorial nominee Bruce Rauner, who won the November 2014 election and kept his vow not to close Murray. The parents had held off the state, at least temporarily. Jerry Stermer, who served as a senior adviser to Quinn, defended the former governor's handling of the closure process. The Jacksonville auction, Stermer said, was designed to match residents with group home providers who could meet their needs. Following complaints from businesses, state officials relied on a silent auction process in which group home officials marked preferred resident selections on paper, he said. Quinn's goal, Stermer said, was to shift money from supporting a few hundred people in an expensive state facility to helping a far greater number of individuals receive community-based care. The Rauner administration has stated there will be no institutional closures this fiscal year, which ends in June. About 1,650 residents remain in seven developmental centers, and the Arc of Illinois continues to lobby vigorously for closing at least six of them. In 2012, Quinn targeted four developmental centers for closure but succeeded only with Jacksonville. State records show that Carl was returned to Murray earlier this year, after multiple hospitalizations and new medical complications that caused severe weight loss. Winter now helps provide Carl's care. For now, the state acknowledged, the institution is where Carl needs to be. The Misericordia question H undreds of miles away on the campus of Misericordia Heart of Mercy, the most formidable opponent of the big-is-bad philosophy is gently rallying 200 women at a fundraising luncheon to take on what she calls "the injustice of the system of service for people with disabilities." For nearly half a century, Sister Rosemary Connelly, the Roman Catholic nun who leads Misericordia, has defied convention as she built a community for 600 people with developmental disabilities on the site of an abandoned orphanage in Chicago's West Rogers Park neighborhood. "The bureaucrats have held since the '70s that anything that is big is bad," Connelly tells the crowd at the Christmas luncheon. "They hate Misericordia because of the fact that we're big and we're not bad. We're good. And we're good because so many people believe in us enough to get involved." If Murray resembles an aging community college, then Misericordia's 31 acres look more like an elite liberal arts campus, the antithesis of institutions that confine rather than care for people with intellectual disabilities. Misericordia Heart of Mercy in Chicago serves 600 people with developmental disabilities. Its continuum of care, the size of its staff and the varied programming attract 300 families to Misericordia's waiting list. (John J. Kim / Chicago Tribune) Though the front-porch appeal of the buildings impresses visitors, it's the continuum of care, the size of the staff (about 1,000) and the varied programming (commercial bakery, greenhouse, restaurant, art studio, aquatic center) that attracts 300 families to Misericordia's waiting list. Executives of some group homes pride themselves on taking in residents whom others won't — people with severe behavioral issues and mental illness. Misericordia doesn't do that because, Connelly says, her organization couldn't meet their needs. On-campus housing options range from a village of homes for more independent residents to a skilled-nursing facility for medically fragile children and adults. As medical advances have extended the lives of people with disabilities, Misericordia this year tapped private donations to open four 15-unit homes to cater to the needs of aging residents and those with dementia. But to advocates who push for closing state institutions, any large facility that segregates residents from people without disabilities is a barrier to the ideal of community living and represents an outdated approach. Paulauski, of The Arc, has been engaged in a philosophical tussle with Connelly for four decades as both pursue their vision of working with people with developmental disabilities. "People with disabilities must be able to live in the community, work in the community, and participate in all aspects of community life together with their peers without disabilities," he wrote to supporters in an "action alert" last spring when a bill granting Misericordia special licensing status came up in Springfield. Sister Rosemary Connelly, executive director of Misericordia, works in her office. The Roman Catholic Sister of Mercy for decades has tussled with activists who say all big settings are bad. (John J. Kim / Chicago Tribune) Connelly sees Misericordia as a vibrant community. She doesn't oppose group homes; Misericordia operates 10 of them in Chicago and Lincolnwood. Yet she calls them "isolated houses in the community" and says the 65 residents who live there, most of whom have off-campus jobs, have richer lives because they can come back to campus for activities. After-work social gatherings at Misericordia include clubs geared toward various sports, music, science, technology, sewing, theater and dance. Her view: Big can be bad. Small can be bad, too. Both can be good. The danger comes when policymakers who control the funding insist that one size fits all. "I don't think we're the only way," Connelly said. "All I say is we're a legitimate way." The divide over institutional care threatens the government support of Misericordia and more than 200 of Illinois' other private intermediate-care facilities — settings that serve nine or more people with disabilities under one roof. Statewide, these private facilities care for twice the number of people that state developmental centers do and at a fraction of the cost. Misericordia, for instance, receives about \$65,000 annually for each of the 360 residents in its 21 intermediate-care facilities. In his first year in office, Rauner proposed a 12 percent cut to the funding for this type of care, a reduction forestalled only by the state's inability to pass a budget. More broadly, federal and state officials are wrestling with which settings are too "isolated" to merit funding. For example,

federal and state regulators have put Misericordia's developmental training program under "heightened scrutiny" because when group home residents bake brownies, package ground coffee or fold clean laundry, they are doing so on Misericordia's campus, the type of setting that the federal government presumes has the "the qualities of an institution." To retain funding for this programming, Connelly and her staff have to prove that the people holding these jobs also have meaningful lives in the larger community. As part of its programming, Misericordia runs the Hearts & Flour Bakery, which helps some residents develop job skills. (John J. Kim / Chicago Tribune) For policymakers, the challenge is that for too long bigger settings were the only option. Stanley Ligas, a man with Down syndrome, could read and balance his checkbook and held a job at a Popeyes chicken restaurant, but the state repeatedly turned him down when he asked to move from a 96-bed intermediate care facility in Woodstock to a smaller home. A federal lawsuit filed on behalf of Ligas and thousands of other people with disabilities led in 2011 to the Ligas consent decree, which requires Illinois to fund community living options for people who want to leave intermediate care facilities and those who are living at home but seek community services or placement. Connelly knows what can happen if government loses faith in a model of care. Misericordia's campus sits on the grounds of the former Angel Guardian Orphanage, which closed in the 1970s when it lost government funding as the state shifted from orphanages to foster homes. Misericordia can provide the care it does because Connelly, her staff and thousands of volunteers raise more than \$20 million in private money each year to supplement the government support. But Connelly turned 85 this year. A goal of the Christmas luncheon was not just to raise money but also to build a next generation to take on the big-is-bad activists when she's gone. Connelly wrote to supporters this year that the state can learn a lesson from the shuttered orphanage. "When I see the middle-aged homeless people on the streets of Chicago," she wrote, "I wonder how many are the so-called 'success stories' of the '70s when the government allowed institutions to close without providing adequate support for all involved."

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When foster care puts kids in peril When foster care puts kids in peril BY [Tina Lee](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Saturday, December 31, 2016, 5:00 AM [facebook](#) [Tweet](#) [email](#) BY [Tina Lee](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Saturday, December 31, 2016, 5:00 AM Child welfare has been down this road before. A high-profile tragedy involving a death of a child "known to the system" — [this time, Zymere Perkins](#) — is followed by an apparent spike in the number of children taken from their homes by the Administration for Children's Services. Caseworkers, their supervisors and other officials, who genuinely care about keeping children safe, realize they are not likely to be held accountable for any harm that comes to children as a result of being placed in foster care. But they may be on the front page, or lose their jobs, if a tragedy occurs after they had the opportunity to remove a child. The fear created by the predictable rush of politicians to attack ACS actually creates less safety for children. This situation is familiar to me. In 2006, I began a long-term, in-depth study of New York City's child welfare system. I spent months watching family court hearings, shadowing caseworkers, talking to families and closely following 250 cases. [ACS worker faces ax for missing chances to save Zymere Perkins](#) Just a few months earlier, the child welfare system had been shaken by the death of Nixzmary Brown. Because of the outcry that followed, the share of child maltreatment reports ACS flagged as "indicated" increased, and the rate of foster care placements increased by 53%. Caseworkers described increased workloads, an inability to give all cases the attention they deserved and a prevailing "remove and ask questions later" mentality. In a large majority of the cases, it seemed that removals could have been avoided and that families and children suffered — their lives made worse, not better, by the presence of ACS in their lives. Most child welfare cases involve neglect, with allegations closely related to poverty and a lack of social services to deal with issues such as domestic violence and drug use. Rather than providing services that would have made children safer, parents were punished with child removals. Children suffered. I frequently heard attorneys discuss how children's school performance declined, the mental health and behavioral problems that arose, and how some children had their first expulsion or juvenile justice case. [2016's trail of shock and blood: Trump, terror dominated year](#) During months of observing family courts, it was striking how little evidence was presented about the harms children faced relating to the allegations in their case and how much time children's attorneys discussed the harms children suffered in foster care. Often it was clear that agencies were doing a far worse job of meeting the same needs that parents were accused of neglecting. Nixzmary's death set off a frenzy (Chet Gordon) In one case, workers removed a child, aged 10, because they decided her mother wasn't treating her mental health issues. The child was hospitalized upon removal and caseworkers, 10 days later, still were unable to tell the judge what illness led to the hospitalization. They had not visited her even once to check on her treatment. In another, a single mother who had herself come of age in foster care struggled to raise her children through low-wage jobs. She was accused of using excessive corporal punishment with her middle school-aged son and of recreational marijuana use. She admitted to both and explained she slapped her son after he had been acting out and not taking school seriously enough. The caseworker wanted her to enroll in services. The mother said she never was told to do that. Two weeks later, her children were removed. [De Blasio denies deceit in spurious child-services announcement](#) Caseworkers later decided there was little risk after all and decided to send the children back home. (By then, the boy was stealing and failing in school.) But they weren't — because the private foster care agency handling the case determined that her apartment was unsafe. Rather than making the needed repairs, the landlord threatened to evict the mother. This pattern of lives made less secure, not more, is common. Studies that compare children placed in foster care with children who have suffered comparable maltreatment but stayed with their families find that children in foster care fare worse on measures of mental health, education, juvenile delinquency, teen pregnancy, and unemployment. Yes, Zymere Perkins' death was a terrible tragedy. However, flooding the system with more removals, giving caseworkers less time to make thorough assessments and placing more children in foster care unnecessarily will create more harms, not fewer. This time, we should take the road less traveled. Lee is the author of "Catching a Case: Inequality and Fear in New York City's Child Welfare System" and a professor of Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Source: <http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/foster-care-puts-kids-peril-article-1.2929089>

Study shows foster care may be bad for children's health January 2, 2017 186 Children who have been in the U.S. foster care system are at a significantly higher risk of mental and physical health problems than children who haven't been in foster care, according to a University of California, Irvine sociologist. The problems range from learning disabilities, developmental delays and depression to behavioral issues, asthma and obesity. "No previous research has considered how the mental and physical well-being of children who have spent time in foster care compares to that of children in the general population," said study co-author Kristin Turney, UC Irvine associate professor of sociology. "This work makes an important contribution to the research community by showing for the first time that foster care children are in considerably worse health than other children. Our findings also present serious implications for pediatricians by suggesting that foster care placement is a risk factor for health problems in childhood." Published in *Pediatrics*, the large-scale study is the first to offer health comparisons based on a nationally representative sample of U.S. children. Turney and co-author Christopher Wildeman, associate professor of policy analysis and management at Cornell University, analyzed data from the 2011-2012 National Survey of Children's Health. Of the more than 900,000 kids included in the survey, 1.3 percent were identified as having been in foster care. They were compared to children who hadn't spent time in foster care, those who had been adopted from foster care and those living in a variety of family arrangements, including single-mother and economically disadvantaged households. Using logistic regression models, researchers found that kids who'd been in foster care were: • Seven times as likely to experience depression • Six times as likely to exhibit behavioral problems • Five times as likely to feel anxiety • Three times as likely to have attention deficit disorder, hearing impairments and vision issues • Twice as likely to suffer from learning disabilities, developmental delays, asthma, obesity and speech problems "This is typically a difficult-to-reach population, so having access to descriptive statistics on their living arrangements, physical well-being and behavior provided an excellent opportunity to help identify the health challenges they face," Turney said. "This study expands our understanding of the mental and physical health of these highly vulnerable children, but we must take a closer look if we are to understand how foster care really affects child well-being." Source: <https://knowridge.com/2017/01/study-shows-foster-care-may-be-bad-for-childrens-health/>

Unregulated recovery homes criticized over living conditions | Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Unregulated recovery homes criticized over living conditions January 3, 2017 12:00 AM Group homes for recovering drug addicts could fall under tougher scrutiny statewide this year, targeted for what critics call inconsistent living conditions that can hobble the recovery process. By Adam Smeltz and Molly Born / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Three-quarter-way houses are meant to be a bridge to independent living for addicts, but critics calling for tougher state oversight say some are so crowded, unsupervised and unstable that they can hobble the recovery process. Neither state nor Allegheny County officials have complete tallies of recovery homes, also known as three-quarter-way or sober-living homes. But market observers believe the housing has proliferated over the last several years amid the opioid epidemic, bringing in short-term tenants after they leave drug court, licensed halfway houses or other care. There are almost no regulations for these homes other than zoning limitations on how many unrelated people can occupy a residence. Some have house managers, mandatory drug testing and other requirements, while others leave tenants to their own devices.

Among hundreds of recovery homes thought to operate in Pennsylvania, a number offer virtually no support to their residents, according to addiction experts and neighborhood watchdogs. Pittsburgh City Council has urged state lawmakers to regulate the residences. Councilwoman Natalia Rudiak said the group homes have been a problem in her district, which includes Carrick, Brookline and Beechview. "They are simply warehousing those who are struggling with addiction and trying to remain sober," Ms. Rudiak said of troubled recovery homes with few amenities. She said tenants arriving there from more structured halfway houses are "basically entering a free-for-all" by comparison. William Davison, 28, of Allentown lived in a recovery home in Ms. Rudiak's district about three years ago. He said that five recovering addicts shared a single bathroom in the Brookline home, where a house manager left to watch over another home, he said. [A property operator identified by Mr. Davison reported no immediate recollection of his having been a tenant.] "Some people started using [drugs] in the house here and there," said Mr. Davison, a recovering heroin addict. He said he "lasted about four months — and then I started using again." His friend Gus DiRenna, 57, who works with addicts, said some operators may fit more than a dozen people into a three- or four-bedroom home. Monthly prices typically run about \$450 apiece, at times delivering fat profits for those property owners who skimp on tenant services, Mr. DiRenna said. The time when recovering addicts leave the structure of inpatient centers or halfway houses is often a make-or-break period, he said. A poorly managed three-quarter-way home can undermine months of progress. "At that point, I think, is where you make the difference to keep these kids alive. That's where we're losing them," said Mr. DiRenna, of Whitehall. "We're not losing them in the treatment centers. We're not losing them in the detoxes. It's right afterwards, when they get out of those places and it's time to start over." Allegheny County recorded at least 300 drug overdose deaths through November, according to [OverdoseFreePA.org](http://www.OverdoseFreePA.org). Mr. DiRenna advocated eliminating the profit motive for operators of recovery homes. A state certification program, he said, could set minimum standards for many facilities, along with a mechanism to gauge — and perhaps reward — their successes. To that end, two recent state bills would establish baseline requirements for recovery homes that receive federal or state support. State Rep. Tina Davis, a Bucks County Democrat, said she will reintroduce her legislation this year. Among its provisions, the measure would require background checks for the affected recovery home owners, sobriety for their house managers and a rule book for their operations. "I live with it every day," said Ms. Davis, who reported frequent complaints about the facilities. Another effort could produce regulations from the state Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, or DDAP, by early 2017, said Carol Gifford, a spokeswoman for the agency. It's weighing safety recommendations that a task force issued in July. The suggestions include drug and alcohol testing for owners, employees and operators of recovery homes. Those workers also should not involve themselves romantically with residents, should not pay commissions to encourage referrals from health care providers and should not provide therapeutic interventions unless they're licensed to do so, according to the recommendations. Additionally, the task force suggested that major appliances and utilities be in good condition and that any crimes, deaths or overdoses be reported to the state. The standards would apply only to those recovery homes certified to receive state money or referrals from state-licensed treatment programs. At the nonprofit Recovery United Pittsburgh, president John Miller said such regulations are necessary. While his group recovery homes follow internal rules such as curfews and drug tests, he said, other outfits have essentially no structure. He expects state regulations could put many out of business. But the facilities are not a cure-all, Mr. Miller said. "It's up to the person who's trying to get their life together to fix themselves," he said. "It'd be great if they came in, and I waved a wand and said, 'You're done; you're cured.' Unfortunately, that's not what happens." A relative handful of recovery homes in Pennsylvania already face review. State drug officials estimate that more than 50 are contracted at the county level. Inspections are mandatory for those that receive state money, according to the DDAP. Allegheny County contracts with two recovery housing providers, each monitored every year. And the Philadelphia-based Pennsylvania Association of Recovery Residences has certified around 150 homes through its own process, largely in eastern Pennsylvania. Taken together, the dwellings represent a fraction of the 800 to 1,000 recovery homes estimated statewide by Fred Way, the association's executive director. He figured around 1 in 12 of the home operators is a bad actor. Most are helping people, said Mr. Way, who served on the DDAP task force. "It's about being holistic with their recovery and making them better men and women," he said. He supports making independent bodies, such as his association, responsible for issuing state-recognized certifications. Back in Western Pennsylvania, recovery-home owner Leo Hutchison is working to form a regional chapter of the state recovery residence association. He got into the business after seeing unscrupulous practices elsewhere in the field, he said. His residents in Beechview and Carrick must show progress in a 12-step recovery program, among other expectations. Though he follows other guidelines, such as stocking fire extinguishers and allowing a specific number of beds per square foot, he's heard of other facilities that are more lax. "I don't know if they're going to want to stay in this business," Mr. Hutchison said, "with less of a profit margin." Source: <http://www.post-gazette.com/local/city/2017/01/03/Unregulated-recovery-homes-tweaked-for-living-conditions/stories/201701030016>

Texas Foster Care System Faces Concerns About Overmedication of Children by [DAGNEY PRUNER, Reporting Texas](#) The Gilmer Mirror 3 days ago | 783 views | 1 | 4 | | [Texas Foster Care System Faces Concerns About Overmedication of Children](#) By DAGNEY PRUNER Reporting Texas Holding a scrapbook inches from his face, Jessy Dussetschleger flips through pages and pages of pictures from his childhood. Smiling and tapping his adoptive mother on her shoulder, he points to a photo of himself with his siblings at a birthday party. Touching memories from early childhood are a rarity for him. Jessy, 22, was born deaf. His mother, a single mom, also was deaf and raised him in an abusive household in Corpus Christi. He was just 4 years old when Child Protective Services removed him from the home. Although it is unclear how much abuse he suffered, scars indicate it was extensive. The state declared that he was "severely traumatized." He had six placements during his first three months in the foster care system before he was placed with Melody and Darrel Dussetschleger. Jessy was unable to communicate and had severe behavioral problems due to his deafness and the abuse. He was holding the scrapbook so close to his face because he also is legally blind. At 4, he was prescribed Focalin, Thorazine and BuSpar to manage his behavior. His sister, Shela, also was fostered by the Dussetschlegers and was on heavy psychotropic medication when she came to them at 3 years old. "Every kid we had was so over-medicated. He was on medication most adults can't even handle. She would just look hollow. It was horrible," said Melody Dussetschleger, 56, a stay-at-home mom. More than 30,000 children are in Texas' foster care system, including more than 1,000 Travis County. In 2015, 15.5 percent of foster children were prescribed psychotropic medication by the state or contract physicians, down from 28 percent in 2002. Psychotropic medication includes drugs that affect mental activity, which includes sedatives, tranquilizers, stimulants, antidepressants and anti-psychotics. Side effects can range from suicidal ideation and cardiac arrest to seizures and sudden death. There are few studies on the long-term effects of those medications. The drugs also can mask underlying problems that could be treated with therapy. "The medications are not only approved, you have to give it to them. They are pushed by the state. We didn't have a choice," said Darrel Dussetschleger, 60, a self-employed contractor. His family has fostered 32 children over the past 25 years. Jessy was their first. In December 2015, U.S. District Judge Janis Jack ruled that Texas' foster care system was unconstitutional. She found that the system subjected children to unreasonable risk of harm and that children left foster care more damaged than when they entered. The state is responsible for children "shuttled throughout a system where rape, abuse, psychotropic medication and instability are the norm," Jack's ruling said. Jack ordered an expert review of the system, which found that psychotropic medication had been prescribed widely, often without evaluation and with missing medical records. The report, which was released in November, recommended that the state establish regular review of children's diagnoses and medication dosages and create an informed consent protocol. Marissa Gonzales, a spokeswoman for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, said it conducted an "extensive review" of prescription practices for children in foster care more than a decade ago. "In general, the use of psychotropic medication in foster children has declined significantly in recent years, even as the number of children entering the foster care system has continued to rise," she said. Concerns about the use of psychotropic medication in the foster care system date at least to 2008, when the federal Government Accountability Office compared Medicaid data from five states. The GAO found that in Texas, 32 percent of foster children were prescribed psychotropic drugs, compared to 7 percent of children outside of foster care. No other state had such a big disparity. Timothy Belseth said medication made it difficult to get to the root of the trauma he saw kids endure in foster care. "You can't get a pill to take away trauma," said Belseth, 26, who entered Texas' foster care system when he was 15. He is now a research coordinator at the Texas Institute for Child and Family Wellbeing in Austin. "It's easier to deal with a doped-up kid than to deal with one that is constantly mouthing off," Belseth said. The Department of Family and Protective Services now revises its guidelines on psychotropic medication, which were introduced in 2005, every three years based on recommendations from the experts at the University of Texas at Austin's College of Pharmacy and other medical professionals. The guidelines set limits for dosages and designate "red flags" for mixing medications that trigger a review of the child's treatment plan. However, scarce resources make it difficult to enforce the parameters. "Certainly, kids need more psychotherapy than they're getting," said Dr. Steven Pliszka, a child and adolescent psychiatrist who helps DFPS develop the medication parameters. The goal is not to get children completely off medication but to reduce practices such as prescribing multiple drugs to treat the same behavioral disorder, he said. "We know very little about childhood PTSD and really the best treatments. For the most part, we are extrapolating from the adult data, and that's true in therapy as well as medication," Pliszka said. Jessy suffers from macular degeneration, a condition that causes blind spots to grow in his field of vision. The disease is

caused by retinal deterioration, which typically manifests as adults age. Specialists said repeated head trauma could have damaged Jessy's eye tissue, preventing it from developing correctly. Vision specialists told the Dussetschlegers there was no way to estimate when he would lose his sight completely. When he was in second grade, Jessy's blindness had worsened to the point where he could no longer see his teacher. The Dussetschlegers said his psychiatrist recommended Jessy get off psychotropic medications, including Thorazine, an anti-psychotic whose side effects include vision problems. "We took him off, and it was amazing how much easier his behavior was, because he didn't have all of those side effects," said Melody. Jessy's medications had caused drooling, insomnia and severe mood swings. "We called them 'the afternoon nasties,'" she said. Tyrone Obaseki understands the emotional side effects of psychotropic medication from his 18 years in the foster care system. "I was living an environment where you are constantly being told that you are retarded," said Obaseki, now a Houston-based therapist and advocate. "That begins to affect the self-esteem of the young person like it did with me, especially in adolescence." Obaseki was on and off psychotropic medication and was admitted to psychiatric hospitals during his time in the system. He believes he was misdiagnosed and pleaded with his foster parents to take him off all medication. After leaving the system, he went on to earn a master's degree in counseling from Prairie View A&M University. "I believe that I am a normal, functioning adult who was dealt a bad hand and is trying to make the best of it," he said. "The solution was not drugs, it was love and support." After decades of working with the state, the Dussetschlegers haven't fostered children since 2010. They said it became too difficult to work with DFPS and its prescriptions for how they should care for children. "It wasn't our home anymore," Melody said. But heartened by the changes that Jack's ruling might spur, the Dussetschlegers, parents of three biological and two adopted children, are thinking of becoming foster parents again. Their house is about to empty. Jessy has a full-time job at a warehouse in Taylor and is eager to move out of his parents' home, and his sister, Shela, is getting married in April. "I have seen true evil in what has happened to these kids, but they are so resilient. Seeing how much they have overcome only strengthens my faith," Melody said. "It makes me full of hope." Read more: [The Gilmer Mirror - Texas Foster Care System Faces Concerns About Overmedication of Children](http://www.gilmermirror.com/view/full_story/27340055/article-Texas-Foster-Care-System-Faces-Concerns-About-Overmedication-of-Children?instance=lead_story_left_column) Source: http://www.gilmermirror.com/view/full_story/27340055/article-Texas-Foster-Care-System-Faces-Concerns-About-Overmedication-of-Children?instance=lead_story_left_column

South Florida con artists turn 'sober homes' into insurance scam Thomas Cordy Palm Beach Post By Fred Grimm fgrimm@miamiherald.com [LinkedIn](#) [Google+](#) [Pinterest](#) [Reddit](#) [Print](#) [Order Reprint of this Story](#) What the hell is it about South Florida and drug-addiction profiteering? First we spawned a national opioid epidemic, allowing some 200 sham pain clinics to dispense oxycodone pills like Skittles. Cash-only pill mills, most of them operating out of strip shopping centers in Broward, Palm Beach and Miami-Dade counties (no insurance allowed) peddled 8.2 million oxy tablets in 2009 alone. Florida claimed all 50 of the nation's top 50 docs who prescribed that highly addictive narcotic. Through the first decade of the 21st century, South Florida's pill mills supplied the bulk of the oxycodone behind an [addiction epidemic](#) that still ravages Appalachia and America's rust belt. When Florida finally cracked down on its freewheeling pain clinics, the nation's oxy addicts turned to cheap Mexican heroin. And lately, to fentanyl, a synthetic heroin and another South Florida speciality. All of which led to our latest drug-addiction scam — faux "sober homes," group homes for recovering addicts in league with substance-abuse treatment programs that are hardly more than vehicles for insurance fraud. ADVERTISING Hundreds of barely regulated sober homes have proliferated in Palm Beach and Broward counties over the past decade. Many are tied into very lucrative addiction-treatment programs exploiting well-meaning federal laws that put behavioral disabilities (including alcohol and drug addiction) on par with physical handicaps. And make them eligible for medical insurance coverage. "Over the past, bad actors have been using these laws to hide their exploitation of the very people that these laws were meant to protect," a Palm Beach grand jury warned in a special report issued last month. "This is especially true in the business of recovery housing, where many unregulated homes have become unsafe and overcrowded 'flopouses,' where crimes like rape, theft, human trafficking, prostitution, and illegal drug use are commonplace." The grand jury described a kind of lowdown medical tourism designed to exploit the drug epidemic. Desperate parents, reacting to deceptive advertising, ship their addicted children to South Florida treatment programs. What their kids get, according to the grand jury, is rank exploitation. Many unregulated homes have become unsafe and overcrowded 'flopouses,' where crimes like rape, theft, human trafficking, prostitution, and illegal drug use are commonplace. Palm Beach Grand Jury Report Sleazy operators make millions by billing insurance carriers for useless drug tests. The Palm Beach Post, which exposed the sober house racket in a stunning [investigative series](#) that began in 2015, [described](#) how operators were making thousands on routine urine tests that should have cost no more than \$10 or \$20. After the Post series, Palm Beach State Attorney Dave Aronberg created the state's (maybe the nation's) first [sober house task force](#). So far the task force has busted 10 drug treatment and sober home operators, most of them for illegal patient brokering. The latest was Leonard R. Dobard, 49, of the House of Chance group home in Boynton Beach, charged Wednesday with accepting thousands of dollars in bounties for delivering patients to the Whole Life Recovery treatment center. (Owner, James Kigar, 55, who was arrested in October, has been charged with 95 counts of patient brokering.) Federal investigators, carrying out their own sober home sleaze sweep, [arrested six industry operatives](#) last month, including two doctors, tied to treatment centers in Broward and Palm Beach counties. The feds said the [centers](#) were run by Kenneth Chatman, 46, a [notorious ex-con](#), who was accused of coercing "female patients and residents into prostitution, telling them that they need not pay rent or participate in treatment or testing so long as they would allow him to continue to bill their insurance companies for substance abuse treatment and testing that the patients did not receive." And there was more. Chatman, according to federal prosecutors, "engaged in various tactics to keep patients from being able to leave" his programs, "including threatening violence, and confiscating their belongings, such as car keys, telephones, medications, and food stamps, in order to maintain the ability to continue fraudulently billing the insurance companies." Sober house operators have also [exploited federal disabilities laws](#) that prevent local governments from using zoning laws to ban or limit the number of group homes in residential neighborhoods. Towns like Boynton Beach and Delray Beach have become the unwilling host to hundreds of sober homes, some taking over expensive houses in gated communities. According to the Post, the sober homes often dump out-of-state addicts onto local streets after their insurance dries up. They become instant local social burdens. There was a familiar name among the treatment industry pirates swept up by the Palm Beach County Sober Home Task Force. Christopher Lee Hutson, 36, who was charged with patient brokering in October, had [pleaded guilty](#) back in 2011 to another set of racketeering charges. The Wellington man had been implicated in an [infamous pain clinic operation](#) that had peddled 20 million oxycodone pills in Broward and Palm Beach counties. Hutson, like so many other of South Florida's other drug industry con artists, had exploited the addiction crisis coming and going. Fred Grimm: fgrimm@miamiherald.com, @grimm_fred Read more here: <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/fred-grimm/article124838879.html#storylink=cpy>

Clark County man charged after group home resident 'duct taped' in room Billy Gross Spicer i Billy Gross Spicer By Morgan Eads meads@herald-leader.com A Winchester man has been charged with abuse after working as a caregiver in an adult group home. Billy Gross Spicer, 21, was charged with knowingly abusing or neglecting an adult, which is a Class C felony, according to a news release from the office of Attorney General Andy Beshear. Spicer is also charged with unlawful imprisonment and terroristic threatening. Spicer worked at a Clark County group home for adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities, according to the news release. While caring for a resident overnight, Spicer "either duct taped the resident in his room or failed to remove duct tape from the resident's door, which prevented the resident from leaving his room and which prevented Spicer from providing the required level of care," according to the news release. "Abuse of any kind is unacceptable," Beshear said in the release. "One of the core missions of my office is to protect Kentucky's most vulnerable citizens from abuse and exploitation — and to prosecute offenders to the fullest extent of the law." Spicer was indicted on Dec. 8 and, if convicted of the charges, could serve up to 15 years in prison, according to the news release. The attorney general's office has a tip line for reporting allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation in Medicaid facilities, 1-877-ABUSE TIP (1-877-228-7384). Reports can also be made to Adult Protective Services by calling 1-800-752-6200. Morgan Eads: [859-231-1330](tel:859-231-1330), @HLPublicSafety Read more here: <http://www.kentucky.com/news/local/crime/article124966684.html#storylink=cpy>

RM LAW Announces Class Action Lawsuit Against Universal Health Services, Inc. News provided by [RM LAW, P.C.](#) Jan 06, 2017, 19:45 ET Share this article WAYNE, Pa., Jan. 6, 2017/PRNewswire/ -- [RM LAW, P.C.](#) announces that a class action lawsuit has been filed in United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania on behalf of all persons or entities that purchased Universal Health Services, Inc. ("Universal Health" or the "Company") (NYSE: [UHS](#)) securities between February 26, 2015 and December 7, 2016, inclusive (the "Class Period"). Universal Health shareholders may, no later than February 21, 2017, move the Court for appointment as a lead plaintiff of the Class. If you purchased shares of Universal Health and would like to learn more about these claims or if you wish to discuss these matters and have any questions concerning this announcement or your rights, contact Richard A. Maniskas, Esquire toll-free at (877) 316-3218 or to sign up online, visit: www.rmclasslaw.com/cases/uhs. The Complaint alleges that throughout the Class Period Defendants made false and/or misleading statements and/or failed to disclose that: (1) Universal Health admitted patients based on its own financial

considerations and not upon the medical necessity of the patient; (2) Universal Health would keep patients admitted until their insurance payments ran out in order to ensure the maximum payment for its services; (3) as a result, Universal Health's revenues from inpatient care relied on unsustainable practices; (4) in turn, Universal Health lacked effective internal control concerning its practices and policies of admitting patients; and (5) as a result, Universal Health's public statements were materially false and misleading at all relevant times. On December 7, 2016, BuzzFeed published an investigative story on Universal Health alleging, among other things, that Universal Health put profits ahead of people. On December 7, 2016, BuzzFeed issued a report revealing the results of its investigation into Universal Health. BuzzFeed's investigation was based upon interviews with current and former Universal Health employees, including executives who had operational responsibilities in hospitals. The investigation also included interviews with patients and government investigators. According to the report, employees from Universal Health hospitals said they were "under pressure to fill beds by almost any method – which sometimes meant exaggerating people's symptoms or twisting their words to make them seem suicidal – and to hold them until their insurance payments ran out." On this news, shares of Universal Health fell over 12% to close at just \$111.36 per share on December 7, 2016. If you are a member of the class, you may, no later than February 21, 2017, request that the Court appoint you as lead plaintiff of the class. A lead plaintiff is a representative party that acts on behalf of other class members in directing the litigation. In order to be appointed lead plaintiff, the Court must determine that the class member's claim is typical of the claims of other class members, and that the class member will adequately represent the class. Under certain circumstances, one or more class members may together serve as "lead plaintiff." Your ability to share in any recovery is not, however, affected by the decision whether or not to serve as a lead plaintiff. You may retain RM LAW, P.C. or other counsel of your choice, to serve as your counsel in this action. For more information regarding this, please contact RM LAW, P.C. (Richard A. Maniskas, Esquire) toll-free at (877) 316-3218 or by email at rmaniskas@rmclasslaw.com or visit: www.rmclasslaw.com/cases/uhs. For more information about class action cases in general or to learn more about RM LAW, P.C. please visit our website: www.rmclasslaw.com. RM LAW, P.C. is a national shareholder litigation firm. RM LAW, P.C. is devoted to protecting the interests of individual and institutional investors in shareholder actions in state and federal courts nationwide. CONTACT: RM LAW, P.C. Richard A. Maniskas, Esquire 995 Old Eagle School Rd., Suite 311 Wayne, PA 19087 484-588-5518 877-316-3218 www.rmclasslaw.com/cases/cnc rmaniskas@rmclasslaw.com To view the original version on PR Newswire, visit: <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/rm-law-announces-class-action-lawsuit-against-universal-health-services-inc-300387254.html> SOURCE RM LAW, P.C.

Child abuse victims testify in group home trial by Jasmine Williams Tuesday, January 10th 2017 Share Video Share Video 00:00 00:00 MOBILE, Ala. (WPMI) — Mobile county jurors heard from child abuse victims today in the Saving Youth Foundation case. Three of the facilities operators are on trial right now in Mobile, charged with 14 counts of felony aggravated child abuse charges. Jurors saw images of an isolation room today were investigators say teens would be locked for days at a time. all at the hands of the facilities owners. John Young, William Knott, and Aleshia are accused of abusing teens at the Saving Youth Foundation in Mobile. The facility was associated with the church Solid Rock Ministries. Prosecutors say troubled teens were voluntarily sent there by parents all over the country. Last year, the state removed 15 girls from their building on Sullivan Avenue and 21 boys from their Springhill Avenue location. Investigators say they excessively used isolation, physical restraints, and extensive exercise as punishment. Prichard police first investigated the operators of this facility five years ago, when it was called Restoration Youth Academy. Testimony resumes tomorrow morning with more witnesses from the state. Source: <http://local15tv.com/news/local/child-abuse-victims-testify-in-group-home-trial>

State finds violations at local addiction treatment center Woodhaven By [Natalie Tendall](#) Published: January 8, 2017, 9:20 pm Updated: January 9, 2017, 11:37 am DAYTON, Ohio (WDTN) - A 2 NEWS Investigation uncovers the state of Ohio's Mental Health and Addiction Services found several violations at a local drug and alcohol residential treatment facility months ago and there still has been no action taken. According to a document 2 NEWS Investigates obtained, the state is proposing to revoke the non-medical community certification for Woodhaven Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services out of 1 Elizabeth Place in Dayton. State investigators say they violated the law in at least four areas. 2 NEWS was contacted by several current and former clients and employees of the inpatient addiction treatment center. All had concerns with how the program is being run. Former patient, Sarah Stern is one of them. 2 NEWS Investigates found the state has been investigating allegations at the center over the past year. We obtained the letter sent in August to Woodhaven from the state. It lays out several violations against the facility including, inadequate staffing and supervision, failure to set forth individual treatment plans and a violation of client rights. The document says most interviews took place in February of 2016. The first claim says residents reported being harassed, sometimes sexually by upper management. This is something Sara says she witnessed first hand. You can read the [full document here](#). *2 NEWS is redacting any names of those mentioned in the allegations because no official charges have been filed. "Conversations that an owner of a facility shouldn't be having in front of clients," said Stern. The letter from the state also said they received complaints that clients were being verbally and emotionally abused by staff. It also noted that former clients claim three separate sexual incidents occurred at Woodhaven and the proper reports were not filled out. "A lot of women are used to being taken advantage of or using sex to get what they want, especially with being an addict. So the fact that that was going on wasn't okay. Women at these treatment facilities need to feel safe and like they don't have to do that kind of stuff to get attention of something they need," said Stern. The state is also noting a violation because the only physician at Woodhaven at the time of the investigation did not have the proper substance abuse scope of practice and the nursing staff was not adequately supervised. The report also said they found Woodhaven did not have a client rights officer like they are supposed to, who would take complaints from clients. The letter from the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services says they've reviewed the alleged violations and are proposing to revoke Woodhaven's certification. We've learned Woodhaven management has since requested a hearing to contest the allegations but months later, no date has been set. The hearing officer will decide whether or not Woodhaven should close. After talking with several staff members and former clients, they DON'T want to see a closure. They say the facility has a great opportunity to help people with addiction in the community. They just want to see better leadership and a better environment for those who are working through their addiction. "To shut it down when there is such an epidemic would be tragic. There is already a wait list at every other center for a bed," said Stern. 2 NEWS reached out to Woodhaven management several times about these allegations and have left a message with their attorney. We did receive a statement back from CEO James Goodwin that says, "Woodhaven has been working closely with the state of Ohio to address accusations it has made against it, most of which - including the most severe - we dispute. Woodhaven has worked hard to ensure it is delivering the highest quality services and care to those suffering from substance abuse, and is taking all necessary measures to ensure that those services will continue." We'll stay on top of this story and let you know what happens at that hearing. Source: <http://wdtn.com/investigative-story/state-finds-violations-at-local-addiction-treatment-center/>

ACS Still Doing Business With Deficient Foster Care Providers, Comptroller Audit Finds by [Raphael Pope-Sussman](#) in [News](#) on Jan 12, 2017 4:45 pm State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli. (NYS Comptroller's Office) The Administration for Children's Services continues to do business with private foster care providers that have allowed children in their care to be abused or neglected, according to an [audit released this week](#) by the New York State Comptroller's Office. According to the audit, which follows up on a [2015 audit](#) from the comptroller studying ACS contracts and contractor performance, ACS has made "virtually no progress" on the major recommendations in the original audit. That audit, which examined a sample of 40 ACS contracts, found that ACS had frequently awarded non-competitive or semi-competitive contracts to foster care providers found to have failed to protect children in their care from abuse or neglect. The report found that ACS renewed and extended contracts with these contractors. It also found deficiencies in ACS's reporting of contracts to the city comptroller's office. It called for ACS to increase the lead time for contract awards to facilitate competitive bidding processes, provide thorough documentation justifying decisions to award non-competitive contracts, improve monitoring of contractor performance, and renew contracts based on performance. But according to the findings of a follow-up audit, which were released in the form of a letter sent to ACS Commissioner Gladys Carrión, ACS has not implemented these recommendations. The follow-up audit examined a random sample of 10 contracts—eight contract renewals, one extension, and one new contract—awarded during the 2015-2016 fiscal year. The deaths of two children whose families [had been repeatedly investigated](#) by ACS for abuse but who were not removed from their homes has placed ACS under immense scrutiny in recent months. In October, weeks after the death of one of those children, Zymere Perkins, Mayor Bill de Blasio [said](#) that he would be instituting major reforms at ACS. Last month, Commissioner Carrión [announced that she would be stepping down](#) from her position. According to ACS, she will stay on as commissioner until a qualified replacement is found. ACS spokesperson Aja Worthy-Davis defended the agency's record in a statement to Gothamist. "We are working closely with providers to ensure that they are able to complete the

complex application process to register contracts on time," she said. "Our rigorous monitoring of foster care agencies include monthly safety checks, random case reviews, improvement plans, and other assessments." Source: http://gothamist.com/2017/01/12/acs_audit_comptroller.php

Utah County treatment center owner filed \$700K in false claims, feds say By [Dennis Romboy](#) Deseret News@[dennisromboy](#) Published: Jan. 13, 2017 4:35 p.m. Updated: Jan. 13, 2017 5:06 p.m. [2 Comments](#) Sun Jan 15 17:05:37 2017 SALT LAKE CITY — The owner of two Utah drug and alcohol treatment centers submitted more than \$700,000 in fraudulent claims to a health care benefits program, federal prosecutors say. A federal indictment charges Dustin Joseph Long, 29, of Santaquin, with six counts of health care fraud and six counts of wire fraud. He pleaded not guilty in U.S. District Court this week. A trial is scheduled for March 17. Long is the co-owner of Arcadia Recovery Center in Payson and Arcadia Residential Treatment Center in Bluffdale. Arcadia used a third-party biller, CloudMedicalBilling, to prepare, submit and track claims filed with Humana. Long was a co-owner of the billing company. The indictment alleges that despite numerous requests, Long denied CloudMedicalBilling employees access to BestNotes, the most accurate source of Arcadia client information available, to prepare claims and to verify the accuracy of the rosters he provided. In late June 2015, the billing company discovered that Long's rosters falsely identified continued drug and alcohol treatment services well past Arcadia clients' discharge dates, according to the indictment. Although the company notified Long about the billing discrepancies, he failed to correct any errors, did not refund money to Humana and continued to submit false rosters until October 2015. The indictment alleges Long submitted more than 900 false claims involving 14 clients, totaling more than \$700,000 in payments from Humana to Arcadia. The maximum penalty for each of the six health care fraud counts is 10 years in prison term and a \$250,000 fine. The wire fraud counts each carry a 20-year sentence and a \$250,000 fine. Source: <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865671089/Utah-County-treatment-center-owner-filed-700K-in-false-claims-feds-say.html>

'Spiritual warfare,' 'demonic attacks' The role religion played in home for sex-trafficking victims posted Jan. 13, 2017 2:50 p.m. (CDT) [email article](#) [print](#) font size [- +](#) by / Marjie Lundstrom and Sam Stanton Share [2](#) SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Two weeks before the voluntary shutdown last year of Courage House, a licensed group home for young sex-trafficking victims near Sacramento, a ritual was performed on a teenage girl. According to findings in a state investigation, the girl's forehead was anointed with oil, a religious verse was recited, and the teen was told she would have to be a Christian, or at least denounce Satan, to continue living in the home. Crosses then were handed out to the other girls to wear. Courage House founder Jenny Williamson later would explain that the girl had multiple personalities and posed a danger to herself and others. "She worshipped Satan, and she practiced animal and human sacrifice," she said in August. Williamson told regulators in a June 18 memo responding to the state's unannounced visit that the girl had been the victim of satanic ritualistic abuse and told staff she had "participated in human sacrifice when she was an alter personality." Williamson said the girl terrified staff by announcing that "this week was a blood sacrifice week." The California Department of Social Services did not accept the group home's explanation and issued Courage House a "Type A" citation, the most severe penalty for violations considered serious enough to have an immediate impact on clients' health, safety or personal rights. In its investigation, the state found that the girl had an interest in satanism but did not threaten to perform sacrifices and, instead, had "made a general statement that she enjoyed drawing some of the images" of satanic practice, a state licensing official wrote. Courage House appealed the citation twice, losing again in November, arguing in its appeals documents that the state's investigation was "grossly inadequate" and that "the resident was adamant that she wanted to pray to become a Christian." In addition, her condition left her with frequent amnesia, preventing her from being able to recount "full events," two Courage House officials wrote Oct. 6 in their second appeal to the state. "There was never any pressure given, or ultimatums discussed with her," wrote former program director Melissa Herrmann and clinical director Angela Chanter, who participated in the episode. "She was told she could not perform human and animal sacrifices, or drink the blood of any person there, but she was never told she could not worship Satan nor was she told she had to become a Christian." The clash underscores the tension that can arise between faith-based service providers and government officials — each held accountable for the health and safety of vulnerable clients. Over the past decade, child sex trafficking has become a hot-button topic, spawning new programs and multiple new funding streams. Christian organizations in particular have rallied to the cause, organizing conferences, engaging communities and embarking on worldwide missionary work. Some Christian-based groups, such as Courage House and its nonprofit parent organization, Courage Worldwide Inc. of Rocklin, Calif., have gone a step further, establishing their own facilities to house and treat young victims. The once-vaunted program is struggling to reopen its Northern California facility for six girls, ages 11 to 17, while undergoing scrutiny from the state — including accusations it has violated children's right to religious freedom. Because Courage Worldwide accepts government money — \$9,100 a month per child at the time the group's Sacramento-area home closed in June — the program must stay within regulatory boundaries and not favor one religion over another, or press children to participate. If it is able to reopen, it would be eligible for about \$12,000 a month per girl under a new state system in effect next year. Courage Worldwide officials maintain they have found the appropriate balance. "State funds do not mean you cannot be a Christian home — state funds and license mean you cannot force a child to practice any religious ritual, and Courage House does not," said Gil Stieglitz, a board member for Courage Worldwide Inc. and pastor at Bayside Church in Roseville, Calif., in an emailed response. From the time Courage Worldwide opened its Sacramento-area group home in 2011 on 52 acres north of the city, the organization has been steeped in Christian beliefs and practices, according to a Bee examination of state licensing records, dozens of internal Courage Worldwide emails and interviews with 17 former employees, business associates and a former client. The group opened a second Courage House around that same time in the east African country of Tanzania that it says now has 12 beds. For years, Williamson has touted an ambitious expansion plan for Courage House Northern California that includes as its centerpiece a shimmering chapel with a large cross, according to architectural renderings. The architect's plan, which also envisions 10 new cottages for 60 girls, describes the chapel "as the most important building on the campus." Despite aggressive fundraising around those plans — and a \$300,000-plus kick start in 2011 from Bayside Church — the organization has yet to break ground. Williamson and other Courage Worldwide officials vehemently deny there is any pressure to practice Christianity at Courage House, and said that girls are free to attend services of their choice as staffing levels permit. "We are in full agreement with the state to provide access to religious services when the girls request it, if provided sufficient notice in advance so that we can properly staff for such requests," Courage Worldwide officials said in an emailed statement to The Bee. The state licensing file includes a sample of a "Courage House religious participation form," which allows girls to check a box indicating their preferences. Choices range from no participation to weekly church services to worship nights and other spiritual events. Even so, the state leveled a Type B citation against Courage House in December 2015, finding that the girls were required to attend the Midthuns' church — a concern shared by some staff members. DeAnne Brining, a former therapist at the home, said the girls felt awkward and conspicuous at the church because the congregation knew who they were. "The girls did not want to be known as Courage girls," she said. "Everybody at that church knew they were trafficked." Courage Worldwide officials disputed the state's findings, telling The Bee the Elk Grove church was the girls' "consensus choice." Courage Worldwide's conflicts with the state have extended beyond matters of religious freedom. In the last five years, Courage House has been cited 36 times for regulatory violations, according to the data released to The Bee in early December. That's more than three times the average for citations at the 300 facilities statewide of similar size and classification level. Source: <http://www.leadertelegram.com/Features/Religion/2017/01/07/Spiritual-warfare-demonic-attacks-nbsp.html>

The Real Lesson from the Fall of R.I.S.E.: Group Homes Don't Work By [Richard Wexler](#) Saturday Jan 14, 2017 · 4:00 PM PST 2017/01/14 · 16:00 [2 Comments \(9 New\)](#) The great filmmaker Costa Gavras, known for making "political films" such as "Z" and "The Confession," once said: "The issues in politics are not complex, even though politicians tell us so in order to convince us of the politicians' importance ... and to keep us from criticizing them." It works the same way in child welfare. The bloviations of assorted "providers" concerning the complexity of this or that problem usually are rhetorical fog, created to obscure the simple fact that whatever it is the providers are providing has failed. Case in point: [a story in The Chronicle of Social Change](#) about the closing of the Residential Intervention for the Sexually Exploited (R.I.S.E.) group home for commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC — yes, there's already a dehumanizing acronym) in Redwood City, Calif. The story goes on and on about how the closing illustrates the "complexities faced by the entities engaged in serving and protecting [such] children," how the group home ran up against "complicated" protocols, etc. But the real story is simple: Group homes are almost always a bad idea. Someone opened a group home. It failed. It was forced to close. Only item four on the list is unusual. Indeed, given what the [San Jose Mercury News exposed](#) about group homes and institutions California allows to remain open, you have to wonder about a place authorities found so bad they shut it down after only two years with the owner agreeing never to open a group home in Redwood City again. But The Chronicle of Social Change does not wonder. It does not dig into the details about the failures at R.I.S.E. that led to the closure. Perhaps that's understandable. Two years ago, The Chronicle did [a 2,000 word encomium to R.I.S.E.](#) featuring gushy paragraphs like this: The interior walls of the yellow craftsman style home ... are all painted bright colors and dusted with empowering quotes; the aesthetics a small indication of the lengths to which Annie Corbett ... and her staff have gone to ensure that this home is a

safe place ... Right. Because if the walls look pretty and the quotes are “empowering” what could possibly go wrong? I’m sure Corbett meant well. But in that story, she already is portraying herself as a child welfare Gulliver, always at risk of being tied down by the Lilliputians of licensing who can, she says, “inflict torment any way they want.” As for actually helping these young people by placing them with families: Corbett says foster parents “don’t want these kids.” Needless to say birth parents are not even mentioned. Layers of Faux Complexity Now that the program has shut down, The Chronicle buries the basics in layers of faux “complexity.” The most recent story begins: In foster care most of her life, 17-year-old Amber [not her real name] finally found a little stability at R.I.S.E. House. After cycling through 35 foster and group homes, she developed relationships at R.I.S.E. and was poised to graduate from high school. Normally in a news story a claim such as this would be followed by something to back it up – at least a quote from Amber herself. But no evidence, and no quote, is offered. Apparently, the reporter just took someone’s word for it. (In fact neither Chronicle story quotes any current or former resident of R.I.S.E.) Only toward the very end of the story do we learn that, notwithstanding the claims about “stability” and “relationships,” Amber had run away from R.I.S.E. not once, but five times. The story does quote from a [report](#) by the California Child Welfare Council – but selectively. The story notes the report’s call for “stable housing and specialized placement options.” But the report also says: CSEC survivors who have successfully left their exploitative relationship often point to the emotional connections and trusting relationships they built with caring adults as significant factors in their recovery. In contrast, CSEC survivors identify significant difficulties with living in group homes. For example, in those placements, no one caregiver looks out for their well-being. CSEC may also pose risks to the other children in the home. Group home placement can even exacerbate CSEC victimization, because pimps use such facilities as recruiting grounds. Pattern Seen All Over the Country That’s exactly what has happened [over and over, all over the country](#). Yet despite the mountain of evidence that [group homes](#) and [institutions](#) are a failure for all populations, the group home industry persists in pushing institutionalization [for this especially vulnerable group](#). And when it all goes wrong, it’s everyone else’s fault. The licensers are “harassing and intimidating us,” Corbett says. The police put her program “in a vice grip.” And, of course, only she really cares about the children. In a comment reminiscent of Donald Trump’s declaration that “I alone can fix it,” Corbett says she is working “with a population everyone else gets rid of.” Shutting down her group home, she says, is just another example of “the marginalization and discrimination against these vulnerable and traumatized kids.” In her telling, the problem isn’t that, as authorities said, there was no therapeutic program, issues with the staff-child ratio, poor school attendance, and trouble with staff training (which is odd since the earlier Chronicle story assured readers that staff already were specifically trained to deal with this population). No, Corbett says, those awful police and licensing people were at the home so often there just wasn’t time to run a worthwhile program. Here’s another possibility: They were there so often because R.I.S.E. was a bad idea, badly executed. There is nothing a group home can do that can’t be done better by providing [wraparound services](#) to children living either with their own families or with foster families. You can find foster families to accept “these kids” if they know they will have the intensive support they need to help them. Indeed, the California Child Welfare Council report recommends that the state “create a CSEC subspecialty within Wraparound programs that will ensure caregivers have the knowledge and resources needed to care for CSEC victims.” Some things in child welfare are complicated, such as funding formulas. But the issues in child welfare are not complex, even though providers tell us so in order to convince us of the providers’ importance. And to keep us from criticizing them. _____ Richard Wexler is Executive Director of the National Coalition for Child Protection Reform, [www.nccpr.org](#). This column originally appeared in the [Chronicle of Social Change](#). Source: [http://www.dailykos.com/stories/2017/1/14/1619640/-The-Real-Lesson-from-the-Fall-of-R-I-S-E-Group-Homes-Don-t-Work](#)

How Texas’ Overburdened Foster Care System has Produced a Generation of Lost Adults Posted By [Alex Zielinski](#) on Tue, Jan 17, 2017 at 5:00 AM click to enlarge Illustration by Jess Blank On Caleb Pitts’ 18th birthday, two letters were delivered to his Comal County jail cell. One was from his foster mother, Elaine, who’d watched him dart in and out of juvenile detention for years. The other was from the state of Texas, informing Pitts that he had officially become an adult. Suddenly, after 11 years in the state’s foster system, 20 foster homes, dozens of forgotten schools, a blur of paperwork and a lifetime of trauma, Pitts was on his own. Sitting alone in the cold, familiar cell, he couldn’t have felt less prepared. Pitts was plucked from his home and put into state custody when he was seven years old, after his meth-addicted mother was sent to prison (his absent father was already homeless, somewhere). The state immediately separated Pitts from his three biological brothers, and the trauma left Pitts with uncontrollable anger issues — issues few foster parents could tolerate. So, instead of living with a family, Pitts spent the majority of his childhood living in prison-like facilities for kids with “behavioral issues,” alongside other heavily-medicated, equally pissed-off boys. It was unusual for a kid to leave these “homes” without a criminal record. Pitts is one of the 1,180 kids who “age out” of Texas’ foster care system each year — children in state custody who are essentially pushed out the door with a birth certificate, a few bucks, and serious trust issues. Many leave with undiagnosed mental health problems, often linked to the sexual, physical, or emotional abuse sustained in different foster homes. The few transitional tools the state gives foster kids are outdated, unrealistic, and pushed on them without context. With little preparation for the adult world, hundreds of these kids quickly slide into chronic homelessness or incarceration. Some might return to an abusive household or start one of their own. Texas knows it’s a terrible parent. Numerous court cases, leaked state documents, and now a federal lawsuit underscoring the severity of the state’s neglect have officials clamoring for reform. But long-time foster advocates have heard this before — and know a successful overhaul of the state’s gargantuan Department of Family and Protective Services would take years. In the state’s absence, local organizations and agencies are working to cobble together some kind of realistic safety net to catch their community’s most vulnerable adults before it’s too late. It’s a net that still has many holes. Pitts, now 23, should actually be considered a foster care success story. He’s working part-time, taking business classes at San Antonio College, off drugs, pays rent on time, and only has the occasional run-in with the law. He had to do most of this without the state’s help. The majority of kids Texas has chewed up and spit out into adulthood, including Pitts’ biological brothers, face a much darker reality. These are the children Texas has raised. *** For as long as she can remember, Jessica Urias has always been on some kind of medication. Her biological mother fed her sleep aids and adderall to keep her quiet from age five, threatening to punch her daughter when she bothered her. When DFPS shuttled her into foster care at age ten, Urias says doctors just added more prescriptions, antidepressants and bipolar medication. “I don’t remember a lot of that time,” she said. “I lost a lot of weight, because the pills make me sick.” If her foster parents knew she wasn’t eating, they’d think she was trying to get them in trouble with DFPS, Urias said. So she hid it from them. Rampant overmedication is just one of the many pieces of the Texas foster system U.S. District Court Judge Janis Jack condemned in her blistering 2015 ruling on DFPS failures. Texas’ 28,000 wards of the state, she wrote, “have been shuttled throughout a system where rape, abuse, psychotropic medication, and instability are the norm.” According to her ruling, this system had gone unchecked for more than 20 years, leaving behind a generation of troubled adults in its wake. “It is widely recognized that foster youths who age out generally experience poorer life outcomes,” Jack said. This ruling was triggered by Texas’ refusal to settle a 4-year-old lawsuit from a national child advocacy group that claimed DFPS violated children’s rights. The 12,000 foster children in permanent state custody had been “doubly traumatized,” attorneys argued: “First by the abuse and neglect that brought them into foster care, and second by their treatment at the hands of their state custodians.” They spoke for dozens of foster children who’d been raped, hog-tied, suffocated in closets, and severely beaten in foster homes. Then-Attorney General Greg Abbott, however, contended that the state isn’t “liable for the psychological well-being and emotional development of every child in foster care.” Jack saw things differently. She immediately assigned two child welfare experts to investigate the tangled foster care system and present recommendations to the state. True to form, Texas officials rejected the federal interference, calling the 56 recommendations “impractical” and unnecessary. Texas could take care of itself. But more than a year after her original ruling, little has changed. “The state’s overall response to this lawsuit was a general unveiling of how poor they are at their job,” said Katherine Barillas, the director of child welfare policy at One Voice Texas — a Texas nonprofit that advocates for public policy issues. While Texas has yet to suggest its own comprehensive solution, DFPS did approve a substantial salary boost for the state’s notoriously overworked social workers. But without expanding the number of salaried workers, Barillas doesn’t see the point. “We need a dramatic investment in these workers to ensure the kids get any attention. The change we’re talking about is massive. We need to change the entire system. Even if one part is broken, we’ll fail thousands of these kids,” Barillas said. “We can’t just implement one thing and walk away.” Doing so would only continue the state’s vicious cycle of neglect — one best illustrated by Judge Jack’s ruling. “Children ... suffer abuse and neglect that is rarely confirmed or treated, are shuttled between placements—often inappropriate for their needs—throughout the state...are medicated with psychotropic drugs, and then age out of foster care at the Intense service level, damaged, institutionalized, and unable to succeed as adults,” she wrote. “Foster children often age out of care more damaged than when they entered.” *** click to enlarge Jessica Urias Courtesy of Jessica Urias Urias learned to never get too comfortable in a foster home, or too attached to her foster family. She never knew when a family would decide she was too much work, or would simply dislike her, and give Child Protective Services a call. “I had been rejected by so many families I started to expedite the process in every new home,” she said. “I knew how to push my parents enough to make them put in their 30 day notice [to have her removed by CPS]. I always felt like an inconvenience. I just wanted to get it over with.” Her nomadic living situation isn’t unusual. According to 2015 data, foster kids who age out of the system in Bexar County have lived in an average 6.8 homes.

In some Texas counties, it's closer to 15. Not able to find love from these state-selected families, Urias created her own. She became pregnant at 16, eager to give her baby the parental love she never received. But shortly after giving birth, the state put her daughter up for adoption. This is a familiar cycle for DFPS. According to a 2012 survey of former foster youth, 10 percent of Texas' foster kids have given birth to or fathered a child before turning 18. And more than 50 percent of foster youth who age out of the system have children before they're 20 (nationally, only 30 percent of young adults get pregnant before 20). "Every girl I know who's left the system either already had a kid or immediately got pregnant," Urias said. "You have to understand — we're children. We'll do anything to give or get love. And that's what a baby is for us." Seventy percent of those kids are funneled back into the foster care system. These numbers have inspired Texas lawmakers to mandate that DFPS start tracking just how many girls become pregnant while in foster care. The state's first annual report will come out next month. After losing her baby, Urias spiraled into a deep depression, one that couldn't be solved with just more meds. Two weeks before aging out of the system, she tried to commit suicide. "No one wanted me," she said. The emotional damage the foster system had inflicted on her left Urias with little hope for the future. Pitts managed to hop through 20 different foster homes from the time he entered the system, at 7 years old, to when he aged out. But unlike Urias, he spent a lot of his childhood living in what the state calls a "Residential Treatment Center," a facility for foster kids with "serious emotional disturbances or mental health issues." Pitts, who had been traumatized when DFPS separated him from his three biological brothers, would tear apart foster homes when he was upset — punching walls, tearing down doors, smashing anything in sight. At one point, he was on nine medications all at once ("like a lab rat," he now says), but nothing worked. In Texas' eyes, RTCs were the answer. When Pitts describes life in the RTCs, he's basically describing a prison. "You're in close quarters with a lot of angry guys," he said. "If you didn't fight, you didn't survive." He was supposed to be under constant supervision — a "perk" of the RTCs — but rarely felt like the staff were looking out for him. "When we'd fight in the halls, it was like a gladiator match. We'd get bloody and beat up and the staff would just watch," he said. "They wouldn't do anything." In some RTC campuses surrounded by barbed wire, the foster kids would go to school and live alongside kids serving time in juvenile detention. The state didn't differentiate between the two. It's no surprise, then, that Pitts spent his teenage years flitting in and out of detention — mostly for fights and selling meth. After aging out, Pitts was diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder from the trauma he'd sustained while in the state's RTCs. Some 30 percent of all Texas foster kids leave the system with a PTSD diagnosis. Pitts says he easily could have joined the thousands of other foster kids who graduate to prison after they age out — that is, if he didn't have a foster mom rooting for him. According to state statistics, some 11 percent of Texas' foster youth are incarcerated by the time they turn 20. To him, jail was a familiar setting, a place where someone else could continue to make all of his decisions for him. "The foster mentality is pretty similar to the prison mentality," he said. "It felt like home." *** Stop by the San Antonio PALS center (short for Preparation for Adult Living) on a weekday afternoon, and you'll find a few teens tapping away along a wall of computers or slumped into a couch, watching 2 Fast 2 Furious on a flatscreen TV. You'll also find Jose Chapa, the head coordinator for DFPS' Region 8 — a 28-county swath of South Texas with San Antonio as its headquarters. "I'm the first to admit that it's a tough age group to work with," said Chapa, who's been working with foster teens for over a decade — and is what some local youth advocates call "a beacon of hope." To successfully do his job, he said, he's become half guidance counselor and half parent. "If we help them too much, they'll expect us to help them with everything," he said. "If we give them too little, they'll fail." Chapa and his eight coworkers are responsible for connecting all of Region 8's foster youth with resources that will help them age out of the system with ease. Their main job is to conduct the PALS course, a voluntary, week-long life skills class for 15-year-old foster kids where they learn how to write a check, rent an apartment, or make a resume. This class, offered two years before they age out, is how the state prepares kids for adulthood. Barillas said the PALS program hasn't changed much in the past decade — and it's far from adequate. "This shouldn't just be a week in a classroom, this should be a program built on consistent, age appropriate experiential learning," she said. "Teach them to cook, take them to a bank, go to a laundromat. You can't expect this one class to turn them into an instant adult when they age out. I mean, really, who still writes checks?" Urias, who attended the PALS course, says she has absolutely no recollection of what she was taught. "I was 15, what do you expect?" she says. Granted, PALS connects kids with other resources meant to soften the blow of adulthood — and on paper, they seem pretty fantastic. But, according to foster advocates, they come with problematic caveats. By law, the state of Texas must cover in-state college tuition costs for any former foster youth. Which sounds great, if you assume a foster kid would be prepared to enter college after what is often an inconsistent and incomplete education. In reality, less than half of the kids who age out of the Texas foster program each year even have a high school diploma. "Even if they cover tuition, who will pay for the dorms, the text books, or the transportation? It's unrealistic," said Dr. Harriett Romo, the director of UTSA's Child & Adolescent Policy Research Institute. "Many do express the desire to go to college, but don't have the proper support system. Nobody is there to help them." On average, only 4 percent of former foster youth have earned a 4-year college degree by the time they're 26 — compared to 36 percent of the general population by that time. Thanks to legislation Congress passed in 2009, Texas is required to offer extended housing and care to kids aging out of the foster system. In Texas, these "Supervised Independent Living" facilities give 18-year-olds an apartment-like home with social workers on-site to ease them into independent living. Residents can easily get help searching for work, applying to college, and perfecting other "life skills" like buying a car or signing up for health insurance. But Texas only has nine of these SIL facilities with varying capacity—the largest location offers 34 rooms (the smallest can house eight). At best, Texas' SIL program could only house 10 percent of kids aging out each year. Chapa says the wait list is so daunting it can take some kids up to two years to get in. So what happens when aged-out foster kids can't get into supportive housing? Chapa says he has to send them to a local homeless shelter. Urias was homeless for the first three months after she turned 18. Thankfully, an older cousin let her move in — but not all kids have that kind of fallback. A whopping 37 percent of Texas foster youth report being homeless at least once after leaving foster care. "We're the parent, the state's the parent, and we're letting them live like this," Barillas said. "How would state lawmakers feel about someone's biological parents treating their kids that way?" Other state programs in California and Connecticut have rolled out an even more transitional housing program for foster kids, allowing them a few smaller steps even before living in a supervised housing unit. This is a model Texas should follow, Barillas says. "In Texas, youth go from one setting to being on their own or living in Supervised Independent Living — which may be too big of a leap to independence for some." *** Child advocates unequivocally agree on one obvious solution to Texas' poor parenting: Mentorships. And the only person in Bexar County working to connect foster kids with mentors is Elaine Hartle. Pitts said he'd still be behind bars if it wasn't for Hartle. Hartle was Pitts' last foster parent he had before DFPS passed him through the RTC system. Even after Pitts punched holes in her walls and threatened her safety, forcing her multiple times to call the police, Hartle stayed by his side. It was Hartle (and her husband) who ultimately convinced Pitts to clean up his act. "She'd send me letters in jail and they'd visit me whenever they could," Pitts said. "They cared about me — and I didn't want to ruin their life. So I went to rehab and got my GED." The struggle she went through to raise Pitts, an angry teenage boy already hurt by the foster system, motivated Hartle to help more kids left behind by Texas' failed parenting. "Imagine your child's going off to college," she said. "You give them a big hug and a little money and say, 'We wish you the best but you can never come back or call. Good luck.' That's, essentially, what Texas is doing." Hartle created the THRU Project — a nonprofit connecting local foster teens to volunteer mentors — to combat this cycle. Now five years old, THRU has connected some 70 foster kids with more than 100 adult mentors in the community who help them navigate adulthood — whether that's going with them to a car dealership, helping them finish school, or just being an ear on the other end of the line. "When you've never been allowed to make your own choices in life, it's impossible to start from scratch," Hartle said. "You quit planning for the long term when you move every six months. Mentors can see further ahead than these kids, and steer them in the right direction." Her main goal is to help kids "find a better normal," whatever that may look like. In the Bexar County children's court system, judges wish this "normal" was a state mandate. "The success stories are when I see someone connect with a kid — whether it's a THRU mentor, an attorney, a CASA representative, or a judge," said county District Judge Peter Sakai. "But we don't have enough of those people in our community." Sakai has worked with foster children in the county courts since 1995 — and he's seen far fewer success stories than he would have liked. He's come to the conclusion that his work, placing at-risk children in foster care, is far from a cure-all solution. click to enlarge District Judge Peter Sakai Sakai recalls one particular case that best illustrates this problem. The state was taking away a young couple's baby, after they both failed drug rehab programs and denied needed mental health care. Both parents were former foster kids. As he remembers it, the child's father said, "You took me away from my parents when I was three, and nobody ever gave a shit about me. What do you expect? You think you're fixing things, but you're just making it worse." "I realized, he's got a point," Sakai said. "This guy got screwed by the foster care system. He should have fought harder for his kid — but he didn't know how to. And that's our fault." Sakai has little trust that the state will build a reliable safety net for these young adults anytime soon. Instead, he's urging communities to care for their own. "We need local solutions to make up for the state's tenuous safety net," he said. "There are all these little ways we can make our own safety net, right here. It just requires a lot of cooperation." In fact, the most comprehensive, bipartisan bill filed in the state legislature — meant to reform DFPS — suggests the state do just that. Under the proposed law, Texas would coordinate with regional nonprofits and child welfare groups to "increase child safety, placement stability, and permanency." *** click to enlarge Caleb

Pitts Pitts never imagined he'd go to college. He never thought he'd have his own apartment. He definitely didn't think he'd have a shot at becoming a realtor — the main reason he's getting a business degree. "I didn't think I had a future," he said. Sure, he still struggles with PTSD-fueled outbursts of rage, and Hartle still isn't surprised when she gets a call from the cops. But Pitts comes from a generation of foster kids thrown into a system that, according to the courts, has done "more harm to our children than good." The fact that he found a pathway out of incarceration or homelessness or addiction appears to exceed state expectations. He's one of the lucky ones — something he's reminded of whenever he hears an old friend has been sentenced to decades behind bars or that his biological brother is still struggling with drug addiction. Just a few months ago, Pitts and Hartle walked by the Greyhound station in downtown San Antonio. Pitts paused. Two people sitting near the station looked familiar — both were around his age and both looked like they lived on the streets. He went up and talked to them, and confirmed his suspicion: they were his former foster siblings. One was on some kind of drug, he told Hartle, the other was working as a prostitute to make ends meet. Both were homeless. "Damn," he said, as they continued down the sidewalk. "That could have been me." Source: <http://www.sacurrent.com/the-daily/archives/2017/01/17/how-texas-overburdened-foster-care-system-has-produced-a-generation-of-lost-adults>

Judge properly moved teen into adult system to protect him Posted: Jan 18, 2017 12:04 PM CST Updated: Jan 18, 2017 12:06 PM CST [Jason Morrison/FreeImages.com](#) Jason Morrison/FreeImages.com News Data [Wisconsin Traffic Fatalities Map](#) [Madison Crime Map](#) MADISON, Wis. - The state appeals court said a judge properly moved a teen offender into the adult system after saying he thought the boy would be safer there than in the state's troubled youth prison. The teen was accused of sexually assaulting a fifth-grader. Prosecutors asked Racine County Circuit Judge John S. Jude to waive him into adult court, citing the "cloud over Lincoln Hills" and newspaper articles detailing problems there. Federal investigators are probing allegations that the youth prison's staff abused inmates. Jude said he believed the teen would be safer in the adult system. The teen argued Jude improperly considered news coverage and out-of-court information about Lincoln Hills. The 2nd District Court of Appeals ruled Wednesday that the evidence supported waiver into the adult system. Source: <http://www.channel3000.com/news/judge-properly-moved-teen-into-adult-system-to-protect-him/276665798>

Redwood City: Youth counselor arrested for alleged sex with teen client By [Robert Salonga](#) | rsalonga@bayareanewsgroup.com | PUBLISHED: January 19, 2017 at 11:38 am | UPDATED: January 19, 2017 at 2:44 pm REDWOOD CITY — A youth counselor has been arrested on suspicion of having a sexual relationship with a teen client while working at a Redwood City group home last summer, according to the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office. When he was arrested last week, he was still working as a youth counselor, at another group home in San Jose. Francis Caceres, 28, of Mountain View, was arrested Jan. 12, 2017 on suspicion of having a sexual relationship with a teen client while working as a youth counselor at a Redwood City group home in the summer of 2016. Francis Caceres, 28, of Mountain View, was arrested Jan. 12 and has been charged with one count each of a lewd act with a child 14 or 15 years old with at least a 10-year difference in age, and unlawful sexual intercourse with a victim under 16 years old while being over 21 years old. He is being held in the Maguire Correctional Facility on \$200,000 bail. In late December, San Mateo County's Child Protective Services contacted the Sheriff's Office to report an illicit relationship involving a 15-year-old female victim. Caceres was alleged to have met the girl in July, when she was staying at Your House South in Redwood City, where Caceres was a youth counselor. By the time detectives launched an investigation, Caceres had already been fired by the group home, though the exact reason has not been specified. They found evidence that he and the girl had sex at an undisclosed location away from the home, the Sheriff's Office said. When detectives gathered enough information to make an arrest, Caceres was working as a youth counselor at Tayler Group Home in San Jose. Because the investigation did not begin until several months after the alleged acts, it is unlikely that they would have surfaced in a background check. When reached by phone, the director of the San Jose group home declined to comment on the case. Investigators are exploring the possibility that other victims may be connected to Caceres. Anyone with information authorities can contact Detective Joe Cang at 650-259-2417 or at jcang@smcgov.org, or leave an anonymous tip at 800-547-2700. Source: <http://www.mercurynews.com/2017/01/19/redwood-city-youth-counselor-arrested-for-alleged-sex-with-teen-client/>

DHEC cites child treatment facility in Florence for violations An autistic 20-year-old with the mind of a child, pictured before losing 40 pounds while in the care of a facility in Florence. Photo provided to the Greenville News i Tim Smith - The Greenville News tcsmith@greenvillenews.com COLUMBIA, SC State officials have cited a residential treatment facility for children with 19 violations including abuse, understaffing, and not controlling youth who bit and attacked each other more than a dozen times last year, according to documents obtained by The Greenville News. The state Department of Health and Environmental Control also cited the facility for insufficient snacks and menu problems, for failing to adequately watch over the children and for maintenance issues. DHEC, which licenses Palmetto Pee Dee Behavioral Health in Florence, issued the citations in the wake of allegations reported by The Greenville News in December and earlier this month. Adrianna Bradley, a spokeswoman for DHEC, said the violations were found after three visits of the facility on Dec. 13, Dec. 28 and Jan. 5. She said the facility remains under investigation and must submit plans of correction for each of the violations. According to DHEC regulations, violations can result in monetary penalties ranging from several hundred dollars to several thousand dollars, depending on the classification of the violation and whether it is a repeat offense. Halle Mechling, business development director for Palmetto Pee Dee, submitted a statement on behalf of the facility saying it strives to "maximize the safety of our patients." "Like all healthcare providers we are subject to unannounced inspections," the statement read. "The facility takes all feedback we receive seriously and constantly explores how we can improve the services we deliver. "We are certainly mindful that over the course of treating more than 100 patients annually, irregular and unpredictable events can occur. In each of these situations, including the recent DHEC inspections, the facility works to learn from these incidents and enhance the quality of our care, if applicable." The News earlier this month reported that current and former workers at the facility alleged that children at the facility have been hurt after altercations with staff, were given inadequate food and programming, and the facility often has been short-staffed. Workers also said the aging facility has suffered a host of maintenance problems, including broken laundry equipment, malfunctioning showers and mold. Training has been inadequate, workers have been forced to work 16-hour shifts, staph infections and scabies have been found at the facility, and children there have been subjected to verbal abuse by staff, the concerned workers told the newspaper. Those allegations came after DHEC confirmed it was looking into complaints by a Columbia mother that her autistic child had lost excessive weight at the facility and had been bitten repeatedly while there, with one of the wounds becoming infected, The News reported Dec. 12. Workers allege a host of problems at children's facility The first of the investigation results released this week dealt with those allegations. The findings do not name any resident, parent or staff member, but the summary appeared to mirror the Columbia mother's allegations that her son's weight had dropped from 132 pounds to 96 pounds and that he had been bitten four to five times by other residents during the past four months. Among the investigation's findings was that a diet order for the resident was not available for review. The facility's administrator told DHEC the resident's diet was not addressed upon admission. The mother told the newspaper that at one point she provided a list of food her son would eat and pestered the staff to buy peanut butter. DHEC reported 14 incidents in which the resident was attacked and injured by other residents. "These injuries included kicking, punching, and biting and occurred during each of the three shifts," the agency's report stated. "The Administrator stated that the clients in Resident A's unit need more care/supervision and are less independent than other units. However, all units are staffed the same, regardless of the condition of the residents." The DHEC report noted a number of the incidents, including a body audit of the adolescent on Oct. 8 that observed five bite marks on the youth's back but offered no explanation for how they got there. On Oct. 30, DHEC reported, a bite mark on an arm was observed after he was bitten by another resident. Later that night, staff reported bite marks on his back after being bitten by a roommate, according to DHEC. On Nov. 21, the youth was bitten in the upper shoulder/upper back while in class, DHEC reported. The next day, DHEC reported, he was bitten on the left hand by another resident while in group. There were 23 other children or adolescents on the same unit as the resident who was repeatedly attacked, according to DHEC, and others on the unit also had been attacked or had attacked others. Some, the agency said, were "out of control," according to staff. "The facility did not staff sufficiently to provide supervision for all residents as determined by the condition of the residents," the agency concluded. Using staff log sheets, DHEC cited certain dates and shifts in which it said staff was insufficient for the unit, including one shift during which only two staff were present. Documentation for another shift, DHEC found, was "unavailable for review." The investigation also found multiple violations with the resident's individual treatment plan, which it found lacked descriptions of the resident's nutritional needs, social and recreational activities and visits by health care providers. DHEC noted that the resident's weight dropped to 99 pounds and his nutritional needs had not been coordinated even though the facility had documented his weight loss. According to the mother of the autistic youth, her son was placed in Palmetto Pee Dee by the Lexington-Richland Disabilities and Special Needs Board. The agency previously said it could not comment on individual cases due to federal health privacy laws. Altogether, DHEC cited the facility for 10 violations, including two Class 1 violations, the most serious type. According to DHEC's website, Class 1 violations "present an imminent danger to the health, safety, or well-being of the persons in the facility." Liane Hughes Turner, the mother of the autistic boy who first called attention to the facility over her son's weight loss and bites, said

what has happened at the facility is "just so sad." "Management is allowing this to happen," she said. "That's where the fix needs to start." She said she is "counting the days" until her son is moved from the facility, though she said the facility now appears to be doing better at caring for him. She suggested DHEC conduct more unannounced visits and follow-up with their findings to be sure planned corrections are implemented. The second investigation, in December, looked at 11 allegations, citing the facility for six of them. It again cited the facility for understaffing as well as for violating a facility policy of having residents within sight or sound observation of staff and conducting welfare checks of residents no more than every 15 minutes. It noted one case in which a resident had attempted suicide, having been found on the floor, blue in the face with a shirt tied around their neck. It also cited the facility for a case of abuse in which a resident said they were physically abused by a female staff member on Nov. 25 after calling the resident "stupid." DHEC reported that, "Resident then stated that 'Staff Member A got into my face and I pushed her and that's when she punched me in the face, grab my hair and hit my head on the rail.' There were two witnesses present that separated the staff from the resident." The facility was cited over menu or snack issues, including snacks that were "not suitable for the residents," including one snack offering that consisted of just saltines. The facility also was cited for a number of maintenance issues, including missing faucet knobs, a hole in the wall, malfunctioning fire doors, brown stains on the ceiling, dead insects and dust. DHEC could not verify allegations of a staff member choking a resident, of marijuana found at the facility, of a lack of hygiene products or of the presence then of mold or a staph infection. The report said it could find no documentation of the choking incident and that it found storage containers with adequate hygiene supplies. Staff said they did not know anything of a staph infection, according to the report, and DHEC found no mold in the facility. Workers previously told The News that the mold was sometimes painted over. Some workers told the newspaper that they bought hygiene items themselves to help the children because such products were either in short supply or were locked up. An investigation on Jan. 5 again cited the facility for understaffing, finding a staff of two on one unit's shift and four on another unit's shift that dwindled to one by the end of the shift after workers left. Four of the 19 violations were repeat instances, DHEC reported. "Palmetto Pee Dee Behavioral Health strives to continually improve our quality of care and maximize the safety of our patients," the facility said in its statement. "The facility is licensed by the State of South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) and fully accredited by The Joint Commission, whose rigorous accreditation and clinical quality assessment protocols are widely respected throughout the healthcare industry. We also operate a robust quality improvement program." Mechling said in her response earlier this month that the workers' allegations were "dubious" and said in a statement to the newspaper that the residents' care was the company's highest priority. Children there are referred from a variety of sources, including local disabilities boards, although the center is not a qualified provider of the state Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, and it does not oversee its care. Palmetto Pee Dee is owned by Universal Health Services, the largest facility-based behavioral health provider in the nation, with more than 230 facilities in 37 states, according to its website. UHS facilities, according to its website, outperformed the industry in 2015 in Joint Commission surveys and many were recognized as "Top Performers" in key metrics. Mechling said federal regulations prohibit facility officials from discussing details of the care and treatment of any individual. Source: <http://www.thestate.com/news/state/south-carolina/article127374639.html>

Months after teen dies in Wordsworth treatment home, CEO quietly leaves her job Updated: January 20, 2017 — 6:25 PM EST 9Share Tweet Tumblr Email REPRINTS Popular Stories [Philly march doubled expected size, D.C. rerouted for huge crowd: Live blog replay about 1 hour ago](#) [Delaware River Bridge closed after crack in steel truss is found about 2 hours ago](#) [Avi Steinhardt](#) In addition to the now-shuttered treatment facility, Wordsworth offers educational programs, mental health services and foster care and does case-management work for the city Department of Health and Human Services. by Nancy Phillips, Staff Writer [@PhillipsNancy Email @PhillipsNancy 215-854-2254](#) Nancy Phillips Staff Writer More by Nancy Phillips [Months after teen dies in Wordsworth treatment home, CEO quietly leaves her job Jan 20 More from Nancy Phillips](#) The president and chief executive officer of Wordsworth, a residential treatment center for troubled young people, has quietly left her post, months after a child died in the care of the West Philadelphia facility and the state ordered it closed. Debra Lacks, who led the agency for eight years, was replaced by Diana Ramsay, who was named interim CEO, Wordsworth officials said Friday. Lacks' departure comes three months after [a 17-year-old boy died in a fight with staffers](#) who accused him of stealing an iPod. And it follows the [December arrest of a former staffer](#) who is charged with sexually assaulting three girls in the program. In a terse three-paragraph statement, Wordsworth welcomed Ramsay and made no mention of Lacks or the turmoil that has engulfed the program in recent months. "Debbie is no longer with Wordsworth," said Stephanie Shell, the agency's director of organizational advancement. "She's just no longer with Wordsworth," said board chairman Tom Johnson. "That's all I can really say at this moment." Efforts to reach Lacks were unsuccessful Friday. Ramsay, the interim leader, is a former president and CEO of Woods, a Langhorne-based program for people with behavioral and intellectual disabilities. She could not be reached for comment Friday. In addition to the now-shuttered treatment facility, Wordsworth offers educational programs, mental health services, and foster care, and does case-management work for the city Department of Human Services. The state Department of Human Services ordered the [residential program closed](#) in late October, saying conditions posed "a serious danger to the health and safety of residents." The closure followed the Oct. 13 death of David Hess, 17, of Lebanon, Pa. Hess died after a clash with staffers who went to his room in search of a stolen iPod. Video captured one staffer pushing and shoving Hess in a hallway while escorting him to his room shortly after 8 p.m. In the confrontation that followed, three staffers flipped over his bed and tossed furniture around, according to a report by the state DHS. Hess grew agitated, the report said, and three staffers attempted to restrain him. One held his legs as another punched him repeatedly in the ribs, according to the report. Soon after, the report said, Hess began gasping for breath, saying, "Get off me, I can't breathe." Then, it said, the room fell silent. No one has been charged in connection with his death, which is under investigation by Philadelphia police, the city Medical Examiner's Office, and DHS. James Garrow, a spokesman for the Medical Examiner's Office, said Friday that a report on the cause and manner of death was not yet complete. Officials with the city Department of Human Services have declined to comment on Hess' death while the investigations are underway. In a statement Friday, a spokeswoman for DHS Commissioner Cynthia Figueroa said she supported Wordsworth's leadership and had spoken to Ramsay to offer support. Before ordering the facility to shut down, state officials had repeatedly cited Wordsworth for unsafe building conditions, lapses in training, and instances of improper restraints. Earlier this year, it ordered Wordsworth to step up security and surveillance in the building after the three girls reported that they had been sexually assaulted by staffer Isaac Outten. Outten, 37, is charged with institutional sexual assault, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, corruption of minors, and other crimes. Police say he repeatedly had sex with three girls in the program, ages 15 to 17, luring them to the basement for sex and forcing them to take naked selfies with his iPhone. Source: <http://www.philly.com/philly/news/Wordsworth-teen-dies-treatment-home-CEO-leaves.html>

Madison Township group home license to be revoked after manager charged with patient abuse [Megan Hickey](#) 11:16 PM, Jan 20, 2017 12:02 AM, Jan 21, 2017 Share Article x Can 'Raindrop Procedure' make reading glasses a thing of the past? Madison Twp group home license to be revoked after manager charged with patient abuse Copyright 2016 Scripps Media, Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. Madison Twp group home license to be revoked after manager charged with patient abuse MADISON TWP, Ohio - The Madison Township assisted living facility at the center of patient abuse allegations is in the process of having its license revoked, according to written records provided by The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Hubbard Road Meadows Administrator Alice Ramsey, 54, was arrested and charged with patient abuse on Jan. 13, stemming from a Jan. 3 report of abuse that allegedly sent an 85-year-old patient to the hospital. According to letter provided by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, on Jan. 3, Ramsey "abused a resident resulting in that resident's hospitalization. Adult Protective Services filed a complaint on Jan. 5. According to the letter, staff heard banging in the resident's room. And when staff entered the room the resident "was found to have her head wedged in a nightstand." According to the report, Ramsey also "verbally abused residents by yelling at them." The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services notified Owner Marvin Bruno of plans to revoke the facility's license in a letter dated Jan. 17. In addition to patient abuse, the letter also cited a failure to before adequate background checks on employees, facility violations, failure to list food allergies, dietary requirements and medical and mental health diagnosis, multiple occurrences of patient falls and the failure to provide documentation of training requirements. Madison Township Police told News 5 that the case then took a tragic turn when the victim died on Jan. 17. "Depending on the outcome of the autopsy there absolutely could be further charges coming out," Patrolman Ron Hess told News 5. Since the charges were made public, Hess said multiple current and former employees as well as family members of patients came forward with similar allegations of abuse committed by Ramsey. News 5 spoke with one of the former employees who said she witnessed Ramsey "slap and hit" patients on several occasions. "She was physically and verbally abusive," the employee, who asked not to be named, said. She said she made multiple attempts to alert the facility's owner but nothing changed. "I would come home bawling my eyes out and I didn't know what else I could do," she said. Attempts to contact the owner on Friday were not successful. Ramsey's preliminary hearing is set for January 30 in Painesville Municipal Court.

Madison Township police are requesting that anyone else with information related to this case contact Detective Tim Doyle at 440-428-2115. Source: <http://www.newsnet5.com/news/local-news/oh-lake/madison-twp-group-home-license-to-be-revoked-after-manager-charged-with-patient-abuse>

Ex-foster parent accused of abuse arrested [Story Comments](#) [Print](#) [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) Posted: Saturday, January 21, 2017 11:00 pm **Ex-foster parent accused of abuse arrested** By Duane Barbati Alamogordo Daily News The Santa Fe New Mexican ALAMOGORDO — A 41-year-old former foster care parent was arrested Tuesday after Alamogordo Police Department detectives learned the man allegedly sexually abused a 7-year-old girl in his care, an APD spokesman said. Deputy Police Chief Roger Schoolcraft said Jason Goodman is charged with one count of first-degree felony criminal sexual penetration of a minor under 13 years of age, three counts of second-degree felony sexual contact of a minor under 13 years of age and one count of fourth-degree felony contributing to the delinquency of a minor. Goodman was jailed at the Otero County Detention Center on a \$25,000 no-10 percent bond pending his appearance in court. Schoolcraft said on Nov. 4, 2016 Alamogordo detectives received a New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department intake report regarding the suspected sexual abuse of the girl. He said after detectives received the report, they conducted a lengthy investigation into the suspected sexual abuse allegations. As a result of the investigation, detectives obtained a court warrant for Goodman's arrest, Schoolcraft said. According to court records, the girl had been placed in Goodman's care between March 29, 2016 and May 19, 2016. Goodman allegedly told investigators that he became a foster parent about a year and a half or two years ago, but he quit being a foster parent, according to court records obtained by the Daily News. According to records, investigators learned through two safe house interviews with the girl that Goodman allegedly had the girl massage his feet then he moved the girl's hand up to his private area. During interviews with the girl, investigators learned the abuse occurred between March 2016 and May 2016, records show. The girl allegedly told investigators that Goodman also allegedly molested the girl while they were in his bedroom, according to records. According to court records, the girl told investigators Goodman did yucky things to her almost every night that she was staying at the home. During a safe house interview, the girl allegedly told investigators that she prayed "Dear heavenly father please let me have this nightmare over" while she was staying at the home, according to records. According to records, the girl was moved to another foster home then told her treatment foster mother about the alleged abuse in November 2016. Schoolcraft said he believes CYFD and APD detectives were very thorough in their investigation of the case. "Based on what they learned from the victim, there was enough probable cause to draft an arrest warrant for Mr. Goodman," he said. Source: http://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/ex-foster-parent-accused-of-abuse-arrested/article_37b8d41a-b885-50dc-85dc-0b03dfb6e99b.html

State says Maple Leaf violated policy, workers allege hostile environment Jan. 24, 2017, 11:56 am by [Morgan True](#) [2 Comments](#) Maple Leaf Farm Executive Director Catey Iacuzzi testifies in the Senate Health and Welfare Committee earlier this month. Photo by Elizabeth Hewitt/VTdigger UNDERHILL — A report from the state Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program says unlicensed and uncertified staff at **Maple Leaf Treatment Center** were providing clinical services in violation of state policy. The report released Monday found at least one instance in which a patient who had been under treatment for addiction for five days and hadn't yet been given a treatment plan. In addition, unlicensed staff provided billable hours in violation of state policy, and clinical notes written by unlicensed staff were not reviewed by licensed counselor or doctor, according to the report. On Jan. 15, Maple Leaf was forced to temporarily close due to a large number of vacancies. The inpatient treatment facility is expected to reopen in mid-February if the facility can address staffing deficiencies. Current and former employees say those vacancies are directly related to a hostile work environment. The company, Maple Leaf Treatment Associates, Inc., runs a separate outpatient drug rehabilitation program in Colchester that will continue to operate. Maple Leaf staff was told in early January that during the closure they will be involved in training and projects to improve the facility. Employees will continue to be paid during the temporary closure, company officials say. The Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program forwarded complaints to the Division of Licensure and Protection, which licenses health care facilities. Those complaints, which are not public, triggered the division's "immediate jeopardy standard," meaning they suggested clients were in danger. The Division of Licensure and Protection investigation report was completed Jan. 12 and is expected to be released this week once Maple Leaf has submitted a plan to correct findings in the report, according to Suzanne Leavitt, the assistant director of the division. Leavitt said if Maple Leaf isn't able to correct problems identified in the Division of Licensure and Protection report, the facility could lose its certification and close permanently. She said she's not aware of any facility that has remained open without state certification. Maple Leaf, with 41 inpatient drug treatment beds, accounts for 30 percent of the inpatient beds at treatment centers in Vermont. The Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program has accepted a separate plan from Maple Leaf to increase staffing and reopen after a 30-day closure. Ken Liatsos, the company spokesman, said in a Monday statement that Maple Leaf "has been working diligently and transparently with various Vermont state agencies to ensure that we provide our clients with the best standard of care available." "We are taking, and will take, all appropriate actions to correct any deficiencies," Liatsos said. Maple Leaf CEO Catey Iacuzzi has said staff departures [were part of the normal churn faced by drug rehabilitation programs](#), many of which struggle to retain a qualified workforce. However, five current and former employees told VTdigger that the turnover at Maple Leaf is the result of a hostile work environment. The workers said there was a previous wave of departures from Maple Leaf in June and July, shortly after Dr. Charles Sprague Simonds was hired as clinical director in May. More than two dozen employees have quit in the last six to eight months, they said. The workers, who asked not to be identified for fear of retaliation, said Simonds repeatedly made comments about female clients bodies and made several female staff so uncomfortable that they quit. Iacuzzi has been unwilling to address with Simonds' behavior, they said. In a joint statement on Jan. 9, Iacuzzi and the Maple Leaf Board of directors said they are "aware of these allegations and take them very seriously. Maple Leaf Treatment Center management, under the oversight of the Board of Directors, is investigating all aspects of this situation, and will take appropriate action swiftly pending the results." Maple Leaf's attorney, Thomas Somers, issued a statement in response to a request to interview Simonds. "Certain false and defamatory allegations have been made against Dr. Simonds by anonymous individuals concerning personnel matters at Maple Leaf Treatment Center," Somers wrote. "State agency investigations into Dr. Simonds' conduct have been closed with the finding that the allegations were not substantiated based on the information gathered during the investigations." "Internal Maple Leaf Treatment Center investigations have reached similar conclusions. These allegations against Dr. Simonds have no basis in fact," the statement concludes. Maple Leaf Farm Treatment Center in Underhill. Somers would not say what state agencies he was referring to, or what documentation or evidence there is that the claims made by current and former employees are false and defamatory. Neither the ADAP or DLP investigation reports had been provided to Maple Leaf on Jan. 11 when Somers delivered his statement, according to both agencies. Simonds is a licensed psychologist, and his license is issued and regulated by the Office of Professional Regulation. Officials there said they can't confirm a pending investigation, but currently no action has been taken against Simonds license. OPR has its own prosecuting attorneys and their investigations only become public once charges are brought against a licensee. Simonds was arrested in Cape Elizabeth, Maine, in 2010 and charged with domestic violence assault. Court records show the case was resolved only after Simonds agreed to stay away from his alleged victim and undergo "psychological counseling." The charges were dismissed in 2012. In addition, a former case manager said he was directed to refer clients from Maple Leaf's inpatient program to the company's outpatient program, regardless of whether the person had a different preference or if there was a more convenient location for them to receive those services. The manager said they quit, in part, because they believed the arrangement was unethical. They said they were told to keep referrals in house because Maple Leaf's outpatient program, which opened last summer, was losing money. Inpatient treatment is typically for people with addiction who need time to detox with medical or mental health support services. Outpatient treatment involves regular visits for medication and counseling. Source: <https://vtdigger.org/2017/01/24/state-says-maple-leaf-violated-policy-workers-allege-hostile-environment/>

Child deaths, hundreds of police calls from youth group home prompt discussion at City Council MIKE SIMONS/Tulsa World file [Buy this photo](#) Posted: Tuesday, January 24, 2017 12:00 am | Updated: 3:20 pm, Tue Jan 24, 2017. [Child deaths, hundreds of police calls from youth group home prompt discussion at City Council](#) By Harrison Grimwood Tulsa World TulsaWorld.com | [2 comments](#) Two city councilors are pushing for a discussion after finding that nearly 400 police calls over three years came from a Tulsa group home where authorities recorded a second runaway child death in less than four years from the facility. Councilors Jeannie Cue and Karen Gilbert are seeking the talk "regarding the number of emergency calls to state supported 'group homes,'" according to a Wednesday agenda posted for the Public Works Committee. Gilbert said they are not trying to single out a single facility, but the only group home in the city is Realations Community Services of Oklahoma, according to the state Office of Juvenile System Oversight. "If we have police officers responding to 90 calls in less than six months, then why are we (the city) not putting policies and procedures in place to protect these kids?" Gilbert said. Police responded to 158 calls for service in 2016, 115 calls in 2015 and 119 calls in 2014 at that group home, according to Tulsa Police Department records. About 53 percent of those calls for all three years were for runaways or missing persons. The next most frequent call types — canceled calls and disturbances — made up

about 10 percent and 6 percent of the calls for service, according to police records. “The biggest concern is the last person who died on U.S. 75 ... he was from that home,” Cue told the Tulsa World. [Chase Dakota Bridges, 11](#), was killed Dec. 28 attempting to cross a section of Interstate 244 in west Tulsa sometimes referred to as U.S. 75. A 2010 Subaru hit Bridges at about 6 p.m. that day on the highway near 31st Street. Chase was a resident of Realations — a group home for abused and neglected children who cannot be placed in foster care. Chase had walked away from the facility earlier in the day, according to a previous story. Another resident from the group home, [Christopher Seaton, 11](#), was killed in April 2013 while attempting to cross Interstate 44. Cue also referenced Tulsa residents’ concerns about burglaries and larcenies in the area of Realations, located on the 2000 block of West Skelly Drive. “We’re hoping they (the Department of Human Services) will look at the facility to see if that facility is the proper place for these kids,” Cue said. “If we’ve had two foster children die from auto-pedestrian accidents, are they being properly supervised?” Cue and Gilbert are initiating the discussion about the group home between Tulsa police and the Working in Neighborhoods department. It is scheduled to take place during the 2:30 p.m. Wednesday committee meeting at Room 411 at One Technology Center, located at 175 E. Second St. “That’s what I want to get down to: what can we do to help the group homes keep the children safe?” Gilbert said. “As a city, what role can we play?” Gilbert said she hopes Wednesday’s discussion can lay out what the city and its departments can do to address the safety of the children and the community. Mark Jackson, owner of Realations, said Monday morning he was unaware that his group home was scheduled to be discussed by the City Council. Since Chase’s death, Jackson said Realations assigned an additional staff member to patrol the grounds between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. He said that time frame was the busiest for residents leaving the facility. In a previous interview, Jackson said Chase had walked away the day of his death about 3 p.m. “We’re not a detention center, we’re not a prison,” Jackson said. “We can’t physically stop them from going AWOL.” Part of Realations’ protocol for a runaway is to notify police. Many of the runaway reports are residents who repeatedly leave the facility, Jackson said. Jackson said he is looking to relocate the facility into the country for many reasons, including the two deaths. His company made an offer last Friday on a 100-acre piece of property in Osage County, he said. “Our kids, with what they’ve been through in their lives, have a lot of noise in their heads,” Jackson said in a previous interview. “And I think the rural setting would help to quiet that.” The Osage County property is, “as the crow flies,” about 10 miles from downtown Tulsa, he said. The Department of Human Services’ primary goal in placing youth in a Level D-plus group home such as Realations “is to help youth cope with and control” emotional, behavioral disorders or problems the youth might have through counseling and treatment, DHS spokeswoman Sheree Powell said. Powell stated that Level D-plus facilities are paid a fixed rate of \$134 per day per bed. According to DHS records, two facilities fall under the Realations umbrella, totaling 32 beds. Powell, in a previous statement to the Tulsa World, said the DHS Office of Client Accountability is “investigating the circumstances of this child leaving the group home to establish whether or not the facility followed protocols designed to prevent the child from running away short of locking children down, which we cannot do by state and federal requirements.” Harrison Grimwood 918-581-8369 harrison.grimwood@tulsaworld.com Twitter: @grimwood_hmg Source: http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/child-deaths-hundreds-of-police-calls-from-youth-group-home/article_1136117f-5868-56e8-97df-c1abee8e8d47.html

Lincoln Hills inmate: Guards 'treat the kids there like dogs' [MOLLY BECK](#) mbeck@madison.com Molly Beck | [Wisconsin State Journal](#) 15 hrs ago [8 Buy Now](#) [MOLLY BECK, STATE JOURNAL](#) An inmate at the Lincoln Hills School for Boys juvenile facility, pictured here on Dec. 16, alleges in a column published in the Guardian US he and other inmates were treated like “dogs” by guards at the state’s youth prison. prev next Inmates at the state’s youth prison are routinely placed in solitary confinement for minor offenses, a current inmate and a plaintiff in a lawsuit against the state alleges in a column published Wednesday. “Being in solitary messes you up: you can’t sleep, you feel anxious, and the longer you are there the angrier it makes you feel. I mean, you try sleeping with the light on 24 hours a day, or having to distract yourself in a small, dirty, smelly space,” the inmate listed as “J.J.” wrote in a column [published in the Guardian U.S.](#) “And they give you 30 or 60 days in solitary for whatever – disrespecting staff, running, not even stuff that hurts other people.” A Department of Corrections spokesman declined to comment because of the pending litigation. A spokesman for Gov. Scott Walker did not respond to a request for comment. The inmate, who wrote he has been at Lincoln Hills for about two years, is one of four plaintiffs in a lawsuit brought by the ACLU this week against the state DOC for alleged violations of inmates’ constitutional rights, including the right to live free from cruel and unusual punishment. A former Lincoln Hills guard disputes the inmate’s claims, which appear in the lawsuit. “There are very few incidents other than fighting or battery for which a youth may be sent to security,” said Doug Curtis, who retired in October after 20 years. The two buildings at the prison’s campus with solitary cells are known as “security cottages.” Curtis rejected describing the cells as “solitary confinement.” He said the inmates are removed from the cells frequently and contribute to a negative atmosphere in the security cottages. “Frequently they plug their toilets and flood both their rooms and the halls. They smear feces, cover their cameras, cover their door windows, pound and kick their doors, scream (obscenities) and do everything they can to disrupt the security building,” Curtis said. “Their pounding and noise can be heard hundreds of yards away.” The inmate wrote in the column he was first sent to the Irma facility when he was 15 after getting “in trouble with the law,” but did not say what crime he committed. “I didn’t know they’d be sending me four hours away to Irma, Wisconsin, where I would be surrounded by guards who treat the kids there like dogs,” the inmate wrote, adding he also saw guards beating kids and that he has been sent to the prison’s solitary confinement cells about 10 times. “I’ve spent most of my time at Lincoln Hills in solitary confinement,” the inmate wrote. “Honestly, I feel like the guards intentionally provoke kids to get them to react so they can put them there and not have to worry about them.” But Curtis disputed the inmates’ characterization of the treatment of inmates by guards. Curtis said in an interview Wednesday that the inmates are not routinely kept in the security cottages’ cells for all but one hour out of a day. Like this story? Get local news sent to your inbox I understand and agree that registration on or use of this site constitutes agreement to its user agreement and privacy policy. “It’s determined by the kid’s behavior,” Curtis said of how long stays are. “If they are still wild and combative, well then they’re going to stay there until they calm down. ... If they’re threatening everyone in the world, then we don’t really feel confident in sending them back to their cottage to beat up everyone in there.” The ACLU lawsuit also focuses on the staff’s use of pepper spray. The inmate wrote he has been sprayed five or six times. “One time, I wasn’t cooperating when they tried to take me to solitary, so they pepper-sprayed me,” he wrote. “They do that to a lot of kids, even for nonviolent stuff like refusing a staff order. ... Sometimes they spray it into the cell, sometimes they spray it right into your face. It makes you temporarily blind and hurts really bad.” Curtis said pepper spray is used as a “last resort” and that guards make decisions in response to inmates’ behavior. The ACLU lawsuit comes after two years of state and federal authorities investigating allegations ranging from child abuse to sexual assault to official misconduct at the facility. Source: http://host.madison.com/wsj/news/local/govt-and-politics/lincoln-hills-inmate-guards-treat-the-kids-there-like-dogs/article_7633cdc3-99af-5ded-93f4-5add40dfba77.html

Missouri Valley resident sentenced for sex trafficking minors Jan 26, 2017 Updated Jan 26, 2017 [0](#) Courtesy Pottawattamie County Jail John F. Thomsen prev next On Wednesday, Jan. 25, John F. Thomsen, a 47-year-old resident of Missouri Valley, was sentenced by Chief United States District Court Judge John A. Jarvey to 235 months in prison for coercion and enticement of a minor for sex and for transporting a minor with intent to engage in sexual activity, announced United States Attorney Kevin E. VanderSchel. Thomsen will be required to serve 15 years of supervised release after his prison term. Thomsen pleaded guilty to the two counts on Sept. 1, 2016. The guilty pleas and sentencing were the result of an investigation into the transportation of minor females from Arkansas to Missouri Valley so the minors could engage in sexual acts. The investigation showed Thomsen had met a 14-year-old female while working at a group home in Arkansas. After leaving his group home employment, Thomsen used social media to keep in contact with the minor female and convince her to live with him, and his wife, Trudy Thomsen, in Missouri Valley. The Thomsens traveled to Arkansas and drove the minor to Missouri Valley, where the Thomsens engaged in various sexual acts with the girl. After the minor was returned to the group home, John Thomsen again contacted her via social media and arranged to have her, and a second minor female, transported back to Missouri Valley for sexual activities. Co-defendant Trudy Thomsen is pending sentencing in the Southern District of Iowa. This investigation was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation Child Exploitation Task Force, Arkansas State Police, Missouri Valley Police Department, Council Bluffs Police Department, Omaha Police Department, La Vista Police Department, and the Harrison County Attorney’s Office. The case was prosecuted by the United States Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of Iowa. Source: http://www.enterprisepub.com/movalley/news/missouri-valley-resident-sentenced-for-sex-trafficking-minors/article_3d830d02-e418-11e6-bb06-07d11a3624ac.html

UPDATED: Alleged rapes occurred at Lakes Homes group homes in DL — Administrator says all employees undergo state background checks | Detroit Lakes Online **UPDATED:** Alleged rapes occurred at Lakes Homes group homes in DL — Administrator says all employees undergo state background checks By [Paula Quam and Nathan Bowe](#) Today at 3:09 p.m. AddThis Sharing Buttons Share to FacebookShare to TwitterShare to RedditShare to EmailShare to Copy Link The administrator of Lakes Homes and Program Development, which operates a number of homes for developmentally disabled people in the region, says

all employees are subjected to background checks prior to being hired. That includes two former employees, each accused of raping a vulnerable woman, in incidents that allegedly occurred at two different Lakes Homes group homes in Detroit Lakes. The two men are Jallah Sallah Kollie of West Fargo and Varfee Kamara of Fargo. Both face felony rapes charges in Becker County District Court. "We had done a background study prior to their employment and they passed the background study," said Lakes Homes Executive Director Tom Reiffenberger. "We had no information to believe there was an issue with them." Varfee had worked for Lakes Homes only a few months, and Kollie for less than a year, he said. Reiffenberger said an earlier version of this story, posted on the Detroit Lakes Online website, incorrectly stated that Lakes Homes failed to do background checks on employees. It's true that Lakes Homes had been cited once by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, which regulates group homes, for not running a background check on an employee, but that incident did not involve Kollie or Kamara, he said. Rather it involved an employee who got married, changed their name, and failed to undergo a new background check under the new name. A background check is required by the state for all group home applicants, and the state conducts the study, then provides the results to the group home operator prior to an applicant being hired, Reiffenberger said. On Jan. 6, DHS issued its findings to Reiffenberger, that stated the company "did not comply with background study requirements" in that case as is required by state law. Lakes Homes is being fined \$200 for the violation. According to the investigation memorandum filed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, one of the alleged rapes happened at a Lakes Home group home at 920 Summit Ave. The employee in question, Jallah Sallah Kollie, 39, of 219 Second Ave. W., West Fargo, was charged in Becker County District Court with felony counts of first- and third-degree criminal sexual conduct — victim mentally impaired. He remains in the Todd County Jail. Authorities responded to the group home on Sept. 13 after another employee reported walking in on Kollie and the victim, who was naked, in the bathroom. According to the DHS report, the victim is a vulnerable adult who has a "lack of understanding of sexuality" but is somebody "who does not need assistance in personal hygiene care." The report states that when the other employee saw blood on the victim's buttocks, they told Kollie to leave and began questioning the victim on what had happened. The victim explained in graphic, childlike detail of an assault that involved raping several parts of her body and that after she told him to "get out of here", Kollie told her to "shut up" and just "be touched". Kollie denied having any sexual contact with the victim, but authorities say a sexual assault kit administered at the hospital points to him. The location of the second alleged rape was at 405 E. North Street in Detroit Lakes, which is a group home also run by Lakes Homes and Program Development. The alleged victim in the case resided at "The Willow Home" at the time, but was part of a cleaning crew with the suspect, Varfee Kamara, 30, of 2602 18th St. S., Fargo. He has been charged in Becker County District Court with felony counts of first- and third-degree criminal sexual conduct — victim mentally impaired. This incident reportedly occurred June 17 when, according to the the complaint filed in Becker County District Court, he allegedly followed the mentally impaired woman into a bathroom at the group home and sexually assaulted her. The DHS report in this cases stated the vulnerable adult was "likely to seek or cooperate in an abusive situation" and that she had a history of past sexual abuse. The report indicated that both the victim and Kamara testified that the vulnerable adult instigated the sexual situation, but it also states staff is prohibited from any sexual contact with residents. Kamara denied any contact with the woman, but a sexual assault kit allegedly pointed to him as the perpetrator. Kamara was in trouble with the law at least three times after the date of the alleged rape. He was arrested by a Hawley police officer after being clocked driving over 100 mph west on Highway 10. He was arrested in Fargo with a group of other men caught stealing from parked cars, and he was wanted for "criminal conspiracy" in the Fargo-Moorhead area, according to Valley News Live. Reiffenberger said the two accused men do not represent the excellent employees at Lakes Homes. "We believe we do a very good service, we try hard and we have very good employees," Reiffenberger said. "We do a very good job with training ... it's a bad situation and we understand that, but that's not what Lakes Homes is all about." Marked history This isn't the first time Lakes Homes and Program Development has been in the news. According to a story filed by MPR News, a state investigation into the death of a vulnerable adult in Detroit Lakes found that the facility, Lakes Homes, failed to perform CPR when staff found the resident unresponsive in March of 2016. The MPR report states that in an interview with management, the staff said one of them told the other not to perform CPR because the vulnerable adult was already "not alive" and was "already gone." He was not deceased at that point, however - he died at a hospital shortly after the incident. Investigators in that case found evidence of neglect and that nursing staff "always waited too long" to get medical help for that resident, who staff said was curled up in a ball in pain on the floor in the hour prior to his death. The MPR report goes on to say that in August of 2015, the state issued another investigative memorandum for Lakes Homes, which found neglect and maltreatment in response to another death in one of its homes. According to MPR, "In that incident, staff took the vulnerable adult to a picnic and saw the vulnerable adult appeared sweaty, pale and gray. Staff took the person back to the group home then to the emergency room where the vulnerable adult was pronounced dead. That investigation determined staff knew the resident was severely ill prior to the death and neglected to seek medical attention immediately." Lakes Homes provides adult foster care to roughly 20 different homes around Detroit Lakes, Mahanomen and Fergus Falls. Source: <http://www.dl-online.com/news/crime/4206511-suspected-group-home-rapists-go-unchecked-lakes-homes-cited-failing-do-background>

State: Patients reported verbal abuse at Maple Leaf Jan. 29, 2017, 6:12 pm by [Morgan True](#) [Leave a Comment](#) Maple Leaf Treatment Center Executive Director Catey Iacuzzi appears before legislators. File photo by Elizabeth Hewitt/VTDigger UNDERHILL — State investigators have identified a number of violations at Maple Leaf Treatment Center. The most serious are unreported complaints from clients who say they were verbally abused by a staff member at Maple Leaf, according to a report released last week. Residential treatment centers such as Maple Leaf are required to report complaints of abuse to the state Adult Protective Services program within 48 hours, but multiple complaints of abuse from patients, dating back to July, were never reported. Maple Leaf is a drug rehabilitation program with 41 inpatient beds. It accounts for 30 percent of inpatient beds at treatment centers in Vermont. Earlier this month, [the facility was forced to close temporarily due to staff vacancies](#). Investigators at the Division of Licensure and Protection, which regulates health care facilities under the Adult Protective Services program, say they identified seven instances in which "suspected, reported or alleged" incidents of "abuse, neglect or exploitation" were not reported to state officials. The division also found that clients at Maple Leaf did not receive information about their rights; staff did not receive the proper training; and the program was not keeping records of whether the facility was properly staffed. Maple Leaf employees told investigators staffing was insufficient. Maple Leaf has submitted a plan of correction to state officials, which has been accepted. The facility has 60 days to implement the plan. If the plan is not implemented within that period, the facility could lose its certification and be forced to close permanently. A spokesman for Maple Leaf did not respond to a request for comment Thursday after the report was released. Neither did Executive Director Catey Iacuzzi or multiple board members. One member, reached by phone, referred VTDigger to the company spokesperson. Maple Leaf Treatment Center is in Underhill. Ken Liatsos, the spokesperson for Maple Leaf, said in an email Wednesday that the board, which met Tuesday night, is "intimately involved in ensuring that (Maple Leaf) regains a stable footing, and they will continue to meet regularly." Liatsos said the board is "flat out" and members would not speak to a reporter until the "end of next month." The state's report does not identify the person or people alleged to have acted abusively toward clients. However, five current and former staffers told VTDigger that complaints at Maple Leaf centered on the behavior of Clinical Director Dr. Charles Sprague Simonds, who was hired in May, about the time complaints of abuse identified by state investigators began. The workers, who asked not to be identified for fear of retaliation, said Iacuzzi did nothing to rein in Simonds' alleged behavior when staff reported it to her, and would instead defend him. State investigators reported that staff who witnessed abusive behavior toward clients did not report it to state officials as required. Simonds would frequently make remarks about the bodies of female staff and clients, the workers said. Two female former staffers said Simonds made them so uncomfortable they quit. "I still have nightmares," one said. "He used physical proximity to staff and patients to keep them where he wanted so he could speak with them." After VTDigger made multiple attempts to reach Simonds over several weeks, Maple Leaf's attorney, Thomas Somers, replied with the following statement: "Certain false and defamatory allegations have been made against Dr. Simonds by anonymous individuals concerning personnel matters at Maple Leaf Treatment Center. State agency investigations into Dr. Simonds' conduct have been closed with the finding that the allegations were not substantiated based on the information gathered during the investigations." "Internal Maple Leaf Treatment Center investigations have reached similar conclusions. These allegations against Dr. Simonds have no basis in fact," the statement concludes. Somers declined to answer follow-up questions asking what state agencies he was referring to, or what documentation or evidence there is that the claims made by current and former employees are "false and defamatory." Two state agencies investigating Maple Leaf said they had not provided the company with their findings at the time Somers sent his statement. According to the state report released last week, a Maple Leaf administrator interviewed by state investigators said that in May and July someone on staff reported "harassment and unprofessional conduct" by a co-worker. Around that time, staff reported that the same co-worker "used a sexual term towards a resident." The administrator said the allegations were investigated internally by the human resources department, which determined the complaints were "boiled down through the gossip vine and had zero concerns," according to the report. One person being treated at the facility told investigators during an unannounced visit in December that a staff person asked "inappropriate and unprofessional" questions about the client's history of trauma and abuse that left the client feeling

"violated," according to the Division of Licensing and Protection report. The incident was not reported to Adult Protective Services by a staff person who witnessed it or by Iacuzzi, who told investigators she was aware of the incident. Iacuzzi told investigators the client was not interviewed to obtain a statement about the "inappropriate" questioning. Investigators found Maple Leaf has a written policy that complaints of abuse should be vetted by the clinical director or an on-call physician before being reported, which violates the Vermont Abuse Reporting Requirements, according to the report. When staff made female clients, who reported Simonds was commenting on their bodies, aware of Maple Leaf's grievance process in July, Iacuzzi told workers during a staff meeting that they should resign if they planned to encourage clients to complain, according to two people who were present at the meeting. "You have these women coming from backgrounds where if they're being sexually harassed by a man who has power over them, they might need someone to let them know it's all right to say something," said one former staffer. The report confirms that two grievances were filed by people being treated at the facility in July who reported "inappropriate and unprofessional" behavior by someone on staff. Iacuzzi told investigators that she received the grievances but did not respond in writing to the people who filed them, as required by Maple Leaf's written policies, according to the report. Source: <https://vtdigger.org/2017/01/29/state-patients-reported-verbal-abuse-maple-leaf/>

Tucson foster-home worker is facing federal child-porn charges By Caitlin Schmidt Arizona Daily Star Caitlin Schmidt Jan 31, 2017 Updated 1 hr ago Courtesy of Pima County Sheriff's Department Taylor Ray Freeman — Credit: Courtesy of Pima County Sheriff's Department A Tucson group foster home worker has been arrested on federal charges of distributing child pornography, records show. Taylor Ray Freeman, 27, was booked into the Pima County jail on Jan. 10 and spent less than 24 hours in custody before being extradited by federal authorities to an undisclosed location, said Deputy Cody Gress, a Pima County Sheriff's Department spokesman. In a Dec. 27 online chat, Freeman, using the screen name "AMERICANPSYCHO06," told an undercover police officer in Australia that he had a "sexual interest in children," and said he had "naughty" pictures to trade, according to a complaint filed in federal court here. Freeman emailed the officer a photo of an underage girl on a bed with her genitalia exposed, and made obscene comments about what he'd like to do to her, the complaint shows. Agents with Homeland Security Investigations tracked the email to his computer and on Jan. 10 a federal warrant was served at his home. Agents seized a smart phone, an internal hard drive, revealing photos and videos depicting child pornography, according to the complaint. It said Freeman told investigators he used his email address to send and receive pornography. Freeman was arrested by the sheriff's department that day and held in jail until he could be transferred to federal custody, Gress said. On Jan. 11, U.S. Magistrate Judge Bernardo P. Velasco signed a detention order, saying Freeman would remain in federal detention until his trial. Velasco accepted the recommendation of Pretrial Services, which said there was a "serious risk" Freeman wouldn't appear at trial, the order shows. Arizona Department of Child Safety records show Freeman was hired in 2013 by local nonprofit TMM Family Services, which provides social services outreach. TMM's executive director, Donald Strauch, did not immediately respond to the Star's inquiry as to whether Freeman had contact with children. TMM provides shelter services for up to 38 children ages 3 to 17, according to an Arizona Department of Economic Security license issued in 2011. Contact reporter Caitlin Schmidt at cschmidt@tucson.com or 573-4191. Twitter: @caitlinschmidt Source: http://tucson.com/news/local/watchdog/tucson-group-home-employee-faces-federal-child-porn-charges/article_cd529a58-a727-5ac9-9018-bdd0c4608612.html

Ex-SBU football player is charged for beating at group home Abuse charges filed against former SBU football player Abuse charges filed against former SBU football player Abuse charges filed against former SBU football player Share Video Playlist Next Up Ex - SBU football player faces assault charge 00:00 01:50 [Abuse charges filed against former SBU football player Ex - SBU football player faces assault charge](#) By reporter Linda Russell and videographer Tim Leimkuhler, KY3 News | Posted: Wed 11:01 AM, Feb 01, 2017 | Updated: Wed 6:12 PM, Feb 01, 2017 BOLIVAR, Mo. (KY3) - A former all-America Southwest Baptist University football player now faces charges after being accused of beating a boy at a group home outside Bolivar last summer. Prosecutors charged ViaVia Manuma with one count of child abuse and one count of first-degree assault. Detectives say they became aware of the beating in mid-January from a video shared on Facebook. SBU dismissed Manuma and another student on Tuesday after its own investigation found it violated its Code of Conduct for students. Investigators say the incident at a group home near Bolivar happened July 17, 2016. Manuma was an employee at that group home. That video shows a man punching a young man in the group home run by Home Court Advantage. It contracts with the he state Children's Division to provide residential treatment programs for children with special needs. That video prompted an investigation. A Polk County detective said in a probable cause statement that the video showed Manuma fighting with a teenager, later identified as a Home Court Advantage resident. The detective said he saw Manuma physically struggling and hitting the boy. The detective said he saw the teenager struck twice in the face, possibly becoming unconscious. The detective also wrote in the probable cause statement that he observed a second staff member videotaping the assault appeared to kick the child in the head. The investigator said, when the boy regained consciousness, a third staff member and Manuma helped the boy to his feet. That is when the video ends. The detective noted someone in the background of the video is laughing and making statements such as "oh yeah" and "how do you like that sh**." The probable cause statement says, during an interview with a detective, the teenager said he was attacked by Manuma and two other men. The boy says he was advised to stay in a room he was in until medications were completely distributed to all residents. The boy told investigators he wanted to go to his room anyway. The teenager says that is when he was grabbed by Manuma. The boy told investigators he pulled away and went into the bathroom. The boy then says Manuma pushed him into a bathtub. That is when the boy says he began to fight back, grabbing a shower rod, the probable cause statement says. The boy said he then swung that shower rod at Manuma. The boy said that is when Manuma struck him several times. The second man then kicked him in the head. The boy says he then stopped fighting. Staff then escorted him to his room and provided him an icepack. The detective say he attempted to interview ViaVia Manuma, but he said he would not speak without an attorney being present. A reporter contacted Manuma on Monday. In a Facebook message, he said "the kid was threaten(ing) to kill the staff and was looking for a weapon." He also said, "It was my fault for even touch (ing) the kid but it was a quick reaction from my part." After a reporter starting asking state officials about the video, which was posted on Facebook and shared with reporters on Monday, Gov. Eric Greitens and other state officials held a news conference in Jefferson City late Monday afternoon. They said they've been aware of the video since last week and have special teams investigating its circumstances. "I saw this video. It is deeply disturbing," said Governor Greitens. "Both as your governor and as a father, I can tell you, we will not stand for this. It is doubly disturbing, because it appears to have taken place in a facility that was responsible for the protection and care of some of our most vulnerable children." Tim Decker, director of Missouri's Children's Division said state investigators worked through the weekend to ensure all the kids at the home near Bolivar were safe and that the alleged abusers were removed. The Home Court Advantage facility houses 64 children. Decker said the company has had contracts with the state for many years. Southwest Baptist University officials said Monday that they were aware of the video and were cooperating with law enforcement. They said they also conducted their own investigation. "The University acted swiftly and respectfully upon receiving information last week related to the incident, resulting in the immediate contacting of authorities. In this, as with all allegations of student misconduct, it is imperative that we follow our internal processes and procedures," said President Pat Taylor. "This resulted in the dismissal of two students from our University." The two other staff members named in the probable cause statement also were football players. No charges against them showed up on Wednesday on Missouri Casenet, the online record of court cases for the state. Manuma was named a Division II all-American on Tuesday. If he's convicted, he faces a prison sentence of at least five years. An email message sent to his attorney, a public defender, had not been answered by early Wednesday evening. Earlier Wednesday, SBU put out this statement after the charges were filed: "The alleged incident related to the video was not connected to Southwest Baptist University or any University-sanctioned activity. "The alleged incident related to the video did not occur on the Southwest Baptist University campus. "It is our understanding that the individuals related to the incident in the video were employed by Home Court Advantage. Their employment was not through or associated with SBU. "On the morning of Tuesday, January 24, 2017, SBU administration was made aware of a video of an off-campus incident. Immediate and appropriate actions were taken that same morning, including communications with law enforcement and a hot-line phone call made to the State of Missouri Department of Social Services Children's Division. SBU cooperated with law enforcement. SBU also cooperated with the Children's Division. University policies also were followed as to the individuals allegedly involved." Source: <http://www.ky3.com/content/news/Ex-Southwest-Baptist-football-player-charged-for-videotaped-beating-at-group-home-412430853.html>

A teacher accused of having sex with a female student at a school for troubled youth is out of job A Pennsylvania teacher is out of a job as the case of institutional sexual assault ramps up against her. Twenty-eight-year-old Nina Scott was fired in December after accusations surfaced that she had illicit sexual contact with a 16-year-old female student at a school for youths with emotional and behavioral issues from February to October in 2016. Scott now faces 34 counts each of institutional sexual assault of a minor and corruption of minors, [according to Philly.com](#). She was arrested Wednesday. Some of the alleged correspondence between Scott and the teen has shown up in the criminal complaint. Scott allegedly exchanged 30 letters with the student. In one conversation,

Scott is said to referred to her bed as “our bed.” In another, she referred to her 2-year-old child as “our baby girl.” In yet another, she said she was “rolling over in [her] bed and missing [the student] because she was not there.” Police also said that Scott often signed the letters “Pretty.” RELATED: [Yet another teacher has been accused of having sex with a student — what she called him is something else](#) The student’s journal also made clear references to Scott, calling her “future wife,” “the love of my life” and “good in bed.” Ad by Kleenex Be ready to care for all of life’s moments with the gentle touch of Kleenex. Save 50¢ now! Get coupons and special offers on Kleenex products today and be ready for all of life’s moments. Scott and the student allegedly had sexual contact several times at the teacher’s apartment, in her car and in the classroom at the Village, the school for troubled youth. “The mission of the Village is to promote the healing of the spirits of children, families and communities broken by trauma including violence, neglect, addiction, poverty, mental illness, racism and other serious societal problems,” the Village describes its mission [on its website](#). The relationship came to light after the student left the school. Staff members at Mid-Atlantic Youth Services found the teen’s journal and reported it to police. The teen said that the relationship began when she gave Scott a note saying, “How would you feel if I kissed you?” The teen also asked if Scott would tell anyone. At first, Scott and her legal team denied that a sexual relationship had taken place. They later admitted that there was a relationship. Scott declined comment when she appeared outside of court and was asked if she had sex with a minor. WTXF/screenshot RELATED: [Teacher arrested in crazy sex scandal with student case has entered her plea](#) The Radnor Police Superintendent called Scott’s alleged actions “downright disgusting.” “As a parent and as a police officer for 36 years. It never ceases to amaze me when you put children in the care of a position such as a teacher, and they violate that trust,” William Colarulo said. Scott had been working at the school since October 2016. Source: <http://rare.us/story/a-teacher-accused-of-having-sex-with-a-female-student-at-a-school-for-troubled-youth-is-out-of-job/>

State says Logan County group home staff taught kids to get high State: West Liberty group home workers injured, got high with kids [local](#) By [Katherine Collins](#) - Staff Writer [...](#) Posted: 5:55 a.m. Friday, February 03, 2017 The state has revoked a West Liberty group home’s license following several alleged violations against staff members, including injuring children and showing them how to “get high.” The Adriel School, which houses and teaches children with behavioral issues from across Southwest and Central Ohio, plans to appeal the loss of its license from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. But [CEO Todd Hanes said](#) it might shut down its residential program anyway. RELATED: [Fights lead to 9 juvenile arrests at Adriel group home in Logan Co.](#) “At this point I think we do need to take a hard look at what our future is and does that include residential,” Hanes said. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services sent an 11-page letter dated Jan. 24 to Adriel saying it had determined the group home hadn’t complied with several state regulations. The letter, obtained by the Springfield News-Sun, alleges several incidents were caught on video in February 2016, including a staff member mixing cough medicine and soda. The video appears to show the staff member and three children drinking the mixture “for a ‘high,’” the document says. Related [State: West Liberty group home workers injured, got high with kids](#) A state agency has revoked the license for the Adriel facility in West Liberty. JEFF GUERINI/STAFF READ MORE: [Adriel School under state, county investigation](#) In the same month, another video appears to show a staff member crushing pills and showing the children how to make a straw from paper bills, before snorting the crushed pills with three children, according to the state’s letter. “We dealt with it when it happened,” Hanes said of these incidents. “These employees were held accountable. They were terminated. These were unacceptable things that happened here.” A child also sustained a broken wrist during restraint that wasn’t treated medically until the next day, the state’s letter says, despite the child’s complaints. A former employee at Adriel, Debbie Roberts, said that behavior doesn’t surprise her. “It wasn’t the kids that were shocking, it was the other employees and the supervisors and the things that went on that I saw personally that were not OK,” she said. DETAILS: [Spike in police calls to youth home challenges community](#) Roberts worked nights in the home in 2015 and said she was fired after she tried to come forward about what she saw as possible violations. “I blame the people at the very top,” she said. “And I think that Adriel, if it’s going to have a future, needs to get back to their roots.” Jon Keeling, spokesman for Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, said in an email that the safety and security of the young people who live at this location are the state’s first priority. “Our inspectors take this responsibility very seriously, and as a result of their investigation a determination was made to revoke this location’s license,” he said. “As is protocol, Adriel has 30 days to appeal.” Adriel had previously developed a corrective action plan for re-certification that was implemented Feb. 1, 2016. The state’s letter also cites a physical abuse report of one child that was substantiated by Clermont County Children Services in March 2016. A July 19, 2016, complaint alleged a staff member showed two children a video of men engaging in a sex act together, according to the state’s letter. EARLIER COVERAGE: [Police calls to youth center nearly double](#) Another citation against Adriel was that children weren’t allowed to attend religious services when requested. Hanes doesn’t deny the letter’s accuracy, but he said all situations were addressed and new policies have been put in place to prevent them from happening again. “Our defense is not that they didn’t happen,” he said. “Our defense is that they happened, they’re unacceptable and absolutely not tolerable.” The board will discuss if the group home should close, he said, to focus on its foster care division. West Liberty Police Chief Shane Oelker said his department frequently responds to the group home and he’s glad its operations are being examined. “There’s obviously some changes that need to be made,” he said. Hanes took over as CEO of Adriel in October 2015. Before then, the West Liberty campus was riddled with complaints from the community and police department, mostly about runaways. But so far this year, there has been runaways and large fights again. Staying with the story The Springfield News-Sun has provided extensive coverage of problems at the Adriel School for more than three years, including stories digging into the number of police calls to the group home and concerns of neighbors. Source: <http://www.mydaytondailynews.com/news/crime-law/state-west-liberty-group-home-workers-injured-got-high-with-kids/sVpJeWV7A6Liopaq79TNwL/>

Ex-official at Minn. treatment center who sexually assaulted patient had extensive criminal history The incident underscores serious gaps that still persist in Minnesota’s system for screening thousands of caregivers and other staffers who care for vulnerable adults and children. By [Chris Serres](#) Star Tribune February 2, 2017 — 11:57pm, Star Tribune A police photo of Bruce Biddlecome, age 42, of St. Paul. Text size [share tweet email](#) Print more Share on: [Share on LinkedIn](#) [Share on Google+](#) [Share on Pinterest](#) Copy shortlink: Purchase: [Order Reprint](#) In 2013, a recovering methamphetamine addict with an extensive criminal history — including a charge for engaging in prostitution — was hired to run one of the largest chemical dependency treatment centers in the state. The decision would have dire consequences. After being hired, Bruce Biddlecome threatened a female patient and coerced her to have sex with him at Douglas Place Treatment Center in East Grand Forks, Minn. Early in the morning on Christmas Eve of 2014, the woman awoke in her bedroom to find Biddlecome “petting her face and stroking her hair.” After promising the patient an “early Christmas present,” Biddlecome pulled down her shorts and sexually assaulted her, according to state and local law enforcement reports. Advertisement: Replay Ad Ads by ZINC 3 Biddlecome, 42, was sentenced to five months in jail for sexual abuse of a vulnerable adult, and now the patient is suing Douglas Place and its parent company for negligent hiring and supervision. The incident underscores serious gaps that still persist in Minnesota’s system for screening tens of thousands of caregivers and other staff who care for vulnerable adults and children at state-licensed treatment centers. A long-touted plan for automating and improving criminal background checks is still being rolled out statewide nearly three years after the Legislature approved it. A spokeswoman for the Minnesota Department of Human Services said the rollout is nearly complete, and most providers should be on the new system by the end of this month. Meanwhile, fines for violations are often minimal. In sworn depositions filed this week in Ramsey County District Court, executives for the treatment center’s parent company, Meridian Behavioral Health of New Brighton, admitted they hired Biddlecome as executive director despite knowing about his guilty plea for prostitution. Biddlecome said Meridian’s chief executive “thanked me for my honesty” when he confessed to paying \$100 for a prostitute at a hotel. “I was an open book,” said Biddlecome, who also had a previous conviction for felony vehicle theft and a charge for misdemeanor assault with a deadly weapon before he moved here from California. “I said, ‘Look, there are some things in my background that you need to be aware of,’ and they appreciated that.” A spokesman for Meridian declined to answer questions about the case. The new job placed Biddlecome in a position of authority at Douglas Place, an 85-bed residential treatment center. He could enter patients’ rooms, take them on trips alone in his personal vehicle, and even change the surveillance cameras, records show. After the assault, the patient told state investigators that Biddlecome threatened to send her “back to prison” if she did not comply with his demands for sex, according to a state investigative report. Following the Christmas Eve incident, the patient left a handwritten note on her bed describing what happened and then provided police with a napkin with Biddlecome’s bodily fluids. Police later made a match to his DNA sample, and staff found condoms when they cleaned out Biddlecome’s desk, records show. State investigators concluded that Biddlecome had sex with the patient “on more than one occasion,” and immediately disqualified him from working in state-licensed programs. “It’s clear that he ... had unfettered power,” said Roberta Opheim, state ombudsman for mental health and developmental disabilities. “It would have been very hard for a client to fight against that level of power.” Prostitution sting In a recent interview, Biddlecome denied that he threatened or coerced the patient and said Meridian officials never told him state law prohibits facility staff from having sexual contact with patients. Biddlecome recalled signing a packet of documents at his job orientation, which may have included information about abuse of vulnerable adults, but said he never actually read them before signing. “I should have known

better but ... I'm a guy and sometimes you're not always thinking straight," he said. "I knew what I was doing was unethical, but I didn't know it was something that I would be charged with — and would have to do jail time." This was not Biddlecome's first encounter with the law. In 2012, he responded to a posting on Backpage.com advertising a "fun and relaxing time with a sexy and flirty girl next door." Biddlecome arranged a meeting with a woman who turned out to be a decoy police officer at a Days Inn in Maplewood, where he placed \$100 on the nightstand and began to undress. Police officers entered the room and arrested him, according to a criminal complaint. Biddlecome would plead guilty to loitering with intent to participate in prostitution, a misdemeanor. But that did not appear to dissuade Meridian from hiring him. In testimony in the Ramsey County lawsuit, Biddlecome said he told Meridian's president and chief executive, Fran Sauvageau, of the prostitution case. "[Sauvageau] said that thanks for telling him ... but we wouldn't have to speak about it again," Biddlecome said. The problems at Douglas Place went beyond the rape allegations. In a recent deposition, a former counselor described a facility that had become chaotic and unsafe during Biddlecome's tenure. Patrick Plemel said people were bringing drugs into the facility in pizza delivery boxes, and that others were entering the facility at night and taping drugs to the garbage dumpster. Plemel said no one questioned why Biddlecome was taking a female patient on unaccompanied trips outside the facility. "It was a madhouse," Plemel said. During a licensing review in March 2015, the state Department of Human Services cited the facility for 33 violations and placed its license on conditional status. The facility was fined \$200 for each background study violation, a total of just \$600, records show. As for Biddlecome, who has a wife and two children, he said he is trying to rebuild his life and put the abuse conviction behind him. He works at an oil-change shop in St. Paul and has been "clean and sober" for more than 14 years, he said. "I believe in second chances. I can tell you that I'm not seeing prostitutes, you know what I mean," he said. "You learn from your mistakes and your experiences." Twitter: @chrisserrres Source: <http://www.startribune.com/man-who-sexually-assaulted-patient-at-minn-treatment-center-had-extensive-criminal-history/412625193/>

Unregulated transfer of children's guardianship advances despite safety fears ERIN LORANGER erin.loranger@helenair.com Feb 4, 2017 Updated Feb 4, 2017 0 +1 Roger Webb +1 TownNews.com Content Exchange HELENA — A bill allowing the care of children to be transferred from a parent to someone else via power of attorney passed second reading in the Senate Friday. An [investigative report](#) in 2013 by Reuters on unregulated private re-homing networks revealed that children were being passed around to new families without any oversight. As a result, many states have banned the transfer of custody via power of attorney to stop private adoptions from circumventing state foster care. Sen. Roger Webb, R-Billings, wants to make it easier to transfer guardianship without state interference. Webb said Senate Bill 117 would allow a faith-based organization to temporarily care for a child if a parent voluntarily asked for help. Democratic senators said the bill could allow a child to be transferred to a stranger with no accountability. The Foundation for Government Accountability asked Webb to carry the bill in 2015, where it died on the Senate floor. Senate Bill 117 is the revival of that legislation, which passed second reading 30 to 19 on Friday. Webb said the bill would allow the Foundation for Government Accountability to take in children via power of attorney. The [website](#) for its Safe Families program says children are in its temporary custody for an average of six weeks, but there isn't a time limit on if or when a child must be returned to a parent. Power of attorney allows people to go around a legal adoption, which requires a court and vetting of adoptive or foster families. A power-of-attorney document is one piece of notarized paper that declares the child to be in the care of someone else. It isn't filed anywhere and, as reported by Reuters, acts more like a receipt. While organizations like Safe Families screen volunteer families, there isn't a consistent process to make sure all parents are subject to the same standards. It's also impossible for Child and Family Services to monitor whether those children are at risk of being abused or neglected. During discussion on the floor, Webb said the foster-care system is broken and his bill provides a safe alternative. "It gives a faith-based organization an opportunity to help these people," he said. "We're not asking for help from the state." Specific cases gone wrong in the Reuters investigation were mentioned on the floor by Democrats, who strongly oppose the bill. One family was struggling to raise Quita, a child they adopted from Liberia. The Puchalla family posted an ad online and a few weeks later drove from Wisconsin to a mobile-home park in Illinois to hand off Quita. The only paperwork was a notarized statement transferring guardianship. The Reuters investigation later found that Nicole Eason, who took guardianship of Quita, lost custody of her two biological children after she was found to be violent. Nicole and her husband Calvin Eason were also accused of sexually abusing the children they babysat, although no charges were filed. On the first night Quita stayed with the Easons, she was asked to sleep in their bed where Nicole slept naked. When the family called to check up on Quita, they couldn't reach the Easons, and she hadn't shown up at the school she was supposed to attend. The Puchalla family called the police, who located Quita in New York and took her out of the Easons' custody. Law enforcement didn't take any action to stop the Easons from using online networks to take in another child. In one case, Nicole Eason and a man took custody of a 10-year-old child in a motel parking lot. That man was later sent to prison for trading child pornography. Sen. Jen Gross, D-Billings, said similar situations could unfold in Montana if SB117 takes effect. She said the bill doesn't implement any of the safeguards and regulations used by the Department of Health and Human Services. "No background checks. No requirement for a home check either before or during the temporary transfer of custody," she said. "We could very well call this bill legalizing parking-lot abandonment," Gross said. Sen. Dick Barrett, D-Missoula, had similar concerns that one organization having a screening and background process doesn't mean other organizations or individuals will hold themselves to the same standard. "My understanding of the role of the faith-based group is that it would be providing something of a safeguard to make sure these transfers of custody were not made improperly, but in fact, in the bill, there is no provision for any safeguard of that kind," Barrett said. Shannon McDonald, deputy chief of legal counsel at DPHHS, said the bill is dangerous without regulations. "This bill would really take us in the opposite direction," she said. Webb said he believes the foster-care caseload would go down by 25 percent if his legislation passes, but McDonald said there hasn't been any evidence introduced to support his claim. Sen. Mary Caferro, D-Helena, said the legislation is coming forward at a time when the Legislature should be reforming Child and Family Services, not making it more difficult to monitor the safety of children in Montana. While Webb pointed out the large number of children in foster care in Montana, Caferro said the high number isn't necessarily a sign of a bad system. "It could be that state workers are doing a better job of keeping kids safe and removing them from a dangerous situation," she said. Source: http://www.kpvi.com/news/national_news/unregulated-transfer-of-children-s-guardianship-advances-despite-safety-fears/article_a008ac3e-a10c-574a-9a7b-0c41da10791f.html

Texas foster care advocates clash with privatization supporters By [Jonathan Baker](#) • Feb 4, 2017 [TweetShareGoogle+Email](#) Credit Astrid Westvang / Creative Commons In Texas, foster care providers have clashed with court judges over a senator's proposal to privatize foster care. [As The Dallas Morning News reports](#), the debate centers around whether private contractors in Texas should be allowed to completely take over supervision of abused and neglected children. As it stands now, private contractors already provide 90 percent of foster care in the state. But under Sen. Charles Schwertner's plan, "case management" would also be outsourced. That would mean that social workers working for private companies would take over the duties of CPS workers. These private workers would coordinate foster kids' therapies, visit with birth families, write court reports and appear before judges. Critics say this solution would lead the private contractors to take advantage of the state's inability to handle the work, and jack up prices, thus costing taxpayers more in the long run. Source: <http://hprp.org/post/texas-foster-care-advocates-clash-privatization-supporters>

Bills Would Expand Oversight Of DCF, Shift Death Investigations To Child Advocate DCF Ronald DeRosa The Department of Children and Families' office in Hartford. The Department of Children and Families' office in Hartford. (Ronald DeRosa) [Josh KovnerContact Reporter](#) The Department of Children and Families falters in gauging risky households, enforcing foster-care licensing rules, and relying on unenforceable "safety plans" for children when family members have troubling backgrounds, two legislative leaders testified Tuesday. With those assertions as the backdrop, Sen. [Leonard Fasano](#), a Republican of North Haven, and Rep. Toni Walker, a Democrat of New Haven, proposed four bills that they said would markedly increase the independent oversight of the sprawling department. Saying the agency is highly scrutinized as it is, DCF officials objected to all four bills, and the co-chairwoman of the committee on children said some of the measures duplicate functions that already exist. The panel did not immediately vote on the bills, which require General Assembly approval. The House and Senate last week rejected an agreement that would have reduced oversight of DCF. One measure proposed Tuesday would have the Office of the Child Advocate take over the responsibility of investigating deaths of children in DCF care, so the department would no longer be "investigating itself," Fasano said. Personnel would have to be added to Child Advocate Sarah Eagan's office, making passage of the bill less likely with the state's gaping budget deficit. Another bill, raised and defeated two years ago, would remove the ombudsman's office from inside DCF and establish it as a separate service, so people inside and outside the department could register complaints "without strings attached," Fasano said. A fifth bill, proposed by Rep. Timothy Ackert, a Republican of Coventry, dealt with unruly group homes. It would give towns more authority to take action when residents of DCF group homes trespassed, committed vandalism, or otherwise broke the law. Coventry resident Gary Jonas testified that the town's 15-member police department responded to 62 calls at one group home last year. Details of the proposal haven't yet been published, but several advocacy groups were concerned that such a law would discriminate

against teenagers in the custody of DCF, who deserve a shot at living in family neighborhoods. "We don't want to see policies enacted that have an element of 'nimbysm,'" said Kathleen Flaherty, of the Connecticut Legal Rights Project. Ackert and Jonas said they were not pressing for the closure of the group home, only more local control. Fasano and Walker cited child deaths or foster-care placements gone awry that relate to what they see as DCF's most critical problems: misdiagnosing the level of risk to children in a household, improperly vetting relatives before children are placed with them, and using "safety agreements" that purport to keep certain household members away from children, but that are ultimately unenforceable. In addition to assigning the child advocate as the lead death investigator and establishing an independent ombudsman, the lawmakers proposed creating a DCF oversight council made up of a wide cross-section of experts and community members, and transferring the care and detention of the most serious or needy juvenile delinquents from DCF to the Judicial Branch.

[Legislature Rejects Deal To Shrink Federal Oversight Of DCF](#) JOSH KOVNER The General Assembly Wednesday rejected a deal that would have shielded the Department of Children and Families' budget from any cuts in exchange for a quicker exit from the federal-court oversight that has loomed over the agency for more than a quarter century. The Senate vote was 25-8. The tally... The General Assembly Wednesday rejected a deal that would have shielded the Department of Children and Families' budget from any cuts in exchange for a quicker exit from the federal-court oversight that has loomed over the agency for more than a quarter century. The Senate vote was 25-8. The tally... (JOSH KOVNER) The proposals would result in greater accountability and responsiveness on DCF's part, said Walker and Fasano. Rep. Robyn Porter, a Democrat of Hamden, also was a sponsor of the measures. DCF Commissioner Joette Katz said the bills were unnecessary. She said DCF has the expertise and professional commitment to investigate child deaths on its watch, and to vigorously follow up on complaints that come to ombudsman Kenneth Mysogland, a veteran DCF internal investigator. Mysogland's office handles 2,000 complaints and information requests each year. That includes nearly 100 grievances annually from juveniles detained at the Connecticut Juvenile Training School in Middletown, which is slated to close next year. "It's not pleasant for DCF staff when they get an email from us," said Mysogland, who said he has access to administrators and staff members at all levels when investigating complaints. "Families have expressed frustration to me," said Sen. [Len Suzio](#), a Republican whose district includes Meriden and Middletown. He said people feel as if they have "battered up against a cold bureaucracy" and that they have been "churned up by the machine." Katz said she would like to personally hear about every person who feels that they have not been heard, and said she would follow up on each case. "But sometimes families don't get the answer they want to hear, and that is a different matter," Katz said. Diana Urban, a Democrat of North Stonington and co-chair of the committee on children, said that the State Advisory Committee on Children already does what Fasano and Walker's proposed oversight panel would do. She said the committee could be expanded, if needed. Egan, the child advocate, said the current panel serves an advisory role and has no authority. Source: <http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-commission-on-children-0208-20170207-story.html>

Special Needs Teen's Asphyxiation Death at Philadelphia Treatment Center Ruled a Homicide By [Steve Helling](#) • [@stevehelling](#) Posted on February 14, 2017 at 4:29pm EST [Share](#) [Tweet](#) [Email](#) Wordsworth Academy The death of a 17-year-old at a private Philadelphia treatment facility for special needs children has been ruled a homicide, PEOPLE confirms. David Hess died of suffocation after a physical altercation with staff members at the **Wordsworth Academy**, a residential treatment center for children and teens with emotional and behavioral needs, according to a report by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. The cause of death was asphyxiation, according to the Philadelphia Medical Examiner's Office. "One or more people caused the death," a spokesman for the Medical Examiner said in a statement "It is not a determination of criminality. It is the role of the District Attorney's Office to determine if these actions were crimes and, if so, if there is sufficient evidence to charge any person(s) with a crime." According to a Department of Human Services report obtained by PEOPLE, the incident began when staffers allegedly suspected that Hess had stolen an iPod from another student. Several Wordsworth staff members searched his room. The report describes Hess as being "aggressive" as the staffers allegedly flipped over his mattress and went through his things. At some point, the staffers allegedly restrained Hess. Witnesses allege to DHS that Hess initially taunted the staffers, saying, "I can take this, that's the only thing you got, give me more." Eventually, however, Hess allegedly began gasping and yelling, "Get off me. I can't breathe." He died shortly thereafter. The report notes that the iPod was eventually found in a soap box in Hess's room. • Want to keep up with the latest crime coverage? [Click here](#) to get breaking crime news, ongoing trial coverage and details of intriguing unsolved cases in the True Crime Newsletter. Four days after the incident, DHS revoked the treatment center's license. In a letter obtained by PEOPLE, DHS told Wordsworth that it was being closed due to "your failure to comply with the Department's regulations and gross incompetence, negligence and misconduct." In a statement, Wordsworth's Chairman of the Board expressed sorrow over the teen's death. "Everyone at Wordsworth Academy was deeply saddened by the loss of this young man, and the medical examiner's finding underscores the tragic nature of this situation," Chairman Tom Johnson said in the statement. "Our thoughts continue to be with his family and friends during this difficult time." The District's Attorney's office did not return PEOPLE's requests for comment, but a spokesperson refused comment to the [Philadelphia Inquirer](#), citing an ongoing investigation. No one has been criminally charged in Hess's death. Source: <http://people.com/crime/david-hess-special-needs-teen-death-philadelphia-treatment-center-homicide/>

APNewsBreak: Grand jury report blasts NY foster care system By Frank Eltman, Associated Press HAUPPAUGE, N.Y. — Feb 15, 2017, 1:01 PM ET [Share](#) [Email](#) [Star](#) [Share](#) [Email](#) A foster parent accused of sexually abusing boys in his care could have been stopped years earlier if not for "abysmal" communication among the child-welfare agencies involved, according to a special grand jury report obtained by The Associated Press. In the 83-page report, the Suffolk County Supreme Court jury outlined a remarkable series of failures that allowed Cesar Gonzales-Mugaburu to take in more than 100 children over 20 years, despite being the subject of 18 separate child-abuse investigations. Rules intended to protect the reputations of falsely accused foster parents were partly to blame, the report said. Substandard abuse investigations were another issue. But the biggest problem, the report said, was the simple failure of the four governmental and one nonprofit child-welfare agencies to share information. One agency, the Suffolk County Department of Social Services, became so concerned with the number of suspected abuse reports against Gonzales-Mugaburu in 2002 that it asked a contractor to stop placing children with him. Yet, the agency did not document the reasoning behind that decision or communicate it to anyone in writing, including other agencies that were also sending children to the home, the grand jury report said. It identifies Gonzales-Mugaburu only by the letter "A," but its description of the allegations against him are identical to facts that have been made public in his criminal proceeding. "The foster care system in the state of New York is a bureaucratic nightmare," said Suffolk District Attorney Thomas Spota, who empaneled the grand jury. "There has to be some corrections that are made, especially with respect to how these agencies interact with each other." The report recommended a number of reforms. Among them: The state should get rid of the statute of limitations for prosecuting child sex abuse, create a central registry of foster homes and widen access to reports of abuse, even if they have been determined to be unfounded. The break that led to Gonzales-Mugaburu's arrest came early last year after detectives say two brothers came forward with credible stories of abuse. Others credible accusers followed. Gonzales-Mugaburu, 60, now faces trial next month on charges he sexually abused eight children as young as 8 years old inside his home in Ridge, on eastern Long Island. Prosecutors said statute of limitations laws precluded them from bringing even more charges. Gonzales-Mugaburu has pleaded not guilty. His attorney says he denies ever abusing children and contends the accusers are lying. Prosecutors say Gonzales-Mugaburu earned more than \$1.5 million in tax-free income caring for foster children between 1996 and his arrest in January 2016. All of them were boys, including many deemed to require special treatment because of emotional or physical challenges. New York's clearinghouse for suspected child abuse complaints received 18 reports regarding Gonzales-Mugaburu as far back as 1998, each of which was investigated by Suffolk County child welfare officials. Some were for less serious issues, including failing to fill a child's eyeglasses prescription. There was also at least one allegation of sexual abuse. One complaint, involving a child with bruises, went as far as a formal hearing before officials decided the allegations were false. All the complaints were ultimately deemed by investigators to be unfounded. Still, in 2001 or 2002, Suffolk County's Department of Social Services "verbally requested" that SCO Family of Services, one of the state's largest foster home providers, stop placing children with Gonzales-Mugaburu, according to the grand jury report. But that request was apparently never communicated in writing and no one could explain how the notification occurred. "One witness, in fact, testified that this notification could have potentially have been made in passing during a conversation in a hallway," the report said. "For some reason, and with tragic results," the grand jury wrote, the decision was never communicated to other agencies, including New York City's massive child welfare agency, the Administration for Children's Services, which continued to place dozens of children with Gonzales-Mugaburu. The grand jury specifically criticized an arrangement under which the New York City agency ceded responsibility for overseeing case management to SCO Family of Services because of a special state waiver. "There was virtually no contact by ACS with these children or the foster parent," Spota said. "They basically delegated every single responsibility they had to these nonprofit agencies and said to them, 'They're yours. Goodbye.' And that is so wrong." SCO Family of Services said it never uncovered evidence of sexual abuse or improper sexual behavior in the home. But the organization's chief strategy officer, Rose Anello, said last summer there were other issues, "and in retrospect and knowing what we know now, a decision to close the home should have been made at that time."

SCO said it has worked with the state, ACS and Suffolk County "to diligently address each and every concern about the quality of care provided in this home." Spokeswoman Leslie Johnson's statement added the agency has "undertaken a rigorous corrective action plan to ensure complete transparency and significantly strengthen our foster care program. We are hopeful the findings included in this report will advance meaningful and systemic foster care reform in New York." ACS and Suffolk County child welfare department representatives did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Source: <http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/apnewsbreak-grand-jury-report-blasts-ny-foster-care-45512208>

Good Shepherd Services to close Baltimore County residential treatment program Sarah Gantz and Erica L. Green **Contact Reporters** The Baltimore Sun Good Shepherd Services will close its residential treatment program Good Shepherd Services will close its troubled residential treatment program for adolescents in Halethorpe after two state agencies decided to withdraw the children they had placed there. The decision to withdraw the children followed moratoriums imposed late last year by the agencies on sending more youths to the Baltimore County treatment center. **Good Shepherd was cited last year by state health regulators for not providing proper supervision after one patient reported being sexually assaulted and others showed signs of overdose after taking medicine stolen from a medical cart.** The state citations were disclosed in public records obtained by The Baltimore Sun in December. The 49 children currently being treated at Good Shepherd will be moved to other facilities within 30 days, the agency said. The Catholic nonprofit's decision puts some 200 Good Shepherd employees out of a job and affects another 100 contract workers and vendors. Paid Post What's This? Paid Posts are created by our advertisers. Our editorial and reporting staffs are not involved in the creation or production of Paid Posts. [Why the Internet Loves This Mattress](#) Sponsored by [Casper](#) Casper's outrageously comfortable mattress was designed to have just the right sink and just the right bounce. Plus it ships for free in a "how did they do that?" sized box. [See More](#) Good Shepherd leaders expressed frustration Thursday about their decision to shutter the 150-year-old program and said they had not been given an opportunity to work with the state to resolve the problems that led to the moratoriums by the Department of Human Resources and the Department of Juvenile Services. [Maryland state agencies stop sending youths for treatment to Good Shepherd, group home Erica L. Green](#) [Two state agencies have placed a moratorium on sending youths in their custody to Good Shepherd Services, a Baltimore County residential treatment center cited by regulators for not providing proper supervision after one patient reported being sexually assaulted and others showed signs of overdose... Two state agencies have placed a moratorium on sending youths in their custody to Good Shepherd Services, a Baltimore County residential treatment center cited by regulators for not providing proper supervision after one patient reported being sexually assaulted and others showed signs of overdose... \(Erica L. Green\)](#) "It's hard to fathom that state leadership and Good Shepherd leadership couldn't come together to ensure the long-term best interest of these children and their families," said Michele Wyman, Good Shepherd's president and CEO. "It's heartbreaking." The Department of Juvenile Services, which contracted with Good Shepherd for mental health services for young offenders, rejected Wyman's claim that the agency had refused to work with the facility. Since 2013, the department has enacted four moratoriums against Good Shepherd, including three last year. The moratoriums, which ranged from a couple of days to a few months, were lifted after resolving the issues that led to the action. Caption OCC student suspended for recording professor's "anti-Trump" comments appeals Victoria Lugo, interim dean of students at the Costa Mesa college, informed Caleb O'Neil of the suspension for one "primary (fall/spring) semester in addition to the summer" and other disciplinary actions against him, including that he submit a written apology to the professor, Olga Perez Stable Cox. Victoria Lugo, interim dean of students at the Costa Mesa college, informed Caleb O'Neil of the suspension for one "primary (fall/spring) semester in addition to the summer" and other disciplinary actions against him, including that he submit a written apology to the professor, Olga Perez Stable Cox. Caption A missing mother and daughter from Baltimore Baltimore Police Department need the public help in the disappearance of a mother and daughter from Baltimore city. (Baltimore Sun video) Baltimore Police Department need the public help in the disappearance of a mother and daughter from Baltimore city. (Baltimore Sun video) "The department's highest priority is the safety and security of the youth in our care and custody," Audra Harrison, the department's spokeswoman, said in a statement. "We will continue to work with Good Shepherd, families, stakeholders, and the state's other human service agencies to ensure a smooth transition and minimal impact on the youths' treatment." The Department of Human Resources, which oversees the state's child welfare programs, including foster care, said Thursday that the safety and well-being of the youth it cares for is its main priority. "We are transitioning our youth from Good Shepherd to new placements based on each of their specific needs," it said without elaborating on its reasoning. After citing Good Shepherd for multiple problems last year, the state Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Office of Health Care Quality gave Good Shepherd a "directed plan of correction" in January, a spokesman said. Such plans order providers to take corrective actions. About two-thirds of the youths Good Shepherd treated were referred to the facility by the state Juvenile Services and Human Resources departments. The agencies' decision earlier this month to withdraw the remaining children they had placed in the facility's care "thrust Good Shepherd into a financial corner," said the organization's chairman, William Buttarazzi. "We are deeply saddened for the disruption this will cause to the care of the children and additional pain it will bring to their families," Buttarazzi said in a statement. "We are further saddened for the several hundred dedicated and loyal workers who will be adversely impacted by the state's precipitous actions." Good Shepherd traces its roots in Baltimore to 1864 when the Catholic order of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, founded to help women and girls in crisis, opened the House of the Good Shepherd at Mount and Hollins streets in the city. It opened a second house in 1892 and moved to the current 70-acre location in Halethorpe in 1970. In recent years, the organization provided troubled youth with residential as well as psychological, psychiatric, clinical and health services. There was a school on the grounds so the youths could sustain their education. The residential program had been serving between 65 and 75 youths a day, but its ranks began to dwindle after the two state agencies stopped sending children and others were discharged as planned. Wyman said the organization would have tried to continue operating with a reduced population if its leaders thought they would be able to work with the state agencies to make improvements. "If we'd been having some kind of meaningful discussion or conversation, we would have held on to hope this could be resolved," she said. The program's closure means 200 employees — a range of support staff, social workers, medical professionals and kitchen and maintenance workers — will lose their jobs. Affected workers will stay on with the company for about two months. As Good Shepherd winds down its residential treatment center, one of its cornerstone programs, leaders are re-evaluating the organization's mission. Good Shepherd plans to establish a task force within the next three months charged with determining how to shape programming. The organization has been considering a turn toward community-based programs, though Wyman didn't rule out the possibility of restarting a residential program in the future. "I think the board sees this as an opportunity to pause and really take stock of the needs of the state, and the community we serve, and what they need," Wyman said. Source: <http://www.baltimoresun.com/business/bs-md-good-shepherd-services-20170216-story.html>

System of self-reporting makes it impossible to assess medication errors in group homes Limited training and fear of losing employment cast low number of recorded medication errors in a suspicious light Written by [Caitlin Russell](#) Edited by [JPat Brown](#) A direct care provider working in a group home looks at the clock and sees that it's 2 p.m. - too late to hand out the medications scheduled for noon. Protocol is to immediately contact a [Medication Administration Program](#) (MAP) consultant and the employee will have an official medication occurrence on his or her record. Many companies contracted to operate group homes for the [Department of Developmental Services](#) (DDS) allow three medication errors (or "occurrences"), before an employee is either retrained or fired. When a person is one lost paycheck away from their life falling apart, the prospect of weeks to months of lost paychecks is a nightmare scenario, especially when the job provides health insurance. So why would a person risk their job risk it when perhaps they could just wait it out, make sure the client who missed the medication, or got the wrong medication doesn't die or have any obvious adverse reaction, and resolve to never make a med error again. Until they do. In group homes across Massachusetts, the administration of medication is entrusted not to medical professionals such as nurses, but to direct care providers who pass [a three-day course](#) in the MAP. The relatively low number of medication errors that occur each year according to the Massachusetts DDS seems miraculous in light of the limited training and large number of doses handed out every year. [DDS estimates](#) that in 2015, there were 5,833 medication errors out of the approximately 41.9 million doses of medication doled out. Expecting employees who make little more than minimum wage to self report mistakes that could result in the loss of a job that provides regular hours and health insurance is unrealistic. It places employees in [an extremely difficult position](#), which in turn puts DDS clients at risk. The impact this sort of mistake can have on a client obviously varies depending on the type of medication. For example, a person will have a less severe reaction to missing a dose of an antihistamine than they would to receiving a large dose of antipsychotics that aren't prescribed to them. Some companies, for example [the May Institute](#), provide the bare minimum of training in medication administration - 16 hours over three days. One could also look at it as four years worth of nursing school crammed into three days. Hiring a nurse for every residential facility - or even one nurse for every five facilities - would be far more expensive than giving bare bones training to employees making \$25,000 to \$30,000 per year. Nurses train direct care staff, and pop in for the occasional surprise visit at residential facilities to see if the med books are in order, the medication closet is locked, and the narcotics are

double locked, but they aren't there every day to distribute medication or to provide their expertise while observing a client's reaction to medications. For example, increasing a person's dose of Prozac can cause stomach problems that make it difficult for a person to eat. The average direct care provider is not nearly as likely to know this as a nurse would be and might misinterpret a client's refusal to eat as a bid for attention or a sign of depression as opposed to a normal reaction to physical discomfort. A system of self-reporting will not succeed when employees are set up for failure through a combination of inadequate training, and the fear of making a mistake and losing their jobs. Companies contracted with DDS to run residential facilities relentlessly hammer home the seriousness of medication administration to its employees, but the unwillingness of these companies to hire medical professionals to administer medication belies the fact that they're shirking their responsibility to provide the best care possible, and in the process, shifting that responsibility to their lowest paid employees. Read DDS' full data on medication occurrences embedded below, or on [the request page](#). Source: <https://www.muckrock.com/news/archives/2017/feb/15/system-self-reporting-makes-it-impossible-assess-m/>

West Liberty group home closes after license revoked, staff shortages [crime](#) By [Katherine Collins](#) - Staff Writer 0 The Adriel School in West Liberty. Bill Lackey/Staff Posted: 6:00 a.m. Saturday, February 18, 2017 A Logan County group home whose license had been revoked recently has closed after leaders say it wasn't able to maintain a trained workforce. The Adriel School in West Liberty housed and taught about 40 kids with behavioral issues from across Southwest and Central Ohio. In the past several years, West Liberty Police had responded to the campus hundreds of times for everything from fights to stolen cars. RELATED: [State alleges Logan Co. group home workers taught kids to snort, smoke](#) "With them being closed, it'll reduce our calls for service and we'll be able to focus on some other things," West Liberty Police Chief Shane Oelker said. [The decision to close was difficult](#), Adriel CEO Todd Hanes said, since the campus has been a residential facility for more than 100 years. "There is no question that this is painful," he said. Earlier this month, a letter from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services said the state had revoked the home's license and alleged employees violated regulations on several occasions, including reportedly showing kids how to snort pills to get high and not seeking prompt medical care for injured children. Hanes hasn't denied the allegations but said that the employees involved were terminated and the home took steps to improve. But those issues weren't the main reason Adriel closed, Hanes. MORE COVERAGE: [Fights lead to 9 juvenile arrests at Adriel group home in Logan Co.](#) "Our top reason is finding a sufficient number of staff here in this area," he said. It wasn't possible to hire enough qualified workers in a small town like West Liberty, he said. "We have no intention of operating a residential facility," he said, "and that's independent of ODJFS." On Friday, the remaining seven children at the home were picked up, he said. Workers began finding other placements for the children two weeks ago, he said, and were able to find foster homes for some children. Others were picked up by the counties they're from. Neighbors have complained over the past few years about vandalism and thefts. But some neighbors, like Janet Yoder, are worried about the well-being of the children. "The things that have happened are wrong and they need to be taken care of in the right way," she said. "But where are these children going to go?" She used to raise money for the home, she said, and saw how it gave children a stable environment. EARLIER COVERAGE: [Spike in police calls to youth home challenges community](#) "The bad things you hear are always going to overshadow the good things because that's what we focus on," she said. "And that's a shame." Adriel will now focus on the other services it provides, Hanes said, including its foster care network, family preservation and visitation programs. Its leaders are looking to discuss options with the local school district or educational service center for the school building on its campus that will now go unused, he said. Adriel has assisted the 52 employees who will lose their jobs because of the closure, he said. They've offered job fairs and interviews on campus. "Things do change and this organization has undergone changes several times in its past," he said. "I think we'll come through this stronger." It's in the best interest of the children to close the school, Oelker said, if the company isn't able to keep a qualified staff. "We're going to continue to work with them if they ask for our help with things," the police chief said. He plans to focus more on community policing. Adriel had previously appealed the state's decision to revoke its license but Hanes said no decision has been made as to whether the home will continue that appeal. Staying with the story The Springfield News-Sun has reported on problems at the Adriel School in West Liberty for nearly three years, including stories digging into complaints from neighbors and police officials and state investigations of the group home. By the numbers 40: Approximate number of children housed at the Adriel group home 52: Employees laid off because of the group home closure 100: Years Adriel has had a residential home in West Liberty Source: <http://www.springfieldnewssun.com/news/crime-law/west-liberty-group-home-closes-after-license-revoked-staff-shortages/mrex7SDtQYWlfoJ2BSiSK/>

Three Separate School Fights Top Mount Pleasant Police Blotter [Carol Reif](#) [Share](#) [Tweet](#) [Pin It](#) [Email](#) [Print](#) 0 Comments Mount Pleasant police are investigating three separate incidents of violence at a local high school and at two residential treatment schools. Photo Credit: File More Articles police & fire [Female Teen Swings Lacrosse Stick In St. Thomas Aquinas Fight...](#) [Condo Fire Contained Off Route 6 In Mohegan Lake Man In Trench Coat Reportedly Took Photos Near School, North ...](#) comment 0 Read / Add Comments MOUNT PLEASANT, N.Y. -- Several young people are facing assault and harassment charges in three separate altercations in Mount Pleasant, police said. The first incident, which police said took place at Westlake High School on Wednesday, Feb. 8, involved a 17-year-old and an 18-year-old from Thornwood. They both were charged with third-degree assault and had been scheduled to appear in Town Court on an unspecified date. Police said the second incident involved an 18-year-old Peekskill girl who is attending the Edenwald School, which is part of the Mount Pleasant-Cottage Union Free School District. The teen was charged with second-degree harassment after police charged her with hitting another student with "a rolling pin," on Friday, Feb. 10, police said. Edenwald serves about 130 residential and day students with academic, social, behavioral and vocational needs. Meanwhile, on Thursday, Feb. 16, five residents of the Hawthorne Cedar Knolls Residential Treatment Center are being accused of attacking and injuring a classmate's mother, police said. The five, all girls, were charged with third-degree assault. Three of them are under 16 and were referred to Westchester County Family Court. The other two, ages 16 and 17, were referred to Town Court, police said. Hawthorne Cedar Knolls provides mental health, social and therapeutic services to at-risk boys and girls, ages eight to 18. The next day, a 17-year-old resident of the Mann Center Residential Treatment Center at Hawthorne Cedar Knolls was charged with falsely reporting an incident. Police accuse the teen of intentionally setting off a fire alarm at the facility. In other police blotter items: Saturday, Feb. 11: A 41-year-old Pleasantville man was charged with Endangering the welfare of a child after police accused him of committing a lewd act at the family's home. Tuesday, Feb. 14: - A 42-year-old Yonkers woman, pulled over by police on Elwood Avenue in Hawthorne, is facing several vehicle and traffic charges. Police said she had a suspended registration and the vehicle she was driving was unregistered and uninsured. Wednesday, Feb. 15: A 31-year-old Thornwood man was charged with harassment and criminal contempt in connection with, police said, "ongoing family issues." Thursday, Feb. 16: A 32-year-old Hawthorne man has been charged with leaving the scene of an accident. Police accused him of striking another car on Pythian Avenue and then fleeing. A brief investigation by the Mount Pleasant police patrol, with assistance from a resident's home video surveillance, led officers to the suspect as well as his damaged vehicle. He was also charged with operating without a driver's license. The driver of the other vehicle was treated for a fractured hand. Friday, Feb. 17: A 30-year-old Ossining woman was charged with aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle after becoming stuck in the median on Phelps Way (Route 117) in Pleasantville. Sunday, Feb. 19: A 23-year-old Ossining woman was charged with driving while intoxicated after driving her car off the road into the center median on Phelps Way (Route 117) in Pleasantville near the entrance to Rockefeller State Park. Source: <http://mountpleasant.dailyvoice.com/police-fire/three-separate-school-fights-top-mount-pleasant-police-blotter/700579/>

New York to pay \$3M to family of disabled boy molested by staffer at group home which perv called 'a predator's dream' New York to pay \$3M to family of boy molested at group home THE ASSOCIATED PRESS Monday, February 20, 2017, 1:04 PM [facebook](#) [Tweet](#) [email](#) Stephen DeProspero, right, in Oneida County Court in Utica, N.Y., as he is arraigned on charges of predatory sexual assault against a young child in Aug. 2010. (Rocco LaDuca/AP) THE ASSOCIATED PRESS Monday, February 20, 2017, 1:04 PM ALBANY, N.Y. — New York state is paying \$3 million to the family of developmentally disabled boy repeatedly molested by a staffer at a state-run group home who later wrote that lax supervision at the facility made it "a predator's dream." The former staffer, Stephen DeProspero, is now imprisoned in the Attica Correctional Facility. He was incriminated by videos and photographs he took of the molestation, which occurred from 2005 to 2008 at the facility located in central New York. "The lack of supervision there made it easy to do what I did," DeProspero said in a handwritten affidavit obtained by The Associated Press. "I could have stayed in that house for years and abused him every day without anybody even noticing at all. It was a predator's dream." State officials say new policies are in place to prevent similar crimes. But a leading critic of state institutional care said the problems persist. "Tragically, this sexual predator case is a drop in the bucket in regards to the rampant sexual abuse occurring within New York State's mental health care system today," said Michael Carey, whose autistic son was killed by a state caregiver 10 years ago this month. The Office for People With Developmental Disabilities, which oversees care for more than 128,000 New Yorkers, has taken steps to strengthen safety and security, according to spokesman Scott Sandman. They include pre-employment psychological assessments and enhanced staff training on ways to prevent, recognize and

report abuse and neglect. Senior administrators are required to make unannounced inspections of state-run facilities. "We also increased the minimum qualifications for our state direct support staff and put more stringent background checks in place," he said, adding that an agency created by Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo and known as the Justice Center has the power to investigate "any abuse or neglect of a person we serve." The Justice Center investigated only six of the nearly 1,400 deaths of developmentally disabled people who died in state care from June 30, 2013, to May 31, 2015, according to a review last year by the AP. In the case of DeProspero, red flags that might have prompted an investigation went unnoticed. Some of the abuse occurred in an open, common area of the group home, according to legal documents. In another instance, DeProspero recorded a video of abuse over the course of four hours on Christmas Eve 2007, even though DeProspero was not scheduled to work that day. "I was confident that a supervisor would never check in to see what was going on," DeProspero wrote in his statement. "The supervisors spent the vast majority of their shifts in their offices doing paperwork. They were rarely out of their offices." DeProspero, 43, pleaded guilty to predatory sexual assault in 2010 and was sentenced to 18 years to life. He also pleaded guilty to manufacturing child pornography and was sentenced to 40 years. The sentences are being served concurrently. He came to the attention of authorities in 2009 when an investigation of online child pornography led them to his computer. Photos and video of the molestation were later discovered. The \$3 million settlement between the state and the family of the victim was finalized late last year. It's intended to pay for the victim's future care and visits with his mother. The victim, now 20, has autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and is mostly nonverbal. He remains at a state-operated group home. "This is a case where you had someone who really was evil. But what failed here was the system," said Andrew Celli, an attorney with the New York City firm of Emery Celli Brinckerhoff & Abady LLP, which represented the boy's family in the case. "You have to have systems in place to ensure the safety of children who have needs, and they just fell down on the job here." Carey wants state leaders to require surveillance cameras in group homes. He's also pushed legislation that would require complaints about possible abuse or neglect of disabled or mentally ill people in state care to go to 911 and local prosecutors rather than investigative units within state agencies. Source: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/new-york-pay-3m-family-boy-molested-group-home-article-1.2977392>

Sick, Dying and Raped in New York's Mental Health Facilities & Group Homes Jonathan Carey "Champion for the Disabled" Born September 12, 1993 Killed by caregivers on February 15, 2007 Governor Cuomo has refused to take vital basic emergency actions to protect disabled children and adults from premature death, sexual abuse and rape Governor Cuomo had every opportunity to right many wrongs, but chose to continue to cover-up most of the damages and loss of lives instead." — Michael Carey DELMAR, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES, February 23, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- You can take the CNN investigative report titled, "Sick, Dying and Raped in America's Nursing Homes" <http://cnnpressroom.blogs.cnn.com/2017/02/22/sick-dying-and-raped-in-america-s-nursing-homes-a-cnn-investigation/> and simply change the words America to New York State and Nursing Homes to Mental Health Facilities and Group Homes, the similarities are almost identical. New York State documents obtained through Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) reveal staggering numbers of deaths and sexual assaults in these facilities. These massive problems cannot continue to be pushed aside and ignored by the Governor of New York State. Governor Cuomo has claimed publicly saying "I am disabled" <http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2017/01/29/cuomo-travel-ban-hotline/> which is obviously not true, but he was using it, along with other statements, to say that he is fighting for people with disabilities and their rights, which also sadly not true. The sheer staggering numbers of reported deaths and sexual assaults in these State and private facilities and group homes throughout New York State speak volumes. The truth is, we have severe systemic failures and very ugly things are happening behind these closed doors and many innocent and extremely vulnerable people with disabilities are dying and being raped as a result. State documents reveal that 11-12 deaths on average are reported a day and 1,300 sexual assaults within the Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) system alone on average every year or close to four a day. Most of the deaths are covered-up because Governor Cuomo's Justice Center is not notifying County elected District Attorney's and Medical Examiners or Coroners of most of these deaths. It is hard to fathom that they continue to get away with this evil and these crimes as I continue to expose it and shout it from the rooftops, but hopefully it will be stopped soon. In regards to sexual assaults, the numbers exponentially increase when we look at the full reality and fact that almost all of these sexual assault crimes against these disabled victims, that in most cases cannot speak or defend themselves, will never be witnessed or reported. A well known report titled "Prevalence of Violence" <http://www.mass.gov/dppe/abuse-recognize/prevalence-of-violence.html> has been up on the State of Massachusetts website for a long time, brings an even more powerful fact to light, which is a horrible fact that only 3% of these sexual assaults and rapes of the developmentally disabled will ever be reported. Using this statistical data along with the known New York State numbers of reported sexual assaults could mean that approximately one third of the developmentally disabled living in State and private facilities within the OPWDD system alone are sexually assaulted on average once a year. Sexual abuse and rape of the disabled in these facilities is a massive problem which has been known by Governor Cuomo for many years. Most deaths and sexual assault crimes of New Yorkers with disabilities living in known unsafe residential care facilities and group homes are swept under the rug and covered-up by Cuomo's fraudulent Justice Center. There are basic safety and abuse prevention measures that will make the system much better and safer and dramatically reduce the staggering numbers of deaths and sexual abuse crimes occurring in these facilities, but Governor Cuomo has refused to take action. Surveillance cameras must finally be installed within all mental health facilities and group homes, as well as all transport vehicles, this is vital to prevent these deaths, crimes and to hold sexual predators accountable. Immediate and direct reporting by mandated reporters to 911 and not a State whitewash/cover-up entity is not only critical to hold criminals accountable, but will also save many lives. No longer can New York State continue to deny innocent and extremely vulnerable children and adults with disabilities living outside their family's home 911 emergency first responder medical and police services and assistance, this is discrimination and in many cases it is deadly. Bypassing local authorities, laws in place for everyone and local courts also denies this specific group of people their 14th Amendment right to "equal protection of laws." Included are two very important news pieces. AP News just reported on a disgusting case in which a New York State caregiver was molesting a disabled child in a State run group home. Thankfully, there was some measure of justice in this case, but most are being covered-up by Governor Cuomo's wrongfully named Justice Center which is keeping most reported sexual assault crimes from local police and County elected District Attorney's. Here is the story followed by another horrific one as well; "New York to pay \$3M to family of boy molested at group home" <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/new-york-pay-3m-family-boy-molested-group-home-article-1.2977392>. New York State's system is made up of thousands of State run and privately operated facilities and group homes and the rampant sexual abuse in these facilities can easily be dramatically reduced, but not if basic prevention measures continue to be ignored. The award winning New York Times "Abused & Used" investigative reporting series which was a runner up for a Pulitzer Prize, exposed New York State's extremely dangerous and deadly system in 2011. Governor Cuomo was already aware of the severe problems because it was brought to his attention while he was the NYS Attorney General. Governor Cuomo had every opportunity to right many wrongs, but chose to continue to cover-up most of the damages and loss of lives instead. The very first NY Times investigative report that came out in March of 2011, two months after Cuomo became Governor, details how a sexual predator was caught in the act and that he was still protected and shielded by the State <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/13/nyregion/13homes.html>. Here is the extremely disturbing quote from this investigative report; "At a home upstate in Hudson Falls, two days before Christmas in 2006, an employee discovered her supervisor, Ricky W. Sousie, in the bedroom of a severely disabled, 54-year-old woman. Mr. Sousie, a stocky man with wispy hair, was standing between the woman's legs. His pants were around his ankles, his hand was on her knee and her diaper was pulled down. The police were called, and semen was found on the victim. But the state did not seek to discipline Mr. Sousie. Instead, it transferred him to work at another home." Pretty graphic, but this type of evil must come out into the light and dramatic steps must be taken to prevent these horrible sex crimes and rapes of disabled men, women, boys and girls whom are extremely vulnerable and in most cases cannot defend themselves. Bypassing 911 and local police is how New York State currently gets away with covering-up thousands of crimes and deaths annually. Michael Carey Mr. 5188529377 email.us.here The incredible life and tragic preventable death of Jonathan Carey, who was disabled, had autism, was non-verbal & only 13 when he was killed by his caregivers Source: http://www.einnews.com/pr_news/367915136/sick-dying-and-raped-in-new-york-s-mental-health-facilities-group-homes

Foster care worker pleads guilty to falsifying records Foster care worker pleads guilty to falsifying records [AMY BENNETT WILLIAMS and MELANIE PAYNE](#), The News-Press Published 1:02 p.m. ET Feb. 24, 2017 | Updated 21 hours ago Denny Kern, 53, a child welfare caseworker for the state pleaded guilty to falsifying documents. (Photo: Florida Department of Corrections) 74 CONNECT [TWEET](#) [1 LINKEDIN](#) [COMMENT](#) [EMAIL](#) MORE A DCF subcontractor who lied multiple times about an at-risk toddler's whereabouts has pleaded guilty to falsifying and destroying records. Cape Coral resident Denny Kern, 53, was sentenced to four years' probation for the crime. Kern was arrested in November after an Office of the Inspector General investigation determined he had falsified records. Kern was a case manager, required to make regular health and welfare checks on children under the supervision of the Department of Children and Families. Kern is by no means the only child welfare worker to file fake paperwork. His was one of 25 cases involving falsification of case

management records investigated in the past seven years; of those, 20 ended in employees being fired or quitting. There was one suspension and four cases that were unsubstantiated or had no action taken. While working for Lutheran Services, which has a contract with Children's Network, the private company that provides services to the state's Department of Children and Families, Kern reported he'd visited the toddler girl in Cape Coral. Although Kern knew the child had been moved to West Palm Beach because her mother was in jail, he filed a log detailing visits to the child in March, April and May. The falsified documents came to light only after Kern was fired in May 2015 for poor job performance. When Lutheran Services supervisor Gwen Doyle took over Kern's 38-child caseload, she started hearing from family members and caregivers that he hadn't been doing his job. According to the investigative report, "When Mr. Kern visited (Caregiver 1's) home, Mr. Kern would come to the door, have a blank piece of paper, and ask Caregiver 1 to sign it. Mr. Kern never came inside the home. ... He indicated that Mr. Kern was aware that Child 1 was not present in the home and did not need to see (her)." In another case, Kern admitted another child he was supposed to visit regularly was sometimes "probably not" at home when he said she was, though "Kern believed 90 percent of the case notes were accurate and 10 percent of the case notes ... were false, but could not recall which case notes were false." [4-month old dies in Pine Manor, DCF takes sibling](#)

The fabrications included details that led supervisors to believe Kern had been doing his job. In logs for visits to a child he had not seen, he wrote: "(She) was dressed in a blouse, shorts, socks." "(She) was playing in the back yard when (Kern) arrived and that was where (Kern) conducted private discussion." "(She) likes to play with her toys and be outside (She) does miss her (jailed) mother." In his testimony, Kern told investigators that "He liked (his job) at times; however, it did not suit him. This was a result of caseloads expanding to about 30 cases, with 50 children on a caseload." Kern testified when he asked Doyle for help, she told him to "figure it out." He began going to a counselor because he was feeling personally and professionally overwhelmed, he said, and that's when he began submitting false case notes. Kern admitted he lied "because he wanted to 'get it done' and indicated, 'It was poor workmanship.' ... Kern indicated that he is embarrassed, feels ashamed, and regrets his conduct." [Uneven DCF funding worries child welfare advocates](#)

James Miller, assistant state attorney and chief of the economic crime unit for the Office of the State Attorney, said Kern told investigators the requirements of the job "got to be too much" and that he was working weekends just to keep up. "He believed he had a nervous breakdown." Prosecutors wanted Kern to be found guilty, Miller said, giving him a felony record and precluding him from future employment in a position of public trust. After a retired judge from another state testified on Kern's behalf, Miller said, Judge Ramiro Manalich withheld adjudication, which means that if Kern completes his probation he will not have a felony record. Kern's lawyer, Scott Thomas Moorey, declined to comment, citing attorney/client privilege. DCF spokeswoman Natalie Harrell said any time there's suspicion a DCF employee or subcontractor has falsified records, the concerns are immediately reported to the Office of the Inspector General, an independent state watchdog agency. "They then determine if it rises to the level of an investigation," she said. Falsification, omission, or misrepresentation is the most-investigated category of wrongdoing, accounting for 80 percent of the 225 allegations the Inspector General's office investigated in the 2015-2016 period. When allegations are found to be true, all cases are referred to law enforcement, Harrell said. "The department maintains a zero tolerance policy for falsifying documents. Any time an employee is found to have falsified documentation, the most appropriate and aggressive action, including dismissal, will be taken (and) any individual investigated by the department, whether an employee or not, who is found to have violated the law, including through the falsification of records, is referred to law enforcement for criminal investigation," she said.

Kern timeline April 13, 2013: Started as a case manager at Lutheran Services Jan. 2015: Placed on performance-improvement plan May 14, 2015: Fired for ongoing poor performance; supervisor Gwen Doyle takes over Kern's 38-child caseload May 29, 2015: Lutheran Services reports falsified records to the office of the Inspector General Dec. 18, 2015: Case referred to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement Sept. 16, 2016: FDLE referred the case to the State Attorney's office Nov. 16, 2016: Kern arrested by the Lee County Sheriff's Office Feb. 6: Kern pleads guilty and is sentenced to four years probation Source: <http://www.news-press.com/story/news/2017/02/24/ex-dcf-subcontractor-pleads-guilty-falsifying-records/98302196/>

Child Abuse Council Launches Investigation into County Foster Care System Following NBC Bay Area Investigation High turnover rates and a social worker shortage are at the center of a new investigation by the Santa Clara County Child Abuse Council looking into the Department of Family and Children's Services which provides support to more than 1,300 children By [Vicky Nguyen](#), [Michael Bott](#), and [Mark Villarreal](#) Child Abuse Council Launches Investigation into County Foster Care System Following NBC Bay Area Investigation Link Embed Copy Close Link to this video Copy Close Embed this video [Replay](#) More videos (1 of 9) ⌂ CC Options Captions [FCC](#) × Font Size 1.00 Opacity 100.00% Text Color Background Border Edge Effects This is a preview of your caption settings. This is a preview of your caption settings. This is a preview of your caption settings. This is a preview of your caption settings. This is a preview of your caption settings. This is a preview of your caption settings. 1:40 / 4:57 Share High turnover rates and a severe social worker shortage are at the center of a new investigation by the Santa Clara County Child Abuse Council looking into the Department of Family and Children's Services which provides support to more than 1,300 children in the foster system. The investigation comes in response to a series of NBC Bay Area reports exposing serious concerns about severe abuse and even a child's death following questionable actions at DFCS. (Published Friday, Feb. 24, 2017) The Santa Clara County Child Abuse Council has launched a probe into the Department of Family and Children Services following a series of reports by NBC Bay Area's Investigative Unit. The advisory committee wants to find out what's causing high turnover rates and complaints among social workers that they are not able to provide vital services to vulnerable children. Last August, a group of six social workers spoke to NBC Bay Area, alleging a "toxic" work environment at the agency was driving out social workers, leading to dozens of unfilled vacancies and unmanageable caseloads. According to a spokesperson for the Santa Clara County Social Services Agency, the department has lost 110 social workers over the past two years. The agency says it's actively working to replace those workers, but progress has been slow. In fact, the agency currently has 42 unfilled vacancies, 50 percent more than last June when there were only 28 vacancies. "That just leads to bad outcomes for the children and parents that are getting services from DFCS," said Andrew Cain, Chairperson of the Santa Clara County Child Abuse Council. He's also the Supervising Attorney with Legal Advocates for Children and Youth. "We really wanted to see what are some of the issues that are contributing to that." NBC Bay Area first [revealed concerns](#) about decision making at DFCS in October 2015, when a young girl was nearly killed after reports and signs of her abuse were missed by multiple social workers. Last March, foster parent [Shellie Nichol spoke out](#) after social workers removed 2-year-old Kelly Nguyen from her care, placing the girl with her father in a men's halfway house. The medically fragile toddler died there two months later on February 28th. Nearly a year after her death, the coroner's office says the results of the autopsy are still pending. Nichol told NBC Bay Area she repeatedly questioned the decision to move Nguyen, and warned social workers it wasn't in the best interest of the special needs child. "We were gravely concerned," Nichol said. Hiring and retaining social workers is a constant struggle for many California counties, but Cain said the issues he's witnessed in Santa Clara firsthand and in NBC Bay Area's reporting warranted further investigation. Cain said the working group created by the Child Abuse Council has just started gathering information, and the investigation will result in a list of recommendations to the Board of Supervisors about how to address the key problems at DFCS. When social workers are spread so thin, foster parents are often among the first to see how vulnerable children can slip through the cracks. "[Social workers] are too overworked, too overwhelmed and don't have enough education or training," Jane Ramirez said. The veteran foster parent has cared for more than 50 children and teens in Santa Clara County over the past 30 years. "These are children's lives in the balance. Those are my kids' lives. Those were kids I invested myself in that I loved, that I considered my kids. And for things to happen to them is just so sad." Ramirez is licensed in Santa Clara County but she's currently fostering 4-year-old Damien, a medically fragile toddler from Monterrey County. She said she's thankful the Child Abuse Council is taking on the investigation, and hopes the staffing challenges plaguing the agency can be addressed. "One of the things the Child Abuse Council is doing right now is trying to gather more information through looking at very concrete things like exit surveys, staff complaints that were filed with management, and trying to parse through that information," Cain said. The Department of Family and Children's Services conducted an internal investigation last year when a group of frustrated social workers brought their grievances to management, but the report was never made public. Those social workers [told NBC Bay Area](#) they had hoped to keep their complaints in-house, and only decided to go public when they felt ignored. NBC Bay Area requested an interview with Francesca LeRue, the new director for the Santa Clara County Department of Family and Children's Services, to discuss her vision for the agency and how she plans to address staffing issues there, but the request was declined. In a written statement, LeRue said: "Our goal for 2017-2018 will be to align all existing efforts and resources to build a strong infrastructure to meet federal and state performance outcome measures, focusing on doing what is required and doing it well. In this way, we will hold ourselves accountable, while we also respect and support one another, and celebrate our successes." While hiring and turnover continue to be an issue, the agency has managed to dramatically improve the rate of calls answered at the Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) Center, which manages the county's 24 hour child abuse hotline. A 2013 audit found the CAN Center failed to answer about 40 percent of calls on the hotline. This month, a county spokesperson said 99 percent of those calls are now being answered. The department acknowledged some of those calls go to voicemail or are answered by clerical staff, rather than a licensed social worker trained to assess the safety of a child. Cain says he hopes the Child Abuse Council will wrap up its investigation within the next three months. He said they'll

take their findings to the Board of Supervisors and present possible solutions to any issues they uncover. For now, Cain said his priorities are to shrink caseloads for social workers and make sure they feel supported. "Social work is arguably the toughest job that we have out there," Cain said. "In order for them to do their job in the way to best serve these children, they need to feel supported." Ramirez says she's glad the agency has a new leader at the helm, and hopes that will translate to improvements for children in the foster system and the resource families that take care of them. Despite the challenges and frustrations she's experienced at times over the last three decades, Ramirez said she would happily do it all over again. "I would not give up children or fosters for anything in the world," Ramirez said. "It has enriched our lives so much. That's why you do it – for the kids. If the system wasn't so crazy there would be so many more people out there doing what I'm doing and love it." You can see the rest of our reporting on the Department of Family and Children's Services here: [Click here to watch Part I Click here to watch Part II Click here to watch Part III Click here to watch Part IV](#) If you have a tip for Vicky Nguyen, email her at vicky@nbcbayarea.com. You can follow her on Twitter [@vickynguyen](#) and Facebook www.facebook.com/vickynguyenTV for updates. If you have a tip for Investigative Producer Michael Bott, email him at michael.bott@nbcuni.com. You can follow him on Twitter at [@TweetBottNBC](#). Or give the Unit a call at 888-996-TIPS (8477) Source: [Child Abuse Council Launches Investigation into County Foster Care System Following NBC Bay Area Investigation | NBC Bay Area](#) <http://www.nbcbayarea.com/investigations/Child-Abuse-Council-Launches-Investigation-into-County-Foster-Care-System-Following-NBC-Bay-Area-Investigation-414752083.html#ixzz4ZkSrSGLq> Follow us: [@NBCBayArea on Twitter](#) | [NBCBayArea on Facebook](#) Source: <http://www.nbcbayarea.com/investigations/Child-Abuse-Council-Launches-Investigation-into-County-Foster-Care-System-Following-NBC-Bay-Area-Investigation-414752083.html>

A local treatment center accused of putting profits over people A local treatment center accused of putting profits over people WKYC 10:14 AM. EST February 28, 2017 Abraxas Ohio is a residential treatment center located near Mansfield. They house about 100 teenaged boys, most sent by the juvenile court system because of drug or alcohol problems. A former employee, who was hired as a Clinical Supervisor, spoke to Tom Meyer about her concerns on the quality of treatment these teens received. She alleges Abraxas "Falsely represented the qualifications and training of personnel." She alleges many so-called Abraxas counselors were actually unemployed plumbers, roofers, laborers, who needed a job. She also alleged that group sessions did not take place. Yet, the facility billed Medicaid as if they did. **"It's a total misuse of the money. It's corruption at its best."** she said. Residential Treatment Centers are supposed to be helping troubled kids get back on track - overcome addiction - and mental illnesses. So how can we make sure they don't put profits over people? Source: <http://www.wkyc.com/news/a-local-treatment-center-accused-of-putting-profits-over-people/416112708>

Former group home worker sentenced to jail, probation Brad Dicken | The Chronicle-Telegram Published on Feb. 28, 2017 | Updated 2:09 p. m. [Share Tweet Share Email Comments](#) A former worker at the Lorain County Juvenile Court's Stepping Stone group home was sentenced Monday to four years probation and 30 days in the Lorain County Jail for trading drugs with residents at the facility. Sean Justice, 30, who pleaded guilty in January to attempted corrupting another with drugs and two counts of conspiracy, also was ordered to pay a \$5,000 fine by county Common Pleas Judge John Miraldi. Sean Justice CT FILE [Enlarge](#) Justice's attorney, Paul St. Marie, said his client's legal problems were the result of a back injury he sustained while in the U.S. Navy as a nuclear technician. St. Marie wrote in a sentencing memorandum that Justice suffered herniated disks in his back when his submarine was hit by a wave and "unexpectedly lurched and rolled" while at sea. He said Justice became addicted to the painkillers he was prescribed. Justice said he lied to himself about the nature of his problem, although he insisted that he has since gotten clean. "I'm sorry that it ever got this far, that I didn't ask for help sooner," Justice said during the hearing. Justice resigned from his county job in January 2014 after he was confronted at his home by court staff about allegations that he was involved in drug activity at Stepping Stone. A Lorain County Drug Task Force report on the investigation said when investigators later raided Justice's Elyria home he confessed to giving one teenager \$90 to get him pills and that he received a painkiller and one hit of acid from a teen at the facility. He also acknowledged that he had sent a series of text messages to teens from the facility in which he discussed drugs and asked teen to obtain drugs for him. A group of residents at Stepping Stone called themselves the "Justice Four" because of the preferential treatment they received. One boy told investigators Justice gave him synthetic marijuana and anti-anxiety medication in exchange for good behavior, while another said he traded his attention deficit disorder medication to Justice for other drugs. The task force's report noted that court officials' decision to pursue their own review of the allegations against Justice interfered with the criminal investigations. It also complained about the account of the activity that Juvenile Court Administrator Jody Barilla gave to state regulators. Barilla has previously said that once the court had information concerning wrongdoing by an employee they were required to take action and tried not to interfere with the criminal investigation. The probe into Justice wasn't the first time his superiors at the court grew concerned about his possible involvement with drugs. He was investigated in March 2013 after a resident reported Justice asked him if he knew anyone who could get him painkillers. Although text messages seemed to confirm the allegations against Justice, he told court officials someone must have "swiped" his phone and used the device to send the messages. He was reprimanded and returned to work. The mother of one of the boys involved in the case that led to charges against Justice attended the hearing and afterward said while she wasn't happy with how the case was handled by the court system and had expected Justice to receive a longer sentence, but that she hoped he has cleaned up his life. "I hope he gets his act together," she said. Contact Brad Dicken at 329-7147 or bdicken@chroniclet.com. Follow him on Twitter [@BradDickenCT](#). Source: <http://www.chroniclet.com/cops-and-courts/2017/02/28/Former-group-home-worker-sentenced-to-jail-probation.html>

In our opinion: Lawmakers should explore flexible, compassionate system for juvenile offenders By Deseret News editorial board Published: Feb. 28, 2017 7:00 a.m. Updated: Feb. 27, 2017 9:26 p.m. [2 Comments](#) View 1 Item Laura Seitz, Deseret News FILE æ" A youth stands in his room at the Salt Lake Juvenile Detention Center in Salt Lake City on Friday, Feb. 5, 2016. Vignette V6 651bc87f7cc034217fab1d44951b1bd390b0947 Thu Mar 02 15:51:08 2017 Vignette V6 40794f7adc70e00321d79965a41a59ee448730eb Thu Mar 02 15:51:08 2017 It's been two years since the Utah Legislature initiated a comprehensive reform of the state's justice system, a work still in progress but one that would substantially revise the way juvenile courts handle low-risk offenders. Though the effort will cost more up-front, in the long run it promises to save the state money and will work to keep many youth out who don't deserve to be caught up in the detention system. The measure, HB239, envisions a more flexible and compassionate system for juvenile offenders that lawmakers should explore. First, the new system would make it easier for authorities to deal with offenders on a more individualized basis. Second, it would emphasize early intervention to head off behavioral problems that could escalate into more serious offenses. Third, it would reduce overall costs by allowing more kids to stay in their homes while undergoing court proceedings or counseling instead of facing lockup in a detention facility. Keeping youth in secure lockup or in a group home costs significantly more than monitoring their behavior while they stay with their families. Additionally, in many instances, reintegrating offenders with their family can be more conducive to reform. The current legislative proposal emanates from a study conducted after the 2015 legislative session worked to revise sentencing standards and other procedures in the adult court system. The Juvenile Justice Working Group was tasked by the governor, legislative leaders and leaders of the state judiciary to undertake a data-driven study of the juvenile court system in order to find ways to improve outcomes for offenders and their families while protecting public safety and containing costs. The group's report has resulted in the proposed legislation now before the House. The working group identified trends that show the current system, by requiring nearly all offenders of even minor crimes to be held in at least temporary detention, can be detrimental to rehabilitation and does not lower rates of recidivism. Some will undoubtedly worry that juvenile justice reform may lead to losses in terms of public safety. These are legitimate concerns. However, the working group found that there is evidence that spending time in detention actually increases the risk of a juvenile re-offending, thus compounding the public safety risks. Meanwhile, in recent years, the rate of recidivism among juvenile offenders in Utah has risen while there has also been an increase in serious felony offenses by juveniles. These trends speak to the need to re-evaluate the way young offenders are dealt with the system, and the proposed legislation demonstrates an understanding backed by data that intervention and home-based treatment is more effective than long-term detention. It has long been the philosophy of the justice system to treat juvenile offenders differently than adult criminals with the intent of offering youth a chance to quickly make amends for an offense and move forward with their lives. The current system now skews more toward incarceration, requiring even low-risk offenders to be taken to a detention facility for offenses as minor as truancy from school. HB239 represents a sound, sensible and more compassionate way to deal with kids who fall into wayward behavior. Source: <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865674416/In-our-opinion-Lawmakers-should-explore-flexible-compassionate-system-for-jvenile-offenders.html>

Wisconsin youth prison bill moves through hearing AP February 28, 2017 at 12:00 pm | The Associated Press MADISON, Wis. (AP) — A bill addressing abuse allegations at Wisconsin's troubled youth prison is gaining traction. The measure would make guards at the facility outside Irma mandatory child abuse

reporters, a move that would protect the guards from being fired for reporting incidents. The bill sailed through a Senate judiciary committee public hearing Tuesday. Sen. LaTonya Johnson, one of the bill's chief authors, was the only person who spoke on the measure, saying it would create accountability and transparency. The committee expects to vote Thursday on whether to forward the measure to the full Senate. The FBI is currently investigating allegations of widespread abuse at the prison. Current and former inmates have filed two federal lawsuits challenging conditions there. The GOP-controlled Legislature has yet to pass anything addressing the prison. Source: <http://www.beloitdailynews.com/article/20170228/AP/302289857>

Whistleblower: Millions wasted at NE Ohio rehab center for teens Whistleblower: millions wasted at NE treatment center Phil Trexler, WKYC 11:24 PM. EST February 28, 2017 Lavonte Hinchey was a former client at **Abraxas Ohio** (Photo: Phil Trexler, WKYC) CONNECT TWEET LINKEDIN GOOGLE+ PINTEREST SHELBY - One of the nation's largest private prison companies is defending itself against Medicaid fraud charges filed by a former clinical supervisor at an Ohio residential treatment center for teens. Lynn Roycroft's federal lawsuit alleges Abraxas Ohio in Shelby, an all-male, treatment center owned by GEO Group Inc., billed the government for years on "false or fraudulent" claims, including counseling sessions never happened. "I would say it was a pretty egregious abuse of your tax dollars," Roycroft told WKYC Channel 3 News. "Because treatment did not happen for the most part." According to state Medicaid officials, Abraxas received more than \$9 million in payments in 2016 and more than \$33 million since 2012. Roycroft, who has spent 33 years in counseling, alleges the federal government was billed by Abraxas for group counseling sessions that were never held. She also alleges progress reports were "cut and pasted" from one resident to another. She also contends men and women who once worked blue collar jobs such as plumbers and roofers were hired by Abraxas, given a week of training and then acted as professional counselors for the 100 boys who were housed at the residential facility in Richland County. Abraxas, she said, misrepresented the credentials and qualifications of some counselors. The teens treated at Abraxas were generally sent to the facility to obtain counseling and treatment after having cases heard in juvenile courts across Ohio, including Cuyahoga and Summit counties. Aside from financial and billing irregularities, Roycroft says the teenage boys were often improperly restrained and that "counselors" spent more time "controlling behaviors" instead of providing counseling for drug and alcohol abuse. "The philosophy of the institution was to get as many kids in there as you could and bill [Medicaid] your three hours of group [counseling] a day, whether the groups happened or not," Roycroft said. "To me, it's just blatant fraud." Pablo Paez, a GEO Group spokesman, said Roycroft's lawsuit "has no merit" and that the company will defend it "vigorously." He declined further comment. Abraxas Ohio's director is Erich Dumbeck, who once headed the Huron County Department of Jobs and Family Services. In 2007, Dumbeck resigned in the wake of world-wide attention focusing his agency and a couple who kept their foster children in crudely built cages. Dumbeck declined comment. Lavonte Hinchey of Cleveland was twice sent to Abraxas for three-month stints in 2008 and 2009. He called the programming "a joke" and said teens were not provided counseling. "A lot of the friends I made there...you can look it up, they're having problems today out on the streets," said Hinchey. "They don't know how to handle their problems day to day. "A lot of people's tax dollars went in, but nothing came out of it." That's largely due to the lack of counseling and proper training of staff, Roycroft said. When she was hired in 2008, Roycroft said she was expected to address myriad problems inside the expansive residential center near Mansfield. Some group sessions never met, however, reports were filled out as if they did occur, she said. Those forms were then submitted to Medicaid for billing purposes. "It was totally out of control when I got there," she said. "A lot of the time, I was really just spending trying to wrap my head around what I was being told." The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court, is pending. Roycroft is seeking unspecified damages. She and her attorney say taxpayers were defrauded, but the children and their families continue to suffer because they never received the help needed to overcome addictions or other mental health issues. "This is fraud," said attorney Warner Mendenhall of Akron. "This is very abusive. The worst type of abuse because it's victimizing the most vulnerable people in our society." Source: <http://www.wkyc.com/news/investigations/whistleblower-alleges-tax-dollar-fraud-at-ne-ohio-rehab-center/416246626>

How States Turn K-12 Scholarships Into Money-Laundering Schemes How States Turn K-12 Scholarships Into Money-Laundering Schemes [Carl Davis](#) March 3, 2017 "School choice" happy talk obscures how privatizing education dollars allows wealthy taxpayers to scam the government. [PinIt](#) [Share30](#) [InstaPaperPocketEmailPrint](#) (Photo: Shutterstock) Politicians have long had a knack for framing policy proposals, however controversial, in terms that make them more palatable to voters. This is why unpopular tax cuts for the wealthy are often sold as plans to "invest" in America or to stimulate "growth." Likewise, school voucher programs that funnel public money to religious schools are cast as "school choice," because underwriting parochial schools with taxpayer dollars is controversial. The "choice" frame has heightened public awareness of school voucher programs, and helped their advocates make significant inroads in convincing states to allow the use of public dollars for private schools. Obscured in the spin, however, is how some states, in their zeal to subsidize private schools, have created [an egregious tax scam](#) that allows wealthy taxpayers to profit by donating to private school scholarship funds in return for lucrative tax credits. Many states have constitutional provisions that expressly prohibit the use of public dollars for private religious schools. To sidestep these prohibitions and [public aversion](#) to the practice, voucher proponents and their legislative allies in 17 states have created generous tax credits to encourage taxpayers to donate to private school scholarship funds. Critics who object that vouchers drain resources away from public schools would be doubly outraged if they knew how these vouchers were, in some cases, fleecing the public till. "Neovouchers," as these scholarship funds are often called, have received considerable attention as education policy initiatives, but their full impact as tax policies has drawn less notice. Critics who object that vouchers drain resources away from public schools would be doubly outraged if they knew how these vouchers were, in some cases, fleecing the public till. By offering tax subsidies in exchange for donations to private school scholarship programs, states are using private citizens as middlemen. Rather than include line-items in state budgets for spending on school vouchers, lawmakers ask taxpayers to undertake such spending on the state's behalf, in return for a generous tax giveaway. Advertisement Incentivizing philanthropy through state tax codes is nothing new, of course. For example, donating \$100 to a veterans' organization, food pantry, or cancer research institute might shave \$5 to \$10 off a taxpayer's state tax bill, if the donor claims a deduction for that contribution. But with profit-making "neovoucher" schemes, states supercharge the incentive to donate, rewarding charitable gifts to private schools much more handsomely. Louisiana, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Virginia, for example, all provide tax credits worth between \$65 and \$95 on every \$100 donated. [Alabama](#), Arizona, Georgia, Montana, and [South Carolina](#) go even further by providing dollar-for-dollar tax credits: Donate \$100, and receive \$100 back in tax credits. Because taxpayers are also permitted to claim a federal charitable tax deduction on their donations to "neovoucher" programs—even if they were already fully reimbursed for those gifts by their state governments—the result for some taxpayers is [a tax cut as large as \\$1.35](#) for each dollar donated. Like many tax loopholes, this one is not geared toward ordinary taxpayers. A [quirk in federal law](#) limits the benefit primarily to high-income taxpayers. So, in effect, a handful of states have created elaborate tax schemes that allow wealthy taxpayers to generate risk-free private returns of up to 35 percent. A one-year, guaranteed return of 35 percent on a legitimate investment is uncommon, and a publicly funded return of that size on a so-called charitable donation is patently outrageous. This perverse use of the tax code on two fronts should raise the ire of taxpayers everywhere. The money-making aspect of these "neovouchers" is not lost on organizations running scholarship funds or on wealth managers. One organization based in Georgia, for example, [brags to potential donors](#) that, "you will end with more money than when you started." Similarly, a tax lawyer in Alabama notes on [her firm's website](#) that for some taxpayers, "donating" will "put money in your pocket." And private schools in Oklahoma and Pennsylvania have demonstrated the potential monetary gains of "donating" with hypothetical examples that show the financial returns for participants in their states' programs. Perhaps the most candid marketing language, however, comes from [a wealth-management firm in Virginia](#). It notes that a taxpayer can enjoy a savings that is "more than their original donation," before going on to explain that "there is very little logic to the tax code. Even if you don't agree with the law, you should take advantage of the tax benefits." Until these tax credits are repealed or reformed, it will remain hard to argue with that conclusion. But it doesn't make it any less shameful. Source: <http://prospect.org/article/how-states-turn-k-12-scholarships-money-laundering-schemes>

Troubled St. Cloud center for children to close residential treatment Troubled St. Cloud Children's Home to move 30 children, lay off 95 staffers. By [Chris Serres](#) Star Tribune March 2, 2017 — 8:31pm Cottage at St. Cloud Children's Home Text size [comment](#) [share](#) [tweet](#) [email](#) Print more Share on: [Share on LinkedIn](#) [Share on Google+](#) [Share on Pinterest](#) Copy shortlink: Purchase: [Order Reprint](#) A St. Cloud mental health treatment center for children, which state regulators have cited for repeatedly failing to protect young patients from harm, has stopped accepting patients for residential services and instead will focus on day treatment. St. Cloud Children's Home, a 60-bed treatment center operated by Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Cloud, made the announcement just weeks after state regulators cited it for 33 violations of state rules governing the health and safety of vulnerable young patients. Regulators found that children had been allowed to bang their heads against walls and windows, resulting in multiple concussions, facial injuries and head trauma. Staff knew about the head-banging, but allowed the practice to continue, regulators found. In an interview Thursday, Steve Pareja, executive director of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Cloud, said a state licensing order last month was "one factor among many" in the decision to shutter the residential mental health program, which opened

in 1964. The facility has seen a gradual shift away from residential services, while the population the program treats has grown more difficult and aggressive, he said. "I would say behaviors have become more aggressive — and these behaviors escalate more quickly," he said. "We are all committed to providing safe environments ... and I needed to be assured that we could continue doing that." The closure comes amid rising concerns about an acute shortage of psychiatric services for children and as the state weighs legislation that would expand mental health care in schools. Statewide, there are 19 residential facilities with 744 beds certified to provide mental health services for children. But the wait to get into these facilities can be months. Many families have been forced to send their children out of state for care, said Sue Abderholden, executive director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Minnesota. "This is a big deal in terms of access," Abderholden said. "We already have a lot of children in this state who should be in treatment but are at home or at school because they can't get into a facility." The St. Cloud Children's Home, which still houses about 30 children and teens in its on-campus cottages in St. Cloud, has been plagued with health and safety violations in recent years. In 2012, the site was hit with 46 licensing violations, after state inspectors found that unsupervised children were having sex with each other on the facility grounds. In one incident, a patient was forced to have oral sex by another patient while a staff member played a video game nearby, state records show. Head-banging The scope of the recent violations alarmed mental health advocates. Last October, state inspectors found that staff members "at all levels of authority" were aware that children were banging their heads against walls, but failed to take action. The noise was so loud that it could be heard throughout one of the cottages, investigators found. At least two children got emergency medical treatment. They also sustained black eyes, swollen faces, headaches and abrasions, regulators found. Regulators also found that children were subjected to an unusual form of punishment known as "freeze" that was not therapeutic or approved by a mental health professional. During freeze, children who were noncompliant or aggressive were forced to sit in an assigned area for at least 24 hours, even after they had calmed down. Citing the "nature, chronicity and severity" of the violations, the Minnesota Department of Human Services in early February took the unusual step of placing the center's license on conditional status for three years. Under the conditional license, the home would have operated under greater state scrutiny and was required to submit detailed plans for improving safety and supervision of residents. 95 lost jobs The decision to close residential services means that children and teens will receive treatment at the center and go home to their families in the evening. The 30 children who still are housed at the facility will be discharged or transferred to other sites over the next two months, officials said. About 95 employees will lose their jobs as part of the transition, although more jobs will become available as the center expands its day treatment program. Pareja said that St. Cloud Children's Home has about 60 children in its day treatment programs, which he expects to expand by 30 to 40 patients. Source: <http://www.startribune.com/troubled-st-cloud-center-for-children-to-close-residential-treatment/415241974/>

EXCLUSIVE: Developmentally disabled residents at Bronx state-run group home endured abuse, neglect over decade, lawsuit claims Disabled Bronx group home residents abused over decade: lawsuit BY [Victoria Bekiempis](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Wednesday, March 1, 2017, 10:26 PM [facebook](#) [Tweet](#) [email](#) Guardians of the facility's residents sued Union Ave. IRA staffers in an effort to end the alleged abuse. (Luiz C. Ribeiro for New York Daily News) BY [Victoria Bekiempis](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Wednesday, March 1, 2017, 10:26 PM Several disabled residents of a state-run group home may have suffered abuse and neglect dozens of times over the course of a decade, according to new court papers. The residents of Union Ave. IRA, in the Bronx, endured physical abuse, as well as neglect, while living in the group home, a Manhattan Federal Court lawsuit filed by their guardians alleges. One of the guardians has even claimed that her sister was raped while under the supervision of Union Ave. IRA. The residents' guardians sued Union Ave. staffers, as well as officials from the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities, a state entity that oversees residences for mentally handicapped people, to put an end to the alleged abuse. As part of the ongoing lawsuit — originally filed by their guardians last May — the disabilities agency filed paperwork on Feb. 13 describing its records on abuse and neglect for three residents whose guardians are suing the home. Agency officials said records show that from 2006 to this year there were 24 incidents of alleged abuse or neglect toward one of these three residents. Since 2005, there were 20 incidents of alleged abuse or neglect toward another resident. And from 2006 to this year, there were 13 incidents of alleged abuse or neglect toward yet another resident whose guardian is suing the home, records show. The guardians' lawyer, Ilann Maazel, said he's "never seen so many allegations of abuse" in a group home throughout his years representing alleged abuse victims. The disabilities office said it hasn't completed its search for records on abuse allegations. Incidents involving alleged abuse and neglect were not tracked electronically until 2006, so it's possible additional records exist, the agency said in court papers. The agency did not comment when reached by the Daily News on Wednesday. The disabilities office did not comment specifically on the allegations, but said on Feb. 23 that it is taking steps to prevent abuse. "The safety and well-being of individuals supported by (the agency) is our highest priority. We committed to ensuring that all allegations of abuse and neglect in our service system are thoroughly and quickly addressed, investigated, and that appropriate measures are taken if substantiated," the office said in the statement. "Any abuse of the people in our care is completely unacceptable." Source: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/bronx/disabled-bronx-group-home-residents-abused-decade-lawsuit-article-1.2986415>

HCJFS boss during 'caged kids' episode now heads teen treatment center facing lawsuit • Updated Mar 2, 2017 at 7:47 AM SHELBY — The former boss at the Huron County Department of Jobs and Family Services is in the news again. Erich Dumbeck now serves as the Ohio director for Abraxas Ohio, a residential treatment center for male teens in Shelby that is owned by GEO Group Inc. — one of the nation's largest private prison companies. He headed Huron County's welfare agency during the "caged kids" scandal that garnered international attention. Abraxas Ohio is the subject of a federal lawsuit filed by Lynn Roycroft, a former clinical supervisor there. Tom Meyer, an investigator for WKYC Channel 3 news, [interviewed Roycroft and discussed the lawsuit](#) for a segment that aired during the 11 p.m. newscast Tuesday. Trending Articles [Sponsored By:](#) Kathleen J. Holzwart Norwalk woman who enjoyed baking and being a grandma was 85. [Powered By:](#) The lawsuit claims Abraxas billed the government for "false or fraudulent" claims, including counseling sessions never happened. Among other allegations, Roycroft said out-of-work plumbers and roofers, after receiving only one week of training, were hired to act as professional counselors for the 100 boys who were housed at the Richland County residential facility, according to WKYC. A GEO spokesman told Channel 3 that Roycroft's lawsuit "has no merit" and that the company will defend it "vigorously." Dumbeck declined to comment for the Channel 3 story. Dumbeck joined the Huron County Department of Jobs and Family Services in 1997 as a child abuse investigator. Two years later, he was named the social services supervisor. In June 2004, the county commissioners — Terry Boose, Ardeth Chupp and Mike Adelman — promoted Dumbeck to serve as the agency's director. He held that position [until resigning in April 2007](#). By then, Gary Bauer and Ralph Fegley had joined Adelman as the county's three commissioners and a review of the agency was under way. In August 2005, during Dumbeck's reign, authorities discovered Michael and Sharen Gravelle had been forcing some of their 11 adopted children to sleep in enclosed beds in the family's Clarksfield Township home. The story made international headlines, and a flock of media outlets followed every step of the investigation and prosecution. The Gravelles and social worker Elaine Thompson eventually were convicted of criminal charges, and the [Gravelles served prison time](#). Trial proceedings revealed JFS employees had [known about the abuse for at least two years](#) before an investigation was started. Immediately after the Gravelles' three-week-long trial, Dumbeck told reporters his agency had refined some of its procedures involving complaints and adjusted the checks-and-balances system to prevent another Gravelle-like incident, which Dumbeck called a "1 in 10 million" occurrence. Just months after Dumbeck was hired, the first of the agency's several high-profile cases broke. In October 2004, Paul Efaw stabbed and killed his foster daughter, Connee Dixon, after she attacked him with a knife. A [jury eventually awarded Dixon's estate \\$600,000](#) in a wrongful death lawsuit against the county for failing to properly screen Efaw, a Monroeville man who served three years for voluntary manslaughter. Also during Dumbeck's time as JFS director, a sexual harassment complaint was filed against him. The complaint was dismissed early in 2007. An independent review found that he did have an unwanted, inappropriate relationship with a HCDJFS employee, but it was prior to his promotion to director. When the review of the agency began in February 2007, Dumbeck was relieved of some of his day-to-day duties and asked to focus exclusively on the Children Services division. David Broehl, head of that division, had announced his retirement around that time. Shortly after Dumbeck submitted his resignation letter, [a woman filed a lawsuit against him](#) and agency, alleging she was denied multiple promotions because of sexual discrimination — including "Dumbeck's infatuation with her." The suit also stated Dumbeck was married with two children at the time the "unwanted" contact began, and she was a single mother of one in a relationship with a single man. The suit focused on events that happened between January 2004 and January 2007. [In his resignation letter](#), Dumbeck stated in part: "I believe that God leads in directions that are sometimes unknown to us but are part of a greater plan. I feel that He is leading me in the direction to serve individuals in a different capacity." Source: <http://www.norwalkreflector.com/Local/2017/03/01/Former-HCJFS-boss.html?ip=1&ci=breaking>

Residential treatment facility for children in Florence cited again by DHEC by Tonya Brown Friday, March 3rd 2017 The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) has once again cited Palmetto Pee Dee Behavioral Health in Florence for violations. (WPDE file image) Florence, S.C.

(WPDE) — The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) has once again cited Palmetto Pee Dee Behavioral Health in Florence for violations, according to a DHEC citation report. The facility is located on Gregg Avenue in Florence. The facility's website says it's a residential treatment facility for people ages 7 to 21 seeking "care for a range of psychiatric or addictive disease diagnoses including general psychiatric issues, dually diagnosed, post-traumatic stress disorder, Asperger's Syndrome, autism, mild to moderate mental retardation, and pervasive developmental disorders." DHEC's report says it cited the facility in early January for several violations following an unannounced visit in response to a complaint. The facility was hit then with citations because it did not have a written policy and procedure, titled Diet Orders, implemented; for not having enough staff to sufficiently provide supervision for all residents as determined by the condition of the residents; and for not having a written description of its philosophy regarding each living group size, group composition and staff involvement, including group management and supervision, available for review, according to the report. DHEC said it cited the facility again following an inspection on January 31. Some of the violations included, staffing issues, facility food menus and the facility's upkeep. [Related: DHEC cites Florence residential treatment facility for violations](#) Palmetto Pee Dee Behavioral Health released the following statement on the citation and violations: "Palmetto Pee Dee Behavioral Health, like all healthcare facilities, experiences both routine and unannounced visits by state regulators. Regarding the results from the January 31, 2017 visit by DHEC, we do not agree with the merits of all the findings and have submitted a request for reconsideration. Although we may disagree with instances of alleged non-compliance, Palmetto Pee Dee Behavioral Health shares DHEC's goal of ensuring that all patients receive treatment in a safe and therapeutic environment. We continue to devote the necessary resources to ensuring that our patients receive the high quality mental health services they need and deserve." DHEC said it's working with the facility on a plan of correction for the violations. Source: <http://wpde.com/news/local/residential-treatment-facility-for-children-in-florence-cited-again-by-dhec>

19 girls die in fire at home for troubled teens in Guatemala Last updated 08:05, March 9 2017 At least 19 girls have died in a fire in a government-run home for abused teens, Guatemalan police say, with local media reporting that dozens of residents had escaped the overcrowded home following a melee. A crowd of relatives, many of them wailing with grief, gathered outside the Virgen de Asuncion home for children up to 18 years old, in the municipality of San Jose Pinula, 25 kilometres southwest of the capital Guatemala City. Nery Ramos, the head of Guatemala's national police, said at the scene on Thursday morning (NZT) that 19 people, all girls, were confirmed dead. Nineteen dead in fire at Guatemala children's shelter Video will play in 1 secondPlay Now! Stop REUTERS Nineteen girls have been killed by a fire at a children's home in Guatemala. "This is a painful situation," he said, adding that the fire was started by a group of young people at the centre. R The fire was started by a group of young people at the centre. Plagued by Latin America's highest rates of child malnutrition and street gangs like the Mara Salvatrucha that often prey on minors, Guatemala has long been a traumatic place to grow up. Conditions in public institutions are often dismal with widespread overcrowding. Burnt bodies partially covered in blankets were strewn across the floor of a blackened room in the home, pictures posted to Twitter by the firefighters showed. REUTERS Five hundred children lived in the home, despite its capacity to hold only 400. On Tuesday night (Wednesday NZT), riot police were sent in to quell unrest over the crowded living conditions at the home during which some 60 residents escaped, images on Guatemalan television news showed. [Ad Feedback](#) Local media said more than 500 children lived there, despite its capacity to hold only 400. Pablo Castillo, a spokesman for Guatemalan police, said 38 children had been transferred to local hospitals with burns, some of them severe. Outside the home on Wednesday, Andrea Palomo told reporters in tears that she had brought her 15-year-old son to the home to discipline him. But he told her he was mistreated and complained that gang members there tattooed the children, she said. "We have been given no information since last night," Palomo said outside the home, which takes in children who have been abandoned as well as victims of abuse and trafficking. The home is run by the Ministry for Social Welfare and the attorney general for human rights decides whether children are placed in the home or not. Source: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/world/americas/90223174/19-die-in-fire-at-guatemala-orphanage>

Foster parents accused of sexually assaulting, torturing and strangling 11 kids in their care, including toddlers Foster parents accused of sexually assaulting, torturing and strangling 11 kids in their care, including toddler Daniel Spurgeon and Jenise Spurgeon have been charged with hundreds of horrific sex crimes By Emma Foster 9th March 2017, 12:13 am Updated: 9th March 2017, 1:57 am A FOSTER couple have been accused of sexually assaulting, torturing and strangling 11 kids in their care – including toddlers. Florida couple Daniel Spurgeon and Jenise Spurgeon have been charged with hundreds of horrific sex crimes against children. [1](#) Foster parents Daniel and Jenise Spurgeon are accused of hundreds of sex crimes against kids in their care They have been accused of abusing 11 children who were either fostered or adopted by them when they lived in Alabama and committing incest. Daniel Spurgeon has been charged with 115 counts of first-degree sex abuse, 122 counts of child abuse and four counts of sexual torture. He also stands accused of raping, strangling and suffocating the children. The adoptive dad also faces 115 counts of enticing a child for immoral purposes, six counts of incest and 11 counts of first-degree human trafficking. His wife Jenise has been charged with 100 counts of child abuse, human trafficking, endangering the welfare of a child and enticing a child for immoral purposes. Police said there were 11 victims in total and they were aged from "toddler-age to mid and upper teens." The crimes allegedly took place while the couple lived in Florence, Alabama, before they moved to Cape Coral, Florida in 2015. The Spurgeons are currently in jail in Florida on other charges but will be extradited to Alabama. Source: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/3045816/foster-parents-accused-of-hundreds-of-sex-crimes-against-kids-as-young-as-toddlers/>

Woman accused of sex assault, corrupting minors at center for troubled youth Updated: Mar 16, 2017 - 8:35 AM 0 Woman accused of sex assault, corrupting minors at center for troubled youth <http://on.wpxi.com/2nGd7Xr> A 31-year-old woman is accused of sexually assaulting two teens at a treatment center for troubled youth where she worked. Kelly Zawodniak is charged with institutional sexual assault and corruption of minors in connection with two incidents. Officials said Zawodniak had only worked at Adelphoi Village in Latrobe for eight days when the alleged crimes took place. During that time, police detailed the encounters and interactions she had with at least two teens. Source: <http://www.wpxi.com/news/woman-accused-of-sex-assault-corrupting-minors-at-center-for-troubled-youth/502962320>

Alabama state lawmaker seeks crackdown on troubled youth programs after ABC News report By BRIAN EPSTEIN [Close Follow on Twitter](#) [More from Brian](#) Brian Ross [Close Follow on Twitter](#) [More from Brian](#) Mar 17, 2017, 9:29 AM ET Share [Email](#) Star PlayABC News WatchUndercover at a so-called gay conversion camp Share [Email](#) In the wake of an ABC News 20/20 investigation, a key Alabama lawmaker is pushing for a crackdown on unlicensed religious youth programs that use brutality against "troubled teens," including gay teens. "The display that you showed on television, I think, really brought this home to a lot of people," said Republican state representative Steve McMillan, who has introduced legislation requiring closer supervision of such programs. "I've talked to a lot of people that just did not believe the circumstances," McMillan said of the ABC News report which detailed allegations from teens who said they were beaten and abused at programs. Two so-called Christian pastors and a third person were sentenced to 20 years in prison last month after being found guilty of [child abuse](#) at a facility that operated in Mobile and Pritchard, Alabama. Under the state's Religious Freedom law, such programs had been exempt from state inspections. Under legislation proposed by McMillan, state officials would be able to conduct unannounced inspections, and teens would have the right to speak privately to investigators and to their parents or guardians. McMillan said he believe the law has broad support from legislators and mainstream religious groups that feel something needs to be done about unlicensed programs with records of brutality or violence in their state. "They'll either go out of business or shape up and do the right things," said McMillan. The director of the non-profit Youth Reach Gulfport in Alabama welcomed the proposed legislation. "Juvenile facilities need accountability," said Richard Crawford, who decried the child abuse documented in the ABC News report. "Especially programs that are seeking money for their services," he said. "That's when things often get twisted here with these ministries if there is no accountability." The state representative praised the efforts of a retired Alabama police captain, Charles Kennedy [HEAL Alabama Coordinator], who has campaigned for years against the unlicensed programs. "I guess you could call him a persistent angel, because his heart's in the right place, he really feels strongly about this, and without his persistence it would never have come to pass," said the legislator. Source: <http://abcnews.go.com/US/alabama-state-lawmaker-seeks-crackdown-troubled-youth-programs/story?id=46181915>

14-year-old who streamed her suicide on Facebook suffered years of sexual and physical abuse WITW Staff 03.16.17, Naika Venant (Facebook) An inquest into the death of Naika Venant, a 14-year-old foster child who broadcast her own suicide by hanging on Facebook, has revealed that the teenager had been sent to more than 14 foster homes and endured years of sexual and physical abuse. According to a report released by the Florida Department of Children and Families on Monday, Venant's relationship with her allegedly abusive mother Gina Alexis may also have played a tragic role in her death. "Despite everything that had

occurred between Naika and her mother, Naika longed to be home," the report said. "Naika often told her therapist that she greatly missed her mother and really wanted to go back home." The report detailed a number of disturbing incidents, including a case when 4-year-old Naika was left unattended by a male babysitter without food or running water. The next year, the child welfare agency was contacted after Naika was sent to the emergency room with an undisclosed chronic health condition. Alexis, reportedly, had called her daughter "a liar and a faker." When Naika was 6, the report found that Alexis had beaten her with a belt for being sexually aggressive with another child. According to Naika's therapists, the child told them that she slept in the same room as her mother's boyfriends and watched "sex movies." At the age of 11, Naika reportedly ran away from home out of fear of being beaten by her mother. Alexis then refused to take Naika back, telling investigators that she would beat her if they insisted on returning the child to her. Against the recommendations of caseworkers and Naika's court-ordered lay guardian, a Miami judge ordered the girl returned to her mother two months later. Last April, Alexis returned custody of Naika to the state — reportedly because she'd had enough of the child's "behavior." Naika hanged herself with a scarf on January 22 in the shower stall of her latest foster home, streaming the horrific scene on Facebook Live. The report concluded that mental health professionals had failed Naika by not sufficiently treating the trauma caused by her abuse and her failed relationship with her mother. A lawyer for Alexis has questioned the veracity of the report, describing it as "an apparent whitewash of the systemic failures" of the care system. Source: <http://nytlive.nytimes.com/womenintheworld/2017/03/16/14-year-old-who-streamed-her-suicide-on-facebook-suffered-years-of-sexual-and-physical-abuse/>

How Unaccompanied Youth Become Exploited Workers in the US Sunday, March 19, 2017 By [Stephanie L. Canizales](#), [The Conversation](#) | News Analysis
font size [decrease font size](#) [increase font size](#) [Print](#) The Trump administration has released a series of executive orders targeting immigration at the U.S. southern border. Central American families and children traveling alone [represent](#) nearly half of all unauthorized migrants apprehended by Customs and Border Protection. The criminalization of immigrants at the U.S. southern border disproportionately affects Central American children and youth. Nearly 153,000 unaccompanied Mexican and Central American [children](#) have been apprehended at the U.S. southern border since 2014. Of those detained by Customs and Border Protection and processed by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, 60 percent have been reunited with a sponsor, typically a parent. The other 40 percent are placed with a nonparent sponsor. With the guidance of a parent or guardian, these youths might obtain financial, legal, health and social support. Others who enter without detection and remain unaccompanied when they arrive in the U.S. are financially independent and may never gain access to formal resettlement services. Recent [orders](#) by the Trump administration that prioritize unaccompanied child migrants for deportation heighten the vulnerability of immigrant children in the U.S. Since 2012, I have conducted in-depth observations and interviews with undocumented immigrant youth who arrived in Los Angeles, California as unaccompanied minors and have remained without a parent throughout their settlement in the U.S. I use pseudonyms for confidentiality as research participants are migrant youth living and working in the U.S. without authorization. Pundits and scholars tend to frame immigrant youth as students and adult migrants as workers. However, being unaccompanied at settlement requires youth to become [financially independent](#) and take up low-wage occupations to make ends meet. My ongoing research shows that unaccompanied migrant youth face labor exploitation and suggests that Trump's orders exacerbate the precarious work conditions of unaccompanied immigrant youth workers in the U.S. Workplace Violence Undocumented working youth migrate to Los Angeles in hopes of working to support their families who remain in their home countries. They come to the U.S. with low levels of education and English language fluency. Romero arrived in Los Angeles from Guatemala at the age of 15 and immediately began looking for work in downtown LA garment factories. In an interview, he recalled: "The bosses would tell me, 'do you have experience?' I would say yes. And they would say, 'you are a child still. Go to school.' But I thought, 'yes I would like to go to school but no one is going to [financially] support me. Just me. Who else? It's me by myself.'" Unaccompanied minors like him enter industries such as garment production, service, construction and domestic work. Youth working in the garment industry often [make](#) a median of US\$350 in wages per week for more than 60 hours of work. Undocumented youth garment workers spend hours in dimly lit factories where shop owners often leave doors and windows locked throughout the work day to remain discreet and avoid workplace inspection. The [lack of ventilation](#), heat and loud noises from factory machines, and strenuous work schedules physically and mentally exhaust youth who are then unable to attend school due to [headaches, eye tension and back pain](#). Much like with their [adult coworkers](#), economic necessity and fear of removal from the workplace and the country keep undocumented migrant youth workers quiet in cases of exploitation, and docile and efficient on the job. For example, three young workers at the same factory told me the story of a young Salvadoran woman who was pushed to the shop floor by the factory manager for incorrectly sewing the seams on a batch of dresses. They sorrowfully recalled their inability to help her out of fear of losing their jobs. In early February 2017, the [Department of Homeland Security](#) conducted "a series of targeted enforcement operations" in workplaces and neighborhoods across 12 states that led to the arrest of 680 immigrants. Raids in today's immigrant destinations, including Los Angeles, increase the hostility that workers must navigate in already precarious occupations. Research shows that deportation can have [detrimental mental health effects](#) on children and lead to [financial hardship](#) among families. In 2008, the largest workplace immigration raid in [U.S. history](#) impacted hundreds of Central American workers, including minors. These actions can further mental health and financial instability in the lives of child migrants. Overcoming and Giving Back In the last four years, I have encountered youth who have been entangled with drug and alcohol addictions, experienced bouts of homelessness or toiled in depression and anxiety as they searched for ways to cope. Far from being the "bad hombres" Trump describes, youths' desires to overcome these circumstances permeated our conversations and organized their daily lives. In fact, many see their tenacity in enduring workplace violence as a marker of their commitment to their families and communities. "I didn't come here with a bad intention. I didn't come here to be a burden," says 22-year-old Berenice who arrived from El Salvador at the age of 17. A 19-year-old Salvadoran man explained, "People say Central Americans are gang bangers but we all come here with a dream. We want to help our families. There aren't jobs over there and we come here to work. We are not selfish. We want to help." These young people participate in various community organizations such as [churches](#), book clubs, [support groups](#) and recreational sports teams. A 25-year-old Guatemalan man who has lived in the U.S. for nine years said: "What is important here is that we stay united and we support each other. We all want to be helped and to also help. Like in my case, the way someone lent me a hand, I want to lend it to others. That's how I overcame [my trauma]." Young people construct moral identities based on work, participating in the local economy, giving back to their local community via organizational involvement and community service. They also demonstrate a commitment to their transnational community. A 24-year-old man who arrived in Los Angeles at age 16 gave up attending English classes at an adult language school to remit a few extra dollars to his family abroad after his youngest brother expressed a desire to migrate to the U.S. to attend school. "No quiero que venga a sufrir aca," he said, "I do not want him to come here to suffer." Source: <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/39903-how-unaccompanied-youth-become-exploited-workers-in-the-us>

Ex-Springfield teacher sentenced for sexually abusing teen in her foster care [Giacomo Bologna](#), [GBOLOGNA@NEWS-LEADER.COM](#) Published 4:53 p.m. CT March 10, 2017 | Updated 4:54 p.m. CT March 10, 2017 Jessica Jones (Photo: Greene County Jail) 378 CONNECT [TWEET 5](#) [LINKEDIN](#) 4 COMMENT [EMAIL](#) MORE A former Springfield teacher convicted of statutory sodomy said in court Friday that she made mistakes, but it was the then-14-year-old former student in her foster care who initiated physical contact. Jessica Jones, 33, was sentenced to five years in prison for sexually abusing the teen between 2013 and 2015, though Jones could be out of prison in as few as 120 days if she successfully completes a stint in a sex offender's unit. The assistant prosecuting attorney described Jones' behavior as predatory and called it "disgusting" that Jones and her lawyer argued Jones was "seduced" by the victim. "This was not an isolated incident," said Dawn Diel, the prosecuting attorney. Jones, in a statement to the court, said she had tried to provide a welcome atmosphere for the troubled girl but was drawn into a relationship with a teen much more mature than her age indicated. "She didn't speak or act like a typical teenager," Jones said. As Jones and the girl became closer, Jones said she and her partner of six years broke up. When Jones and the girl visited Jones' parents, Jones said there was only one bed available, so they shared it. "I crossed the line that night," Jones said. "A decision I will forever regret." Jones said the girl told her she loved her, then kissed Jones and placed Jones' hands on her. Her attorney, Jason Coatney, said Jones' behavior was anything but predatory, saying Jones did not want to foster the girl but was worn down by repeated requests. Coatney said that the girl is currently in the custody of the Missouri Department of Corrections for her role in a drive-by shooting. Coatney argued that Jones' crime was one of "opportunity" and that she would not re-offend if released on probation. Jones' mother also testified at the sentencing, telling the judge she had been praying "long and hard about this day." "I truly believe my daughter was targeted by this troubled teen because of her lifestyle choice," Jones' mother said. "My daughter was in over her head ... My daughter's life became a nightmare because of this troubled teen." Jones, who was hired by Springfield Public Schools in August 2006, taught art at Watkins Elementary for nearly all of her nine years with the district. According to a state database that shows assignments, she also worked at Bissett and McGregor elementary schools, Wilson's Creek Intermediate, the former Study Middle School and the Springfield Option Site, a school on the Great

Circle campus (formerly known as Boys and Girls Town). Jones was working for the district when she met the girl, a student of hers, according to court documents. It was not clear which school the girl attended at the time. According to court documents, the teen girl requested to be placed in the foster care of Jones, who completed the necessary steps to become her foster parent. The girl moved into Jones' home in May 2013. The documents show police were tipped off about the possibility of an inappropriate relationship between Jones and the girl in 2014. In July 2014, the girl was interviewed at the Child Advocacy Center but didn't disclose any information. Days later, a second child in Jones' care told interviewers that Jones and the other girl slept in the same bed and visited an adult entertainment store to purchase pornography. The second child also told interviewers she had found photos on a phone of Jones and the victim kissing. The phone was collected by a police detective, but the investigation was suspended — before the phone was checked — because of "conflicting information," according to court documents. A year ago, a new police report was made by a Children's Division investigator after the victim disclosed she was involved in a sexual relationship with Jones. A short while later, police obtained a warrant to review the seized phone and discovered photos of Jones kissing the girl, which corroborated the account of the second child, the documents showed. According to court documents, the victim told investigators during a June 9, 2015, interview that she lied in the previous interview because she "felt she had nowhere else to go and she did not want Jessica to get in trouble." Documents show the teen also alleged the following: • Jones had sexually abused her since she was 14. • The first incident of sexual abuse occurred in July 2013, after she and Jones had been drinking together. Jones performed oral sex on the victim, and the next morning Jones asked her if they were "together." • The victim said the two had performed oral sex on each other "so many times she could not remember." She said the last time was in May 2015. • The victim said Jones had told her that if someone found out what happened between them, "I'd probably go to prison because of statutory rape." • The victim also said she smoked marijuana with Jones and in one instance was given \$80 by Jones to purchase marijuana. Source: <http://www.news-leader.com/story/news/crime/2017/03/10/ex-springfield-teacher-sentenced-sexually-abusing-teen-her-foster-care/99026412/>

After Two Suicides In 60 Days, Lawyer Says Florida's Privatization Of Foster Care Is A Failure By [Rowan Moore Gerety](#) • Mar 10, 2017

[Tweet/Share/Google+Email](#) Naika Venant Facebook A preliminary hearing was held Thursday in the case of Naika Venant, the 14-year-old girl who broadcast her suicide on Facebook Live from her Miami Gardens foster home earlier this year. It was the second suicide of a teenager in foster care overseen by the agency Our Kids in less than 60 days. In December, 16-year-old Laurny Martin hanged herself with a scarf in her room at the Florida Keys Children's Shelter on Plantation Key. Howard Talenfeld, a lawyer representing Naika Venant's biological family, says it's just the latest evidence that the state's move to privatize foster care isn't working. "It's the Department of Children and Families that gives the job to a contractor like Our Kids, and they contract out with case management agencies," he says. "We're seeing kids that just aren't in the right kinds of placements, don't receive the right kinds of services. In her case, she wasn't supposed to be anywhere near the internet." Talenfeld says it's too early to say what legal remedies the family might pursue to avoid another death like Naika's. "We're trying to get at the truth. Until we know what the truth is, we couldn't even begin to try to determine what's appropriate," he says. Talenfeld says it's been 40 days since his firm requested relevant records from DCF and Our Kids, and it hasn't gotten anything yet. "We're hopeful that this kind of information becomes available very soon so that the Florida Legislature can hear more than the fact that 'this kid was just a kid we couldn't help.' " Representatives of DCF and Our Kids did not respond immediately to requests for comment. Source: <http://wlrn.org/post/after-two-suicides-60-days-lawyer-says-floridas-privatization-foster-care-failure>

Federal judge in Texas foster care suit scolds CPS leaders for withholding information Filed under [Child Protective Services](#) at Mar 17 Share [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Email](#) Written by [Robert T. Garrett, Austin Bureau](#) Connect with Robert T. Garrett [On Twitter](#) [Email](#) Get Daily Dallas News Headlines Don't miss a story. Like us on Facebook. [Like Dallas News' Facebook Page](#) [Get Unlimited Digital Access Your first month is less than a dollar. \\$0.99 for first 4 weeks](#) [Subscribe Now](#) AUSTIN — The federal judge in a lawsuit over Texas foster care has chided state officials for rebuffing information requests and has vowed to stick to her previously stated timetables for fashioning remedies that will overhaul the system, two plaintiffs' lawyers said Friday. In her Corpus Christi courtroom Thursday, U.S. District Judge Janis Graham Jack flashed with irritation over the Department of Family and Protective Services' refusal to supply requested information to her two special masters in the case, the lawyers recounted. Department spokesman Patrick Crimmins, though, downplayed the disagreements. U.S. District Judge Janis Graham Jack "We have worked cooperatively with special masters and will continue to do so," he said in a written statement. Plaintiffs' lawyers Lonny Hoffman of Houston and Marcia Robinson Lowry of Chappaqua, N.Y., said that during a 90-minute status conference, Jack pressed state lawyers to explain why the department hasn't responded to queries about foster children's computerized case files, medical records and policies on how to handle abused children who are sexually aggressive. "The special masters sent them interrogatories that were very specific, saying things like, 'Do you have a policy on this?' and 'Where in the record does this appear?'" said Lowry, who has led class-action suits against many states over their foster care systems. "On some of those issues, [state lawyers] said, 'We don't think we have to deal with that. We haven't been ordered to do so yet,'" she recalled. Hoffman, a civil procedure professor at the University of Houston Law Center who has advised the plaintiffs' lawyers in the case, said Jack was upset over some of the state's latest replies to special masters Kevin Ryan and Francis McGovern. The responses "looked as though the state was at least partially stonewalling and hiding behind legalistic objections," Hoffman said. "And she was none too happy about that. She made it clear that she has firm deadlines in her interim order that she expects to keep." Jennifer Speller, a spokeswoman for Attorney General Ken Paxton, declined to comment. Crimmins emphasized that Gov. Greg Abbott and the Legislature "have made CPS and foster care an urgent priority." In December 2015, Jack ruled that the state's long-term foster care arrangements are "broken" places where "rape, abuse, psychotropic medication and instability are the norm." In a final set of remedies she perhaps will issue this summer or fall, Jack is expected to demand that the state hire more Child Protective Services foster care caseworkers and spend more to make sure it has contracts with a wider array of vendors who will house and help foster children. Abbott, Paxton and GOP legislative leaders have criticized Jack for overreaching. They have said the state was making improvements and argued the suit was an unnecessary infringement on state's rights. Since December's emergency CPS funding request that Abbott and the legislative leaders approved, CPS has begun adding 105 more of the "conservatorship caseworkers." [This week's tentatively approved budgets](#) in the budget-writing committees of both chambers would add hundreds more. They also would provide some additional money for rolling out a new procurement method known as "foster care redesign." At Thursday's conference, Jack said "she was waiting to see what the Legislature winds up doing," Lowry recounted. The judge may hold another status conference, possibly in Dallas, shortly after lawmakers adjourn May 29, according to Lowry, Hoffman and Crimmins. Jack asked for a courtroom demonstration of CPS' databases affecting foster children, Lowry said. "The computer system is chaotic," she said. "It takes quite a lot for a caseworker to find things. Sometimes, they absolutely can't." Crimmins said the database "is admittedly an out-of-date system, but modernization is already underway and the system is more user-friendly for caseworkers." On Thursday, Protective Services Commissioner Henry "Hank" Whitman testified before Jack. "The judge indicated she was impressed with the commissioner's commitment," Crimmins said. Jack complimented him, Hoffman and Lowry said. But they said she expressed frustration over how lawyers for Paxton and the department continue to vow to appeal. "The lawyers for the state and the AG's office are continuing to fight us at every turn," Hoffman said. Source: <http://www.dallasnews.com/news/child-protective-services/2017/03/17/federal-judge-texas-foster-care-suit-scolds-cps-leaders-withholding-information>

Committee forming to fight group homes [KATHLEEN MOORE](#) kmoore@poststar.com [Kathleen Moore](#) Mar 18, 2017 [Buy Now](#) Kathleen Moore, kmoore@poststar.com Brian Underwood presents his committee idea to the Washington County Board of Supervisors on Friday. prev next FORT EDWARD — A Washington County man is starting a committee to fight the proposed Brand New Beginnings homes for troubled youth. "This committee has the power and authority to deny or revoke the operating license of any organization that is a direct threat to the citizens it represents," Brian Underwood told the Washington County Board of Supervisors on Friday. The Brand organization wants to house 24 teenagers in two homes, in Jackson and Salem. They would attend the Salem and Cambridge school districts. The teens would have committed sexual offenses, started fires or have addictions. To fight the proposal, Underwood plans to hold a public hearing on the issue "before May," and asked the county to arrange the venue and announce the time and place. Supervisors were generally receptive to his complaints about the group homes, but officials weren't able to find any way in which a committee could revoke a state license. Underwood declined to explain his reasoning. He acknowledged that it wouldn't be easy to revoke the license. "I assume this is going to be challenged," he said. But he will even go so far as to file a lawsuit — which he called "federal charges" — against Brand New Beginnings and the state of New York "for clearly violating our community's constitutional right to public safety," he said. While he wants to stop Brand New Beginnings, he said he wants the committee to be made up only of people who are not directly impacted by the proposal. That means no supervisors or other leaders from Jackson, Salem and Hebron. "I want this to be clean," he said. Although no one could find a way in which his committee could actually revoke a state license, District Attorney Tony Jordan said he could use the

committee to send letters to the state. The letters could urge the state Office of Children and Family Services to not issue a license for the Brand New Beginnings homes. "Your conduit there will be your state representative," Jordan said. Advertisement Play Current Time 0:00 / Duration Time 0:00 Remaining Time -0:00 Stream TypeLIVE Loaded: 0% Progress: 0% 00:00 Fullscreen 00:00 Mute Playback Rate 1 Subtitles subtitles off Captions captions off Chapters Chapters He also tried to advise Underwood to be careful in how he talks about the group home. Underwood said that youth who run away from the home would be "AWOL criminals." "They are youth," Jordan said. "Don't allow word choices to detract from your important message." "No, they are criminals," Underwood answered. Jordan said they would not all be criminals. Some would be younger than 16, and others would have been adjudicated through Family Court, rather than being charged with a misdemeanor or felony in criminal court, he said. Hebron Supervisor Brian Campbell praised Underwood's plan, but also cautioned against words like "criminal." "I commend him," Campbell said before telling Underwood directly, "Salem (school district) survives by those Vermont kids coming in. You don't want to make it sound so bad they pull out. Then you kill the whole school district." The proposal will probably never get a state license, Campbell added, noting the many holes in the required state application. "They'll probably never come," he said. The organization is still searching for an experienced program director who could handle 24 "hard to place" teenagers, including those with sexual offenses, fire-starting tendencies or addictions. Without a director, the homes can't open. Also needed is a "statement of need in our area," said DSS Commissioner Tammy DeLorme. The statement might be difficult, since the region rarely needs to place teenaged sexual offenders or fire-starters. The statement has not been submitted yet by the Brand New Beginnings organization, she said. Source: http://poststar.com/news/local/committee-forming-to-fight-group-homes/article_84774a88-5989-56de-aea2-d11a77e305d6.html

Former group home administrator accused of sexually assaulting residents Posted: Wed 5:04 PM, Mar 22, 2017 ALLOUEZ, Wis. (WBAY) - A Howard man is accused of sexually assaulting residents at an Allouez group home he used to run. That group home provides care for elderly, cognitively disabled individuals. John Vogel is charged with two counts of second-degree sexual assault and two counts of victim intimidation. Court documents indicate three female residents told police Vogel touched them sexually and told them not to tell anyone. He's also accused of grabbing a resident's hand and putting it on his genitalia. The victims said Vogel and his wife Linda suggested the victims would go to jail if they told police. Linda Vogel is also charged with two counts of victim intimidation. John Vogel is due in court next month for his preliminary hearing. Source: <http://www.wbay.com/content/news/Former-group-home-administrator-accused-of-sexually-assaulting-residents-416871203.html>

Campaign to close Wisconsin youth prison launches Campaign to close Wisconsin youth prison launches [Ashley Luthern](#), Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Published 3:26 p.m. CT March 22, 2017 | Updated 11:03 a.m. CT March 23, 2017 Thomas Leonard, Program Coordinator, Urban Underground and Juvenile Justice Advocate, speaks at the Wisconsin Black Historical Society Museum. Michael Sears / Milwaukee Journal Sentinel [Fullscreen](#) Buy Photo Sharlen Moore, Executive Director of Urban Underground and founding member of Youth Justice Milwaukee, speaks. Milwaukee NAACP president Fred Royal speaks at the Wisconsin Black Historical Society Museum. Jeffery Roman, Program Officer of Community Advocates Public Policy Institute and founding member of Youth Justice Milwaukee, introduces the speakers at the event. Youth Justice Milwaukee advocates alternatives to youth prison Youth Justice Milwaukee is seeking to close the state's juvenile prisons. Sharlen Moore, executive director of Urban Underground and founding member of Youth Justice Milwaukee, says such facilities are "traumatizing" youth and their families. A wide-ranging coalition of community groups and youth advocates launched a campaign Wednesday to close youth prisons in Wisconsin. "We have traumatized our kids by locking them up in these old outdated and obsolete prisons," said Sharlen Moore, executive director of Urban Underground and a founding member of [Youth Justice Milwaukee](#). "We are traumatizing their families and the communities that they live in and it needs to stop." The effort comes while [Lincoln Hills School for Boys and Copper Lake School for Girls](#), youth prisons located in northern Wisconsin, remain under criminal investigation for child abuse and neglect. The probe has been going on for two years. In January, four inmates and their parents filed a class-action [federal lawsuit](#) against state officials, alleging guards used pepper spray excessively and kept teens in solitary confinement for weeks or months at a time. The lawsuit was brought by the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin and the Philadelphia-based Juvenile Law Center. Youth Justice Milwaukee is calling for the closure of youth prisons in the state and replacing those facilities with community-based, family centered, restorative programs. CONTINUING COVERAGE: [Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake schools scandal](#) RELATED: [Facing problems, Missouri revamped juvenile justice](#) EDITORIAL: [Time to close Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake](#) Such programs, supporters say, have proved to have better success rehabilitating young offenders and cost taxpayers less money than incarceration. Wisconsin spends more than \$30 million annually operating youth prisons and 61% of former inmates committed a new criminal offense within three years of release, according to the [coalition's analysis of state data](#). At a news conference Wednesday, a college student named Marcus who had spent 14 months at Lincoln Hills urged local officials to invest in prevention, rather than incarceration. The 19-year-old said he was placed in foster care at the age of 9 months and suffered physical and sexual abuse as a child. Marcus requested to be identified only by his first name. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel also does not name victims of sexual assault. When he was placed in another foster home, his guardians tried to find him programs to prevent him from going down the wrong path, but there were none to be found, Marcus said. Instead, he made "poor choices" and ended up in Lincoln Hills. "I never suffered physical abuse," he said of his time at the Northwoods prison. "But what I can say is I watched and had no choice but to stand by as I watched others get verbally abused, physically abused." About 90% of 400 people surveyed in Milwaukee County expressed support for treatment and rehabilitation plans that include a youth's family in planning and services, according to poll data released Wednesday by Youth Justice Milwaukee. Of those surveyed, 83% supported providing financial incentives for states and municipalities to invest in alternatives to youth incarceration; and 73% supported requiring states to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the youth justice system. A state Department of Corrections spokesman said Thursday that youth confined at Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake have typically been unsuccessful in community-based programs and the department has invested in improvements at both facilities. The department also has conducted internal investigations related to the allegations and held staff accountable, he said. The coalition is asking people who want get involved to go online to www.youthjusticemke.org. Source: <http://www.jsonline.com/story/news/crime/2017/03/22/campaign-close-wisconsin-youth-prison-launches/99493470/>

Mother claims child suffered years of abuse in foster care Jonathan Bell Published Mar 25, 2017 at 8:00 am (Updated Mar 25, 2017 at 12:28 am) [3 Comments](#) [Make text smaller](#) [Make text larger](#) ShareThis [FirstPrev...](#) [NextLast](#) Related Stories [Speech expert helps young develop Toddlers on the ball!](#) [Public urged to provide leadership for young Little Seedlings grow love of environment](#) [Family services budget down 2%](#) A woman has spoken out after her child was sent overseas for treatment without her consent — claiming the teenager had suffered years of abuse under foster care. "What hurts me most is that it was all kept from me," said the woman, whose child was placed in the care of her paternal family shortly after she was born. According to assessments provided to The Royal Gazette, the girl developed a host of psychological complaints after alleging a lifetime of bullying, including "emotional abuse within the home". Her mother said she felt let down by the system of care offered through Child and Family Services, maintaining that instances of neglect and abuse had been swept under the rug. The family cannot be identified for legal reasons. According to a 2002 court order granted as part of her divorce from the father, who lives overseas, a parent's written approval would be required to send her daughter overseas. "The Supreme Court said that Child and Family Services overrode the restriction on her travelling, but I signed nothing," she said. Child and Family Service refers clients to facilities in the United States for psychological and educational treatment, and an assessment provided to this newspaper shows a range of problematic symptoms, from stuttering to self-harm, suicidal thoughts and "aggressive behaviour", that were deemed to qualify for intervention. With limited financial resources, her mother is seeking legal aid to pursue a case against the foster family that she maintains mistreated her daughter. "It's hard for me to live knowing what happened to her over all those years, and what she's been through," her mother said. "I feel betrayed because they didn't tell me. I could have been there for her." Source: <http://www.royalgazette.com/news/article/20170325/mother-claims-child-suffered-years-of-abuse-in-foster-care>

Teens Say This For-Profit Alternative School 'Feels More Like Prison' Mar 24, 2017 VIOLENCE, POVERTY AND VERBAL ABUSE: Alternative education for troubled teens is one of the dark parts of the school systems that does not get much coverage. In a report published by Slate earlier this month titled, "[This Company Calls its Schools 'Alternative' Some Students Say They Are More Like Prison](#)," Sarah Carr, Francesca Berardi, Zoë Kirsch, and Stephen Smiley (of [Columbia University's The Teacher Project](#)) expose allegations of physical and verbal abuse that have followed for-profit alternative education providers for years. Camelot Education, the for-profit alternative school service provider for the Reading School District in Pennsylvania, is depicted in the report as, "racially biased, isolated, punitive, unnecessarily violent, and designed, above all else, to maintain obedience and control." Students were occasionally subject to violence for violating the company's or instructor's stringent rules, which included things like: "no jewelry, book bags, or using the water fountain or

bathroom without permission.” Ismael Seals, who worked for Camelot as a behavioral specialist (and was sentenced to prison for lying about his instructional practices) was documented telling students to, “Shut the f*** up.” He reportedly warned students that the next one to talk would get body slammed through the door—and according to the report—he followed through on his threat by beating up a 17-year-old. Stats in the report disclose that 23 percent of Camelot students are homeless, and 45 percent said they experienced violence in their previous schools that affected them academically. Descriptions of student treatment in the story ring eerily reminiscent of activist complaints surrounding the “[School-to-Prison Pipeline](#).” Source: <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2017-03-24-teens-say-this-for-profit-alternative-school-feels-more-like-prison>

Top disability services provider Lifestyle Solutions investigated over series of deaths [Four Corners](#) By [Linton Besser](#), Klaus Toft, Jeanavive McGregor and [Alison Branley](#) Updated about 2 hours ago Sun 26 Mar 2017, 3:10pm Media player: "Space" to play, "M" to mute, "left" and "right" to seek. Australian Broadcasting Corporation ... Other videos 00:00 00:00 00:00 Other videos [Video: WARNING: GRAPHIC CONTENT. Footage shows a fight between two boys at a group home \(ABC News\)](#) Map: [NSW](#) One of Australia's most high-profile providers of disability services, Lifestyle Solutions, is under review by both the Victorian Government and the NSW Ombudsman after a series of deaths of its clients and other alarming reports about the abuse and neglect of some disabled people in its care. Key points: Failings were identified after four patient deaths In one incident, a woman who had her legs amputated was left alone overnight and had no way to seek help Victorian Government cancelled contract with Lifestyle Solutions after complaints The Newcastle-based not-for-profit organisation earned revenues last year of more than \$124 million — almost all of it from taxpayers — to care for 1,200 disabled adults and 300 foster children across the country. It was a broadcast sponsor of the 2016 Rio Paralympic Games. Now, a Four Corners investigation has found that in many cases the care provided by Lifestyle Solutions has been profoundly inadequate. Interviews conducted by the program paint a picture of an organisation which has spent much of the past decade lurching from crisis to crisis, with several of its clients experiencing significant harm as a result of poor care. Some adults and children with disabilities in its accommodation have suffered physical and sexual assault, and others have been hospitalised as a result of serious medication errors. Do you know more? Email besser.linton@abc.net.au In one case, thousands of dollars belonging to disabled clients was stolen by a rogue employee, and in another, the organisation so badly mishandled an investigation into a 2012 assault perpetrated by a member of staff that it prevented the NSW Police from potentially charging the offender. Failures identified in relation to four deaths Deputy NSW Ombudsman Steve Kinmond said the organisation's conduct had been deeply concerning. "We saw enough evidence of significant matters that should not have taken place ... to draw a line in the sand," Mr Kinmond said. [Photo: Deputy NSW Ombudsman Steve Kinmond said the conduct of Lifestyle Solutions has been concerning. \(Four Corners\)](#) His office has now demanded sweeping reforms of the organisation. In 2014 alone, in just the Newcastle and Hunter Valley region of NSW, four of Lifestyle Solutions clients died amidst practice failures which were later identified. A fifth death, in March last year, of a man suspected to have overdosed on prescription medication inside a Lifestyle Solutions home in Goulburn NSW will be the subject of an upcoming inquest by the NSW coroner. Key records went missing after patient's death The NSW Ombudsman has already found that the death in November 2014 of one of those clients — Julie Jacobson — was potentially preventable. The 51-year-old woman was morbidly obese and had lost both her legs to amputation, yet Lifestyle Solutions had taken away her overnight care, meaning she had no way to visit the bathroom or seek help for other needs. She died during the night of a heart-attack. Mr Kinmond said there had been a "range of weaknesses" in her care, which "included the failure, more generally, to recognise that this client had very significant health challenges which, if they weren't appropriately addressed ... there was a risk of death." "I believe that it's appropriate in terms of my role, to make the judgement call that the practices [with respect to Ms Jacobson's care] were clearly unacceptable," he said. Alarmingly, Four Corners has established that in the days after her death, amidst a flurry of internal panic about what had occurred, critical records — which documented failures in the organisation's care for Ms Jacobson — suddenly went missing. Insiders who spoke to Four Corners on the condition of anonymity said a formal inquiry was conducted by the organisation's own investigators into what happened to the files, before finally a set of documents was handed over to the authorities. Mr Kinmond said when the documents concerning Ms Jacobson's care finally arrived in his office there were a set of progress notes missing — Lifestyle Solutions told him it could not locate them. He said that the documentation he was given was, in any case, evidence of "very significant shortcomings in practice". "One of the concerns that I had in the middle of last year, which caused me to escalate this matter, was the fact that we were, on occasions, receiving a lack of information in relation to critical issues," he told Four Corners. Lifestyle Solutions did not answer questions put to it by the program regarding the provenance of the records it produced. Managers left amid internal investigations Last year at least six senior managers and directors departed Lifestyle Solutions following a series of internal inquiries into complaints about the practices of the organisation. One inquiry examined the circumstances which led to the placement — against internal advice — of a high-risk 13-year-old boy into a western Sydney home who went on to sexually abuse one of his fellow residents. Former employee Milissa Christian told Four Corners that it was just one example of young people in the care of the organisation who have been "physically harmed". "They've lived in what I would describe as a domestic violence situation in services," she said. A 2015 video obtained by Four Corners shows another violent attack inside one of their homes in western Sydney; the video shows a disabled teenager being choked by another client until he loses consciousness and begins having a seizure. Victorian Government contract revoked after complaints Earlier this year, the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services revoked a contract with Lifestyle Solutions for the management of one of its three disability group homes in that state, and is now conducting a wider review into the non-profit group. [Photo: Martin Foley said the Victorian Government has acted on complaints. \(Four Corners\)](#) Martin Foley, the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, said: "We've had complaints and we've acted on them". He confirmed that in Victoria its clients had experienced physical harm. There has been repeated instances of insufficient monitoring that has allowed very vulnerable people to go missing from their homes, including in two serious cases in 2009. In one, a profoundly disabled 40-year-old woman disappeared unnoticed during the night from a temporary accommodation facility in a wilderness area in the NSW Hunter Valley, tumbled over a series of cliffs at a 450-metre-high lookout, and was rescued by helicopter the following day. In the other, a 10-year-old girl was killed by a car outside Rockhampton, Queensland, after running away one night from her group home where she had been subjected to repeated violence. In January this year, by sheer luck, NSW Police found two highly autistic teenage boys at 5:00 one morning who were lost, wandering along an unlit main road in western Sydney — one of them was found about 6 kilometres from the Lifestyle Solutions group home where they lived. The carers were unaware the boys had gone missing. Overdose death to be investigated by coroner In March last year a 35-year-old intellectually disabled man, David Veech, died in a Lifestyle Solutions home in Goulburn NSW of a suspected drug overdose. The exact circumstances leading up to his death is to be established by a coronial inquest scheduled for late this year or early next. After being released on parole after a long jail term for serious assault, and despite being known to be a significant abuser of drugs, Four Corners has been told there are concerns Lifestyle Solutions may not have properly restricted his access to prescription drugs on the premises. A spokesman for the NSW Coroner said "care and treatment issues will certainly be explored at inquest". In a statement, Andrew Hyland, Lifestyle Solution's newly-appointed chief executive, said his staff "do very good work" with "some of the most complex and challenging matters". He said that where past investigations had identified shortcomings, "the findings have informed improvements in our policies and procedures". In 2012, a Newcastle Lifestyle Solutions employee, Kim Craig, was convicted of stealing \$11,000 from disabled clients living in the organisation's group homes. Lifestyle Solution's previous boss and founder, David Hogg, also resigned midway through last year. In December, the NSW Police charged Mr Hogg with the sexual assault of a 16-year-old woman in 1988, a charge his lawyer says he will "vigorously" defend. Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-03-27/disability-service-provider-investigated-over-deaths/8388050>

Prosecutor: Home Of LI Foster Parent Accused Of Sex Abuse A 'House Of Horrors' March 29, 2017 5:40 PM Filed Under: [Cesar Gonzalez-Mugaburu](#), [Long Island](#), [Sophia Hall](#) RIVERHEAD, N.Y. (CBSNewYork/AP) — A Long Island foster father who took in [more than 100 troubled boys](#) over 20 years is on trial on charges he sexually abused eight of the children. In addition to the alleged abuse of the boys, prosecutors also say Cesar Gonzales-Mugaburu [sexually abused a dog](#) in front of a child. "The kids used to come by but they were never allowed to talk to anybody, probably because he didn't want them to let the secret out," neighbor Kathy Stein told CBS2's Jennifer McLogan. Opening arguments began Wednesday on Long Island. The trial could last a month or longer. According to a grand jury report, Gonzales-Mugaburu fostered as many as 140 boys over two decades, despite having [18 separate open child abuse investigations](#). Prosecutors say statute of limitation laws prevent them from bringing even more charges in the case. Prosecutor Laurie Moroff called Gonzales-Mugaburu's Suffolk County residence a "house of horrors," where one of his eight victims was allegedly abused sexually for seven years. "They lived in fear. They were afraid. They don't function as you and I would function. They have low IQs and disabilities," she said. Moroff said Gonzales-Mugaburu would punch and threaten his victims is they did not listen to what he said. "It was a horrific place to live," Moroff said. "Eating on the floor, not allowed to do anything without asking for permission — including going to the bathroom," Moroff said. The jury was told the Gonzales-Mugaburu was supposed to be the

boys' savior, but preyed upon them — treating his home like a candy store filled with boys, and more boys — isolating them and threatening them into submission. But defense attorney Donald Mates said the boys are all troubled and they are lying — some for financial gain, WCBS 880's Sophia Hall reported. "There's a lawsuit going on, in federal district court, asking for money," Mates said. Gonzales-Mugaburu was given over \$1.5 million in tax-free money for taking in the foster children. Before his arrest, Gonzales-Mugaburu was the subject of nine previous investigations involving alleged abuse dating back to 1998, according to a spokeswoman for Suffolk County. Each of those inquiries led to a finding that the allegations weren't credible, and none of them led to the removal of children from Gonzales-Mugaburu's split-level ranch home in Ridge. Gonzales-Mugaburu has pleaded not-guilty. If convicted, Gonzales-Mugaburu could face up to life in prison. The case against Gonzales-Mugaburu sparked an investigation into New York's foster care system that found "abysmal" communication among the child welfare agencies involved in placing boys in the home. The children will be called to testify. The jury was also told the boys were forbidden to join after school clubs, play team sports, or have girlfriends. Source: <http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2017/03/29/li-foster-care-sex-abuse-trial/>

Foster parents from hell: Utah couple accused of hog-tying boy, stuffing him in suitcase for a month by Ellen Killoran March 28, 2017 "This was not reckless ... This was intentional," says investigator [3,668 Shares Tweet](#) A pair of foster parents in Roy, Utah, are facing child abuse charges after investigators discovered their three adopted sons living in unspeakable conditions. [According to the Deseret News](#), Matthew Earl Waldmiller, 40, and Diane Seifert Waldmiller, 41, were arrested late last week, and each were charged on Tuesday with three counts of child abuse. An investigation launched earlier this month found that the Waldmillers' three sons, ages 7 through 11, had been spending up to 13 hours a day locked in a bedroom with no light, no food or water, and no linens on their twin sized mattresses. According to [charging documents obtained by the Deseret News](#), the boys, who were reportedly adopted in October 2015, were routinely locked in a room overnight, with the younger boys forced to wear diapers. The 11-year-old boy described additional instances of abuse — including being stuffed in a suitcase for a month — to the investigators: The 11-year-old disclosed that he and his brothers are given 'night pills' to sleep. He stated that he and his brothers have been hit with a 2x4 piece of wood on the 'butt.' He disclosed that Diane hits him on the nose and causes it to bleed. He stated he is not allowed to drink after 6 p.m. He further described that he was zip tied in a 'hog-tie' style and put in a suitcase for a month period of time. [The other boys also reported](#) being restrained with zip ties that functioned as handcuffs, and having duct tape placed over their eyes and mouth. One of the boys said he was forced to perform exercises in order to earn food. Roy Police Sgt. Matt Gwynn told the newspaper the investigation began after the Utah Division of Child and Family Services received a neglect complaint on March 17 and alerted authorities. Investigators reportedly [responded right away and visited the home](#), where they found the three boys to be suffering from serious neglect: All three were underweight and not being properly fed. Advertisement The boys reportedly told investigators that at one point, they had escaped the bedroom through a window to go searching for food in dumpsters. Investigators told the newspaper that the parents punished them by serving them rice that was intentionally over- seasoned with salt and cayenne pepper. The window the boys escaped from was locked and painted black. It was the only window in the bedroom, and the light fixture did not have a bulb. "This was not reckless. It was not negligent," Sgt. Gwynn told the newspaper. "This was intentional. The Waldmillers have reportedly had an active foster care license in Utah since 2013. A 2-year-old foster child, a girl, was living in the home at the time of the arrest, and did not exhibit any signs of abuse or neglect. "We think this might have been 'discipline' directed at the boys," Sgt. Gwynn said, "but we really don't know what the motivation behind this is." The Waldmillers reportedly [admitted in police interviews](#) to locking the boys in the room for an extended period, covering their faces with duct tape, and tying their wrists together with zip ties. All four of the children, including the 2-year-old girl, have been removed from the home. Source: <http://www.crimeonline.com/2017/03/28/foster-parents-from-hell-utah-couple-accused-of-hog-tying-boy-stuffing-him-in-suitcase-for-a-month/>

Documentary on Florida's troubled foster care system draws big St. Pete crowd [Les Neuhaus](#) 10 hours ago March 30, 2017 [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Google+](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Pinterest](#) A new film focusing on Florida's troubled foster care system drew a large crowd at a screening in Gulfport Wednesday night. 'Foster Shock' is a documentary highlighting the ills of the state's child welfare system showed how a government body had completely turned over the responsibility and care of children to contracted, for-profit companies, who, in turn, contract out the work to other companies, exposing minors to dangers such as violence, drugs, sex trafficking and criminalization. Directed by Mari Frankel and narrated by Tim Malloy, with cinematography by Brian Bayerl, Foster Shock takes the viewer inside the world of foster children after they are yanked from their homes. They screened the movie at Stetson Law School in Gulfport to a packed room. Frankel, who once worked as a Guardian ad Litem in Palm Beach County, addressed those in attendance, setting the mood for the film. She told the story of the first child she advocated — a 12-year-old boy with special needs who had been sexually abused in his foster home. After she came and got the boy, the caseworker was nonchalantly prepared to put the young man back in the same home. That didn't happen, Frankel said, but soon after that, another child was placed in that home and was sexually abused, even though Department of Children and Families staff knew of the earlier sexual abuse. "We need to raise the bar, and we need to raise the bar high," she said. "We need to know that we can make a change. I know it doesn't take legislation to be caring, to be loving." Sometimes the parents screwed up or are abusive. Sometimes, children are just prematurely or wrongly removed from their homes. No matter what, they often wind up being placed in settings that were worse than where they came from, enduring life-scarring traumas. At one hour, seven minutes, the film follows the stories of several young adults who "aged out" of the foster care system or in a couple of lucky instances, were adopted and allowed to flourish to be who they wanted to be — something they were not able to do in the prisonlike group homes scattered across the state, housing thousands of children due to a lack of housing placements. In the homes, privacy is nonexistent; fights are commonplace; staff abuse is rampant and inappropriately large dosages of psychotropic drugs are forced onto children by staff lacking any kind of credentials. While film does a good job of portraying group homes, it mentions nothing of the murders, killings and ongoing deaths occurring throughout the state on a routine basis under the care of the so-called "CBCs," or community-based care agencies, like Our Kids of Miami-Dade Monroe, Eckerd Youth Alternatives, Community Partnership for Children, Inc., etc., who continue to have the contracts with DCF renewed, despite the continuing deaths. Meanwhile, filmmakers say CEOs of CBCs are grossly overpaid — as an example, David Dennis, the chief executive officer of Eckerd, made \$708,028 in fiscal year 2015. After the screening, four young adults in their late teens and mid-20s fielded questions from a Pinellas County dependency judge, sharing their experiences with the crowd. Source: <http://floridapolitics.com/archives/235013-documentary-floridas-troubled-foster-care-system-draws-big-st-pete-crowd>

Hanna Boys Center hit with \$2.7 million whistleblower suit | The Press Democrat Hanna Boys Center hit with \$2.7 million whistleblower suit PAUL PAYNE THE PRESS DEMOCRAT | March 30, 2017, 2:23PM | Updated 3 hours ago. A Sonoma Valley facility for troubled teens has been slapped with a \$2.7 million whistleblower lawsuit by a former clinical director who claims he was fired after bringing to light unchecked bullying by some youths that caused serious safety concerns. Timothy Norman, who served in the role at Hanna Boys Center for 31 years, alleges he was dismissed in November after complaining about a lack of response to several incidents, including one in which a boy was teased in a shower and another in which a youth was violated with a lint brush. After airing his concerns to the center's board of trustees, Norman claims Executive Director Brian Farragher called him into his office and fired him, telling him "there was no room" in the organization for both of them, according to the suit filed earlier this year in Sonoma County Superior Court. Norman, 71, claims it was retaliation, and is now seeking punitive and other damages. "There was no rigorous system of discipline when boys prey on one another," said Norman's lawyer, Vic Thuesen. Farragher did not immediately return calls Thursday seeking comment. Hanna Boys Center, founded in 1945, is a residential treatment center and school for about 100 at-risk boys on Arnold Drive. It is associated with the Santa Rosa diocese of the Catholic Church. Related Stories [Makeover gives boost to Sonoma Valley boys center](#) Norman, hired in 1985, oversaw therapists and guided treatment plans, among other things. In his lawsuit, he said his concerns about bullying arose in the months after Farragher was appointed to the top spot in 2014. When nothing was done, he spoke out about campus violence in a series of staff meetings in which he suggested Farragher downplayed the problem. In one meeting he said Farragher threatened staff members with dismissal, saying, "If you can't get on board, get off the bus." Soon after, Norman contacted board chairman, Jack Bertges, and was hit with a three-day suspension for "back-channeling" complaints, the suit said. His concerns continued over the next two years until October when the board convened a special meeting to address safety issues. Norman was asked to speak candidly about what he saw, he said. Farragher, responded, minimizing the shower and lint brush incidents, in an attempt to cover-up what was happening, Norman claims. Twenty-four days later, Norman claims Farragher summarily fired him. Hanna Boys Center has been cited over the past year for a number of violations including operating a facility with an incorrect staff-to-student ratio. In December, it received a citation after a counselor was found to be having an inappropriate sexual relationship with a boy. The counselor was fired, according to a report from the Community Care Licensing Division of the state Department of Social Services. You can reach Staff Writer Paul Payne at 707-568-5312 or paul.payne@pressdemocrat.com. On Twitter @ppayne. Source: <http://www.pressdemocrat.com/news/6834848-181/hanna-boys-center-hit-with>

Records: Embattled agency paid Sara Packer to work as foster parent and case manager [By Jo Ciavaglia, staff writer Jo Ciavaglia](#) 23 hrs ago [0 Buy Now](#) [William Thomas Cain](#) Sara Packer leaves her arraignment Sunday, January 8, 2017, in Newtown. She is accused of conspiring with her boyfriend Jacob Sullivan, to rape and kill her daughter Grace Packer, dismembering her body and dumping her remains in a wooded area of Northeastern Pennsylvania, some 100 miles from where Grace lived in Abington Township. A private, for-profit child welfare agency allowed a former Abington woman accused of murdering her daughter last year to provide foster care services for children in its custody while the woman was also an agency employee, this news organization has confirmed. While state Department of Human Services regulations do not prohibit employees of licensed child welfare agencies from providing foster care services for agencies they work for, potential financial conflicts of interest require the agency to get a waiver and state permission first. DHS has no record of a waiver for Sara Packer that would have allowed her to provide foster care services while she also was employed at The IMPACT Project Inc., of Emmaus in Lehigh County. In the last five years, the state has given only three approvals to county agencies to allow employees to act as foster parents to children in the agency's custody, according to DHS spokeswoman Rachel Kostelac. Neither Bucks nor Montgomery counties' children and youth departments allow staff to act as foster parents for children in the agencies' custody. Courtney Wagaman, the executive director at IMPACT, did not immediately respond to an email Friday seeking comment. Packer, 42, of Abington and Richland, and her boyfriend, Jacob Sullivan, 44, of Horsham, are accused of planning and carrying out the July 8 rape, murder, dismemberment and dumping of 14-year-old Grace Packer, then later filing a missing person report with Abington police. Grace's remains were found Oct. 31 in a remote section of Luzerne County. Sullivan was formally arraigned Friday on murder, rape and related charges. Sara Packer was formally arraigned in March on murder and related charges, including one that she cashed government checks meant for Grace after the child's death. Both defendants face the death penalty, if convicted. Since the January arrests of Packer and Sullivan, state and county child welfare officials have released limited information about Packer and her ex-husband, David W. Packer, who were licensed foster parents for 10 years. The Packers took in 30 foster children from 11 counties between 2000 and 2010. That included four from Bucks and three from Montgomery, according to information from the state. Twenty-three of those children lived in five counties that contracted with IMPACT for foster care services, including Bucks and Montgomery, according to county and state officials. This news organization filed multiple Right-to-Know requests seeking county records, including ones showing how much money was paid to the Packers for foster care services. In answer to those requests, Berks, Bucks, Lehigh, Montgomery and Northampton counties claimed they had no records of any direct or indirect payments to the Packers during the time frame when they provided foster care. In its response, Bucks County included a claim from IMPACT's president and CEO, Joseph Abraham, that the agency "simply does not have documentation of payments to the Packer family for either per diem rates or expenses." Abraham cited state and federal tax guidelines that require retaining financial records for only seven years, and state regulations that require foster parent and child documentation be maintained for only five years. "Any number we gave would be a guess and inaccurate," Abraham said in the response. "Essentially, we don't have that information." Delaware County, which had five children placed with the Packers, provided payment information that shows that IMPACT was paid nearly \$80,000 between 2000 and 2009 for foster care services provided by the Packers. The information also confirmed that Sara Packer worked as a foster parent for IMPACT while she was a case manager for the agency. Available records state that Sara Packer worked for IMPACT from 1999 to 2002; she and her ex-husband became licensed as foster parents in 2000. In 2004, IMPACT placed Grace Packer — then known as Susan Hunsicker — and her two siblings with the Packers. At the time, Sara Packer was working for Northampton County's Office of Children, Youth and Families as a case manager and later was promoted to adoption supervisor at the agency. The couple later adopted Grace and her younger brother in March 2007. The Packers also provided foster care services for three Montgomery County children, two Lehigh County children and nine Berks County children, according to the state. Northampton, Monroe, Dauphin, Schuylkill, Tioga and York counties and the state of Delaware each had one child placed with the Packers during that time. In 2010, the state revoked the Packers' foster care license amid a criminal investigating involving allegations of sexual abuse against David W. Packer, who was charged that year with assaulting two foster children, including Grace. He later was convicted and served five years in prison before he was released in 2015. He is registered as a sexually violent predator with the state's Megan's Law registry. He and Sara Packer divorced in 2016. Sara Packer was terminated from her job with Northampton County. The year after the couple lost their foster care license, Sara Packer applied for Social Security Administration benefits on behalf of Grace Packer, according to Berks County records filed in connection with criminal charges against Sara Packer for alleged government check fraud. Packer received a government stipend of \$712 per month on behalf of Grace — or \$8,544 annually over five years. Packer also collected a \$291.02 monthly stipend from Berks County as part of a subsidized adoption agreement, according to court documents. The county stipend provided the Packers another \$3,492 a year for almost nine years, until the payments stopped in September. Berks officials have not indicated in available court documents why the payments stopped. Recently, IMPACT has come under state and local scrutiny after allegations surfaced from former foster children placed with the Packers more than a decade ago who claim its workers failed to address abuse claims involving Sara and David Packer. The women — who came forward after Sara Packer's arrest on murder charges — claim they each told IMPACT caseworkers about the couple's abusive behavior toward foster children in their care, including Grace. The state is reviewing IMPACT's current cases, administrative policies and internal oversight, according to a Department of Human Services spokeswoman. Montgomery, Lehigh, Delaware and Northampton counties have suspended foster care referrals to IMPACT. Bucks County Children and Youth Social Services had contracted with IMPACT in the past, but currently does not. The county's court administrator did not respond to a request about whether the county's juvenile probation department uses IMPACT. Berks County has contracted with IMPACT since 2001, but generally doesn't use the agency because it doesn't have foster homes in the county, according to Krista McInaney, administrator of Children and Youth Services. The current contract expires June 30 when it will be reevaluated, McInaney said, adding that currently the county has no foster children placed with IMPACT. In press releases, IMPACT has insisted it has operated in the best interest, safety and welfare of the children in its care since 1991 and adhered "without exception" to state regulations for reporting any instance of suspected child abuse to appropriate authorities. The agency also has stated it cannot comment on its relationship with Sara Packer, citing confidentiality rules. State [records](#) show that IMPACT has routinely passed annual license renewal inspections, the most recent on April 19 and 20. At the time, the agency had 78 children in its care, 41 approved foster care families, and employed 20 staffers. The 2016 review mentioned the agency's personnel records were "in good condition with excellent training and supervision." Source: http://www.theintell.com/news/local/records-embattled-agency-paid-sara-packer-to-work-as-foster/article_123d7bf7-850f-5c92-a1b0-c72859215599.html

DHS group homes are riddled with assault, crime and chaos, officials claim [Story Comments \(2\) Image \(2\) Print Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) [Previous](#) [Next](#) Courtesy Marland Children's Home 1 At Marland Children's Home in Ponca City, 23 out of 44 residents have been charged with delinquent offenses and police calls have increased 451 percent from 2014 to 2016. Courtesy Courtesy Marland Children's Home 2 Residents play basketball at Marland Children's Home. The Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth has reported a number of problems at group homes for troubled youths. Courtesy Posted: Sunday, April 2, 2017 12:00 am [DHS group homes are riddled with assault, crime and chaos, officials claim](#) By Brianna Bailey and Jaclyn Cosgrove The Oklahoman TulsaWorld.com | [2 comments](#) OKLAHOMA CITY — Children who were sexually assaulted after running away from state custody, attacks on staff members and hundreds of calls to police are just some of the problems that the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth claims exist in at least two state-contracted group homes for troubled youths. Lisa Smith, the commission's director, said her agency has called DHS to address systemic issues that endanger children in state care. "We feel if children are going to be taken from their homes, they need to be provided for," Smith said. "The state has a duty to provide children good quality of life if we're going to take them from their home." Officials at the Oklahoma Department of Human Services said they've long been aware of the allegations in the letter that Smith sent DHS in late February, outlining issues at group homes, and they are investigating them. Source: http://www.tulsaworld.com/homepagelatest/dhs-group-homes-are-riddled-with-assault-crime-and-chaos/article_36376d86-6be4-51bb-acb6-3449f7f23e33.html

Lawsuit alleges Seattle Mayor Ed Murray sexually abused troubled teen in 1980s Originally published April 6, 2017 at 3:13 pm Updated April 6, 2017 at 5:58 pm 1 of 6 Ed Murray, elected Seattle mayor in 2013, is running for a second term this year. (Alan Berner/The Seattle Times file, 2016) A new lawsuit accuses Seattle Mayor Ed Murray of child sexual abuse decades ago. Two other men have told The Seattle Times they too were abused by Murray as teenagers in the 1980s. The mayor vigorously denies all the accusations. Section Sponsor Share story By [Lewis Kamb](#) and [Jim Brunner](#) Seattle Times staff reporters A 46-year-old Kent man sued Seattle Mayor Ed Murray on Thursday, claiming Murray "raped and molested him" over several years, beginning in 1986 when the man was a 15-year-old high-school dropout. [The lawsuit in King County Superior Court](#), filed under the man's initials, "D.H.," alleges Murray sexually abused the crack-cocaine addicted teen on numerous occasions for payments of \$10 to \$20. "I have been dealing with this for over 30 years," the man, now sober for a year,

said in an interview with The Seattle Times. He said he was coming forward as part of a “healing process” after years of “the shame, the embarrassment, the guilt, the humiliation that I put myself through and that he put me through.” [Attorney for Mayor Ed Murray responds to sexual-abuse allegations](#) Murray vehemently denied the allegations and abruptly canceled a news conference about police reform scheduled for Thursday afternoon. A statement from Murray’s personal spokesman Jeff Reading said, “These false accusations are intended to damage a prominent elected official who has been a defender of vulnerable populations for decades. It is not a coincidence that this shakedown effort comes within weeks of the campaign filing deadline. These unsubstantiated assertions, dating back three decades, are categorically false. Mayor Murray has never engaged in an inappropriate relationship with any minor. ... Mayor Murray will vigorously fight these allegations in court.” D.H. is not the first to accuse Murray, one of the state’s most powerful politicians, of sexual abuse that occurred decades ago. Murray, 61, has known of other allegations for years, and has quietly, but vigorously denied them. Subscribe to The Seattle Times Watchdog newsletter Sign up to get exclusive updates and insights from our investigations team. * indicates required Email Address * Two men, Jeff Simpson and Lloyd Anderson, said they knew Murray when they were teenagers and growing up in a Portland center for troubled children. They accuse Murray of abusing them in the 1980s when he was in his 20s. Simpson made the claim as a teenager in 1984, and talked with a social worker and detective at the time. No charges were filed. Both men raised the allegations a decade ago in calls to reporters and Washington state lawmakers, and they repeated them in recent interviews with The Seattle Times, saying they would testify in court if needed. Now, with the D.H. lawsuit, Murray faces a formal public accusation for the first time, and details of the case bear similarities to the earlier allegations. Featured Video [The legacy of Lin's Tackle \(5:05\)](#) Most Read Stories [Norwegian launches Seattle-London flights with \\$199 one-way fares](#) [Dozens of University of Washington programs make top 10 in new global ranking](#) [Lawsuit alleges Seattle Mayor Ed Murray sexually abused troubled teen in 1980s](#) [VIEW Seahawks GM John Schneider on Richard Sherman trade rumors: 'What you've seen lately in the news is real'](#) [What luck: We dithered so long, Bertha's tunnel now makes more sense](#) | [Danny Westneat](#) [VIEW 3-course dinners for \\$32 starting April 2](#). While The Seattle Times chose not to publish the 2008 allegations, the similarities between those claims and the new public case gave additional weight and relevance to the previous information. Reading’s statement also acknowledged Simpson and Anderson’s accusations: “The two older accusations were promoted by extreme right-wing anti-gay activists in the midst of the marriage equality campaign, and were thoroughly investigated and dismissed by both law enforcement authorities and the media.” Taking action now In his lawsuit, D.H. said he first met Murray on a Metro bus on Capitol Hill, and that Murray invited him back to his apartment, propositioning him for sex. The two haggled over the price — \$10 or \$15, D.H. said in an interview this week, adding that Murray continued to pay him for the next four to five years, at least 50 times. “And there’s times he would be doing certain things and I would tell him to stop and he wouldn’t stop, and I let it happen because I wanted that money so I can go get those drugs,” D.H. said in the interview. The lawsuit gives details about Murray’s 1980s Capitol Hill apartment, accurately recalls Murray’s phone number from the time, and offers a description of his genitals. Before first paying D.H. for sex in 1986, according to the lawsuit, “Mr. Murray asked D.H. his age, and he responded truthfully, age 15.” Murray was then in his early 30s. Having sex with a child under 16 — the age of legal consent in Washington in 1986 and today — constitutes rape of a child under state law. The statute of limitations to bring any criminal charges based on the man’s claims expired long ago. The civil lawsuit seeks unspecified damages, and notes that D.H. has not previously made “any financial demands” of Murray. D.H. initially took his allegations to Lawand Anderson, a Des Moines lawyer. She has teamed up on the lawsuit with Lincoln Beauregard and Julie Kays with Connelly Law Offices, a high-powered firm that has won major judgments in abuse cases. D.H. said he is taking action now, in part, because his father’s recent death has freed him of a desire to keep the abuse secret. He’s also now getting counseling and participating in addiction-recovery programs. Like D.H., Simpson and Anderson, the two men who lived in Portland, allege that Murray paid them for sex when they were teenagers. Simpson, who is 49, also says Murray — whom he thought of as a father — raped him over several years, starting at age 13, and in later years, paid him. A knock on the door On a recent Sunday, two Times reporters showed up unannounced at the Portland-area apartment that Simpson, now a public roads crew worker, shares with his wife and teenaged son. He appeared surprised, but immediately said he had prayed someone would eventually come knock on his door. “I would really like for him to admit it and to take responsibility ...” Simpson said of Murray. “I don’t necessarily think that he destroyed my life but I believe a lot of the problems I have stemmed from this.” Jeff Simpson, seen here in a 1984 yearbook picture, said he knew Murray when Simpson was a teenager growing up in a Portland center for troubled children. (Archive photo) Simpson’s effort in 2007, with support from Lloyd Anderson, to bring a case against Murray fell apart when his lawyer withdrew. A few months later, in March 2008, Simpson started the calls to media organizations and lawmakers in Olympia, spreading the word that Murray, then a state senator, was a “pedophile” who had sexually abused him. Murray denied the accusations to reporters and hired a lawyer, who worked to discredit the men largely based on their criminal pasts. Neither The Seattle Times nor other media publicly reported the allegations, and Murray’s political career continued to rise. Anderson told a paralegal for Simpson’s attorney about his alleged sexual acts with Murray during a 2007 interview and described distinctive physical features. “During these encounters, (he) noticed that Ed had an unusual bump on his penis and bright red pubic hair,” the paralegal wrote in a memo in 2007. In his lawsuit, D.H. described Murray as having “reddish pubic hair and a unique mole on his scrotum — it is a small bump.” In separate interviews, Simpson and Anderson said they were unaware of any forthcoming lawsuit. They said they had not talked with anyone about their own allegations for years. National Sexual Assault Hotline [RAINN](#) operates a free and confidential hotline for sexual assault survivors at 800-656-HOPE (800-656-4673). There is also an [online chat option](#) here. Similarly, D.H. said he didn’t know of anyone else claiming abuse by Murray. His attorney Beauregard said Wednesday he didn’t recognize Simpson or Anderson’s names. “Only parent that I know” Murray, a progressive Democrat whose work in the Legislature made him a [champion for gay rights](#), was elected Seattle’s mayor in 2013. He’s enjoyed a series of successes in his first term, and lately he’s drawn national attention as a prominent face of [resistance to President Donald Trump’s agenda](#). He has been considered well-positioned this year to win a second term. Long before he got into politics, Murray, one of seven children in an Irish Catholic family, considered the priesthood. He spent a year at a seminary in 1976 before studying sociology at the University of Portland, a private Catholic institution, according to news profiles. While Murray was in college, Simpson said, he worked with kids at the Parry Center for Children. That’s where they met, said Simpson, who went to live there when he was 6. At age 3, Simpson said, his adoptive parents had abandoned him for setting a Christmas tree on fire, burning the family house. The alleged sexual abuse by Murray began in 1980, Simpson says, when he lived at a group home after leaving the Parry Center, and was allowed to spend the night at Murray’s apartment. Simpson says the two were watching TV, when Murray, then in his mid-20s, began to stroke the 13-year-old’s legs. “Hey ... Jeff, can you keep a secret?” Simpson said Murray asked him. Simpson claims Murray told him “you really excite me” and asked whether he could take off the boy’s clothes and touch him. Simpson says he told Murray he wasn’t comfortable, and Murray stopped. But later, Murray pulled off Simpson’s clothes and performed oral sex, Simpson claims. “I told him no, no, no ... I don’t want to do any of this,” Simpson said. “I started crying... and we stopped.” The next day, he said, Murray took him back to the group home in Beaverton and asked him not to say anything. Months later, Murray again abused him on an overnight visit, Simpson claims. The abuse, he said, went on for years. All the while, Murray also seemed to genuinely care about his welfare, Simpson said. Murray tried helping Simpson find foster homes, and eventually took him in. “That’s why this is so hard for me,” Simpson said. “He’s the only parent that I know, as messed up as that is.” Simpson said he was about 15 when he went to live with Murray. At the time, Simpson had been running away and getting into trouble at other homes. While living alone with Murray, Simpson claims “the abuse was going on regularly” but with one difference: Murray started paying him for sex. Simpson said he used the cash to buy pot. “I was young” Anderson, 51, says that while he lived at the Parry Center from about 1973 to 1980, he became “best friends” with Simpson and also came to know Murray. In a telephone interview Thursday, Anderson said he left the center at age 14 or 15, to live with a Portland-area couple. He cried when recounting that Simpson later visited him and confided he’d been having a sexual relationship with Murray. “It wasn’t exactly voluntary,” Anderson said Simpson told him. “He was crying.” In 1981 or 1982, when Anderson was about 16, he said he left the home where he’d been staying periodically to live on the streets and do drugs. One day, Anderson said, he had a chance encounter downtown with Murray, who invited him to his apartment in Northwest Portland. Anderson said Murray later offered to pay him \$30 and some marijuana for oral sex — and he agreed. Anderson said he would meet Murray at his apartment for sex after that. The encounters continued until Anderson was about 17, he said. Murray paid him from \$15 to \$30 during each encounter, Anderson said. “Look, the guy took advantage of my situation,” said Anderson, who now lives in Florida. “I was young, I was homeless and doing drugs and everything.” About two years later, in 1984, Simpson said, Murray kicked him out of his apartment following a fight. Simpson said he went back to a group home, where he became angry and depressed, and cut his wrists in the shower. Simpson said he told a group-home administrator Murray had molested him, triggering a police investigation. Despite the alleged abuse, Simpson said he told authorities he wanted to return to live with Murray. Simpson said he was interviewed by police and child-services investigators, but no charges were filed against Murray, who for a time in Portland worked in a public defender office. Representatives for Portland police and Oregon’s Department of Human Services, which oversees child-welfare cases, each said the investigation occurred so long ago, the records would have been destroyed. The only remaining

record corroborating the investigation is a "case fact sheet" entry from an old Multnomah County District Attorney's database. It indicates the DA's office considered but rejected a felony third-degree sodomy case that identified Murray in May 1984. Simpson admitted he was a bad witness, running away to live on the streets, doing drugs and earning cash as a prostitute. A few months later, Murray moved from Portland to Seattle, records show. While living on Capitol Hill, he worked as a paralegal, according to news accounts. Moving to Seattle in 1986, D.H. claims, he met Murray shortly after dropping out of Seattle's Nathan Hale High School during his freshman year. He said he was hanging out on Broadway, and Murray, then in his early 30s, "propositioned D.H. for private visits to his Capitol Hill apartment," the lawsuit contends. Simpson says that around the same time, while he was in his late teens, Murray also was paying to have sex with him in his Capitol Hill apartment. Despite his previous allegations against Murray in Portland, Simpson said he followed Murray north to Seattle. Simpson was mostly homeless then, but at times stayed with Murray. Simpson last month accurately recalled the apartment's location. He also described where the bathroom and bedroom were in the third-floor unit, much as D.H. described them in his lawsuit. Court records show Simpson was arrested several times in Seattle between 1986 and 1988, drawing theft, weapons and prostitution charges, among others. Simpson often gave aliases during his frequent run-ins with the law. During at least one encounter with police involving a firearms violation, he identified himself as "Jeffrey David Murray," court records show. He also used Murray's Harvard Avenue address as his own on court documents during a 1987 credit-card theft and forgery case, records show. "Position of trust" All three of Murray's accusers have substantial criminal records. D.H. admits to drug addiction and has a long history of criminal convictions and charges, including a prostitution arrest in 1990. He's now in recovery programs and attends community college, studying to become a chemical-dependency counselor. He said his parents were crack addicts and died of drug overdoses. For years, he said, he has struggled with shame over the alleged abuse. "I tried to commit suicide a couple of times, just because I was disgusted with myself, but I'm past that now," D.H. said. Anderson, who accused Murray with Simpson in 2007, also abused drugs and alcohol. A registered sex offender, he was convicted in 1998 for several counts of felony sexual contact with a minor. He spent eight years in prison. Anderson said he now lives with his longtime wife, has two grown children and for a time managed a steakhouse. He no longer uses drugs, he said. Simpson has convictions for burglaries, robberies and selling drugs to support his meth addiction. In 1990, he was convicted of armed robbery and served nine years in prison in Oregon. After leaving prison, Simpson said, he continued to sell drugs. He began to get sober after his son's birth a year later. Court records show he has not had a criminal conviction since 2004. In 2007, as part of his long recovery, Simpson said he felt compelled to go public with his allegations. By then, Murray had served in the Washington Legislature for more than decade. Simpson said he contacted a Portland attorney, and after a lawsuit wasn't filed, he started calling news organizations and lawmakers in early 2008. He also said he spoke on the phone with the Rev. Ken Hutcherson, a chief opponent of gay rights (Hutcherson died in 2013). Murray hired a Portland attorney, Katherine Heekin, who distributed Simpson's and Anderson's criminal records and attacked their credibility, saying their story was false. Murray paid Heekin more than \$10,700 from his surplus campaign funds in 2008, according to Public Disclosure Commission records. Another \$8,000 went to a private investigator. Simpson said he understands why no one believed him then. "I get it. I understand, my past is less than stellar," he said. "... People did think I was nuts and nobody wanted to believe it. But I felt I needed to tell the truth, finally tell the truth." Sitting his lawyer's office Wednesday afternoon, D.H. said he didn't see how Murray would be able to deny the alleged abuse. His attorneys want to question Murray under oath within 90 days. D.H. said he wants Murray held accountable for treating him "like I was just nothing, like I was worthless." His lawsuit said he "is disturbed that Mr. Murray maintains a position of trust and authority, and believes that the public has a right to full information when a trusted official exploits a child." Staff reporters Gene Balk, Daniel Beekman and Hal Bernton contributed to this report. Jim Brunner: 206-515-5628 or jbrunner@seattletimes.com. On Twitter [@Jim_Brunner](https://twitter.com/Jim_Brunner). Lewis Kamb: 206-464-2932 or lkamb@seattletimes.com. On Twitter [@lewiskamb](https://twitter.com/lewiskamb). Source: <http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/lawsuit-alleges-seattle-mayor-ed-murray-sexually-abused-troubled-teen-in-1980s/>

FOX25 Investigates: State warned years ago about school investigators phoning it in | FOX25 Delivered To Your Inbox Newsletter: Breaking News Morning Headlines Please Wait Thank You for Subscribing! Your newsletters will be arriving soon. FOX25 Investigates: State warned years ago about school investigators phoning it in by: Eric Rasmussen, Erin Smith Updated: Apr 5, 2017 - 11:15 PM 0 Share this with your friends! From To Compose your message FOX25 Investigates: State warned years ago about school investigators phoning it in <http://fox25.com/2o4RvqI> BOSTON - A child advocate sounded the alarm nearly three years ago that school regulators were investigating suspected abuse at day cares and residential schools by phone, FOX25 Investigates has learned. Investigative Reporter Eric Rasmussen first uncovered in November that state license regulators at the [Department of Early Education and Care](#) were "phoning in" [investigations of suspected abuse](#) – rather than visiting residential schools and day cares in person. Now, one child advocate tells FOX25 Investigates she raised concerns about the problem in emails to EEC in 2014 – but the agency failed to take action. **FOX25 Investigates obtained emails Angela Smith of HEAL sent to the agency, writing that investigators should have interviewed children in person at a residential school facing abuse allegations "instead of asking the program director by phone and leaving the investigation at that."** "I think it's outrageous," Smith told FOX25. "In my years of child advocacy, I know that is not how you handle a special victim's report." While the Department of Children and Families looks into specific allegations of abuse, EEC licensing inspectors investigate the school programs and day cares where suspected abuse happened. Investigative Reporter Eric Rasmussen caught up with state Education Secretary Jim Peyser and asked why EEC is still conducting so many investigations by phone. "So, phone investigations, as well as in-person investigations depend on the circumstances," Peyser told FOX25 Investigates. "There's some judgment that has to be made about how to most effectively follow up on allegations." But Peyser also said EEC is asking for more money to do more in-person investigations. "Hopefully we'll be able to build more capacity to do more of it, so we don't necessarily have to make choices that are sub-optimal," said Peyser. Last year, EEC Commissioner Tom Weber told state lawmakers his agency had [just five investigators to oversee 9,000 day cares](#), after-school programs and residential schools across Massachusetts. But Smith says she isn't satisfied. "Lack of funding is no excuse when children's lives are at risk," said Smith. FOX25 Investigates uncovered in November that the state agency in charge of overseeing day cares and school programs rarely opens investigations into complaints of neglect and abuse – a troubling pattern uncovered by FOX25 Investigates. And when EEC did assign its school inspectors to look into complaints, FOX25 found that much of the work was done by phone – rather than visiting in person. FOX25 Investigates reported in November that EEC opened nine investigation reports at Chamberlain International School, a residential school in Middleboro, over a year and a half but made just one in-person visit by an EEC investigator during that time. Those reports detailed allegations of abuse, a school staff member meeting "fully naked" with a student and another student "dizzy and disoriented" and hospitalized after taking the wrong medication – all incidents EEC investigated by interviewing the school's assistant director "via phone." A spokesman for Chamberlain School sent FOX25 Investigates an email this week saying it "self-reported" all of the cases in question to the state and insists "the proper state agency" – DCF – investigated those cases "on-site." "Chamberlain International School has faith in the state reporting and licensing agencies," said the school in a statement. PREVIOUS: [FOX25 Investigates: State school investigators phoning it in](#) FOX25 Investigates: State agency overseeing day cares rarely investigates problems Source: <http://www.fox25boston.com/news/fox25-investigates-state-warned-years-ago-about-school-investigators-phoning-it-in/509534221>

Group Home Workers Accused of Assaulting Patient With Disabilities Trending Stories 1 [Privacy policy](#) | [More Newsletters](#) Hamden Police Two group home workers in Hamden are accused of hitting a patient with disabilities with a mop handle, police said. The director of resident services for ARC of Meriden and Wallingford reported suspicious injuries on a 19-year-old patient that may have been inflicted by two staff members on Jan. 12, according to Hamden Police. [US Launches Missile Strike on Syrian Airfield, Killing 7](#) Video footage from the group home shows two "direct support staff members", Victoria Dancy, 50, and Melissa Smith, 41, attempting to restrain the victim. The video then shows Dancy and Smith hitting the victim with a broom and mop handle, the police investigation revealed. Later, the video shows the victim lying on her back while Dancy chokes her. After, Dancy is seen striking the victim with the mop handle again, while the victim lays on the floor, Hamden Police said. [After Syria Strikes, US and Russia Spiral Into Confrontation](#) When the victim's mother noticed the bruises, she contacted the Department of Developmental Services. Dancy and Smith were arrested on April 6 and 7, respectively. Dancy, of New Haven, was charged with cruelty to persons, assault of a disabled person, strangulation in the second degree, reckless endangerment in the second degree and disorderly conduct. Dancy, who was released after posting bond, is scheduled to appear in court in Meriden on April 20. Smith, of Stratford, was charged with cruelty to persons, assault of a disabled person, reckless endangerment in the second degree and disorderly conduct. Smith, who was detained on a \$25,000.00 bond, is scheduled to appear in court in Meriden on April 20. Source: [Group Home Workers Accused of Assaulting Patient With Disabilities | NBC Connecticut](#) <http://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/local/Group-Home-Workers-Accused-of-Assaulting-Patient-With-Disabilities-418673843.html#ixzz4dc6OjVPO> Follow us: [@nbcconnecticut on Twitter](#) | [NBCConnecticut on Facebook](#)

Council: Conditions at Teens' Group Homes Need State Intervention [Haverhill Local News](#) 2 days ago Deputy Chief Anthony Haugh Haverhill city councilors say they fear conditions at three group homes for troubled teens and adolescents are reaching crisis proportions, potentially putting neighbors and the young residents themselves at risk. The homes, at 4 and 31 S. Kimball St. and at 230 Liberty St., are run by a Danvers-based nonprofit, NFI Massachusetts, under a contract with the state Department of Children and Families. All three homes are co-ed and serve children ages 12 to 18. In total, they have the capacity to house 42 children, most of whom were removed from their family homes because of abuse and neglect. Deputy police Chief Anthony Haugh told city councilors that the number of police service calls to the three homes have increased over the past few years, and he estimates the number will exceed 700 this year, based on the number of times police have been called to the homes in the last few months. Haugh asked City Council to reach out to the homes' management, as well as state agencies and officials, to try to find ways to curb the number of calls to police. The deputy chief said the majority of calls, as many as 80 percent, are for runaways. The others are for incidents such as fights or medical situations. Police are concerned about whether the homes are properly staffed and whether residents are being adequately supervised, Haugh said, noting cases of resident-on-resident sexual assault have been reported to police. "This program needs direct intervention from the state," said City Councilor Thomas J. Sullivan. He called for a meeting including Mayor James J. Fiorentini, the city's legislative delegation, NFI, and top leadership of the state Division of Children and Families to answer to the issues at the homes and find solutions. Councilor Joseph J. Bevilacqua revived a suggestion he made several months ago that NFI hire security at its Haverhill group homes. Source: <http://www.whav.net/cms/council-conditions-at-teens-group-homes-need-state-intervention/>

Maltreatment charged in group home client choking death April 11, 2017 [Local News](#) A state investigation has determined that there was maltreatment on the part of a group home worker, associated with a choking death of a client. The person who died was a vulnerable adult who was living at the Community Options and Resources group home in Madelia and was brought to the Mankato Pizza Ranch on February 5. While eating, the vulnerable adult, who had a specific dietary plan because of a prior stroke and a lack of teeth, began choking on food. The vulnerable adult pointed to his/her mouth and mouthed that s/he could not breathe. The group home staff members removed food from his/her mouth, but the vulnerable adult shortly after went limp and later died from asphyxiation. An investigation by the Minnesota Department of Human Services determined that there was maltreatment by one of the staff members who brought the vulnerable adult there, because that staff person had been trained in the Heimlich maneuver, but never performed it in order to try to save the vulnerable adult's life. The report says the staff person thought that s/he was not supposed to perform the Heimlich as part of the vulnerable adult's health care directive, but that was not the case. The directive did call for such action to be taken in the event of an emergency illness/situation. The staff person has not been disqualified from providing direct care services because of this incident, but has been warned that they will be disqualified if there's another substantiated act of maltreatment. - See more at: <http://www.mvklgr.com/2017/04/11/maltreatment-by-group-home-worker-in-client-choking-death/#sthash.GuGK7Y4E.dpuf>

TX foster care ministry accused of sexual abuse by David Roach, posted [Monday, April 10, 2017 \(3 days ago\)](#) Tags: [sexual abuse](#) [Texas Baptist Home for Children](#) [SBTC](#) FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) -- A \$7 million lawsuit alleges children were "seriously sexually abused" and neglected at a Baptist children's home in Texas. The Texas Baptist Home for Children (TBHC) -- an "affiliated ministry" of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention -- did not respond specifically to the suit but told Baptist Press it maintains the highest standards of safety for children in its care. The lawsuit, filed April 5 in Tarrant County civil court, claims seven siblings under age 14 suffered sexual and physical abuse as well as "serious medical and other neglect" in 2013 while under the care of foster parents at cottages owned by TBHC in Waxahachie, Texas. Among the suit's allegations are that TBHC failed to "properly investigate reports of abuse," "perform adequate background checks or follow-ups on foster parents" and "take prompt action against perpetrators." Hal Browne, an attorney representing the siblings, told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram three of the male siblings were sexually abused by "other, older children" while the four additional siblings suffered neglect. The plaintiffs are requesting awards "in excess of" \$1 million for each of the seven children, according to a copy of the suit provided to BP by Browne. "We don't file lawsuits lightly," Browne told the Star-Telegram. "If we didn't feel the abuse was severe and long-term, we wouldn't have filed the lawsuit." TBHC interim president Randy Odom told BP April 10 he had not been served with the suit yet but noted all TBHC foster parents undergo a "very extensive process" to be licensed. "Our standards go well beyond state standards," Odom said. The suit names the SBTC as a codefendant, noting TBHC is an affiliated ministry of the convention. The SBTC has "representation" on the TBHC trustee board and provides funding to the ministry, according to the lawsuit. The SBTC told BP in a statement it "is aware of the lawsuit, and we pray for a resolution that facilitates the continued ministry of the Texas Baptist Home for Children as they meet the needs of at-risk children and families." Another codefendant is the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas, a network of 400 churches listed on the SBTC website as a "related ministry" that "operates" the TBHC. According to the Star-Telegram, allegations in the lawsuit appear to match facts from a previously publicized case in which the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services "found no deficiencies in its own inquiry of" the TBHC. The state recommended, however, that foster parents who cared for two of the siblings "increase supervision and not allow the children to have any unsupervised contact with one another." The Southern Baptist Convention, with which the SBTC maintains a cooperative relationship, adopted a 2013 resolution "on sexual abuse of children" that "remind[ed] all Southern Baptists of their legal and moral responsibility to report any accusations of child abuse to authorities." The resolution "call[ed] upon all Southern Baptists to cooperate fully with law enforcement officials in exposing and bringing to justice all perpetrators," urged the use of background checks for ministry staff and volunteers and "encourage[d] all denominational leaders ... to utilize the highest sense of discernment in affiliating with groups and or individuals that possess questionable policies and practices in protecting our children from criminal abuse." Source: <http://www.bpnnews.net/48650/tx-foster-care-ministry-accused-of-sexual-abuse>

\$4.5 million awarded in Davis group home neglect case Posted: 04/12/17, 6:45 AM PDT | Updated: 22 hrs ago [0 Comments](#) SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — A former resident of a children's group home in Northern California has been awarded nearly \$4.5 million after jurors found he was severely neglected by the home's caregivers while living at the facility. The Sacramento Bee reports (<http://bit.ly/2p7KWIM>) the jurors determined Tuesday that EMQ FamiliesFirst caused the child emotional distress and concealed information from him and his family. The alleged neglect took place at the Davis group home in 2012 and 2013, starting when the boy was 11. The plaintiff's attorney alleged in court documents that the boy had been sexually and physically assaulted while away from the home one night. Advertisement The group home ultimately lost its state license in 2013. It had shed about 100 employees amid allegations of sexual assaults and unsupervised children walking away from the facility. ____ Source: <http://www.montereyherald.com/general-news/20170412/45-million-awarded-in-davis-group-home-neglect-case>

To help address foster care tragedies, better understand and listen to youth By [Christine Gendron](#), April 14, 2017 Photo by iStock.com Earlier this month, two teenagers in foster care were struck by a vehicle after running away from Child Protective Services (CPS) offices in Houston, where they had been staying because of a lack of appropriate placement options. One, a 15-year-old girl, died from her injuries. The tragic fatality has heightened attention on Texas' foster care capacity crisis, but it is important to recognize that the issues Texas must address are much broader. Due to challenges with how information was collected and stored in previous years, CPS does not know exactly how many young people who should be in foster care have fled and not returned. The agency does know that 1,068 children ran from care in 2016 and that only 776 of them were located. The whereabouts of the remaining 292 runaways are unknown, but research suggests they are at very high risk of being victimized, particularly by sex traffickers. What should we do about this? We must recognize that housing children in CPS offices is unacceptable. Appropriate funding is needed to address this capacity crisis by supporting an array of quality foster care services that can meet demand for all children, including those with more challenging behaviors who require higher levels of care. Texas legislators have proposed significant funding increases for foster care, and the Texas Network of Youth Services applauds their leadership on this important issue. Additionally, Texas must develop appropriate strategies to prevent and respond to runaways and potential runaways. The Legislature has insisted that CPS find the young people who have run away from care. CPS should absolutely make every effort to do that, but there is a larger problem, too: How will CPS keep them from running again, since this behavior is not unusual for children who do not want to be in care and who have experienced severe physical and emotional trauma? This challenge requires a multi-faceted approach that includes increased training for providers and thoughtful discussion about how the system approaches care. One approach is to create "cultures of care" — climates that recognize past trauma youth have experienced and that work to prevent triggers that cause and escalate challenging behaviors such as running away. For four years, our organization supported the development of cultures of care at a handful of residential treatment centers serving some of the most challenging youth across Texas. Evaluations results show the initiative was extremely successful; most programs substantially reduced their use of seclusion and restraint practices, which are often used to control behaviors but can create more trauma. This initiative can serve as a blueprint for preventing future foster care tragedies: by investing in evidence-based training and support services for providers to create climates that don't prompt so many runaways.

Working collaboratively with youth and valuing their perspectives is another key part of the solution. Young people are telling us something when they run from care, and it is time to start listening. They often know what works best for them and research suggests that allowing youth to participate in decisions about their lives may help them heal. Perhaps youth should be able to exercise more choice regarding their placements, or even be given the choice to “opt out” of foster care placement during their later teen years and instead enter supportive living environments with fewer restrictions and strings attached. These ideas may seem radical, but traditional foster care settings are just not working for everyone, and we risk future tragedies if we don’t adapt. In addition to increasing Texas’ foster care capacity, we must work to better understand and listen to youth in foster care so that we can keep them healthy, safe and on the right path. Source: <https://www.tribtalk.org/2017/04/14/to-help-address-foster-care-tragedies-better-understand-and-listen-to-youth/>

State foster care system comes under fire during forum State foster care system comes under fire during forum Federico Martinez , San Angelo Standard-Times Published 9:35 p.m. CT April 13, 2017 | Updated 5 hours ago More than 75 percent of reported child abuse cases that occur in foster homes go unresolved in Texas every year, said Houston attorney Chris Porter Chris Porter (Photo: Contributed photo) 6 CONNECT [TWEET](#) [LINKEDIN](#) [COMMENT](#) [EMAIL](#) [MORE](#) More than 75 percent of reported child abuse cases that occur in Texas foster homes go unresolved every year because state politicians and government leaders ignore reports by Child Protective Services, said Chris Porter, a prominent Houston attorney who is among several attorneys suing the state for child neglect. Porter was the featured speaker during a “Truth About CPS” community forum Thursday night at Stephens Central Library. The forum was organized by the Tom Green County Democratic Club. “This is currently one of the biggest issues in the state,” said David Currie, chairman of the county Democratic Party. “This state doesn’t do a good job of taking care of our children, and we know why: Poor children don’t have money to donate to political campaigns.” Yetter Coleman, which Porter works for, is one of several law firms in Texas that joined forces and filed a lawsuit in 2014 alleging the state is guilty of child neglect because it has failed to address ongoing problems in the foster care system. The law firms in 2015 won an initial judgement in 5th Circuit Court, but the state has filed an appeal. Porter said his side believes the state will continue to ignore the problems until a federal court orders reform in the foster care system. “There’s always a lot of talk about change during the election season, but then it never happens,” Porter said. “To be clear, we started looking into the problem in 2004 and didn’t take it to court until 2014. In 2015 we got an opinion in our favor. “The state has had at least 13 years to do something, but there have been no changes.” According to research findings that Porter and other attorneys have already presented in court, there are 12,000 children “trapped” in the state’s foster care system, meaning those children have been in the system for more than 18 months with little hope of ever finding permanent placement. National guidelines recommend that each social worker should have 12-15 cases assigned at one time, Porter said. Most Texas social workers have 67 percent to 100 percent more cases than the national guideline. “What that means is they have so many cases that they can’t do their jobs,” Porter said. “The result is our children are being deprived of services.” Attorneys also discovered the state doesn’t keep track of caseloads, even though those numbers are kept and easily available, Porter said. State officials also refuse to acknowledge child abuse incidents that occur in foster homes involving children physically or sexually assaulting other children. Those incidents are tracked by CPS programs throughout Texas, but state officials do not include them in public reports, Porter said. Of the more than 4,000 cases identified by the attorneys’ group in 2013, the state investigated less than 15 of the incidents. The forum comes at a time when both state Senate and House leaders are discussing the idea of privatizing CPS. The state already uses some private, for-profit facilities to house foster care children, Porter said. In recent years CPS departments throughout Texas, including San Angelo, have been forced to place children in hotel rooms or make them sleep in office waiting rooms because there aren’t enough foster homes to place the children at, Porter and Currie said. The Tom Green County Club each month hosts a public forum on different issues. Source: <http://www.gosanangelo.com/story/news/2017/04/13/state-foster-care-system-comes-under-fire-during-forum/100448774/>

I Was Abused While Living In Foster Care 04/18/2017 03:25 am ET | Updated 2 days ago Six years, 312 weeks, 2,190 days — those are 3 different ways to describe how much time I spent living in 18 different group homes or foster homes as a ward of the Toronto Children’s Aid Society and a Crown Ward. No matter how you calculate it or sum it up, I was YOUR child as Crown Wards are children under legal guardianship of the province. Your tax dollars paid for my medication, your tax dollars fed me, and your tax dollars also paid for the salaries of the people who abused me over this six-year period. You see, I was born to an intellectually disabled single mother who wanted to adopt me. But my grandmother, who had always dreamed of having a grandchild, stepped in and offered to assist in raising me in return for my mother calling the adoption off. When I was five years old, my grandmother was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease, and so my mother was left to care for a child she never really wanted in the first place. My mother had a difficult time choosing between caring for me and caring for my grandmother, and at times, I ended up facing the wrath of my mother’s hands and other objects. When I was around seven or eight years old, the Children’s Aid Society (CAS) began to investigate, and when I was nine years old, I was apprehended. And so began my journey living out of garbage bags (that’s what was used to put my belongings in when I moved from home to another). Little did I know that I was trading one abusive environment for another. Last year, [the Government of Ontario announced that it was introducing new legislation](#) in order to enhance the experience of youth living in care. There is absolutely no discussion about having children and youth served by people who are actually qualified to do so. In a [previous blog](#) I talked about the need to have licensed workers in group homes and specialized foster homes which would improve accountability. For most of my time living in care, I had an undiagnosed mental illness that was written off as behavioral, and rather than spending time to dig into what was actually causing my so-called behavior, I suffered abuse and eventually shipped off to yet another group home or foster home. No youth worker will admit what they did to me was abuse, instead they’ll tell you they were using different techniques as a means of putting a stop to my behavior. I remember one day when I was 10 years old I found out my grandmother had been rushed to the hospital, upon receiving this news, I ran to my room, sat in my chair and began to cry. Rather than coming into my room and consoling me, a worker in my group home charged into my room and immediately put me on the floor and restrained me. I later learned they thought I was harming myself because I was crying so loudly. So rather than finding out what was wrong first, they just assumed the worst and restrained me. The louder I cried, the harder the restraint got. This is still a memory that brings me to tears and one that will forever haunt me; I will never forget the person that did this to me, nor will I forgive them. In another group home, I had my door taken off its hinges. In that same group home, the residents’ shoes were locked up and as punishment we sometimes had our clothes taken away and given hot pink (or some other really tacky color) of pajamas to wear. When I threatened to jump out my second floor window, a worker in my group home brought me a step stool and said, “If you do it, I’ll say you accidentally fell.” To deter “behavioral” issues, sometimes my fellow residents and I were given Cream of Wheat or something of that nature as punishment. I remember eating this and having a group home worker tell me, “You’re lucky I didn’t urinate in it.” Every child living in care has the right to freedom of religion (and that includes refusing to go to church or other religious activities) in one particular foster home I lived in for several months when I was 12 years old I refused to participate in a weekly bible study session. Over a two-week period that resulted in me having to stay in my bedroom when I got home from school at 3:30pm until 7:30am the next morning. I was only allowed out of my room to bathe or use the washroom. I had to even stay in my room on weekends. All my meals were brought to me. The only items allowed in my room were my homework and a bible. This is only a small snapshot of the abuse I suffered at the hands of the very system that was supposed to protect me. A few years ago I was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which the psychiatrist believed to be a direct result of my experience with the child protection system. I did try and assert my rights and stand up for myself while living in care. I made dozens of calls to [The Provincial Advocate for Children & Youth](#) (The Advocate’s Office) whose powers are somewhat limited as to how they can intervene. At most my advocate would try to mediate the issue but more times than not that just pissed off the group home which led to the entire house going bowling while I had to stay at the group home and scrub floors. Each child is given a ‘Rights and Responsibilities Handbook’ which is reviewed with the child/youth every 3 months. Just like the law, every single worker and foster parent interpreted every single word of the rights and responsibilities differently and at the end of the day I was told that my foster parent or group home worker was in charge and sometimes their methods were more creative than others yet had to be respected. Group homes and foster homes are inspected annually but are usually given weeks if not months to prepare. My experience was that the inspections usually happened when the kids were outside of the house and if we did see the inspector it was just as they were leaving the house. Ask any youth or former youth in care and they’ll tell you that we were rewarded for saying positive things to the inspector and we were all penalized for saying negative things to the inspector; usually in the form of being put off-program (the group home version of lockdown). The government says as part of its new legislation it hopes to include unannounced inspections. I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again; our children and youth of Ontario deserve better! Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/i-was-abused-while-living-in-foster-care_us_58f5ba3e4b04cae050dca81

Home-Based Drug Treatment Program Costs Less And Works April 17, 2017 By Jack Rodolico Share [close](#)more Hannah Berkowitz in her parents' home in West Hartford, Conn. Getting intensive in-home drug treatment is what ultimately helped her get back on track, she and her mom agree. Hannah Berkowitz is 20 years old. When she was a senior in high school her life flew off the rails. She was getting high on whatever drugs she could get her hands on. She was suicidal. Berkowitz moved into a therapeutic boarding school to get sober, but could only stay sober while she was on campus during the week. "I'd come home and try to stay sober really hard — really, really hard," says Berkowitz. "Sometimes I'd make it through the weekend, and sometimes I just couldn't make it. It was white-knuckling it, just holding on." The transition back home always triggered a relapse for Berkowitz. "I thought it was just my fault and there was no hope," she says. No hope — but Berkowitz did have luck. She had private health insurance and she lived in Connecticut, where a startup company, [Aware Recovery Care](#), had begun treating clients in the very environment where Hannah was struggling to stay sober: her home. A chronic disease approach Treating addiction is a growing business, but a lot of the treatment that's available is expensive and patients often relapse. Fortunately, there is a way to help some people pay less for better results, says [Matt Eacott](#), vice president of Aware Recovery Care. "Ninety-nine percent of the industry really treats addiction as an acute problem — like a rash on your arm that you rub lotion on and you're done," says Eacott. Instead, Aware treats addiction as a chronic illness — it doesn't disappear just because symptoms are temporarily under control. The approach is a cost-effective way of treating addiction, Eacott says, with better results than most competitors achieve. Aware comes into clients' homes and connects them with a nurse, a primary care doctor, a therapist, peer support, 12-step meetings and a case manager. Clients hooked on opioids can get medication-assisted treatment. They can also submit to urine screening and GPS tracking, if that helps them stick with the program. Hannah's mother, Lois Berkowitz, says the program is intense at first. But as Hannah built coping skills the supports faded into the background. "It's not like they're doing the work for the addict," says Lois Berkowitz, "they're just basically taking them by the hand and saying, 'Here are the places you need to go that will help you. And I'm going to go with you to start, so it doesn't feel that uncomfortable. And then we're going to let you fly.' " Before they "fly," Aware clients have a pretty long runway. The treatment lasts for a full year. Benefits worth the initial cost, insurer says Aware has now expanded from its base in Connecticut into New Hampshire. The program is expensive. It costs \$38,000 a year. As of now, it's only available to private-pay clients and people insured through [Anthem](#) health insurance in New Hampshire and Connecticut. Anthem became the first insurer to pay Aware, because the treatment is based on hard science that's yielding solid results for clients, says [Dr. Steven Korn](#), Anthem's behavioral health medical director. Science and results are rare in addiction treatment, he says. "There are old, old notions that have hung pretty tough," says Korn. "When I was young — when I was in training — as soon as substance abuse was mentioned, the response of physicians was, 'Well, go to AA. That's not our problem. We don't treat that.' " For a year of treatment, Anthem says it's paying Aware about the same as the cost of a month or two of inpatient treatment. Anthem also says 72 percent of Aware clients are either sober at the end of one year or still in active treatment. That's about twice the sobriety rate of people who check in to a facility for a month and then get no follow-up care, says [Dr. Stuart Gitlow](#), past president of the American Society of Addiction Medicine. Treating addiction at home makes sense because it's the exact place where people learned all their bad habits, Gitlow says. "It's all based on this concept that addiction is not about the substance use," he says, "but is about what led to the substance use in the first place. And you can't really get there without getting to know the patient." Aware says it's in negotiations with four more major insurers. The program hopes to have a couple hundred clients in New Hampshire by the end of the year. Source: <http://www.wbur.org/npr/523016186/home-based-drug-treatment-program-costs-less-and-works>

Family wants more answers, transparency from a local group home By [Jenn Schanz, News 4 Reporter](#) Published: April 18, 2017, 6:13 pm WILLIAMSVILLE, N.Y. (WIVB)- The Adams adopted their daughter Wendy when she was four. The now 48-year-old is blind and non-verbal. "We didn't have much choice when we had to place Wendy in a group home, it bothered us immensely," Clayton Adams, Wendy's father told News 4. Wendy lives in a group home in Williamsville run by Aspire of Western New York. Almost a year ago, the Adams got a call Wendy suffered a minor injury, burns to several fingers on her left hand. "They said it was discovered at day program but they don't know if it happened at day program, if it happened at the house," said Pamela Adams, Wendy's mother. The Adams were only notified of the burns after Wendy was taken to the doctor. News 4 spoke to an Aspire spokesperson, who didn't want to go on camera. They told us protocol was followed; they are legally required to notify families of an injuries within 24 hours, which they claim they did. Pamela said the fact that Aspire staff couldn't tell her how the injury occurred is not acceptable. "There seems to be very little consistent follow through," Clayton said. According to a corrective action report from Aspire, the staff member was "re-trained to notify family prior to doctor appointments when an individual has an injury." Pamela said there have been other causes for concern; how to properly guide a blind person, she said, didn't appear to be known by some staff. "One person grabbed her by the back of the neck and steered her around," she explained. Their concerns were investigated by Aspire internally. Aspire would not provide copies of their internal investigation, but told us they made changes to alleviate some of the Adams' concerns, like upping Wendy's supervision. "They're going to fall back on the fact that they can't question Wendy specifically to find out what she wants to say," Clayton said. "Basically it's a nonverbal individual against an organization that is obviously going to try to defend itself." Source: <http://wivb.com/2017/04/18/family-wants-more-answers-transparency-from-a-local-group-home/>

Former CEO of Florida Group Home Association Convicted of Conspiracy to Defraud SSA Date: Wednesday, April 19, 2017 Office Affiliation: [The Office of Investigations](#) From the U.S. Attorney's Office, [Middle District of Florida](#): Tampa, FL – Acting United States Attorney W. Stephen Muldrow announces that a federal jury today found Richard Lilliston (70, Brooksville) guilty of conspiracy to defraud the United States, and to make false statements to the Social Security Administration. He faces a maximum penalty of five years in federal prison and a fine of \$250,000. A sentencing date has not yet been set. According to court documents, the Hillsborough Achievement and Resource Centers (HARC), formerly the Hillsborough Association for Retarded Citizens, was established in 1953 to positively impact the future for all people living with developmental disabilities, such as Alzheimer's disease and Down syndrome. HARC opened and operated group homes that served its target client population. HARC also spearheaded various community programs for its clients focused on inclusion activities for youths, adults, and seniors with disabilities. Many of the HARC clients received SSA benefits due to various developmental disabilities. For certain HARC clients who lacked the capacity to manage their own SSA benefits, SSA approved one or more HARC officials to act as a "Representative Payee" to receive the client's benefits and to use them exclusively for that client's benefit. As a Representative Payee, the HARC official was required to complete and submit to the SSA a "Representative Payee Report" that included information about each HARC client's living situation and the financial benefits received and expended on behalf of that client. Lilliston began working at HARC in 1997 as the Chief Executive Officer. While working in that capacity, he and others orchestrated a scheme whereby HARC client funds, purportedly saved solely for HARC's developmentally disabled clients' needs and use in a HARC bank account ("Endowment Account"), had been and were being wrongfully diverted from the clients to the HARC operating account for other purposes. In November 2009, in an effort to conceal that HARC client funds were being wrongfully diverted from the clients and to make it appear as if HARC's Endowment Account had been properly established and maintained, Lilliston directed the former HARC CFO and Controller to secure signatures from the developmentally disabled HARC clients on a document backdated to 2007, titled "Pooled Trust Joinder Agreement." The CFO and Controller did as instructed, knowing that the HARC clients who signed the Pooled Trust Joinder Agreement document did not have the capacity necessary to understand the importance of the document. Notwithstanding, Lilliston and other HARC employees signed the backdated agreements. Trial testimony further revealed that Lilliston was terminated from his HARC CEO position in November 2011, following a discovery by the HARC Board of Directors that he had wrongfully taken an additional \$10,000 in salary (\$160,000 rather than the approved \$150,000) and had allotted himself a car allowance of \$1,850 per month. In June 2013, the U.S. Attorney's Office filed a Verified Complaint for Forfeiture Rem in a related case (Case No. 8:13-cv-1601-T-17TBM), seeking the forfeiture of \$87,000 held in a Synovus Bank account. That complaint raised like allegations that HARC clients' SSA benefits had been wrongfully diverted from the clients and used by HARC for other purposes and was supported by facts contained in the sworn affidavit of a special agent with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - Office of Inspector General. On September 30, 2013, the district court entered a Default Judgment of Forfeiture in which the court ordered the forfeiture of the \$87,000 to the United States. This case was investigated by the Social Security Administration - Office of the Inspector General, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - Office of Inspector General, and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, along with the State of Florida's Department of Financial Services - Office of Fiscal Integrity. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jay G. Trezevant. Source: <https://oig.ssa.gov/audits-and-investigations/investigations/april19-harc-ceo-convicted>

Sharon Group Home Employee Charged With Abusing Developmentally Disabled Resident April 21, 2017 11:31 AM Filed Under: [Sharon](#) Patricia Afriyie-Yeboah. (Image Credit: Sharon Police) SHARON (CBS) – Police have charged a Sharon group home employee with abusing a developmentally

disabled resident using a shower rod. Sharon Police began an investigation into the reported abuse, which stemmed from an incident on Tuesday. Staff members alerted police to the abuse, and after an investigation police arrested Patricia Afriyie-Yeboah of Stoughton. The 22-year-old group home resident was not seriously injured. Afriyie-Yeboah was suspended immediately after the incident was reported. She was arraigned Thursday in Stoughton District Court on charges of assault and battery by means of a dangerous weapon and assault and battery on a disabled person. Source: <http://boston.cbslocal.com/2017/04/21/sharon-group-home-abuse-arrest-patricia-afriyie-yeboah/>

Death, rapes, and broken bones at Philly's only residential treatment center for troubled youth Updated: April 22, 2017 — 6:00 AM EDT 923Share Tweet Tumblr Email 91 Comment [REPRINTS](#) Popular Stories [Death, rapes, and broken bones at Philly's only residential treatment center for troubled youth](#) 6:29 AM What the soda tax has done to a 210-year-old black cherry elixir Apr 21 - 5:42 PM Buy Photo JESSICA GRIFFIN / Staff Photographer The gravestone of David Hess at Merion Memorial Park by Nancy Phillips & Chris Palmer - Staff Writers [Email @PhillipsNancy 215-854-2254](#) Nancy Phillips Staff Writer Nancy Phillips is a member of the Inquirer's investigative team. She has reported on police misconduct, political corruption, the failings of Philadelphia's child welfare system, and dysfunction in city courts. She has won numerous state and national awards, including a special citation from Investigative Reporters & Editors for her work solving a murder by eliciting a confession from a killer. She is a former Inquirer city editor and a former assistant to the publisher of the Inquirer, Daily News and Philly.com. Shortly after David Hess [died in a struggle](#) with staffers at Wordsworth last fall, the state [shuttered the West Philadelphia facility](#), decrying it as "an immediate and serious danger" to the children who lived there. Family photo David Hess, 17, died in a confrontation with staffers at Wordsworth, a residential treatment center for troubled young people. The death of Hess, 17 — [ruled a homicide](#) — was yet another violent chapter in a hidden history of abuse at the city's only residential treatment center for troubled young people. In the last decade, at least 49 sex crimes have been reported at Wordsworth, including 12 rapes and 23 accounts of sexual abuse, an Inquirer investigation has found. Interviews, court records, state inspection reports, and police records reveal a trail of injuries to children, from broken bones to assaults to the suffocation death of Hess. Along the way, lawyers, licensing inspectors, and others found conditions there appalling and sounded the alarm with little success. In 2015, three girls at the center were sexually assaulted by a counselor who lured them with promises of money and gifts, they would later tell police. While rumors of the incidents swirled, Wordsworth officials were slow to investigate, and the girls say the assaults continued for weeks. "I couldn't believe that. It's pretty outrageous," said Frank Cervone, executive director of the [Support Center for Child Advocates](#), which represents victims of child abuse and neglect. For Hess, who suffered from profound mental illness, and the other behaviorally challenged young people who called Wordsworth home, the center was supposed to be a refuge, a place to get needed help. Taxpayers shelled out \$119,000 a year for the care of each child, but all too often reaped failure. "He died a child," said Hess' sister, Elizabeth, 28. "He died a child in a facility designed to help him, and it didn't help him. It killed him." "Exceptional hardships" On the sprawling grounds of a former hospital on Ford Road, [Wordsworth](#), a nonprofit, runs a variety of programs that aim to help children and families in need. The redbrick-and-glass residential treatment facility housed 82 young people the night Hess died. Many had been placed there by the city after suffering abuse or neglect. Others were ordered to stay there by juvenile court after committing a crime. All had mental illness or behavioral problems, posing severe challenges for their caregivers. Ranging in age from 10 to 21, the young people in Wordsworth's care lived in a rundown facility and slept in rooms with holes in the walls, exposed wiring, broken light fixtures, and faulty heaters. There, records show, they were sometimes tended to by ill-trained staffers. Family photo David Hess. "He died a child in a facility designed to help him, and it didn't help him. It killed him," says his sister Elizabeth. Despite its deficiencies, Wordsworth had its license renewed by the [state Department of Human Services](#) again and again, and child welfare agencies and the courts continued to send young people there. DHS officials declined to explain its decisions to allow Wordsworth to operate after compiling a long history of violations. They said the agency is examining how it handled problems at Wordsworth and whether changes need to be made. Officials at Wordsworth, which has appealed the [closure order](#), declined to be interviewed and declined to respond to a detailed list of questions. In a statement, Wordsworth's board chairman, Thomas V. Johnson, said: "At Wordsworth, there is no greater value we have than the responsibility to care for our children." He said many of the young people who live there "had experienced exceptional hardships in their lives with behavioral and other mental health issues." Johnson said pending lawsuits prevented him from discussing specific incidents at the facility. However, he said, "we would like to state unequivocally that Wordsworth remains committed to ensuring a safe and secure environment for all children in our care." He also noted that in January Wordsworth hired a new CEO. [Community Behavioral Health](#), a nonprofit that oversees publicly funded mental-health services for the city, funneled about \$6 million a year in state and federal money to Wordsworth to care for a steady stream of young people at an average cost of \$326 per day. The agency continued to write those checks even after it learned of serious problems at the facility, including sexual assaults. "Our approach to agencies generally is that we need them, and if there are opportunities to improve, we work with them," said Joan Erney, chief executive of Community Behavioral Health. "We did rely on Wordsworth extensively," she added. "Places outside of Philadelphia don't want to take our kids. They tell us our kids are too complicated. They tell us our kids are too hard. We have kids with some really difficult problems." "Nobody believes you" In the last decade, police were summoned to Wordsworth more than 800 times for incidents ranging from minor disturbances and tripped fire alarms to rape. Police records show reports of 12 rapes, two cases of involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, seven reports of indecent exposure, four cases of corruption of the morals of a minor, and one case of child endangerment. In addition, police were called to investigate 23 reports of sexual abuse, and six reports of physical abuse against children. Police declined to provide details of those cases, but records obtained by the Inquirer shed light on some of those crimes, which began shortly after the center opened in 2006. The next year, for instance, staffer Norman Thompson went to a 16-year-old girl's room at 4 a.m., touched her genitals, and forced her to touch his penis, court records show. Thompson, then 26, later pleaded no contest to indecent exposure and corruption of a minor and was sentenced to five years' probation. Another case that year turned out much differently. A girl, 13, told police a staffer came into her room one night and raped her. She told her social worker, who took her to the hospital and alerted police. Other staffers were less supportive, said the woman, now 23, whose name the Inquirer is withholding because it does not identify victims of alleged sexual assault without their permission. "They didn't believe me when I told," she said. "Nobody believes you. They all stick together." After she reported the assault, she said, she was moved to what Wordsworth called the "safe room" and she never saw her attacker again. But word of her allegations spread through the facility, she said. "People kept calling me a liar," she said. "So I just told my social worker I didn't want to do it [pursue the case] anymore, and they didn't force me." The woman described Wordsworth as a violent place where young people fight among themselves and with the staff. "That place was horrible," she said. Another woman reported a sexual assault by a staffer at Wordsworth in 2008 when she was 16. She said the man came into her room at night, assaulted her, and ejaculated on her. Afterward, she remembered feeling confused. In ways that she now understands to be wrong, part of her felt good about it. "I was just happy that somebody touched me," she said. "I never had a guy touch me because I was in placement for so long." The woman, now 25, said she and her brothers were removed from their home because their mother had mental problems and tried to harm them. After the assault at Wordsworth, she said, she finally told her social worker. "She was like my mom because I'd been there for so long" — since age 11, the woman said. "She told me, 'That's wrong,' and she reported it." The woman said she knew girls at Wordsworth who had sex with staffers. "They'd say, 'Hey, Daddy.' Like you call your man, 'Hey, Daddy.'" It was tolerated, she said. "Nothing came to light down there," she said. Among dozens of sex crimes reported at the facility, records show, arrests were made in just four cases. Those include the one involving Thompson and the arrest of a staffer charged with assaulting the three girls. Also charged were two boys, 16 and 13, accused in separate incidents of raping other boys at the center. "They just lost track of the place" Wordsworth, founded in 1952 as a school for children with reading disabilities, expanded rapidly in recent years. Beginning in 2013, it won city contracts to provide foster care, education, and social services for children at risk of abuse, neglect, or delinquency, with public funding rising to \$55 million a year. These contracts fueled enormous growth. Wordsworth grew into a behemoth organization with a \$77 million-a-year budget that also runs a school and an acute psychiatric facility and says it serves more than 5,600 children and families each year. As Wordsworth's work expanded well beyond the troubled youth home, said Cervone, of the Child Advocacy center, "it's possible that they just lost track of the place." Over the years, inspectors from the state Department of Human Services repeatedly cited the facility for failing to ensure that its workers had the required training in the care and management of children. ELIZABETH ROBERTSON / Staff Photographer "You're either allowed to be around children or you're not," says Steven F. Marino, a lawyer for the Hess family. "It's like carrying a gun without a license. You either have it or you don't," said Steven F. Marino, a lawyer for the Hess family who plans to sue Wordsworth. "You're either allowed to be around children or you're not." Proper training in how to safely restrain a child is essential in facilities such as Wordsworth, where children can grow combative quickly, experts say. State officials warned Wordsworth about the importance of the proper use of restraint in inspections of the facility in 2012, 2013, 2015, and 2016. Wordsworth officials repeatedly pledged to be more diligent. If staff aren't properly trained in proper restraint techniques, "they use techniques they'd use in the street," Marino said. Lissy Sherman says that's what she experienced at Wordsworth in 2008 when she was 17. In an interview, Sherman, now 26, said it was "med

call,” or time to get medication, and she didn’t come out of her room on time. A mental-health technician, Isaac Wilson, came in to get her, she said. “He literally dragged me out the room pulling my clothes, dragging me, pulling me,” she said. “You could see my bone sticking out.” — Lissy Sherman, who was injured at Wordsworth when she was 17. As it happened, her friend saw the attack. “He had her on the ground and bent her arm back,” the woman recalled. “She was crying.” During the struggle, Sherman said, her arm was fractured. “You could see my bone sticking out.” Sherman remembers that Wilson turned to her and said: “I didn’t do that.” A lawsuit Sherman’s mother later filed on her behalf said the injury to her arm required surgery to realign the bone. In court papers, a lawyer for Wordsworth said Sherman had been “combative and aggressive” and contributed to her own injury. The suit was settled for a sum not disclosed in court documents. Sherman said she was paid \$47,000. In another incident, a 17-year-old girl suffered a broken jaw in 2010 in a struggle with a staffer who was trying to break up a fight she was having with another girl. Shakara Holly said in court papers that the staffer, Ahmadou Mbengue, used “unusually harsh force” as he attempted to restrain her. Lawyers for Wordsworth and Mbengue denied that and the lawsuit ended when Wordsworth agreed to pay an undisclosed sum. Then came a terrible event that reverberated outside the Wordsworth campus. In April 2015, a 16-year-old boy at Wordsworth was awakened at 4:30 in the morning by another boy who forced him to perform oral sex and then pushed him to the floor and raped him. At the time of the assault, Craig Roberts, who was sent to Wordsworth after committing a robbery and threatening to inflict bodily harm on someone, was supposed to be kept under one-on-one supervision, lawyers for the victim said. Instead, he was left alone and attacked the boy. When the victim initially reported the crime, staffers were dismissive, the teen said, and he had to beg to be taken to the hospital. An exam there found tears in his anus. Police investigated and Roberts, now 18, was arrested and adjudicated delinquent on a sexual-assault charge. The victim was moved to another wing at Wordsworth, where he was raped by a second attacker, he later told police. These crimes and other troubling reports so concerned lawyers at the [Defender Association of Philadelphia](#) that they began holding monthly meetings with officials at Wordsworth and Community Behavioral Health. Also at the meetings were representatives of the city and its Department of Human Services, which is responsible for the care of children who have been abused or neglected or have been adjudicated delinquent after committing crimes; the state Department of Human Services, which licenses and inspects the facility; and representatives of Philadelphia’s juvenile probation department. Wordsworth officials agreed to put cameras in the building and fix up conditions inside, Erney said. They also pledged to improve training. AVI STEINHARDT / For the Inquirer A visitor enters Wordsworth. Crimes and other troubling reports so concerned lawyers at the Defender Association of Philadelphia that they began holding monthly meetings with officials at Wordsworth and Community Behavioral Health. But as part of their review, Community Behavioral Health officials neglected to read the state inspection reports on Wordsworth. Had they done so, they would have learned of lingering problems, including lapses in training, delays in medical care, injuries to children through improper restraints, and reported abuse. The monthly meetings became bimonthly meetings. “Everyone seemed to think that they were on the right path, and we were going to go to every six months” for meetings, Erney said. But several months later, in 2015, three girls, ages 15 to 17, reported repeated sexual assaults by residential counselor Isaac Outten. The girls said Outten took them to the basement for sex and forced them to take naked photographs of themselves with his iPhone. He lured the 15-year-old to the basement by promising her diapers and milk for her 1-year-old child in exchange for oral sex and intercourse, she later told police. He promised another girl, 17, that he would help her with a criminal case in exchange for sex and naked selfies, police said. And the third girl, also 17, told police Outten took her to the basement for sex after a counselor left her alone with him. She said he told her not to tell anyone or he would get in trouble. Wordsworth suspended and later fired Outten after one of the girls told a counselor what happened. But some staffers had heard rumblings that Outten was having sex with one or more of the girls and they did nothing, according to a summary of interviews Wordsworth officials conducted in preparation for the defense of a lawsuit. State DHS officials learned of at least one of the alleged rapes through its abuse hotline, Childline, in late November. A month later, the agency renewed Wordsworth’s license. Outten, 38, was later [charged](#) with institutional sexual assault, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, corruption of minors, child endangerment, and other crimes. He has pleaded not guilty and is awaiting trial. Through his lawyer, Outten declined to comment. DAVID SWANSON / Staff Photographer “It is unfortunate that Wordsworth did not follow protocol that would have prevented their employee from preying on these vulnerable girls,” says lawyer Nadeem A. Bezar, who has sued Wordsworth on behalf of two assault victims. Nadeem A. Bezar, a lawyer with Kline & Specter who has sued Wordsworth on behalf of two of the girls, said the center breached its duty to them by allowing Outten to be alone with them. “It is unfortunate that Wordsworth did not follow protocol that would have prevented their employee from preying on these vulnerable girls,” he said. He also faulted it for not investigating the rumors that Outten was having sex with the girls. Cynthia Figueroa, commissioner of the city’s Department of Human Services, also decried the reported assaults on the girls. And she said she was horrified by the death of Hess. Figueroa was new to the job when Hess was killed at Wordsworth and she visited the center days later to investigate. “I wanted to see it with my own eyes,” she said. “You could feel the stress and tension when you walked into the building.” — Cynthia Figueroa, commissioner of the city’s Department of Human Services. What she found shocked her. The place was in “horrible condition,” she said. “It was not the conditions conducive to a child that would be in our care,” she said. “It was really worn down.” Michael Bryant / Staff Photographer Cynthia Figueroa, commissioner of the city’s Department of Human Services, visited Wordsworth after the death of David Hess. The physical plant aside, Figueroa said, “you could feel the stress and tension when you walked into the building.” Still, she said, some children told her that they were happy there, that the staff was like family, that they considered Wordsworth their home. Others wanted to leave. Within days of the closure order, all of the children were sent to residential treatment centers in other states or to acute psychiatric facilities. A stolen iPod, a death On Oct. 13, three Wordsworth staffers entered David Hess’ bedroom in search of a stolen iPod. Two of them did not have the required annual training in the proper methods of restraining a child and should not have been allowed to work with children, state records show. As they flipped over his bed and tossed furniture around his room in search of the iPod, the 5-foot-9, 149-pound Hess grew agitated and struggled with them. At one point, a staffer held him down while another punched him repeatedly in the ribs, witnesses later told state investigators. “Get off me,” [he cried](#), according to a state report on the incident. “I can’t breathe.” And then, witnesses said, the room fell silent. The [city Medical Examiner’s Office](#) ruled that Hess died from suffocation. Just a few days earlier, Hess’ mother, Maryann Roth, had spoken to her son about his coming home for Christmas. Roth, who adopted Hess and his two brothers when he was two, said it was too painful to talk about what happened to him at Wordsworth. Born into a family with a history of mental illness, Hess was removed from his biological mother’s home in Germantown when he was a toddler. His birth mother was schizophrenic, drug-addicted, and given to bouts of anger, said Marino, the lawyer for the Hess family. Hess and his brothers were adopted together and moved to Lebanon, Pa., where they lived with Roth, her husband, and five other children. As he grew, Hess exhibited signs of mental illness, paranoia, explosive anger, and self-destructive tendencies. “He was a very, very difficult child,” Marino said. “This child’s parents couldn’t manage him.” For a time, he was sent to live at the Bradley Center, a residential treatment facility in Pittsburgh that specializes in helping children with mental-health problems. But officials there found him to be too much of a challenge, Marino said, and he was sent to Wordsworth. “It’s hard to find a setting for kids with these disabilities,” he said. “You’re dealing with a tough population.” At the same time, he said, Wordsworth, in accepting the challenge of admitting and treating Hess, had a duty to help him. “Wordsworth says, ‘We’ll take on the responsibility.’ They take the money and they can’t manage him,” Marino said. Law enforcement officials declined to comment but continue to investigate Hess’ death. Wordsworth paid for his funeral and tombstone. To Elizabeth Hess, the loss of her brother’s life was senseless. “An iPod,” she said. “Are we really OK with that being the cause of my brother’s death?” Staff writer Mike Newall contributed to this article. Source: <http://www.philly.com/philly/news/pennsylvania/philadelphia/Death-rape-Philadelphia-Wordsworth-residential-treatment-center-troubled-youth.html>

Some offenders allowed to work at group homes [JON BRINES jonathan.brines@journaltimes.com Jonathan Brines](#) 7 hrs ago 0 +1 Crawford +1 Larry RACINE COUNTY — Two employees of a group home run by Love of Caring LLC in the 100 block of Howland Avenue, Racine, are facing misdemeanor battery and disorderly conduct charges after a [physical fight on Jan. 5](#) at the home between the employees over work schedules. The court commissioner in the case ordered the two employees, Tierre Crawford, 40, and Tonya Larry, 40, to stay away from the group home or its residents. At the time of the incident, Larry told The Journal Times she was working for Crawford, who didn’t show up for work to care for two mentally challenged residents. “I was on the job,” Larry said. Larry said Crawford showed up three hours later with a family member. “They slapped me and slapped the phone out of my hand and pulled my hair. What was I supposed to do? I called the police,” Larry said. “I was defending myself.” Larry said she lost her job over the incident, even though she had five good years without incident with the company. Love of Caring LLC officials could not be reached for comment. Larry said she feels victimized by a co-worker whom she said has a criminal record. “She never should have been hired,” Larry said. “She shouldn’t be working in this industry.” According to court records, Crawford has a 2013 guilty plea in a misdemeanor disorderly conduct case for a previous parking-lot fight in which she assaulted a man. Crawford also pleaded guilty to obstructing an officer and bail jumping in 2003 and a hit-and-run charge in 2001. Crawford could not be reached for comment. Both Larry and Crawford, if convicted of the new charges, could still potentially be allowed to work in another group home, according to Wisconsin state statutes that list seven

acceptable felonies convictions for employment: battery to an unborn child, battery with special circumstances, reckless endangerment, harassment, invasion of privacy, disorderly conduct and misdemeanor battery. Larry said she wants the state to make changes to eliminate the exceptions even if it means she's barred from employment over the incident. "People put their family in the group home and never visit them," Larry said. "I liked taking care of them. They connect with you and depend on you and they don't feel lonely." Larry said she misses the residents she cared for every day and hopes they are well taken care of. Background checks Elizabeth Goodstitt, a spokeswoman for the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, which regulates group homes, confirmed the seven non-serious convictions do not prohibit employment but do require the employer to obtain more information to see if they still want to make the hire. "The criminal complaint and judgment of conviction provide the employer with more information regarding the actual circumstances of the conviction," Goodstitt said. "Under Fair Employment Law, an employer may refuse to hire someone if the person has been convicted of an offense that is not on the offenses list but is, in the estimation of the entity, substantially related to the duties or circumstances of the job or residency." Larry said she's trying to get a job at another group home, and that that group home is delaying hiring her until her charges are resolved. DHS conducts a criminal background check on everyone who does anything for the home, including the licensee. They do so when a new group home is licensed, then every three years after that. If something happens in between, the employee is required to self-report a criminal allegation, especially if it involves his or her job. The department is looking for convictions and pending criminal charges which "substantially relates to the care of dependent" resident or the funds or property of the resident in the group home, according to DHS policy 88. DHS is allowed to drop in for an assessment of a home at anytime, generally every two years, and can order drug and mental evaluations for workers if necessary. The DHS Bureau of Assisted Living — which oversees facilities including group homes — reports seeing increases in complaints last year associated with residents wandering away, medical issues and challenging behaviors, as well as other issues, including a lack of qualified staff, low staffing levels and properly trained staff. "I think we have had some good group homes, and some not-so-good ones," said Luann Simpson, who works for the Racine chapter of National Alliance on Mental Illness. "There are not enough people to do that kind of work. We pay more to take care of our cars than people." Get breaking news sent instantly to your inbox I understand and agree that registration on or use of this site constitutes agreement to its user agreement and privacy policy. The Madison-based Personal Care Association has reported a worker in a group home makes on average \$10.75 an hour. Misconduct Registry DHS does maintain a list of names of nurse aides with a substantiated finding of caregiver misconduct, including misappropriated funds or property of the resident and neglect or abuse of a resident. Called the Wisconsin Caregiver Misconduct Registry, it shows the first name, last name and date of birth of the individual so employers can use this to determine if a potential employee is eligible to work, according to DHS. Neither Larry nor Crawford are on that list. Burlington resident Becky Borucki has a finding on the registry and is no longer eligible to work with the mentally disabled, or the elderly in group homes or other state facilities. Borucki pleaded guilty in 2012 of stealing from the patients under her care and was sentenced to three years in prison and to pay \$15,000 in restitution to the victims. Burlington Police discovered Borucki was stealing from three residents — reportedly about \$24,383 — after they were contacted by the legal guardian of one of the men who noticed discrepancies in bank records. All residents in her care were relocated. Due to Borucki being in jail, DHS suspended the license and revoked it after Borucki's sentencing. According to DHS documents obtained by The Journal Times, the facility Borucki operated in her home was closed due to DHS revocation on Nov. 30, 2012. Subsequently, the facility is no longer listed on the DHS website and its history is only available via public information request. Last year, the state had 36 inspectors to oversee 4,166 assisted living facilities statewide; the largest type was group homes, according to DHS. Simpson concerned Simpson said the state needs to do a better job protecting those who can't help themselves. "The thing is, the majority of people who have mental health issues, who are living in a group home, they don't have a lot of choice," she said. "If they are in there under commitment, the county decides where they're going to go." Simpson said for the situation to change, the community needs to think differently about at-risk individuals at group homes: "I think a lot of it boils down to: What value do we put on mental health in our society? I think a piece of it is a stigma. I think somehow we look at mental illnesses as not an illness. I think that has to change. Source: http://journaltimes.com/news/local/some-offenders-allowed-to-work-at-group-homes/article_706ca217-c113-51e8-9226-fe37255b563b.html

'Horrorified' Council members call for cancellation of Wordsworth contracts Updated: April 26, 2017 — 4:33 PM EDT 524Share Tweet Tumblr Email 171 Comment [REPRINTS](#) Avi Steinhardt In a letter to the heads of two city agencies charged with helping children in need, council members said they were "horrorified" and "sickened" by an Inquirer and Daily News investigation over the weekend detailing violence and abuse at Wordsworth, the only residential treatment center for troubled young people in the city. by Nancy Phillips & Chris Palmer - Staff Writers [Email @PhillipsNancy.215-854-2254](mailto:Email@PhillipsNancy.215-854-2254) Nancy Phillips Staff Writer Nancy Phillips is a member of the Inquirer's investigative team. She has reported on police misconduct, political corruption, the failings of Philadelphia's child welfare system, and dysfunction in city courts. She has won numerous state and national awards, including a special citation from Investigative Reporters & Editors for her work solving a murder by eliciting a confession from a killer. She is a former Inquirer city editor and a former assistant to the publisher of the Inquirer, Daily News and Philly.com. More by Nancy Phillips [State legislators call for hearings on troubled Wordsworth Apr 26](#) ['Horrorified' Council members call for cancellation of Wordsworth contracts Apr 25](#) [Death, rapes, and broken bones at Philly's only residential treatment center for troubled youth Apr 21](#) More from Nancy Phillips [Email @cs.palmer.215-854-2817](mailto:Email@cs.palmer.215-854-2817) Chris Palmer Staff Writer Chris Palmer covers crime and law enforcement. More by Chris Palmer [7 Philly teens missing after escaping from Western Pa. juvenile facility Apr 27](#) [State legislators call for hearings on troubled Wordsworth Apr 26](#) [Off-duty cop to be charged for speeding into, killing pedestrian Apr 26](#) More from Chris Palmer Nine members of Philadelphia City Council on Tuesday called for sweeping reforms in oversight of the city's child welfare system, saying it had failed to protect scores of vulnerable children. [More Coverage Death, rapes, and broken bones at Philly's only residential treatment center for troubled youth Abuse at Wordsworth: 'The people who did this need to be punished'](#) [State DHS shares blame for teen's death](#) In a letter to the heads of two city agencies charged with helping children in need, the Council members said they were "horrorified" and "sickened" by an [Inquirer and Daily News investigation](#) over the weekend detailing years of violence and abuse at Wordsworth, the only residential treatment center for troubled young people in the city. "It is clear that for far too long, residential treatment facilities for children have operated without adequate oversight, public accountability, and transparency," said the letter, signed by Helen Gym, chair of the Council Committee on Children and Youth, and eight colleagues. They called for the cancellation of Wordsworth's remaining \$55 million in city contracts to provide foster care, education, and social services for Philadelphia children who have been abused or neglected or are at risk of delinquency. "My colleagues and I are appalled by what was endured by some of the city's most vulnerable children," Gym said in an interview. Others who signed the letter included Cindy Bass, chair of the Committee on Public Health and Human Services, and Curtis Jones Jr., who heads the Committee on Public Safety. The Inquirer and Daily News reported that Wordsworth's now-shuttered facility in West Philadelphia had a hidden history of abuse. Over the last decade, more than four dozen sex crimes, including 12 rapes, were reported at the center, which served mentally ill and behaviorally challenged children. Other children suffered broken bones and assaults there. And in October, David Hess, 17, was [killed in a clash with staffers](#) who suspected he had stolen an iPod. He died of suffocation, prompting state officials to close the facility on Ford Road. The Medical Examiner's Office later [ruled the death a homicide](#). Police continue to investigate. Since Wordsworth's opening in 2006, police were summoned there more than 800 times, records show, for incidents ranging from minor disturbances and tripped fire alarms to sexual assaults. Council members in their Tuesday letter -- sent to Cynthia Figueroa, commissioner of the city Department of Human Services, and Joan Erney, CEO of Community Behavioral Health, a nonprofit that oversees mental-health services for the city -- decried Wordsworth's stewardship of children in its care. In a statement Wednesday, Wordsworth interim CEO Diana Ramsay said: "We understand and share the concerns raised by members of Philadelphia's City Council." She pledged to work with Council and city and state social-service agencies to find solutions "in the best interest of the children, families and communities we serve." Gym and her colleagues also said the city needed a "complete overhaul" of the way residential treatment facilities are monitored, and they faulted city agencies charged with overseeing Wordsworth and other residential centers for "a profound failure of oversight." The Council members said their concerns extended beyond Wordsworth. "If this can happen at one facility under our watch," they said, "it can happen anywhere." They said the overlapping roles of several agencies had allowed them to "disclaim responsibility and point fingers elsewhere." Gym and her colleagues called on each agency to assign one staffer to oversee and publicly report on the safety and conditions of residential facilities within 60 days. Other suggested reforms include: Requiring DHS and CBH staffers to visit all residential treatment facilities that hold contracts with the city within 60 days. With the closure of Wordsworth, Philadelphia children who live there have been sent to treatment centers elsewhere. Requiring those city agencies to make public quarterly reports on the safety and conditions inside. Requiring all residential treatment facilities to provide the city with safety training plans. Heather Keafer, DHS spokeswoman, said the agency shared Council's concerns and was "open to considering the recommendations presented to us" in the letter. She also said Wordsworth was exploring the possibility of being acquired by another company. If the deal went through, she said, that company, Public Health Management Corp., would take over

Wordsworth's remaining city contracts. In a statement Tuesday evening, CBH officials said they were committed to working with the city and DHS as well as the court system to improve treatment programs for children. Gym said Council plans to hold hearings on the issue of safety in such facilities. She and her colleagues said victims and families needed a forum to discuss their experiences with residential treatment and to air concerns. They called on city agencies to create a so-called Truth and Reconciliation Commission for that purpose. An earlier version of this article misstated a potential deal between two companies, Wordsworth and Public Health Management Corp. Wordsworth is exploring being acquired by the company, not merging with it. Source:

<http://www.philly.com/philly/news/crime/City-Council-members-ask-for-Wordsworth-city-contracts-to-be-canceled.html>

Group home for troubled foster kids shutting down in Sonoma County MARTIN ESPINOZA THE PRESS DEMOCRAT | May 1, 2017, 8:03PM After 45 years in operation, Sonoma County's only group home for foster kids who struggle with both mental illness and drug abuse is shutting its doors. The group home, known as R House, is being forced to close because of \$250,000 in losses stemming from costly upgrades and other changes designed to meet new state requirements, program officials said. Sweeping reforms to the state's foster care system call for long-term group homes to transform into short-term, therapeutic facilities or shut down. R House made those changes and has been operating under the new model since January, but the state will not increase its funding for the program at the new, higher reimbursement rate offered to such facilities until it is certified — a process that could take two to three months. The decision to close the Santa Rosa program will displace roughly 40 staffers and a dozen residents, R House director Sylvie Vatinelle said. R House is the only group home in the region that houses "dual-diagnosis" kids, those with both a mental illness and drug addiction, the most troubled and most difficult to place in a family setting. When R House closes, these kids will have nowhere else to go in the North Coast, Vatinelle said. "These kids need this help. There isn't anywhere else for them to go," Vatinelle said. R House, which is run as a subsidiary of nonprofit California Human Development, consists of two residential sites and a school, the Abraxis Charter School. All three sites are closing. Staff will continue working for about two weeks until placements are found for the remaining residents. Some may have to be sent out of state because there are so few facilities in California that provide such a high level of treatment. The foster care system serves children removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect. The overhaul of the system, known as the Continuum of Care Reform, or CCR, is aimed at dramatically scaling back group home placements while increasing the use of home-based family care. The effort began about five years ago when state officials and county welfare directors began working on a statutory and policy framework to overhaul placement and treatment options for foster youth. That led to state legislation, AB 403, which was signed last fall by Gov. Jerry Brown and began phasing in changes at the start of this year. Jay Takacs, secretary of the R House board of directors, said R House made costly changes to the program at the beginning of the year because he and others were led to believe the state would retroactively reimburse the program once it received certification as a short-term residential therapeutic program. For example, R House increased wages to recruit staff with proper credentials to meet the new requirements, Vatinelle said. The state notified R House last month it would not reimburse the program retroactively, Takacs said. By becoming a short-term residential therapeutic program, R House expected it would receive \$12,000 a month for each youth in its care. But without the proper certification, it was reimbursed \$9,000 a month for each teen it served. Its financial woes were compounded by a dramatic decrease in the number of children referred to the program by the county probation department. Two years ago, R House served 22 children a day, on average. Today, it houses 10 to 12 youths a day, Vatinelle said. The lower reimbursement rate and the lower daily census have crippled the program, Takacs said. Expenses have outpaced revenues for a current loss of \$250,000, he said. "We were forced into a position by the state where we can't sustain cash flow," he said. "We had no choice but to shut down, and it's completely heartbreaking." Michael Weston, a spokesman for the state Department of Social Services, confirmed that R House was being reimbursed under the old model. Related Stories [Major transition underway for children's group homes Foster care program desperately seeking families County works to move foster care to family homes](#) The program had not yet received certification as a short-term therapeutic facility, although it could have gotten a two-year extension to operate under the old model, he said. R House applied for certification as a short-term therapeutic facility on April 11, Weston said. It typically takes 60 to 90 days for the Department of Social Services to process an application, he said. On April 22, R House representatives notified the state they would be closing the program, he said. There is no retroactive reimbursement for group homes trying to convert to short-term therapeutic facilities, Weston said. Under the old group home model, R House relied heavily on referrals from the county probation department. Such referrals were court-ordered and kids had to stick with the program to complete their sentences. David Koch, Sonoma County's chief probation officer, said his department has been referring fewer kids to group homes for several years, even before the CCR changes. He said his department is using more intensive in-home support services that enable kids on probation to stay with their families But he said the most troubled kids will be left without a short-term therapeutic facility in the county. "I think it is unfortunate that R House is closing. For certain youth, they fill an important niche," Koch said. "Absent that being in the county, we'll have to look at resources outside the county." Takacs said there is very little that can be done to keep the program running, short of a half-million dollar donation. You can reach Staff Writer Martin Espinoza at 707-521-5213 or martin.espinoza@pressdemocrat.com. Source: <http://www.pressdemocrat.com/news/6936112-181/group-home-for-troubled-foster?article=0>

House honors Tribune's group home abuse series [Politics Caitlin Nordahl](#) | May 8, 2017 Tribune Tower, Chicago Rep. Charlie Meier (R-Okawville) and the Illinois House of Representatives formally congratulated the Chicago Tribune for its award-winning coverage of documented harm in state-funded group homes. "The three-part series published by the Chicago Tribune, which exposed the abuse and neglect that unfortunately occurred in group homes throughout the state, was in part due to the Murray Parents Association bringing their concerns to light," Meier said. "The story had to be told in order to further prevent these incidents of abuse and neglect from ever happening again." The Tribune won the 2016 Worth Bingham Prize for Investigative Journalism for the series. Told in three parts, "Suffering in Secret" exposes 1,311 cases of documented harm in group homes for the developmentally disabled, including at least 42 deaths connected to abuse or neglect, in the past six years. "This Worth Bingham Prize for Investigative Journalism will help ensure the story of abuse and neglect that occurred is not forgotten as it will be printed in newspapers throughout the country," said Meier. "I am hopeful this story will cause other states to reevaluate how they care for the developmentally disabled by making sure what happened in our state doesn't occur in their state." Source: <http://metroeastsun.com/stories/511109594-house-honors-tribune-s-group-home-abuse-series>

Plaintiffs receive 7-figure settlement in Milhous lawsuits, attorney says [Alan Riquelmy ariquelmy@theunion.com](#) May 7, 2017 Article Comments (0) Share Elias.Funez@theunion.com | A sign on the corner of Milhous Drive and Highway 49, signals the Mountain Valley Child and Family Services (formerly Milhous Children's Services), en... Elias.Funez@theunion.com | A sign on the corner of Milhous Drive and Highway 49, signals the Mountain Valley Child and Family Services (formerly Milhous Children's Services), en... Elias.Funez@theunion.com | Signs referencing the former Milhous Children's Services, now Mountain Valley Child and Family Services, warns passersby to keep out of the privately ... Elias.Funez@theunion.com | Signs referencing the former Milhous Children's Services, now Mountain Valley Child and Family Services, warns passersby to keep out of the privately ... [Prev](#) 1 of 4 images [Next](#) Milhous Children's Services has agreed to settle two civil lawsuits filed against it in the wake of a former employee's molestation conviction, with four plaintiffs receiving a seven-figure sum, their attorney said. The settlement amount, which isn't public record and wasn't disclosed by either party, was distributed between the unnamed plaintiffs, according to attorney Joseph George, the Sacramento attorney who represents them. "The clients feel satisfied that they received compensation which hopefully helps them get back on their feet and back on track," George said. The settlement money came from Milhous' insurance, George added. The lawsuits against Milhous — now named Mountain Valley Child and Family Services, Inc. — stem from allegations that a former employee molested children at the group home. That former employee, Jonathan Scott Foote, was arrested in February 2013 on accusations he inappropriately touched boys. He later pleaded no contest to five of 39 charges, and was sentenced in 2014 to 30 years to life in prison. Allegations The lawsuits, dismissed March 20, alleged Milhous staff members failed to report suspected child abuse, tried to conceal the allegations and allowed Foote to resign. The lawsuits also alleged negligent supervision and retention of an employee, negligent supervision of a minor, negligent failure to warn a minor, negligent failure to report suspected child abuse, intentional infliction of emotional distress and sexual battery. "Jonathan Scott Foote admitted to molesting children in our local community and at MCS 15 years ago," Dan Petrie, CEO of Milhous, said in an email. "He is alone at fault for his actions and is in prison. As one of over 5,000 employees over the past 49 years, whom we trusted to protect and serve children in our facility, he violated that trust by his own admission. As his former employer we have been held responsible for his actions at that time." Milhous houses boys who have a range of behavioral issues. It also meets a stringent group home classification standard allowing it to treat children at risk to hurt themselves or others, and who may have autism, PTSD and other disorders. Those children can be violent, suicidal and may have criminal histories, the Milhous website states. Funding Milhous receives most of its funding from contributions and grants, which include payments from county governments. Milhous Children's Services received \$10,357,275 in contributions and grants during the 2014-

15 fiscal year. Its total revenue for that time was \$11,846,542, documents state. Some of Milhous' revenue came from Nevada County. The county's Health and Human Services Agency has a contract with the group home for \$15,000 from July 1, 2014, through June 30. It has paid \$4,183.54 on that contract, said Alison Lehman, assistant CEO of Nevada County. Other counties that contract with Milhous include Lake County, which paid it \$440,000 between fiscal years 2011-12 and 2016-17, said Todd Metcalf, the county's behavioral health administrator. Sutter County has paid Milhous \$323,056.11 from February 2013 to the present, said Charles Smith, public information officer for that county. Alameda County paid \$232,230 between fiscal years 2015-16 and 2016-17, officials said. To contact Staff Writer Alan Riquelmy, email ariquelmy@theunion.com or call 530-477-4239. Source: <http://www.theunion.com/news/local-news/plaintiffs-receive-7-figure-settlement-in-milhous-lawsuits-attorney-says/>

After assaults, no new students at Hawthorne Cedar Knolls After assaults, no new students at Hawthorne Cedar Knolls [Christopher J. Eberhart and Colleen Wilson](#), The Journal News Published 7:09 p.m. ET May 9, 2017 | Updated 10:55 a.m. ET May 10, 2017 Hawthorne-Cedar Knolls is halting student intake just days after two runaways from the residential treatment center were arrested for allegedly robbing a woman at a train station. Video by Christopher J. Eberhart/lohud.com. Wochit Buy Photo A residential cottage at Hawthorne Cedar Knolls, a residential treatment center in Mount Pleasant. (Photo: File photo by Seth Harrison/The Journal News) Buy Photo 57 CONNECT [TWEET](#) [LINKEDIN](#) [COMMENT](#) [EMAIL](#) [MORE](#) VALHALLA — Hawthorne-Cedar Knolls is halting student intake just days after two runaways from the residential treatment center were arrested for allegedly robbing a woman at a train station. This week, the state Office of Children and Family Services ruled that the Hawthorne-Cedar Knolls RTC program will no longer accept students. The ruling takes effect immediately. The ruling affects the residential treatment center, which is run by the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services, a private organization, not the Hawthorne Cedar Knolls "special-act" school district. The OCFS said in a statement that the treatment center's intake will remain closed indefinitely and is overseeing a directive requiring the Jewish Board "to conduct a thorough review of the incident, assess whether the youth currently at the Hawthorne campus are appropriately placed, review its admission and intake protocols and staff supervision of youth." "The OCFS will continue to monitor the agency closely, including announced and unannounced compliance checks," the agency said in the statement. The ruling comes on the heels of Sunday evening's arrests of two Cedar Knolls runaways — 15 and 18 years old. Metropolitan Transportation Authority spokeswoman Nancy Gamerman said the teenagers allegedly mugged a woman and stole her purse and cellphone around 7:30 p.m. Sunday. Mount Pleasant and MTA police responded to the scene. Both teens were arrested and turned over to MTA police custody. Their names weren't released because of their ages, but Gamerman said both were charged with second-degree robbery and assault. She said the 15-year-old was issued an appearance ticket to show up at Family Court, and the other teen is in custody and awaiting arraignment in criminal court. She said the victim didn't sustain any injuries. Mount Pleasant police said on its Facebook page that both teenagers were runaways from the Hawthorne-Cedar Knolls RTC, which helps emotionally troubled teenagers. The Jewish Board said in an emailed statement that teenagers who live at Hawthorne-Cedar Knolls have suffered physical and sexual abuse, "severe" neglect and the loss of family and friends, "often under horrific circumstances." The Jewish Board said residents are there voluntarily, and state regulations prevent it from restraining anyone who leaves the site. The board says staff members typically follow runaways and try to convince them to come back. Teenagers in the treatment center have been arrested for violent outbursts in the facility and in the surrounding community in the last year, including a [large riot](#) and [an incident with makeshift flamethrowers and a fight](#) on consecutive days last May, a [slashing incident in June](#) and an attack of a local restaurant owner by four Cedar Knolls residents who refused to pay a bill last month. **EDITORIAL: Mount Pleasant, troubled youth centers seek accord: Stern NEWS: Residential centers may boost security** Mount Pleasant Police Chief Paul Oliva said in June that police had responded to a total of 1,504 calls — 827 at Hawthorne-Cedar Knolls and 677 at the Pleasantville Cottage School — from May 2015 to May 2016. Source: <http://www.lohud.com/story/news/crime/2017/05/09/hawthorne-cedar-knolls-no-longer-taking-students-following-assaults/314923001/>

Former Head of Corrupt Portland Foster Care Provider Indicted on Federal Charges Mary Holden arrested in Mississippi; now faces extradition to Oregon for misuse of funds meant for needy children. Mary Holden and her Lake Oswego home. [By Nigel Jaquiss](#) | May 10 at 1:40 PM U.S. Attorney for Oregon Billy Williams today unsealed an [indictment](#) of Mary Holden Ayala, the former executive director of the now-defunct foster care provider Give Us This Day. The charges against Holden (as she is known in Portland) include a slew of felonies: five counts of theft; five counts of filing a false tax return one count of money laundering; two counts of engaging in monetary transactions in criminally derived property; failing to file a tax return; and, money laundering. Holden's agency received about \$1.5 million a year from the Oregon Department of Human Services to take care of some of the state's neediest foster children. Because much of that money originally came from the federal government, charges against her will play out in federal, rather than state, court. She was arrested by FBI agents Tuesday in Holly Springs, Miss. and will face charges in U.S. District Court in Portland. [WW first brought Holden's actions to public attention with a 2015 cover story](#). The story explained that although she ran one of the state's largest and oldest foster care nonprofits and received premiums for accepting hard-to-place children, Holden was chronically short of money to pay for children's basic needs, including food, toilet paper and sanitary supplies; that she regularly failed to pay employees; and that although her organization had been given valuable properties by Multnomah County, she was in danger of losing property to foreclosure. [An Oregon Department of Justice investigation found that Holden had diverted as much as two million dollars for personal use](#), including trips to the Caribbean and numerous casinos; shopping sprees luxury stores and to the renovation of her West Linn home; her mortgage payments and the purchase of property unrelated to child welfare. While children in her care went hungry, she spent at least \$20,000 at "nail salons, beauty supply stores, medical spas, and a cosmetic surgery clinic," and another \$25,000 at "luxury retail stores including but not limited to Louis Vuitton, Ferragamo, Michael Kors, Coach, and Nordstrom." The federal indictment pegs the amount she diverted to personal use at \$800,000—a number that is probably conservative. Perhaps the most troubling part of Holden's story is that officials at the Oregon Department of Human Services knew for years that Give Us This Day was failing to serve the vulnerable children placed in its care and that the organization's financial troubles were just a symptom of [far bigger problems](#). [After WW published DHS emails showing that officials had turned a blind eye to obvious problems at the foster care provider](#), Gov. Kate Brown fired top agency officials and lawmakers passed legislation aimed at holding DHS and providers more accountable for their supervision of foster children. The indictment shows that long after Holden's activities became public, she continued her alleged crimes. In particular, in September 2016, Holden allegedly sold a piece of property at 4128 NE Martin Luther King Jr., Blvd., for \$800,000. She'd bought the property in 2012, the indictment says, for \$300,000, nearly half of which was diverted from funds intended for the welfare of children in Give Us This Day's custody. Holden's West Linn Home—partially purchase and subsequently remodeled with money meant for foster children, the indictment alleges—[was foreclosed upon in 2015](#) but in addition to penalties including possible prison time, the indictment seeks the forfeiture of any remaining assets Holden acquired improperly. Holden is in custody in Mississippi and could not be reached for comment. The U.S. Attorney's office declined comment. Source: <http://www.wweek.com/news/2017/05/10/former-head-of-corrupt-portland-foster-care-provider-indicted-on-federal-charges/>

Ex-group home counselor charged with sex trafficking | Updated: 8:48 PM EDT May 10, 2017 Cranston Police Ex-group home counselor charged with sex trafficking | Updated: 8:48 PM EDT May 10, 2017 Share Copy Link {copyShortcut} to copy Link copied! PROVIDENCE, R.I. — A former group home counselor and another man are charged with trafficking a 17-year-old girl at hotels in Rhode Island, New York and Massachusetts. Advertisement A federal grand jury this week indicted 27-year-old Reysean "Sincere" Williams, of Pawtucket, and 18-year-old Providence resident Leandro "Leo" Gomes on multiple sex trafficking charges. Prosecutors allege the duo trafficked the victim at hotels in Warwick, Rhode Island; Queens, New York; and locations in Massachusetts in March. The Providence Journal reports that Williams had worked at the Blackstone Valley Youth and Family Collaborative in Pawtucket but was fired. Prosecutors allege Williams recruited Gomes into the scheme at a group home. Gomes' lawyer says his client had a troubled family life. Williams' attorney described his client as a family man and suggested the victim was a co-conspirator. Source: <http://www.wcvb.com/article/ex-group-home-counselor-charged-with-sex-trafficking/9634628>

Group homes for people with a disability must be phased out to prevent abuse, academics say By the National Reporting Team's [Alison Branley](#) Posted Wed at 1:23pm Wed 17 May 2017, 1:23pm Media player: "Space" to play, "M" to mute, "left" and "right" to seek. Australian Broadcasting Corporation ... 00:00 00:00 00:00 [Video: Open letter calls for royal commission into treatment of people with disabilities \(Lateline\) Related Story: Group home 'hell': Open letter calls for inquiry into abuse of people with disabilities Related Story: Royal commission into alleged abuse of people with disabilities ditched Map: Australia](#) There are growing calls to phase out the practice of placing people with a disability together in group homes amid growing reports of neglect and abuse. Key points: More than 100 academics have published an open letter calling for a royal commission into abuse at the homes Industrial designer says NDIS offers opportunity to go beyond group housing model The Government maintains its new NDIS "quality framework" will protect people More than [100](#)

[academics have published an open letter](#) calling on Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull to hold a royal commission into [abuses and neglect in the homes](#). They say the residences have become the location for similar abuses of the past, and some have said it is time to move to new housing models. Among those is a former support worker, who only wants to be known as Catherine, who worked in the Hunter Valley for more than a decade. "I saw people with disability being abused by staff," she told the ABC. "I saw staff playing mind games with people with Down syndrome, I saw staff giving people with disabilities cold showers. I saw one person with a disability having to change another urinated client and the staff member hid in his office." What Catherine witnessed took such a toll that she herself ended up in a mental health unit. "I couldn't handle it. I've been put on anti-psychotics and anti-depressants," she said. Catherine said the problems were not just limited to one provider. "I think it's across the board," she said. Do you know more about this story? Email investigations@abc.net.au Philippa Carnemolla, an industrial designer at the University of Technology Sydney, said the National Disability Insurance Scheme was an opportunity to go a step beyond the group home model. [Photo: Philippa Carnemolla proposes alternative living arrangements for people with a disability. \(Supplied\)](#) "A group home might be four bedrooms or even five people in this mixed-tenure model," she said. "I'm looking at much smaller individualised apartments." Dr Carnemolla said new designs included people living by themselves or with one other person and being monitored by support workers through sensor technology. "So, for example, we might know if a person who normally received support is in the bathroom, we might be alerted to that," she said. "So there's ways of supporting people without someone having to be there all the time." No-one understands why nothing is being done: expert Specialist academics in fields ranging from sociology to criminology want Mr Turnbull to reconsider his decision not to hold a royal commission. [Photo: Claire Spivakovsky says a royal commission is the only way to thoroughly address abuse against people with a disability. \(Supplied\)](#) A 2015 [Senate inquiry made a key recommendation that there be a royal commission](#) to delve into many allegations of abuse the inquiry received. Criminologist Dr Claire Spivakovsky from Monash University is among the academics to sign the open letter. "I think the average person's at home response [to reports of abuse] has generally been outrage," she said. But she said no-one understood why nothing was being done. "What so many of us have seen through our own research in this space is people with a disability experience higher rates of violence, abuse and neglect," she said. "What the reports are saying is people are being subjected to range of different abuses... people essentially having their bodies controlled by other people." Dr Spivakovsky said it was incredibly difficult to find out what was really going on in a group home because of the limitations of residents and culture of silence. [Locked away in suburbia A hundred years ago people with an intellectual disability were locked up in "lunatic asylums". Today they're still locked away, but it's just behind the walls of suburbia, writes Alison Branley.](#) "A royal commission is one of the only things we have that is actually possible to go in and do some substantial investigations, to actually go in and visit institutional environments and refer criminal matters to the police," she said. The [Government maintains its new NDIS "quality framework" will protect people](#) in the future. In a statement, a Federal Government spokesperson said last week's budget included \$209 million to establish a new independent body, the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, to implement the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Framework. "The establishment of the commission from next year forms the basis of the Government's response to the senate committee inquiry into violence, abuse and neglect against people with disability in institutional and residential settings," the spokesperson said. "The Government has agreed or noted 29 of the 30 recommendations of the committee's report. "Rather than proceeding with another inquiry through a royal commission, the Government is focused on establishing the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and implementing the framework, which will address many of the issues raised by the committee." Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-05-18/group-homes-for-people-with-disability-must-be-phased-out/8534506>

Is Charter School Fraud the Next Enron? Thursday, May 25, 2017 By [Preston Green III, The Conversation](#) | News Analysis font size [decrease font size](#) [increase font size](#) [Print](#) In 2001, Texas-based energy giant Enron shocked the world by declaring bankruptcy. Thousands of employees lost their jobs, and investors [lost billions](#). As a [scholar](#) who studies the legal and policy issues pertaining to school choice, I've observed that the same type of fraud that occurred at Enron has been cropping up in the [charter school sector](#). A handful of school officials have been caught [using the Enron playbook](#) to divert funding slated for these schools into their own pockets. As school choice champions like [Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos](#) push to make charter schools a larger part of the educational landscape, it's important to understand the Enron scandal and how charter schools are vulnerable to similar schemes. What Is a Related-Party Transaction? Enron's downfall was caused largely by something called "related-party transactions." Understanding this concept is crucial for grasping how charter schools may also be in danger. Related-party transactions are business arrangements between companies [with close associations](#). It could be between two companies owned or managed by the same group or it could be between one large company and a smaller company that it owns. Although related-party transactions are legal, they can create severe conflicts of interest, allowing those in power to profit from employees, investors and even taxpayers. This is what happened at Enron. Because Enron wanted to look good to investors, the company created thousands of "special purpose entities" to hide its debt. Because of these off-the-books partnerships, Enron was able to [artificially boost its profits](#), thus tricking investors. Enron's Chief Financial Officer [Andrew Fastow](#) managed several of these special purpose entities, benefiting from his position of power at the expense of the company's shareholders. For instance, these companies paid him US\$30 million in management fees -- [far more than his Enron salary](#). Fastow also conspired with other Enron employees to pocket another \$30 million from one of these entities, and he moved \$4.5 million from this scheme [into his family foundation](#). Enron's collapse revealed the weaknesses of the gatekeepers -- including boards of directors and the [Securities and Exchange Commission](#) -- that are responsible for protecting the markets. Because of lax accountability and federal deregulation, these watchdogs failed to detect the dangers posed by Fastow's conflict of interest until it was [too late](#). Congress responded by passing the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, which [tightened the requirements for oversight](#). How Do Related-Party Transactions Occur in Charter Schools? Forty-four states and the District of Columbia have [legislation that allows for charter schools](#). Just like public schools, charter schools receive public funding. However, unlike public schools, charter schools are [exempt from many laws governing financial transparency](#). Without strict regulation, some bad actors have been able to take advantage of charter schools as an opportunity for private investment. In the worst cases, individuals have been able to use related-party transactions to fraudulently funnel public money intended for charter schools into other business ventures that they control. Such was the case with [Ivy Academia](#), a Los Angeles-area charter school. The co-founders, Yevgeny Selivanov and Tatayana Berkovich, also owned a private preschool that shared facilities with the charter school. The preschool entered into a sublease for the facilities at a monthly rent of \$18,390 -- the fair-market value. The preschool then assigned the sublease to the charter school at a monthly rent of \$43,870. The Los Angeles district attorney's office charged the husband-and-wife team with [multiple counts of fraud](#). Selivanov was sentenced to nearly [five years in jail](#) in 2013. Fraudulent related-party transactions can also occur between education management organizations (EMOs) and their affiliates. [EMOs](#) are for-profit or nonprofit entities that sometimes manage charter schools, and might also own smaller companies that could provide services to those schools. For example, Imagine Schools is a nonprofit EMO that runs [63 charter schools enrolling 33,000 students](#) across the country. It also owns SchoolHouse Finance, a for-profit company that, among other things, handles real estate for many of Imagine's charter schools. Though charter schools typically spend around 14 percent of their funding on rent, some of the Imagine Schools were paying SchoolHouse Finance up to [40 percent of their funding](#) for rent. One of the charter schools operated by Imagine Schools, Renaissance Academy in Kansas City, sued the company for charging it excessive rent. In 2015, a federal judge agreed, ordering Imagine Schools to pay almost [\\$1 million in damages](#) to Renaissance. The court's ruling suggested that Imagine Schools was essentially taking advantage of the charter school: The EMO profited from the excessive rent and failed to tell the school's board of directors how the cost might disrupt the school's ability to pay for textbooks and teacher salaries. The Problem Could Get Worse Because of insufficient oversight, Fastow's fraudulent use of related-party transactions at Enron was not stopped until it was too late. Similarly, the Ivy Academia and Renaissance Academy examples reveal insufficient checks and balances in the charter school sector. In both cases, the monitors responsible for protecting charter schools found nothing wrong with the rental agreements. It might be tempting to conclude that Ivy Academia and Renaissance Academy stories are anecdotal -- that fear of widespread abuse of related-party transactions is overblown. However, there have been dozens of [allegations](#) of similar transgressions, including against industry giants such as [K12 Inc.](#) and [Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School](#). Though only a handful of these allegations have resulted in the [removal of the charter school operators](#), related-party fraud in the charter school sector is an emerging issue. In September 2016, the Education Department's inspector general released the findings of an audit of several dozen charter schools detailing [significant problems with related-party transactions](#). The report also made several recommendations for additional oversight. Such protection could come at the state level (e.g., providing guidance to states regarding charter school contractual agreements with EMOs) or at the federal level (e.g., improving the Department's own monitoring of charter school-EMO relationships). However, Trump has generally expressed a [dislike of federal regulations](#), and DeVos, who played a major role in the development of Michigan's charter school law, has [successfully fought attempts to increase oversight](#) of Michigan's charter school sector. With such anti-regulatory stances, it seems unlikely that Trump or DeVos will support the kind of oversight that's needed to protect charter schools. This aversion to regulation at the federal level could

group care. But The Chronicle's exposure of hundreds of arrests of foster youth for low-level offenses troubled some who led the reform. State Assemblyman Mark Stone, D-Santa Cruz, authored the 2015 legislation to reconfigure the state's foster care system to rely more on emergency family homes and relatives, scaling back group homes and limiting children's stays in shelters to just 10 days. Already three shelters have closed, or plan to close, by year's end. But new legislation may soon be in order "if shelters do not respond to the problems revealed in the report," Stone said. "Now we need to be looking at the shelters with a critical eye. Their interactions with children have to be different — and if they are not, then that's an alarm and we are going to have to step in." Children in most California counties who enter the foster care system do not go to shelters. Instead, they are placed in emergency foster homes or with relatives, or they spend just a few days in an assessment center where emotional blowups are less likely to be considered crimes. "One answer to this problem is to close the shelters," said Patrick Tondreau, presiding judge of the Santa Clara County Juvenile Court, who chairs a statewide task force studying foster youth who cross over into the juvenile justice system. Tondreau's county shut down its shelter more than a decade ago, in part due to the excessive calls to law enforcement. "Every effort needs to be made by everyone at all levels not to transition these kids to a delinquency system," Tondreau said. "They have been seriously traumatized, and it is natural for them to react with anger. Using law enforcement in most of these situations is taking the lazy way out." Reaction to The Chronicle's findings was swift in San Joaquin County where more than half the juvenile hall bookings originated. Last week, shortly after being informed of the newspaper's findings, Mary Graham shelter director Gary Gunderson announced he was going on medical leave. Gunderson and other county officials did not respond to repeated requests for additional information regarding the leave, including when it began, how long it was expected to last and who would take over in the interim. Vickie Delph, the San Joaquin County assistant deputy public defender, said The Chronicle's findings confirmed long-held concerns within her office, which represents children and parents in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. Meanwhile, other county officials announced their own plans to make change: San Joaquin County Supervisor Miguel Villapudua, whose district includes Mary Graham, said in a statement that he would be initiating a review of the incidents that led to arrest, as well as the facility's policies. And the county Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission plans to interview law enforcement and Mary Graham officials about the number of sheriff contacts and arrests at the children's shelter. Some youth advocates and former foster youth demanded that Mary Graham be closed. Michael Provencio, 30, stayed at Mary Graham multiple times in the late 1990s and early 2000s. While there, he said he saw children hauled off to juvenile hall, including a girl who wrapped a towel around her hand and broke several windows and another child who started a fight by throwing a pencil at someone. Provencio now works as a youth coordinator at Fathers and Families of San Joaquin, a local organization serving low-income communities. He and his wife adopted their son several years ago, in part to keep him from the turmoil that Provencio had known in the foster care system. Provencio said he was outraged to learn that more than a decade after he stayed at Mary Graham, the shelter was still relying on law enforcement to handle seemingly minor incidents. "The people in positions of power aren't doing anything. We shouldn't even have a children's shelter," he said. "All of these calls to law enforcement, and all of these kids. It just breaks my heart." Karen de Sá, Joaquin Palomino and Cynthia Dizikes are staff writers on The San Francisco Chronicle's Investigative Team. Email: kdesa@sfchronicle.com, jpalomino@sfchronicle.com, cdizikes@sfchronicle.com; Twitter: [@JoaquinPalomino](https://twitter.com/JoaquinPalomino), [@cdizikes](https://twitter.com/cdizikes) Source: <http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Chronicle-investigation-spurs-calls-to-close-11165519.php>

Wisconsin's Youth Prison Hit With Another Lawsuit A 17-year-old boy who was an inmate at Wisconsin's embattled youth prison is suing the facility, alleging he suffered substantial physical and emotional abuse during his time there. | May 23, 2017, at 5:22 p.m. [MORE](#) [LinkedIn](#) [StumbleUpon](#) [Google +](#) [Cancel](#) Wisconsin's Youth Prison Hit With Another Lawsuit Share × [Share on Facebook](#) [Post on Twitter](#) [Post to Reddit](#) [Email](#) [Share in LinkedIn](#) [Share on StumbleUpon](#) [Share on Google Plus](#) MADISON, Wis. (AP) — A 17-year-old boy who was an inmate at Wisconsin's embattled youth prison is suing the facility, alleging he suffered substantial physical and emotional abuse while there. The Wisconsin State Journal reported Tuesday (<http://bit.ly/2rRj0mR>) that the boy's lawsuit filed this month alleges he was body slammed, pepper sprayed so much that he has permanent vision damage and kept in solitary confinement for weeks at Lincoln Hills in Irma. Conditions at the facility are already under federal investigation. Another lawsuit filed earlier this year by several former inmates alleges an overuse of solitary confinement and pepper spray there. Wisconsin Department of Corrections officials named as defendants in the boy's lawsuit began limiting the use of solitary confinement months ago. DOC spokesman Tristan Cook didn't immediately respond to a message. Source: <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/wisconsin/articles/2017-05-23/wisconsins-youth-prison-hit-with-another-lawsuit>

Married couple — both foster care executives — sentenced for embezzling public funds [Sarah Parvini](#) [Contact Reporter](#) A couple has been sentenced for misappropriating public funds for a group of foster homes they ran, according to the Los Angeles County district attorney's office. CSJ Kidogo, 76, was sentenced to 180 days in county jail on Wednesday and placed on five years of formal probation. His wife, Hitaji Kidogo, 65, was sentenced to three years of summary probation, the district attorney's office said. The pair paid \$109,093 in restitution and were ordered to stop running foster homes. CSJ Kidogo pleaded guilty to one felony count of misappropriation of public money in September 2015, authorities said. He is the former executive director of Little People's World Inc. His wife, the company's former assistant executive director, pleaded guilty to one misdemeanor count of embezzlement. Little People's World ran four group homes that provided foster care to more than two dozen children in Los Angeles County. A county audit revealed that CSJ Kidogo borrowed money marked for foster care to buy real estate for himself. He also used that money to pay mortgages on properties not used for the foster care program, the district attorney's office said. Source: <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-foster-care-20170525-story.html>

Baby Fold to close residential treatment center [Paul Swiech](#) pswiech@pantagraph.com [Paul Swiech](#) 5 hrs ago [5](#) +2 [Buy Now](#) Schultz +2 [Buy Now](#) Beam [Buy Now](#) THE BABY FOLD, For The Pantagraph The Baby Fold agency is shown at 612 Oglesby Ave., Normal. prev next NORMAL — Responding to nearly two years without a state budget, The Baby Fold will discontinue residential treatment center services, the Normal-based human services agency announced Thursday. The program, which was [reduced from serving 28 children to 14 children in 2015](#), will cease operations June 30. Including all its programs, Baby Fold serves more than 1,000 vulnerable children and families. "We will be working diligently to arrange new placements for the children over the next 30 to 60 days so they can be well-settled prior to the next school year," Baby Fold President and CEO Dianne Schultz said in a prepared statement. "I am saddened by the circumstances surrounding the state budget impasse that have made this decision necessary," Schultz said. Growth in other programs may allow some residential treatment center staff members to be absorbed into 14 open positions throughout the agency. But the cut has the potential to impact 27 full-time and 16 part-time staff members from Baby Fold's workforce of 248 people. "The State of Illinois has neglected to invest what is necessary to pay providers who offer this type of specialized, intensive treatment for children in residential care," Schultz said. The residential treatment center is for children who have been removed from their homes because of trauma, abuse or neglect and have significant mental health issues. The program in Normal is believed to be the only one of its kind in Central Illinois. When the reduction was made in 2015, some children returned to their biological families and some moved to foster care after they completed their treatment. "Rates paid to The Baby Fold for these services have not increased in over 10 years. Even after downsizing this program, the agency has been forced to subsidize \$1.6 million over the last two years to compensate for the lack of appropriate funding. Additionally the budget impasse has created an atmosphere of uncertainty about the funding available for residential services in the future," Schultz said. [Meanwhile, an expansion of Hammitt School — announced in April](#) in response to growing community needs to serve children with cognitive and learning disorders, including autism — will go forward as planned. "The remodeling of the building at 612 Oglesby in Normal will begin in June," said Aimee Beam, Baby Fold vice president of development and public relations. Baby Fold hopes that the Hammitt School expansion will be complete in August 2018. Source: http://www.pantagraph.com/news/local/baby-fold-to-close-residential-treatment-center/article_ebdac8fc-622b-5ace-9158-6725186b0b2c.html

Foster care shift: Colorado kids removed from homes now more likely to live with relatives than in group setting Some worry the shift was too abrupt for community-based programs to keep up. SRJ Sangosti, The Denver Post High school science teacher Ty McVicker gives a student a high-five during class at Griffith Centers for Children on May 19, 2017 in Colorado Springs. Griffith Centers for Children teaches students who were truant or had behavior problems so bad that many were kicked out of public school. By [Jennifer Brown](#) | jbrown@denverpost.com | The Denver Post PUBLISHED: May 24, 2017 at 3:24 pm | UPDATED: May 24, 2017 at 3:52 pm Colorado once sent more foster children to austere and clinical residential centers than it did to the homes of relatives, institutionalizing more than 1,000 of the most challenging wards of the state each year. That has shifted dramatically over the past decade, a transition so swift and stark that more than 20 residential treatment centers in Colorado have closed. Calm, nurturing homes are better for kids, say child advocates and government officials. The downside, though, is that children with more acute needs — those who in the past would have gone to treatment centers with round-the-clock paid staff — now are going to foster parents and relatives who in some cases are overwhelmed. And although nonprofits that once operated residential centers are embarking on new business models to bring therapy to kids in their homes, some worry the shift was too abrupt for community-based programs to keep up and

say funding for the new programs is inadequate. Colorado tallied 1,483 child welfare placements in residential treatment centers in 2003, a number that dropped to 526 by 2016, according to data gathered by the Colorado Association of Family and Children's Agencies and presented to state lawmakers in March. At the same time, the number of placements with relatives, called "kinship" placements, rose from 1,308 to 2,401. Colorado's goal is to reduce its percentage of kids sent to "congregate care" — which includes residential centers and group homes — to less than 15 percent of the total 4,880 kids who spent time in out-of-home placements last year. That percentage has dropped from 24 percent in 2012 to 17.8 percent last year — specifically, from 1,109 kids to 870 — according to state Department of Human Services data. "We know that congregate care is not where children need to grow up," said Paige Rosemond, associate director of programs for the state Division of Child Welfare. Residential treatment centers for children began their boom in the 1990s, after Colorado closed hundreds of psychiatric beds for children across the state. Children with severe mental illness who would have used those beds began filling up residential treatment centers, at high cost to state and county child welfare departments. Then the state changed its payment policy, forcing counties to foot a higher portion of the cost of residential care. At the same time, research piled on, concluding that children were better off in family environments. Children placed in congregate care are almost three times as likely to have a mental disorder and six times more likely to have been removed from a home because of a "behavior problem," according to a report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Griffith Centers for Children is among the agencies that shut down residential treatment centers in recent years in Colorado. The nonprofit has closed 280 beds in Larkspur, Rifle and Grand Junction since 2010. Griffith now has just 37 beds in Colorado Springs. Griffith instead has opened new programs to bring therapy to 1,500 families, including programs to help at-risk youths who have skipped enough school to trigger action by child protection caseworkers. Youths with the most severe problems still require residential care, but their stays are shorter than they once were. RJ Sangosti, The Denver Post A student reads during english class at Griffith Centers for Children, that teaches students who were truant or had behavior problems so bad that many were kicked out of public school, on May 19, 2017 in Colorado Springs. Because many of the students are wards of the state they could not be identified in the photos. Marley Day, an eighth-grader who attended school only a handful of days in two years, is among the more than 500 kids who will spend time in Colorado residential treatment centers this year. His mother dropped him off about a month ago at Griffith's residential center in Colorado Springs, where he has no choice but to wake up at 6:45 a.m., eat breakfast at 7:15 and get to an on-campus classroom by 7:45. "He's doing something now," said Marley's mother, Gigi, who once tried, unsuccessfully, to get him to school by dragging him by his sweatshirt hood. Related Articles May 24, 2017 [4 children died in accidental shooting deaths in Colorado between 2014-2016](#) May 23, 2017 [Ask Amy: Unhealthy nutrition early in life might mean problems later](#) May 21, 2017 [Fidget spinners, the hit toy that spun out of nowhere](#) May 18, 2017 [Marijuana sending more teenagers to the emergency room, Children's Hospital doctor finds](#) May 14, 2017 [With sleek new kids-only helicopter, Children's Hospital and Flight For Life are transforming Colorado air transport](#) Three years ago, most of the 40 students at Griffith's school lived in the next-door residential treatment center. That number has dropped to half. And to help them return to public school sooner, Griffith in August started a program that assigns each student a long-term therapist to help with the transition. Another agency that closed its residential center is Excelsior, which ran a "last resort" facility in Aurora for adolescent girls, a place for teens who typically had already been through numerous foster homes and had run away more than once. The 33-acre campus, with 250 girls in living quarters and an on-site school, closed in August. Instead, Excelsior began offering in-home mental health therapy for youths and took on an early-childhood program that teaches struggling parents how to bond with their kids, from infants to 6-year-olds, before they are removed from their homes. The nonprofit receives state money to work with people who are court-ordered or required by child welfare departments to take parenting classes. Excelsior's staff has dropped to 60 from 150 a year ago, marking the hardest part of its transition from residential care to child abuse prevention, said Nicole Bennett, communications manager. The increase in community-based services, therapies and help that come straight into the home where a child is living, whether with their parents or a foster family, is especially helpful for kids who didn't belong in residential care facilities, she said. "Some, frankly, got worse, because they were surrounded by peers with bigger issues," Bennett said. Other youths would improve at Excelsior, only to return home to the same situation and then regress, she said. "In residential treatment, you get only glimpses of success," she said. "These kids are very damaged, and it takes a long time for them to change. We are still here and we are doing great things. It's just different now." Mount Saint Vincent, a home in Denver for children with severe behavioral issues who have often lived in several foster homes, began taking children from other states in 2015 to fill beds left vacant by Colorado's policy shift. Despite adding kids from California, Wyoming and Idaho, the average number of kids living at Mount Saint Vincent on any given day has dropped from almost 30 in 2012 to 21 this year. Mount Saint Vincent has taken on a foster care recruitment program, setting up information booths at churches, community events and large companies in the hopes of finding families willing to take kids who are ready to leave residential care. Mount Saint Vincent staff train and certify new foster parents, then collect an administrative fee from county human services departments, although the business model is not a moneymaker, said Kirk Ward, executive director of the northwest Denver home that was once an orphanage. Ward agrees that kids who are ready are better off in homes than a treatment center. Instead of focusing on meeting a target number of kids in residential treatment, including the 15 percent set by the state or a goal of removing kids from residential treatment by the three-month mark, child welfare officials should decide what's best for each child, he said. "The system is so overburdened and doesn't have the resources it requires to take care of all these kids. Sometimes that gets lost," he said. Fewer residential treatment beds, combined with dwindling psychiatric beds in the state, move kids with more acute mental health needs further down the chain of care. "It just pushes it down all the way to foster parents," Ward said. In response, Colorado has developed "treatment foster care," a level between a group home and a foster home. Treatment foster families receive extra training and are linked with a "wrap-around" team to help with counseling and other in-home therapies. A "warm, soothing setting," where a parent or foster parent can respond to behavior and there is less feedback from peers, helps kids learn to self-regulate their emotions, said Camille Harding, division director of community behavioral health at the state Department of Human Services. "Ideally, a kid might go into a treatment center for a short time but then go back into a lower level of care with lots of supports around them," she said. RJ Sangosti, The Denver Post Math teacher Heilleen Klos radios for an a student to be escorted to the restroom at Griffith Centers for Children, that teaches students who were truant or had behavior problems, so bad that many were kicked out of public school, on May 19, 2017 in Colorado Springs. Because many of the students are wards of the state they could not be identified in the photos. State reimbursement rates to the agencies providing community programs to at-risk youths are "critically low," so low they are "jeopardizing the well-being of Colorado foster (youths)," said Skip Barber, former director of Denver Children's Home and now head of the Colorado Association of Family and Children's Services. Agencies that provide the programs are struggling to hire and retain staff at a time when they are helping children with more acute needs, he said. Kids who don't need a residential treatment center shouldn't live in one, but at the same time, child protection officials shouldn't send kids who aren't ready to live in a family home to foster parents or relatives, Barber said. The system "burns out" foster families. "We put kids in their home and there is no way they can manage them," he said. "The trick is getting right service at the right time for the right kid. That's where we are still struggling." Source: <http://www.denverpost.com/2017/05/24/colorado-foster-care-shift/>

Bench warrant is issued for ex-Potty Boot Camp operator Rebecca Stapp, 42, was last known to be living on Oahu [Local News](#) May 25, 2017 Rebecca Stapp The Maui News A \$20,000 bench warrant was issued for a woman who didn't show up in 2nd Circuit Court on Monday for her trial on a charge alleging she assaulted a toddler in her potty-training "boot camp" four years ago. Rebecca Stapp, 42, who was last known to be living on Oahu, hadn't had contact since early March with the Oahu Intake Service Center, which was supervising her, according to court documents. Another bench warrant for \$10,000 was issued for her on April 7 alleging she violated her bail conditions by not staying in contact with the service center. On March 3, Stapp informed the Oahu center that she planned to return to Maui but hadn't had contact with either the Oahu or Maui offices since then, according to an affidavit filed in court. Stapp has pleaded not guilty to a charge of third-degree assault of a boy who was dropped off for her Potty Boot Camp training at her rented Wailuku residence on May 1, 2013. In a separate trial, Stapp was found guilty of third-degree assault of another toddler, a 17-month-old Paia boy, on the same day at the same daylong potty-training session. Wailuku District Judge Kelsey Kawano found that Stapp had used "substantial force" to hold down the child, who had bruises on his inner thighs, groin, chest and back. In September 2015, Stapp was sentenced to a three-month jail term as part of one year's probation. The jail sentence was delayed while she appealed. On Dec. 23, the state Intermediate Court of Appeals affirmed the conviction. Stapp sought a review by the state Supreme Court, which rejected the request Feb. 28. Three days later, Deputy Prosecutor Justine Hura filed a motion to have Stapp serve the jail term. She hasn't shown up to serve the jail term. Court records show Stapp also is being sought on an \$11,000 bench warrant issued May 8 when she didn't show up for a hearing in 1st Circuit Court on Oahu. She was charged with second-degree theft in a Jan. 28, 2016, incident, according to court records. At the May 8 hearing, Stapp's attorney said she was receiving mental health treatment on the Mainland, according to court records. In issuing the warrant, the court noted Stapp hadn't reported when she would return and didn't have permission to leave the state. Her \$2,000 bail in that case was forfeited. Source: <http://www.mauinews.com/news/local-news/2017/05/bench-warrant-is-issued-for-ex-potty-boot-camp-operator/>

Woman sentenced for stealing from Kansas group home charges By - Associated Press - Thursday, June 1, 2017 LAWRENCE, Kan. (AP) - A woman has been sentenced to 11 months in prison for stealing from children under her care at a Lawrence group home. The Lawrence Journal-World (<http://bit.ly/2rgW6b0>) reports that 37-year-old Jennifer Silva Guerrero, of Lawrence, also will serve 18 months of probation after she is released from prison and must pay nearly \$8,000 in restitution to at least nine of her victims. If she violates the terms of her probation, Guerrero will have to serve more than four years in prison. Douglas County District Attorney spokeswoman Cheryl Wright Kunard says Guerrero was recently convicted of three felony theft charges, two felony forgery charges and one felony charge of making false information. The thefts occurred in 2015 and 2016 at The Villages group home, where she also lived before being fired. Source: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/jun/1/woman-sentenced-for-stealing-from-kansas-group-home/>

Who cares when children are taken from home to foster home – and abused? June 3, 2017 by Michelle Chan Our children are our future. We must nurture them, protect them, give them the tools necessary to survive in this harsh and unforgiving world. What if I told you that the very system designated to care for and safeguard abused and neglected children is in gross and willful negligence of its role as “protector of innocence?” Shafari Harris and Lillian “Monique” Williams are strong and brave sisters who survived severe abuse at home and in foster care. Why would Child Protective Services, or CPS, remove children from parental custody that have not been abused or neglected? The answer is simple and incredibly sad: financial incentives. For Title IV-E federal funding alone, San Francisco gets roughly \$1.5 billion per year. This is in addition to Title IV-D federal funding and funding from the Fostering Connections to Success Act, which incentivizes adoption. There are strict terms and conditions intended to protect children from unnecessary removals and to protect the American taxpayers from fraud. However, there is hardly any oversight or enforcement of the state and federal guidelines and laws designed to ensure that children’s rights are upheld. Further impacting the abuses are the rules of confidentiality that serve to shield CPS and dependency courts from scrutiny. Children who have been legitimately removed from bad situations often have histories of chronic and complex trauma that contribute to adverse mental health outcomes. Further complicating their emotional and mental well-being is the devastating sense of loss and loneliness all children – even those who have been abused and neglected – feel when being separated from their families. For these reasons, the transition into foster care is never easy. Consider, then, that many children entering into foster care are re-traumatized: abused and neglected by the very people who are supposedly “saving” them? According to the Children’s Bureau, somewhere around 1 percent of foster children nationwide are abused in foster care. However, these numbers are self-reported by child welfare agencies and the statistic is so incredibly low it is evidence of gross underreporting or non-existent reporting. Actual accounts from former foster youth tell a drastically different story. The transition into foster care is never easy. Consider, then, that many children entering into foster care are re-traumatized: abused and neglected by the very people who are supposedly “saving” them? Lillian “Monique” Williams and Shafari Harris, born four years apart, are sisters and victims of the foster care system. The circumstances leading up to their removals represent traumas children never should endure. What happened after CPS intervention was even worse. The sisters’ mother was a drug addict with criminal inclinations. The older sister, Shafari, landed in foster care after a series of unfortunate events following their mother’s arrest for shoplifting. Lillian remained in their mother’s custody only to be poly-victimized years later. For three days straight, Lillian watched as her mother’s boyfriend continuously beat her mother. He took regular breaks to molest Lillian, who was 11 years old at the time. Lillian recalls with vivid accuracy being called to the principal’s office. She remembers walking down the hall in fear, certain she had done something naughty. When the principal reached out to her, with the sincerest intentions, Lillian truly believed things would get better. She was wrong. After spending two years in a home with foster parents who made no efforts to comfort or love her – this girl who had arrived in their lives damaged from the molestation, abuse and domestic violence – Lillian was gangraped at knifepoint by a local turf-crew at the age of 13. “I thought it was all over for me,” she said. “Like my horrible life was coming to a horrible end. I felt like a nothing, a nobody, a disgusting piece of trash that could be thrown out at any time.” The foster parents did nothing to defend or soothe the child who, for the second time in her life, had been the victim of violent sexual assault. They did, however, send her away to live in a group home. Lillian “Monique” Williams and Shafari Harris, born four years apart, are sisters and victims of the foster care system. The circumstances leading up to their removals represent traumas children never should endure. What happened after CPS intervention was even worse. Meanwhile, Lillian’s older sister, Shafari, had been molested in her foster home at the age of 9 by her 23-year-old foster brother. “He used to come into our room every night, taking turns with me and the other foster girl. All I remember is him grabbing me, pushing me ... I would put my head in the blanket, saying ‘no, no, no,’” Shafari said. “I felt like a toilet that was tired of being shit and pissed on, that anyone could do anything to me and I could do nothing about it.” Shafari was rescued from that situation at the age of 12, only to be revictimized by an 18-year-old who impregnated her. Although she was just a child, she has lived with the perceived shame of being “fast” her entire life. The two sisters speak of the mental anguish and bleeding hearts that have followed them into adulthood. They ask themselves questions that have no answers. They reach deep within to find the strength, courage and wisdom to go on, to love, to live. Lillian has joined Parents Against CPS Corruption, or PACC, to fight for other children who have been neglected and abused by the foster care system. PACC continues to work towards greater oversight and accountability, due process, equal protection under the law, and increased efforts towards kinship placement and timely reunification. Lillian has joined Parents Against CPS Corruption, or PACC, to fight for other children who have been neglected and abused by the foster care system. For information on protests and marches, to join their cause, or for advocacy, peer support or court attendance, visit ParentsAgainstCPSCorruption.com, email protest@parentsagainstCPSCorruption.com, or call [415-815-9415](tel:415-815-9415). PACC is encouraging people to continue calling the SFPD fraud unit at [415-553-1521](tel:415-553-1521) and the SF District Attorney’s Office at [415-553-1751](tel:415-553-1751) to urge them to investigate and prosecute, to the fullest extent of the law, crimes committed by CPS workers against parents in the process of removing children from parental custody. Social workers do not have immunity for violating penal codes and absolutely must be held accountable. Michelle Chan, co-founder of Parents Against CPS Corruption, can be reached at protest@parentsagainsteps Corruption.com or on Twitter, [@proteststeps](https://twitter.com/proteststeps). Source: <http://sfbayview.com/2017/06/who-cares-when-children-are-taken-from-home-to-foster-home-and-abused/>

Victims of predatory foster parent sue former DHS employees Lawsuit says DHS staffers knew about abuse, did nothing. By Benjamin Hardy Arkansas Nonprofit News Network click to enlarge Clarence Garretson Seven sexual assault victims of former Arkansas foster parent Clarence “Charlie” Garretson filed a [federal lawsuit](#) Monday alleging negligence and due process violations on the part of several former employees of the Arkansas Department of Human Services as well as their assailant’s wife, Lisa Garretson. The suit was filed in Fort Smith less than a week after [Clarence Garretson was sentenced to life in federal prison](#) for assaulting a series of minors in his care, most of them foster children placed in the Garretson household by DHS — the agency responsible for Arkansas’s foster care system — between 1998 and 2004. DHS placed some 35 children in the home over that period, and prosecutors have said there is evidence that at least 14 of them were sexually abused by Garretson. At Garretson’s sentencing hearing May 31, one victim — who is also one of the plaintiffs in the civil suit — told the court that she had repeatedly attempted to inform DHS authorities of the abuse, which began when she was 11. “Arkansas DHS put me and many others in the hands of a monster,” she said at the hearing. U.S. District Judge P.K. Holmes, who presided over the hearing, commented that the case constituted an “extreme failure on the part of the Department of Human Services” and said of Lisa Garretson, “if she didn’t know what was going on, she should have known.” Holmes was also assigned the civil suit filed Monday. The plaintiffs’ allegations of DHS negligence go further. Their suit alleges that DHS approved the Garretsons to be foster parents despite DHS substantiating a report one year earlier that Clarence Garretson had sexually assaulted two children at knifepoint. The lawsuit names as defendants former DHS Director Kurt Knickrehm, who headed the agency from 1999 to 2005, and Richard Weiss, who served as interim director for six months in 1998. The other six DHS defendants are Debbie Williams, Nikkole Hurst, Carol Gillis, Patsy Chase and Robbie McKay, all of whom allegedly served as caseworkers for one or more of the children abused by Garretson, and Dick Pickarts, the DHS director of Logan County at the time of the abuse, according to the lawsuit. The complaint alleges that the DHS caseworkers and the county director “obtained actual knowledge” that at least one of the children in the Garretson home was sexually assaulted, but took no action. A long-haul truck driver, Garretson would take children on cross-country trips, sexually assault them in the cab of his truck and coerce them into silence afterward, according to federal prosecutors. DHS revoked the foster home’s license in 2004 — yet Garretson was not charged with a crime until he raped another child in 2014. That victim reported the abuse to her mother in 2016, leading to an FBI investigation that uncovered the pattern of earlier assaults that occurred when the Garretsons operated their foster home a decade earlier. Garretson pleaded guilty in October to five counts of interstate transportation of a minor with intent to engage in criminal sexual activity. In exchange, federal prosecutors dropped six additional counts and agreed to not prosecute Lisa Garretson. Many of the facts of the criminal case against Clarence Garretson remain unknown to the public because key court documents are under seal. The civil suit filed Monday includes a detail that was not stated in the criminal case: The minor who reported Garretson’s actions in 2016 was herself the child of a teenage victim of Garretson more than a decade earlier, who became pregnant by “a relative of the Garretsons” while she was living in the household as a foster child from 2000 to 2004. (How the minor daughter came to be in Garretson’s company in 2014

is not made clear.) The complaint alleges negligence on the part of those defendants with direct contact with the former foster children — Williams, Pickarts, Hurst, Gillis, Chase, McKay and Lisa Garretson — stating that each “had reasonable cause to suspect that Charlie was sexually abusing children” and “had a duty to report such abuse.” Each “willfully and knowingly failed to report such abuse,” which violated an Arkansas statute requiring foster parents and DHS employees to “immediately notify the Child Abuse Hotline if he or she has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to child maltreatment.” In addition to negligence, the complaint also states two separate causes of action against all defendants, including former DHS Director Knickrehm and former interim director Weiss. The first is a federal civil rights claim. Because foster children are in the custody of DHS, which has “the fundamental duty to ensure that each foster child is in an appropriate placement and confirm that each foster child ... is safe and healthy,” the agency’s failure to do so constituted a violation of the children’s “fundamental rights to physical safety and to be free from the infliction of unnecessary pain.” The complaint states that the defendants demonstrated “a pervasive pattern of indifference” to the victims and their due process rights. The second claim is based on a federal statute that allows minor victims of certain federal crimes (or those who were minors at the time the crime was committed) to seek civil remedies. The plaintiffs are seeking damages that include the costs of medical expenses, pain and suffering, mental anguish and legal fees, along with punitive damages. An amount is not specified in the complaint. The plaintiffs are seeking a jury trial. DHS itself is not named as a defendant in the lawsuit, and the agency typically does not comment on litigation. Confidentiality laws prohibit DHS from commenting on individual foster care cases, meaning the agency cannot publicly refute specific allegations of misconduct. When asked about the Garretson case in October, DHS spokeswoman Amy Webb said, “This is a tragic situation, and DHS would never intentionally put a child in harm’s way. Sadly, there are people who prey upon children and may try to use the foster system to do so. When that happens today, we act swiftly to ensure youth in foster care are in safe homes. “The system for vetting foster families is much stronger and more thorough today than it was 20 years ago. ... We conduct state and federal background checks, child maltreatment checks, home studies, and training. We also do re-evaluations of homes annually and new background and maltreatment checks every two years. In addition, we have a more sophisticated computer system. We also now have a system in place that automatically notifies [the DHS division responsible for foster care] when there is a call into the child abuse hotline that includes an allegation against a foster parent.” As of Monday night, attempts to reach two of the named defendants for comment were unsuccessful. Source: <https://www.arktimes.com/arkansas/victims-of-predatory-foster-parent-sue-former-dhs-employees/Content?oid=7219469>

Study questions New Mexico spending on traumatized children [Story Comments](#) [Share](#) [Print](#) [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) Posted: Wednesday, June 7, 2017 6:23 pm | Updated: 6:45 pm, Wed Jun 7, 2017. [Study questions New Mexico spending on traumatized children](#) Associated Press | [0 comments](#) SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — New Mexico is spending enormous amounts of money in potentially ineffective ways to treat a relatively small number of children for mental health problems related to household trauma and depression, several state agencies announced Wednesday in a report presented to lawmakers. The study showed that over a three-year period, New Mexico spent an average of \$60,000 a year per child in Medicaid funds to treat 190 patients with acute behavioral conditions. Costs linked to those severe conditions dominated the state's spending on children for behavior health problems — making it more difficult to invest in preventative programs that can keep children out of the juvenile justice system and foster care, the study found. Maria Griego, a program evaluator with the Legislative Finance Committee, said \$89 million out of the \$196 million spent on children's mental and behavior health went to acute interventions largely at away-from-home facilities such as psychiatric hospitals and residential treatment centers. “Keep them in their homes, in their communities — the outcomes are better,” Griego said. “It is a more cost efficient way to handle children's behavior health.” The state treats more than 43,000 children for behavior and mental health issues. Residential treatment programs for just over 1,000 children consumed an average of \$42,000 per child. “Residential treatment is an area that has been studied more than any other area for kids and it's consistently been demonstrated that it doesn't get the results,” said Wayne Lindstrom, director of the state's Behavior Health Services Division. Efforts to shift spending to behavior health programs that keep children close to home and active in their communities have been hampered by a lack of data and monitoring. The study looked at the cost effectiveness of dozens of state- and federally funded programs, from juvenile drug courts to games introduced in New Mexico public elementary schools to decrease disruptive behavior. National studies have highlighted the financial strain of treating a small number of children for acute mental health and behavioral problems. A 2013 study of Medicaid-enrolled children found that 4 percent of behavioral health patients accounted for 19 percent of costs. In New Mexico, officials said mental-health treatment spending on children has gravitated toward traumatic stress and mood-related disorders often brought on by household strife, and away from traditional psychiatric conditions. Children in New Mexico were more likely than peers nationwide to witness domestic violence or be the focus of physical and mental abuse, the study noted. Above average rates of poverty, substance abuse and domestic violence put children in New Mexico at a relatively high risk of mental health problems. Teen suicide death rates in New Mexico are double the national average. The state has been shaken by a series of child-abuse related killings, including the slaying last August of 10-year-old Victoria Martens. Sen. Gerald Ortiz y Pino said expensive residential programs still have a place in the state's behavior health portfolio for children. “If after three years at \$150,000 they go to college, get into the Air Force, start a family, are a good father, then that's money well spent,” he said. Source: http://www.ccenterdispatch.com/news/state/article_66bc996f-b383-5dac-a16f-94bc35768810.html

Former Sonoma Group Home Counselor Accused Of Sexually Abusing Teenage Boy Breaking: Authorities allege the Rohnert Park man and youth ministry volunteer committed the acts as a counselor at Hanna Boys Center. By [Maggie Avants \(Patch Staff\)](#) - Updated June 12, 2017 2:51 pm ET [Share](#) [Tweet](#) [Google Plus](#) [Reddit](#) [Email](#) [Comments](#) SONOMA COUNTY, CA -- A Rohnert Park man was arrested Saturday on suspicion of committing lewd and lascivious acts with a minor and sexual assault of a minor while employed as a counselor at a residential treatment center for at-risk boys. Sonoma County sheriff's detectives began investigating Kevin Scott Thorpe, 39, on June 1 when a 23-year-old man reported that he had been a victim of sexual abuse while residing at the Hanna Boys Center in the Sonoma Valley between 2006 and 2011, Sonoma sheriff's Sgt. Spencer Crum said Monday. The abuse, which allegedly began when the boy was 13 years old and continued until the victim was 18, occurred not only at the Hanna Boys Center campus but at Thorpe's home, according to the sergeant. “The victim was in fear of getting in trouble and being kicked out of the Sonoma group home if he told anyone so he kept this private until now, as he fears of ongoing sexual abuse with other minors,” Crum said. Get free real-time news alerts from the Rohnert Park-Cotati Patch. Subscribe “Detectives from the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office's Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Unit investigated the man's claims and they feel there is sufficient evidence to believe Thorpe sexually assaulted the victim as a teenager,” Crum said. Thorpe was taken into custody by the detectives Saturday when a warrant was served at his Rohnert Park home. Thorpe was booked into the Sonoma County Jail, where he was being held in lieu of \$250,000 bail. Detectives believe there may be additional possible victims, either at Hanna Boys Center or in the community where Thorpe volunteers in a youth ministry program for teens, Crum said. Additional victims or anyone with information regarding the investigation should contact the detectives assigned to the case by calling 707-565-4300. Source: <https://patch.com/california/rohnertpark-cotati/former-sonoma-group-home-counselor-accused-sexually-abusing-teenage-boy>

Missouri Sued Over Psychotropic Drugs for Foster Care Kids Missouri being sued over allegations of inappropriately providing psychotropic drugs to foster care children. June 12, 2017, at 3:42 p.m. [MORE](#) [LinkedIn](#) [StumbleUpon](#) [Google +](#) [Cancel](#) Missouri Sued Over Psychotropic Drugs for Foster Care Kids Share × [Share on Facebook](#) [Post on Twitter](#) [Post to Reddit](#) [Email](#) [Share in LinkedIn](#) [Share on StumbleUpon](#) [Share on Google Plus](#) By SUMMER BALLENTINE, Associated Press JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Child advocates filed a federal lawsuit against the Missouri Department of Social Services on Monday over allegations of inappropriately providing psychotropic drugs to foster care children and systemic lack of oversight of the medications. Attorneys for Children's Rights, the National Center for Youth Law and Saint Louis University School of Law Legal Clinics say the lawsuit is the first of its kind nationwide that focuses only on psychotropic drugs given to foster children. The state attorney general's office didn't immediately comment Monday on the lawsuit. The organizations filed the lawsuit on behalf of several Missouri children currently or formerly in foster care, including a 14-year-old boy who has been prescribed as many as seven psychotropic drugs at one time. Attorneys for the children are asking a federal district judge to grant the lawsuit class-action status and order Missouri to implement systemic changes aimed at curtailing potential overprescribing of the drugs. ADVERTISING The lawsuit claims psychotropic drugs are often prescribed as “chemical straight-jackets” for foster care children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or conduct disorder even though there are few to no Food and Drug Administration-approved uses for the drugs among children. The plaintiffs' attorneys say there's little research on how the drugs impact children's brains, and that possible side effects include disorders that cause twitching, Type 2 diabetes, psychosis and suicidal thoughts. “The bottom line is young kids — still developing bodies and brains — are exposed to powerful psychotropic medications in what is in almost in all circumstances off-label prescriptions,” Sara Bartosz, deputy director of litigation strategy at Children's Rights, told The Associated Press in an interview late last month. The lawsuit alleges that there's not enough state oversight of psychotropic medications and that the state keeps shoddy medical records for children in foster care,

making it difficult for foster parents to properly administer medications. The suit calls for the judge to order the state to keep better records, develop a stronger informed-consent policy and implement a system to flag potential overprescribing of psychotropic drugs. According to court records, one former foster parent said she received a brown grocery bag full of medications in November 2015 when she first picked up the 14-year-old boy. She said she didn't get information on his medical history or directions for how to give him the medications. The woman said after giving the teenager his medications one night, he told her it felt like he had knives in his eyes and that he was scared to sleep. She said he also twitched, which she thought might be a side effect of his medications. He later was prescribed a drug used to treat tics caused by Parkinson's disease, according to the lawsuit. The lawsuit says in January the teen was taking seven psychotropic medications at the same time, including three antipsychotics. The former foster parent, who stopped serving in that role after the teen threatened her life but still kept in contact with him, said she visited him after he moved to a different state facility in April and that he was "an entirely changed child." She said he was "lethargic, slurring his speech, and falling asleep in broad daylight." According to court records, the teen told the former foster parent he had been hearing voices that told him to kill himself. Others who the lawsuit was filed on behalf of include sisters, ages 2 and 3, who were prescribed the antipsychotic drug Risperdal, which the lawsuit says is not FDA-approved for children younger than age 5. Source: <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/missouri/articles/2017-06-12/missouri-sued-over-psychotropic-drugs-for-foster-care-kids>

Maryville group home closes after years of reported problems WATE 6 On Your Side Staff Published: June 13, 2017, 6:50 pm [Click to share on Twitter \(Opens in new window\)](#) [Click to share on Google+ \(Opens in new window\)](#) [339Share on Facebook \(Opens in new window\)](#) [339 Click to share on Pinterest \(Opens in new window\)](#) Whispering Pines Related Coverage [Reports show years of problems at Maryville adult home](#) [Blount County adult home under investigation](#) MARYVILLE (WATE) – A group home under scrutiny is now closed after years of problems. Whispering Pines was stopped from accepting new residents in March as federal and state agencies investigated. In the weeks that followed, WATE 6 On Your Side's Don Dare tried to visit the place and get answers from operators, but had no luck. Pictures inside the facility showed a lack of space. State investigators found bugs, dirty conditions, training problems and more. Catholic Charities says it has taken the remaining residents in. The state of Tennessee says the facility was denied licensure renewal. Source: <http://wate.com/2017/06/13/marvville-group-home-closes-after-years-of-reported-problems/>

Youth residential treatment center closes down - Story | Utah Youth residential treatment center closes down Former staff members say clients are being forced out too early By: RICK AARON Posted: Jun 15, 2017 10:04 PM MDT Updated: Jun 15, 2017 10:25 PM MDT AddThis Sharing Buttons Share to FacebookShare to TwitterShare to PrintShare to EmailShare to More132 Salt Lake City - SALT LAKE CITY (ABC4 Utah News) - A residential treatment program for youth with substance abuse and mental health issues is closing down and some former employees say it's putting those clients in danger. Valley Behavioral Health, a private nonprofit organization, had planned to close down the ARTEC Center on 6200 South but workers say they received assurances that the 12 to 18 year old clients would be able to complete their treatment. On Wednesday two employees who worked with those clients were fired and they told ABC4 Utah News the teen clients were being discharged Thursday. One counselor said without the structure of the live-in program, those teens are in danger of relapse, sexual assault or even suicide. "I'm appalled honestly," Taylor Berhow said. "After working for this company for two years, a company that claims to pride itself on the care of its clients and it's staff, the fact that this would happen is honestly inconceivable to me." Susan Pizitz, the Director of Children's Services for Valley Behavioral Health, says that the closure is part of a trend away from residential treatment facilities to in-home and community based programs. "Valley cares deeply about our clients," Pizitz said. "We care about their health and their well-being and we provide a wide array of services to meet needs." Pizitz says all clients will be individually evaluated and moved into other appropriate programs within the Valley Behavioral system. Source: <http://www.good4utah.com/news/local-news/youth-residential-treatment-center-closes-down/742846672>

Columbia NAACP investigating juvenile detention center The Middle Tennessee Juvenile Detention Center in Columbia detains teens who have been accused of delinquent offenses. (WSMV) By WSMV-TV Saturday Posted Jun 24, 2017 at 8:22 AM Updated Jun 24, 2017 at 8:48 AM Share Various records examined by WSMV-TV's investigative team have raised questions about how some troubled teens were getting treated at a Columbia juvenile detention center. Now there's more details about who is running that facility – and how the facility compares to other ones like it across the state. You can find them all over Tennessee: Nine juvenile detention centers that contract with the Department of Children's Services. Every now and then, the agency investigates allegations of abuse or neglect. But one facility stands out from the rest: the Middle Tennessee Juvenile Detention Center in Columbia. And after what WSMV uncovered, one community leader wants answers. "When there is smoke, there is fire," said Rev. TD Byrdsong, president of Columbia's NAACP chapter. Over the course of three years, DCS conducted 42 investigations at MTJDC, according to an open records request filed by WSMV. That's more than the number at all other facilities combined. At all other juvenile detention facilities that contract with DCS, investigators looked into a total of 25 complaints. For months, WSMV has been uncovering allegations surrounding the center, everything from claims of teens not getting proper medical attention to 911 calls detailing abuse allegations. The center is run by a private facility, and its director, Tom Irwin, had little to say about the allegations. "Are these accusations unfounded?" asked reporter Alanna Autler. "We are trying to get your side of the story." "I have no comment," Irwin told her in May. So who is Tom Irwin? WSMV started looking into this past and what we found has some calling his integrity into question. "We are concerned about the character of the man, and that's something we look for more than anything," Byrdsong said. Personnel records show before Irwin worked at MTJDC, he was a trooper for the Tennessee Highway Patrol. But in 2007, Irwin was fired over a sexual harassment allegation. A civil service document states on multiple occasions, Irwin allegedly harassed a court employee. He was accused of trying to kiss her, and then trying to persuade her from reporting it. Irwin was never charged with a crime, and in the eyes of DCS is still considered fit for the position. "Yes, he has been cleared to work around kids, and they're aware of that," said Rob Johnson, a spokesman for DCS. Yet DCS was unaware of what else the I-Team uncovered. In 2008, Irwin joined the Spring Hill Police Department, but only briefly. In his personnel file, an investigator noted Irwin had stated on his application that he was POST certified, which is a requirement for all law enforcement officers. But the investigator wrote that Irwin was not POST certified. Soon after, Irwin submitted his resignation letter, admitting he was not POST certified. "Do you view that as a problem?" Autler asked. "I'm sure we could take the information and take a look at it and have our licensing people at DCS take a look at it," Johnson said. "I'm personally not aware of it." Byrdsong said the Columbia NAACP chapter has launched its own investigation into the facility. He said the first step is holding its leaders accountable. "To me, it's a failing administration and that's something we want to try to make better," Byrdsong said. Only two allegations of abuse have been substantiated at the center since 2014. That's the same number of cases that have been substantiated at the other centers, combined. The director did not respond to questions about whether his past has any bearing on his ability to care for troubled teens. When we asked why MTJDC faced so many more complaints, a DCS spokesman re-sent a previous statement: "The Middle Tennessee Juvenile Detention Center serves the toughest youth in the state. Many who pass through MTJDC have gang ties. Many face serious criminal charges. "They also tend to be unsettled and fearful about what their futures hold. All youth make mistakes, but we don't give up on them. "DCS investigators look into every referral that meets the criteria for abuse and neglect. The DCS staff finds that the center is prompt to fix the state's concerns. Also, MTJDC has adopted the rigorous federal standards designed to reduce the risk of sexual assault. The substantiation rate for abuse and neglect has proven to be low. "DCS requires the center to keep its youth safe. That's not all, though: The center must keep its environment safe — for the workers, teachers, nurses and counselors who serve a challenging population." Source: <http://www.columbiadailyherald.com/news/20170624/columbia-naacp-investigating-juvenile-detention-center>

Civil Rights Lawsuit Claims Minnesota Foster Care System Fails To Provide Safe Placements News Report | June 25, 2017 On May 31, 2017, child welfare advocates sued Hennepin County, Minnesota for violating the civil rights of children in foster care by failing to provide safe placements. The complaint, filed by A Better Childhood and co-counsel Faegre, Baker Daniels, said public data suggests that the Hennepin County child protection system is among the most deficient in the nation, and is a "confusing, underfunded, and erratic system" that inflicts harm to the children it is responsible for protecting. Source: <https://www.openminds.com/market-intelligence/news/civil-rights-lawsuit-claims-minnesota-foster-care-system-fails-provide-safe-placements/>

Tanzania: Boarding School for Under-Tens? Not Ideal By Jimmy Lwagili Sending children aged below ten to a boarding school is denying them their basic rights, which include parental love and care. The remarks were made by the Acting Director of Temeke Municipality, Mr John Bwana who is also Head of Children Department in the Municipality, in Dar es Salaam on the occasion to mark the International African Child Day. He was speaking during an event organised by BRAC Tanzania, which is involved in education, agriculture and entrepreneurship. The theme of this year was 'Strengthen protection and equal opportunities for children'. He advised the parents to not let guests visiting their homes to sleep in the same room with the children because most of them are not

trustworthy. According to him, children being in the same room with adults is not a healthy idea because they could be treated cruelly and might be afraid to reveal it after being threatened. "Now days the world has changed, people are not trustworthy. Even close relatives can mistreat our children by subjecting them to practices that are unsuitable for their age like sexual issues," he said. Mr Bwana, who was the guest of honour said sending children below ten years old to boarding schools contributes to lack of parental love and care to the children. "According to various studies at a tender age, children could learn immoral behaviours at boarding schools. They may even face bullying which affects their lives, acts like homosexuality mostly begin in boarding schools because sometimes their matrons and patrons are unfaithful," he said. He urged the public to unveil and report the acts of violence against children whenever this occurs in their areas to the police instead of solving the matters at the family level. He stressed that most of violence against children begins at family level. He said protection and excellent care to all children is the duty of the parent in order to raise the children with the base of discipline and good moral. The move will help build the future nation of patriotic people. A parent of two children, Aisha Ramadhan said she can't let her children stay in boarding school when they are at the level of primary school. "I won't let my children stay in a boarding school when they are still in primary school level because I need to closely follow up on their behaviour and they have to understand what I like and what I dislike them to behave," she said. Ms Ramadhan said although her husband and herself could afford to send their children to a boarding school of any cost they have agreed to do not so because they both like to see their children at home. She said sending a child of below the age of 15 to boarding school is not good although many parents see it as the fashion without thinking the side effects that could face a child. In boarding school children are missing parental love and care and it is easy for them to learn risky behaviours. "Many children are ending in risky behaviour due to acts they learnt in boarding school because they met with wrong people who taught them bad things and it is also too difficult to parents to notice the changes because they stay with children only few days of holidays," she added. Sponsored [The Evolving Himalayan Sherpa](#) A study has determined that Himalayan Sherpas have a different physiology, allowing them to use oxygen more efficiently. Is this proof that man is ... Parent Daniel Chillu, a father of two children a daughter and son said before the age of ten for a child is the time to understand his or parents and the time for parents to create friendship with the kids in order to help a kid to be open to the parents. He said a child living far from parent is a problem because it is easy for a child to experience bad behaviour without a parent knowing. Without a friendship between parents and children it is difficult to the children to tell or ask the parents for help when they face a problem or any challenge. "I really love my children, I won't let them live far from me until they complete ordinary level of secondary school. They will go to school and in the evening I want them back at home, it is helpful to monitor their discipline," said Daniel. The BRAC Tanzania Project Manager of Growth and Care for the children, Janeth Malela said to strength protection and equal opportunities to the children is to make sure all children are getting equal rights against physical, sexual and psychological violence. She commented that parental love and care is very necessary in raising a child in this moment where the society is facing many challenges of indiscipline and moral decays. "I advise the public to give equal opportunities to all children from family to national level, the opportunities are in education, health and other studies by staying close to them especially in the earlier age." She said. Ms Malela said nothing is worth to the children than education because education will set a child free from many bad things and will help them to know their rights and responsibilities as children. At the pre-primary school level, it targets underprivileged children to prepare them for mainstream primary school entry. BRAC primary schools are designed to give a second chance at learning to disadvantaged children who have been left out of the formal education system due to extreme poverty, violence, displacement or discrimination. The non-formal primary schools complement the mainstream school system with innovative teaching methods and materials. She said BRAC Tanzania through the Accelerated Learning Process (ALP), has benefited 1890 children in Dar es Salaam, Iringa, Tanga, Dodoma and Mbeya. In the Tanga region 900 female children have got entrepreneurship studies. The overall goal of the preprimary school programme is to make children aged between 5-6 years participate in early learning activities in safe, child-friendly, learning environments in centres, homes and communities and develop their cognitive, emotional, linguistic and numerical abilities to communicate, socialise and learn, and become better prepared for school. Tanzania [Tanzanian Passport Is Second Most Powerful in EAC](#) Tanzania's passport is the second most powerful travelling document in East Africa after Kenya, according to The Henley... [Read more »](#) Source: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201706290630.html>

Alleged sexual harassment, poor conditions force teen group home's closure Jen French June 28, 2017 10:19 PM CLOVIS, N.M. — Alleged deplorable conditions, neglect, and sexual comments from staff toward teens forced the Children Youth and Families Department's Licensing and Certification Authority to close New Visions Group Home in Clovis. Advertisement State inspectors discovered the home that was supposed to help teenage boys and girls may have actually been hurting them. New Visions Group Home was home to eight teenage girls and nine teenage boys, all between the ages of 14 to 19. This past March, the state filed a motion to revoke the youth group home's certification and forced it to shut down. The revocation comes after allegations of sparse window coverings, old mattresses and even the adult staff making lewd comments toward the teenage girls. State documents obtained by 4 Investigates reveal David Jackson, the sole therapist and part owner, of New Visions Group Home allegedly told a teenage girl living there that she "had a nice butt," and stared at her breasts. He's also accused of giving her a box of condoms as a gift. Jackson is also accused of telling other teenage residents they "looked slutty" and even telling one "she was going to be good at being a whore." CYFD spokesperson Henry Varela tells 4 Investigates there were numerous regulatory deficiencies and neglect allegations that were being probed by the state as early as March 2016. CYFD's probing of the private group home eventually led to the home losing its contract with CYFD. "We immediately got them [the teenagers] relocated to other areas and then the program," Varela said. "The facility was then closed down." Youth also claimed former employee Christopher Thompson gave gifts and wrote letters to the girls. Teens told state investigators that he was in a relationship with one of the girls. The group home eventually fired Thompson. KOB-TV requested to speak to Thompson, but he did not want to speak to media. As of Wednesday evening, KOB-TV is still waiting for a response from Jackson. "It's very disappointing that something like this happened," Varela said. "You have instances in communities—whether it's a community like Clovis or Albuquerque—these communities really look to these providers to provide the help and assistance to the youth who are placed there." The group home owners have the legal right to request to be recertified. Varela said based on the home's prior history it's not likely that New Visions Group Home will reopen—even under a different name. Clovis Police also investigated claims against staff. However, the district attorney in Curry County has yet to file charges against Jackson or Thompson. At this time, the men do not face any criminal charges relating to New Visions Group Home. <http://www.kob.com/investigative-news/new-visions-group-home-closure-alleged-sexual-harassment-cyfd-children-youth-families-department/4528586/>

Wordsworth Academy files for bankruptcy, will be acquired Updated: June 30, 2017 — 10:45 AM EDT 14Share Tweet Tumblr Email 1 Comment [REPRINTS](#) Popular Stories [Trump responds to claim he tried to blackmail 'Morning Joe' hosts](#) 1:26 PM [Chester County woman fatally shot in head in apparent road rage](#) 11:54 AM Brand Content Take The Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News on the go with our replica editions Paid for by: Philadelphia Media Network Avi Steinhardt Wordsworth, which operated the Ford Road residential treatment center for troubled young people, has agreed to be acquired as part of a deal that will send the nonprofit through bankruptcy. by Harold Brubaker, Staff Writer [@InqBrubaker](#) | hbrubaker@phillynews.com Email [@InqBrubaker](#) Harold Brubaker Staff Writer Harold Brubaker is a business writer. He writes about the financial side of health care and many other topics. More by Harold Brubaker [Wordsworth Academy files for bankruptcy, will be acquired](#) [June 30 New merged Jefferson U. will field sports teams](#) [June 29 Troubled Mount Laurel nursing home has buyer, will stay open](#) [June 29 More from Harold Brubaker](#) Public Health Management Corp. has agreed to acquire Wordsworth Academy Inc. — which operated a residential treatment facility where a teenager died last fall in a struggle with staffers — in a deal that will send the Philadelphia human-services agency through bankruptcy, the two nonprofits announced Friday. "Wordsworth has had its share of problems," said Lawrence G. McMichael, a Dilworth Paxson attorney hired to handle the bankruptcy, which was filed Friday. "They have litigation against them. They have litigation threatened. They have lost the license to operate the Ford Road facility." That West Philadelphia facility is where David Hess, 17, of Lebanon, died Oct. 13 in a fight over an iPod. Hess's death by suffocation was ruled a homicide in February, but charges have not been filed. His death capped a decade of allegations and charges of sexual and physical abuse at what was the city's only residential treatment center for troubled youth, as chronicled by the Inquirer and Daily News in April. "They are not financially viable as a standalone at this point without some relief. Having shut down the Ford Road facility, they have a huge lease obligation there to a landlord, which they can't pay," McMichael said. "Even with all of that, this is an agency we have to save because they are still administering the needs of 5,500 kids in Philadelphia." An attorney representing three victims of Isaac Outten, a counselor who was [charged](#) in December with sexually assaulting three girls, said the bankruptcy and acquisition could be a good thing if it allows Wordsworth to continue its important work serving children. "The bad thing is if this bankruptcy and acquisition is used to rob the victims of compensation for the poor treatment that they've received through Wordsworth. That's a real bad thing," said attorney Nadeem A. Bezar, a partner at Kline & Specter PC. Public Health Management Corp. (PHMC), based in Philadelphia, has already taken

over the management of Wordsworth's remaining programs under a contract that started Monday. Those programs include a school in Fort Washington, community behavioral-health services, and two community umbrella agencies that provide services for families and children in parts of West and Northwest Philadelphia under license from the city's Department of Human Services. "We very much believe in the coming together of not-for-profits so that we can wrap services around people and serve people, their families, and their communities," PHMC president and chief executive Richard J. Cohen said. PHMC had explored joining forces with Wordsworth several times over the years, Cohen said. This year, given Wordsworth's legal and financial woes, there was greater urgency when its interim CEO, Diana Ramsay, approached PHMC and other possible acquirers about a deal. "They asked what we would do with them. We had very productive talks about we would continue the legacy of Wordsworth," Cohen said. "We were chosen after they looked at several folks." Community Behavioral Health, a city-related nonprofit that funnels Medicaid money to providers, said PHMC is already part of its network. "We support this acquisition enthusiastically and believe it's in the best interest of the youth in our community who are receiving behavioral health services," a spokesman said. A Department of Human Services spokeswoman called the Wordsworth acquisition "a step in the right direction." Bankruptcy is key to the deal because Wordsworth has little or no value as a going concern if it cannot be stripped of liabilities from leases it cannot afford and from anticipated legal settlements. "PHMC would never do this if they were going to be exposed to potential unlimited liabilities," McMichael said. "They wouldn't touch it with a 10-foot pole. Nobody else would either. That's why a bankruptcy is necessary." The initial bankruptcy petition provides little financial detail, but it lists the largest unsecured claims against Wordsworth, totaling \$8.5 million, with most of the money owed to other child-welfare agencies. Listed as undetermined is a litigation claim by the Hess family. Stephen Marino, the family's attorney, could not be reached for comment Friday. It is not clear how much money from liability insurance will be available to satisfy claims from the Hess family's anticipated lawsuit and others still pending. The goal of bankruptcy would be to allow for an orderly distribution of however much money is available. Bezar said he has looked at Wordsworth's insurance coverage for the period in which Outten is accused of assaulting the girls he represents. "I would suggest that the coverage is inadequate for what these victims went through at the time, so the bankruptcy is of concern," he said. Source: <http://www.philly.com/philly/business/wordsworth-academy-files-for-bankruptcy-will-be-acquired-20170630.html>

WA man accused of abusing hostel children AAP on June 30, 2017, 5:37 pm [Share](#) [Tweet](#) [Whatsapp](#) [Email](#) [Share](#) Man charged with abuse in WA group homes - Yahoo7 [Pinterest](#) [Tumblr](#) A former WA Department of Child Protection employee accused of sexually assaulting two girls and a boy at group homes he worked at has appeared briefly in court. Stephen John Gale, 59, allegedly abused the children, who were aged between eight and 10, while working at the Doubleview Group Home and Darlington Hostel between 1998 and 2000. He faced the Midland Magistrates Court on Friday, charged with nine counts of sexual penetration of a child under 13, and five counts of indecently dealing with a child under 13. Gale is due to appear in the Perth Magistrates Court on September 20. Source: <https://au.news.yahoo.com/wa/a/36215162/man-charged-with-abuse-in-wa-group-homes/#page1>

Young girl sexually abused after OCS places her in foster care OCS Share Video Share Video 00:0002:0300:00 02:03 Posted: Thu 7:35 PM, Jun 29, 2017 The Alaska Office of Ombudsman released an investigative report on the several complaints about a caseworker at the office of children's services. The Ombudsman investigates citizen complaints against state government agencies and employees. In one of the cases, the father, who lived out of state, was trying to get custody of his daughter. According to the report, he called the caseworker more than 130 times. During the time, his daughter was sexually abused by her foster father. The caseworker was alerted to the alleged abuse, but it was several months before the girl was removed from the home. In another case, an infant was removed from her mother at birth. For two years, the mother has requested the caseworker contact the great-grandfather for placement of the baby. The caseworker allegedly lied in court twice that she had started the placement process, even though she did not. The Office of Children's Services Director, Christy Lawton, has responded that the main reason behind the complaints is due to the worker's case load being too high. "I guess what I would say is that Director Lawton has spoken with regards to this report about the crushing burdensome workload that our workers are facing. In the area where this occurred in our South Central area, we've got caseloads that are up to 43 cases per worker and when you consider that the national average is 12 per worker, that's a pretty stunning caseload." State Representative Tammy Wilson does not believe that is an acceptable excuse, especially when a child is sexually abused in the process. She believes Lawton should be removed from her duties as Director. "When we looked at it and saw Christy Lawton, who is the director, her response was, 'Well we are overloaded and things happen.' That's just unacceptable. A child was sexually abused when taken out of a home by the state. We have seen that there are issues. It's time for the governor and for the commissioner to say, we need a change and it starts with the director. Ms. Lawton for whatever reason, in my opinion, has lost touch and it's time to say we are not going to let our children be injured." Source: <http://www.webcenter11.com/content/news/Young-girl-sexually-abused-after-OCS-places-her-in-foster-care--431679283.html>

Suit accuses boarding school of turning 'blind eye' to sexual abuse <http://www.ajc.com/news/local/suit-accuses-boarding-school-turning-blind-eye-sexual-abuse/1Emr0waXnSSrDBr9BfL7uM/> 13 News View CaptionHide Caption Wilcox Hall on the Darlington School's campus in Rome, where teacher Roger Stifflemire is accused of molesting students in the 1970s and 1980s. BOB ANDRES/BANDRES@AJC.COM A group of former students from the Darlington School, a private boarding school in northwest Georgia, filed a lawsuit late Friday claiming a teacher sexually abused them for years and that administrators did nothing in response. "Darlington turned a blind eye to the pain and suffering of its students," according to the lawsuit, filed in Floyd Superior Court in Rome, where the school was founded in 1905. The abuse allegations are the subject of an [investigation published this week by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#). Seven former students told the newspaper that teacher Roger Stifflemire, who worked at Darlington from 1974 to 1994, sexually abused or propositioned them during the 1970s and 1980s. Stifflemire did not respond to numerous requests for an interview. The school said it hired an Atlanta law firm to investigate the allegations. Nine former students filed the lawsuit, along with the representative of the estate of another, Charles Mark Day, who killed himself last year. In his suicide note, the suit says, Day cited decades-old abuse by Stifflemire and another man. The other man, Fred Marquette, ran a water-ski club on Lake Jordan in Alabama. The suit accuses him of also molesting at least one Darlington student who accompanied Stifflemire on overnight trips to Marquette's lake house. In a recent interview with the AJC, Marquette said he asked Stifflemire not to return after discovering he was having "affairs" with some of the boys. Marquette, now 97 and a registered sex offender in Alabama, said he couldn't remember whether he had also abused the boys but didn't think so. Several of the men who filed the suit said they reported their abuse to various school officials. One said that after Stifflemire molested him on a Boy Scouts camping trip in the eighth grade, he told other students. For telling about the abuse, the lawsuit alleges, a school administrator picked up the student and threw him across a courtyard. The suit also accuses a former student who allegedly molested at least two boys, one age 6. Lawyers for the former students filed the lawsuit ahead of a deadline created by a 2015 state law that temporarily extended the statute of limitations for cases involving childhood sexual abuse. The close of business Friday ended the extension. The suit was filed by attorneys Paul Mones of Los Angeles and Darren Penn of Atlanta. Darlington, the suit says, presented itself as a "safe and morally upright school," but took no steps to investigate or stop sexual abuse. Source: <http://www.ajc.com/news/local/suit-accuses-boarding-school-turning-blind-eye-sexual-abuse/1Emr0waXnSSrDBr9BfL7uM/>

Unusual loan in Wordsworth Academy bankruptcy case Updated: July 1, 2017 — 9:00 PM EDT 18Share Tweet Tumblr Email 3 Comment [REPRINTS](#) Wordsworth Academy's, West Philadelphia residential facility where a patient was killed last year. by Harold Brubaker, Staff Writer [@InqBrubaker](#) | hbrubaker@phillynews.com Email [@InqBrubaker](#) Harold Brubaker Staff Writer Harold Brubaker is a business writer. He writes about the financial side of health care and many other topics. More by Harold Brubaker [Unusual loan in Wordsworth Academy bankruptcy case Jul 1 Wordsworth Academy files for bankruptcy, will be acquired Jun 30 More from Harold Brubaker](#) When attorneys for bankrupt Wordsworth Academy go before a judge Thursday in the case's first hearing, they will present a highly unusual proposal to fund the human-service agency's operations during the early stages of its bankruptcy: a \$1.5 million loan from another nonprofit that leases space from it. The lender, Play & Learn, an operator of preschools, was once affiliated with Wordsworth and had a member of its board, Gerald Schatz, in common with Wordsworth until Schatz resigned from the Wordsworth board shortly before the bankruptcy filing [Friday](#). Wordsworth operated a residential treatment facility in West Philadelphia where a teenager died last fall in a struggle with staffers. Lawrence G. McMichael, a Dilworth Paxson bankruptcy attorney representing Wordsworth, acknowledged that the proposed financing arrangement was unusual, but said it was appropriate. "Despite substantial efforts, the debtors have been unable to secure alternative financing from any source other than Play and Learn in the time frame required," Wordsworth said in a motion Friday asking U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Ashley M. Chan to approve the loan. "Play and Learn is obviously not a traditional lender, but has mobilized quickly to solve the debtors' immediate liquidity crisis. Without Play and Learn, the viability of debtors' Chapter 11 cases would be jeopardized," the filing said. A traditional financing package is in the works from Siena Lending Group that would supplement the proposed loan from Play & Learn. But the current arrangement illustrates the difficult financial position Wordsworth was in before it resorted to bankruptcy, coupled with a plan to

be acquired by Public Health Management Corp. (PHMC), a Philadelphia nonprofit that provides health and community services. "It's not as bad as it seems," McMichael said Saturday. Like many businesses, Wordsworth faces a gap between when it has to pay its bills, such as payroll, and when it gets paid. That gap is typically covered by a line of credit, and Wordsworth had a \$5 million line of credit with M&T Bank. A month ago, McMichael said, M&T froze the line of credit while it had a zero balance. "That was one of the reasons for this bankruptcy," McMichael said. Other reasons include numerous lawsuits after a decade of allegations and charges of sexual and physical abuse at what was Philadelphia's only residential treatment center for troubled youth, as [chronicled](#) by the Inquirer and Daily News in April. Wordsworth, which provides education, behavioral health, and child welfare services to children and youth and is now being managed by PHMC, still owes \$4.7 million to M&T on a separate loan. The board, including Schatz, approved the bankruptcy filing June 12. Schatz and other representatives of Play & Learn, which was founded in 1981 by Wordsworth educators and psychiatrists, could not be reached for comment Saturday. Until about a decade ago, Schatz was president of Wordsworth, which was founded in 1952. The website of Wyncote Academy, a private school in Elkins Park, describes Schatz as founder of Wordsworth Academy, Play & Learn Children's Centers, and Wyncote Academy. The latest available 990 tax return for Play & Learn, for the year ended June 30, 2015, lists Schatz as president. As part of the proposed loan agreement, PHMC will negotiate with Play & Learn on the possible sale of the property Play & Learn occupies on Wordsworth's Fort Washington campus, which a bank appraised at \$9.35 million in 2014. "We have aligned interests. Where they are getting the \$1.5 million, I don't know," McMichael said. The 990 shows that Play & Learn had \$7.7 million in investments two years ago. Laura Otten, executive director of the Nonprofit Center at La Salle University, said a nonprofit is permitted to make such a loan as long as it is from unrestricted money and the board approves it, though she wondered how Play & Learn has that level of liquid assets. "It is very unusual," she said. Source: <http://www.philly.com/philly/business/unusual-loan-in-wordsworth-academy-bankruptcy-case-20170702.html>

'We're devastated' Family mourns boy, 14, after suicide in group home By Lisa Kashinsky lkashinsky@eagletribune.com Lisa Kashinsky Jul 2, 2017 CARL RUSSO/Staff photo. From left, Katti Matias, Sebastian's adopted mother; Natalia Matias, his adopted sister and biological cousin and Ivy Wheeler, Sebastian's biological mother. Natalia is holding a photo of Sebastian during his wake at Farrah's Funeral Home on Thursday. Sebastian is holding his third place certificate he won at the School For Exceptional Studies science fair. Sebastian Wheeler, 14, who graduated from the School For Exceptional Studies on June 14, committed suicide at St. Ann's in Methuen on June 21. His family is speaking out about mistreatment there and trying to prevent this from happening to another family. 6/29/2017 Carl Russo CARL RUSSO/Staff copy photo Sebastian Wheeler, 14 Carl Russo prev next METHUEN — A few minutes before 1 p.m. on Wednesday, June 21, Methuen police received a 911 call that a 14-year-old boy had hung himself in the shower area at St. Ann's home on Haverhill Street. The police and fire department responded, along with St. Ann's staff. Rescue breaths and CPR were performed until the boy was taken to Lawrence General Hospital. Initial reports to police said the boy was not breathing, but medical professionals were able to get a pulse. He was taken via medical flight to Tufts New England Medical Center in Boston. But doctors there told police the boy had no brain activity. By the next morning, Sebastian Wheeler was dead. Wheeler — whose name was released by his family — is yet another child who died under the watch of the Department of Children and Families. Police reported that he was in the department's custody and had been living at St. Ann's Home & School, a facility that provides treatment services for children with behavioral and emotional needs, including through a residential program. According to the state Office of the Child Advocate, 35 children died under the watch of DCF in fiscal year 2016. The causes of their deaths varied from medical conditions, to car accidents, to suicide. DCF had more than 9,000 children in out-of-home placements at the end of fiscal year 2016 and more than 40,000 others on its caseload, making the deaths less than 1 percent of the total population of children with cases under DCF, the annual report said. As Wheeler's family mourns his death, they're also left wondering what went wrong. "We're devastated," said Natalia Matias, Wheeler's biological cousin and adoptive sister. "I wouldn't want another family to go through what we're going through right now to lose a 14-year-old little brother, or for another child to decide this is the only way out," she continued. "I think my family just wants to prevent this from happening to someone else." The teenager's death is being investigated by authorities, including state and Methuen police, DCF and the Department of Early Education and Care. The Department of Early Education and Care did not respond to a request for comment as of press time. Denis Grandbois, president and CEO of St. Ann's, said his staff is "deeply affected" by the death and working with authorities on the investigation. "This is an organizational crisis," Grandbois said. "Sebastian was loved here." "It's not right" The terms of DCF's involvement with Wheeler were not clear as of press time due to confidentiality laws, authorities said. His family said he was adopted from another family member and had dealt with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autism spectrum disorder. Police reports indicate Wheeler was in DCF custody and that he was reported missing from group homes in Methuen three times. The first, in September 2014, was from The Key Program on Mystic Street. The other two times were from St. Ann's on Jan. 1 of this year and again on June 2, just three weeks before his death. He was located and returned to the homes all three times. In the days leading up to his death, Wheeler's family said he was contacting them asking for reassurances that he was loved. "We were really close before he passed away. It surprises us he would take his life," Matias said. Wheeler's suicide came just a couple of weeks after his eighth-grade graduation and just a few weeks shy of his 15th birthday. The police report from the day of Wheeler's suicide details the response from St. Ann's staff and the Methuen Police and Fire Departments. It says that a police sergeant who was already in the facility's vicinity was on scene doing rescue breaths while a St. Ann's staff member performed CPR. Efforts continued until Wheeler was transported by ambulance to Lawrence General Hospital, the report says. Wheeler was taken to Tufts medical center in Boston, where doctors said he had no brain activity. State police detectives were notified in accordance with protocol for deaths and began an investigation, Methuen police said. The Police Department received notice that Wheeler had died around 2:30 a.m. June 22. Grandbois, of St. Ann's, said staff there "responded to it as well as possible." "We did everything we could," he said. Days after Wheeler's death, his family — members of whom had come from several states to join together in mourning — had set up a small vigil for him in their Lawrence home, including a photograph flanked by candles. His wake was held Thursday. "It's not right to take a child from his mother for a better place, and for him to die in that better place," said Rose Matias, translating for Katti Matias, Wheeler's adoptive mother. DCF reforms St. Ann's Home & School was established in 1925 as an orphanage by the pastor of the former St. Ann's Parish in Lawrence. In 1966, it was reorganized into a residential treatment center for children with emotional issues, according to its website. The group home program was established in 1972, followed by a program in 1982 offering services for children who are either at high risk of out-of-home placements, or for families of children who are returning home from those placements. Wheeler is not the first suicide of someone under the care of St. Ann's in recent memory. In 2011, authorities conducted an extensive search for 15-year-old Brynne Kurmas, who was believed to have walked away from St. Ann's and jumped off the Spicket Falls footbridge. Her body was pulled from the river a few weeks later. Of the critical incident reports reviewed by the Office of the Child Advocate in the fiscal year 2016 report, there were 35 fatalities, 10 near-fatalities and two serious bodily injuries. The majority of the deaths were children ages 3 and under. Two youths between the ages of 16 to 20 committed suicide, and two near-fatalities were attempted suicides. These reports include both children who are in DCF custody and those who are in the care of DCF, meaning the family has an open case with the agency but the child remains at home instead of being placed elsewhere, according to the OCA. Stories of deaths and mistreatment of children under the watch of DCF have plagued the department for years, leading Gov. Charlie Baker in 2015 to say he would implement changes to the state agency. Baker's office did not respond to comment by press time. DCF issued a statement to The Eagle-Tribune outlining some of those changes. "Since September 2015, DCF's been committed to a full and complete systematic reform that includes: hiring a full-time medical director and medical social workers for all 29 DCF offices; hiring an additional 280 social workers and 96 managers; reducing caseloads for social workers; implementing new policies and improving oversight," said DCF spokeswoman Andrea Grossman. Some of the new policies include a new intake policy with a set of procedures that guide DCF's review and investigations of reports of abuse and neglect. There is also a policy to strengthen supervisory support for social workers by, in part, identifying practice areas that require special attention, including parental history, the parent's ability to care safely for a child, and risk factors such as substance abuse, mental health challenges or domestic violence, according to the department. "Any child fatality is one too many as there is no greater priority for DCF than to keep kids safe," Grossman said. Follow Lisa Kashinsky on Twitter @lisakash23. Source: http://www.eagletribune.com/news/merrimack_valley/we-re-devastated/article_58fd2536-f1d3-5603-8432-c96af9fedf3b.html

Jersey's 'house of horrors' children's home should be demolished, abuse inquiry report concludes Haut de la Garenne, dubbed 'the house of horrors', where hundreds of crimes were carried out over decades before it was shut in the 1980s Credit: EDDIE MULHOLLAND for The Telegraph [Olivia Rudgard](#), Social Affairs Correspondent 3 July 2017 • 3:15pm The notorious Haut de la Garenne children's home in Jersey should be demolished, a long-awaited report into abuse and mistreatment of youngsters on the island has recommended. In its final report the inquiry, chaired by Frances Oldham QC, said the buildings were "a reminder of an unhappy past or shameful history for many people". It added that "consideration [should] be given as to how the buildings can be demolished and that any youth or outdoor activity or services for children located on the site should be in modern buildings bearing no resemblance to what

went before". The report found that the care system on the island had been dogged by long-running failings caused by "state indifference" and a failure to keep up with modern social care practice. There was "an absence of political and professional will to set or monitor standards of care", it said, and the island's care homes did not develop the standards which were widespread in the rest of the world. Multiple children's homes are criticised by the report, which found that some of them subjected children to an "abusive" regime which was devoid of affection and did not prioritise their wellbeing and happiness. The report concludes: "Unsuitable people who were appointed to management roles, often on the basis of local connections, lacked the leadership skills to manage and raise practice standards and had little up-to-date knowledge of child care theory and practice. As a result, ill-suited carers continued to look after children in unsuitable facilities, using outdated practices. The consequences for the children in their care were devastating and, in many instances, lifelong". Police searching the former Haut de la Garenne children's home in 2008 Credit: EDDIE MULHOLLAND for The Telegraph There was also no way for children to report allegations of abuse until the 1990s, and many were too afraid to speak out, it said, and a "patrician and hierarchical" society in which "children in care were marginalised" contributed to a culture of disbelief. Recommendations in multiple reports commissioned into what happened in the Jersey care system have been ignored, it added. In Jersey Home for Boys and Jersey Home for Girls, children were subject to a regime in the late 1950s that had been substantially unchanged since 1924. Children were subject to "cruel and degrading punishments" such as being "humiliated and beaten with nettles for bedwetting", the report found. At one of the most notorious care homes, Blanche Pierre, children lived in an "oppressive and fearful" environment, and house parents Jane and Alan Maguire had an "inexcusable" approach to bedwetting which constituted "humiliating and degrading treatment", it said. Police forensics officers inside the former Haut de la Garenne children's home in February 2008 Credit: EDDIE MULHOLLAND for The Telegraph It added that Mrs Maguire's friendship with senior child care officer Brenda Chappell was "unprofessional" because it prevented proper scrutiny of the home. Jane and Alan Maguire were charged with abusing children but police dropped the case in 1998 due to a lack of evidence. Another school, Les Chênes was "managed in a strict and physically dominant way", it said. Child protection groups said recommendations including a new Commissioner for Children and Children's Rights Officer, and an "empowered" inspectorate making regular inspections of children's homes should be "implemented without delay". The report also said that Jersey's residency rules could be relaxed to make finding quality staff easier, and new legislation should be introduced to ensure that the island keeps up-to-date with neighbouring countries. An spokesman for the NSPCC said: "Appallingly children who spoke out about abuse were not listened to and those in authority failed to act as part of a culture of fear. Recommendations to improve Jersey's care systems were not just missed but were ignored." The inquiry was set up to establish what went wrong over many years in the care system on the island, which has been [rocked by horrific revelations of sex abuse](#) against children in care. The most notorious of the Jersey children's homes was Haut de la Garenne, dubbed 'the house of horrors' Credit: Anthony Devlin/PA The most notorious of them was Haut de la Garenne, [dubbed "the house of horrors"](#), where hundreds of crimes were carried out over decades before it was shut in the 1980s. Paedophile [Jimmy Savile](#) was implicated in the home's shady past, with an allegation received by police in 2008 that an indecent assault occurred there in the 1970s. But it was decided there was insufficient evidence to proceed. The States of Jersey asked the inquiry to probe the abuse and mistreatment of youngsters placed in children's homes and in foster care on the island from the Second World War. In December 2010, the island's chief minister Terry Le Sueur issued a formal apology to all victims who suffered in the states' residential care system. The apology followed the end of an investigation by the States of Jersey Police, codenamed Operation Rectangle, into historical child sexual, emotional and physical abuse in institutions. The probe reported 553 alleged offences between September 2007 and December 2010 – and most, 315, were reported to have been committed at the Haut de la Garenne. Police identified 151 named offenders and 192 victims but just eight people were prosecuted for 145 offences, with seven convictions. Four of them related to Haut de la Garenne. The probe left the reputation of the island's police tarnished with claims of murders at Haut de la Garenne made in 2008 later discredited after a piece of "skull" was found to be coconut and what had been called "punishment rooms" where children were tortured were found to be too small for an adult to stand up in. Jimmy Savile was implicated in the shady past of Haut de la Garenne children's home Credit: Alex Maguire/REX/Shutterstock Then in 2013, the States Assembly agreed terms of reference for a public inquiry to carry out a wide-ranging investigation into the historical abuse in Jersey. Inquiry chair Frances Oldham QC promised a "robust and fearless" examination of what went wrong and to find answers for the victims. At a preliminary hearing in 2014, Ms Oldham said they would investigate what abuse took place, whether it was reported and what was done, and whether abuse was covered up. She also promised to review the actions of the police, the justice system, politicians and the various government agencies to consider how each responded to child abuse in Jersey. Three phases of hearings were held in public in St Helier between July 2014 and June 2016. Source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/07/03/jerseys-house-horrors-childrens-home-should-demolished-abuse/>

Juvenile corrections officer accused of injuring inmate By KRISTIN HOPPA khoppa@wacotrib.com Kristin Hoppa 2 hrs ago (0) McNeil A Texas Juvenile Justice Department correctional officer was arrested Wednesday, accused of pushing a handcuffed inmate into a wall face first then lying on top of the inmate June 24 at the McLennan County State Juvenile Correctional Facility in Mart. Kerry A. McNeil, 42, of Killeen, was arrested on a Class A misdemeanor charge of official oppression after the incident. The juvenile, who was also in a mask to prevent spitting on officers, received three 3-centimeter-long scrapes to the face and an "egg-sized" bruise on the forehead, according to the affidavit. Details of what led to the incident are not included in the affidavit. The age of the inmate and the reason for being in custody also were not included. A correctional sergeant reviewed surveillance video that shows the inmate's hands were securely handcuffed during the push and while McNeil lay on the inmate, who was face-down on a concrete floor, according to the affidavit. McNeil has been employed at the correctional facility since July 2014, records state. He was arrested and taken to McLennan County Jail, where he remained Thursday afternoon with bond listed at \$1,000. Source: http://www.wacotrib.com/news/police/juvenile-corrections-officer-accused-of-injuring-inmate/article_015f6abc-2e9e-5437-aa2e-023ad1accfe6.html

Juvenile Detention Officer Accused of Sexually Assaulting Teenage Inmate Posted By [Sierra Juarez](#) on Thu, Jul 6, 2017 at 10:46 AM Bexar County Sheriff's Office A Bexar County Juvenile Detention officer accused of sexually assaulting a teenage inmate was arrested Wednesday. The county sheriff Javier Salazar arrested Jasquel Jamal Spell, 23, after an inmate reported a possible inappropriate relationship between the detention officer and a 15-year-old girl. On one occasion, Spell removed the girl from her room forcing her to engage in "unlawful sexual acts," according to [Kens5](#). Officers say they found video surveillance that showed a sexual encounter between Spell and the inmate. Texas Juvenile Investigator officials reported that Spell confessed to the crime over the phone. "The most tragic thing in this case is that somebody like Spell, in a position of authority for this young lady, was obviously there for her protection yet used that position to prey upon her," Salazar told the [Express-News](#). Salazar said further charges could be filed against the detention officer if officials find evidence of any other victims. Spell is in the Bexar County Jail waiting for a judge to set a bail. Abuse against young inmates has been on the rise, according to [ProPublica](#). A 2016 Justice Department Bureau [survey](#) found that nearly 10 percent of youth in detention centers have reported sexual abuse by either the staff or peers. Source: <https://www.sacurrent.com/the-daily/archives/2017/07/06/juvenile-detention-officer-accused-of-sexually-assaulting-teenage-inmate>

Videos show teen inmates being pepper sprayed at Wisconsin youth prison From the [Alleged abuses uncovered at Wisconsin youth prison](#) series [MOLLY BECK](#) mbeck@madison.com Molly Beck | [Wisconsin State Journal](#) 4 hrs ago This Dec. 10, 2015 aerial photo, shows Lincoln Hills School in Irma. A federal judge in June branded Wisconsin's juvenile prison for boys as a "troubled institution," saying it puts too many inmates in isolation and over-relies on pepper spray and shackles when other less intrusive alternatives to control behavior could be used. MARK HOFFMAN, MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL prev next Videos of two teen inmates being sprayed repeatedly by guards at the state's youth prison in Irma were released to the public on Thursday. The recordings were shown during a two-day court hearing last month in lawsuit filed against the state Department of Corrections by former and current inmates at the Lincoln Hills School for Boys and Copper Lake School for Girls juvenile correctional facility. The inmates are being represented by the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin and the Juvenile Law Center. One recording from April 2016 shows a female inmate being sprayed after refusing to go to her cell. Instead, the girl remained in the hallway pacing around. Eventually, a guard pepper-sprayed her when she continued to refuse to walk into her room. A guard sprayed her again after she dropped on the hallway floor with other guards holding her. In a second video, guards twice sprayed an inmate who was inside his cell but refused to move his arms into the cell. The plaintiffs' attorney showed two videos of incidents during which prison staff used pepper spray on inmates: one from a fixed security camera in the hallway of a Copper Lake housing unit and another from a handheld camera used to film an incident in a Lincoln Hills unit. Redacted versions of the recordings were released Thursday after Judge James Peterson denied a request made on June 20 by lawyers representing the plaintiffs to show the videos in private. The Wisconsin State Journal, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, The Associated Press, the Wisconsin Newspaper Association and the Wisconsin Freedom of Information Council had urged Peterson to allow the videos to be shown in court, and the judge agreed if those in the courtroom agreed not to identify the juveniles in the videos. The recordings highlighted the youth prison's practice of using pepper spray to subdue teen inmates at the prison — a

type of behavior management that expert witnesses for the plaintiffs argued was causing permanent damage to the teen inmates emotional development when used in conjunction with solitary confinement and restraints. Peterson ordered DOC and the plaintiffs' attorneys to come up with a plan to dramatically reduce the use of all three techniques at the prison. The plan is due Friday. Tristan Cook, spokesman for the DOC, said in a statement that the department has made "significant changes to institution operations and continues to identify opportunities for further improvement." "We look forward to furthering our efforts to reduce the use of chemical agents and restraints, decrease the frequency and duration of youth stays in restrictive housing, and enhance education and programming provided to youth at Copper Lake School/Lincoln Hills School," he said. Source: http://host.madison.com/wsj/news/local/courts/videos-show-teen-inmates-being-pepper-sprayed-at-wisconsin-youth/article_ecacf326-5d08-5745-9806-5640af4015ab.html

State investigating group home after claims of neglect The owner of a group home was not arrested but sheriff's investigators said they sent five felony counts of neglect to the state attorney, who will decide whether to prosecute. Share Shares Copy Link {copyShortcut} to copy Link copied! Updated: 5:16 PM EDT Jul 6, 2017 PALM COAST, Fla. — The owner of a group home was not arrested but sheriff's investigators said they sent five felony counts of neglect to the state attorney, who will decide whether to prosecute. Funmi Oduyejo said the state inspector, who insisted two residents from his group home on Braddock Lane in Palm Coast go to the hospital, is new and unfamiliar with their medical histories. Advertisement He said resident's leg swelling the inspector found alarming is because the severely disabled patients use wheelchairs to get around. State inspectors and sheriff's deputies said all five disabled residents were in jeopardy because of the heat. The air conditioning, which was finally repaired Thursday, went out Monday. Temperatures in the house reached 91 degrees. The owner said the air conditioning compressor went out and a new one had to be ordered but the Fourth of July holiday delayed the repairs. The state sent three of the five residents who were in good health be moved to a hotel. A spokesman with the state said all the residents will have the option to move to a different group home. The group home owner said he checked on those who are hospitalized. State officials told WESH 2 they will be regularly inspecting the group home just to ensure that the residents are safe. They said they will look at this one and another that the same owner has in the neighborhood. Source: <http://www.wesh.com/article/state-investigating-group-home-after-claims-of-neglect/10269627>

Inslee signs bill to fund pilot project on legal representation for foster kids Posted By [Wilson Criscione](#) on Fri, Jul 7, 2017 at 2:54 PM click to enlarge Washington will fund a pilot project that will provide legal representation to foster kids in two counties where those kids would otherwise be left navigating court proceedings with no attorney. Gov. Jay Inslee signed the bill Thursday — [Senate Bill 5890](#) — that makes improvements to the state's foster care system, including a total of \$1.4 million over the next two years for the project to test legal representation for foster kids. "We are definitely considering this a win," says Alicia LeVezu of the UW School of Law's children and youth advocacy clinic. Inslee also signed a separate bill that creates the Department of Children, Youth and Families, which will combine multiple agencies overseeing services for vulnerable children into one. Currently, Washington has no law that requires abused or neglected children to have an attorney during dependency proceedings. In Spokane County, children are automatically appointed counsel starting at age 12, but other many other counties don't have similar rules or policies. That can effectively leave kids without a voice during critical conversations about where they will live and their future, [according to several lawyers, children's advocates and state lawmakers](#). Rep. Noel Frame (D-Seattle) sponsored a bill this year that would have granted all kids over 2 an attorney in dependency hearings, but the bill [failed to make it out of the legislature](#). Instead, the state will study the effects that legal representation would have on foster kids in four smaller counties in the state — Grant, Lewis, Douglas and Whatcom. Two of those counties will have attorneys provided for kids, and the other two will act as a control group for the state to quantify differences in experiences for children represented by an attorney and for children or are not. The funding for the project goes until December 31, 2019, at which point the Washington state center for court research will report its findings to the legislature. The UW's LeVezu authored a report on the topic last year. Researchers in King, Snohomish and Pierce counties found that children had an 84 percent change of having their opinion shared with the court if both a Court Appointed Special Advocate (volunteers that represent children's best interests) and an attorney advocated for kids. Yet less than 20 percent had their opinion shared in court with only a CASA but no attorney. Many attorneys argue that children need attorneys so that they may have a greater chance of staying with family members or to achieve permanency, rather than languish in the foster care system. Only attorneys can file motions in court on behalf of children. "This study will provide critical information for lawmakers about the importance of attorneys in reducing system-wide inefficiencies and expenses," Hillary Madsen, staff attorney at Columbia Legal Services, said in a statement. LeVezu says this state study is exciting because it will look at permanency outcomes, child welfare indicators and overall child well-being. "I'm hoping it will demonstrate the positive impacts of these kids having advocates," she says. Source: <https://www.inlander.com/Bloglander/archives/2017/07/07/inslee-signs-bill-to-fund-pilot-project-on-legal-representation-for-foster-kids>

US's richest boarding school showed anti-gay video [Newsweek 10 Jul 2017 at 17:03 ET](#) A former student at a Pennsylvania high school claims he was forced to watch anti-gay propaganda after teachers discovered him watching homosexual porn. Adam Dobson, who attended the **The Milton Hershey School** from 2010 to 2013, claimed in federal court that the private boarding school forced 'anti-gay therapy' on him, prompting him to attempt suicide during his time there. Dobson, who was expelled from the school in 2013, allegedly after a suicide attempt, said he was made to watch a film made by 'ex-gay' activist Sy Rogers called One of the Boys, by the 'parents' of his boarding house, [The Philadelphia Inquirer](#) reported. The video advises against the content being shown to minors. In court documents seen by The Inquirer, the school's lawyers admitted such footage was shown to students, although it did not state whether or not the same kind of video was shown to Dobson. However, the school initially denied Dobson's charges, stating in 2016 that the claims against them were "an outrageous allegation and a practice the administration would never allow or condone." On Friday, a spokesperson for the school told The Inquirer: "Unequivocally, the school does not promote or endorse any program that could be remotely characterized as gay conversion therapy. "Any suggestion otherwise is a gross mischaracterization of our values and the environment on our campus," the spokesperson added. The country's wealthiest private school is currently facing lawsuits over two former students, one from Dobson and another from the parents of former student Abbie Bartels, who committed suicide in June 2013 after allegedly being banned from the school after she was treated for suicidal thoughts. The suit filed by Bartels' parents stated: "Abbie was terminated by [the school] and released back to a poor, unstable, and at-risk environment, contrary to any reasonable treatment." Both cases are being heard at the federal court in Harrisburg. Source: <http://www.rawstory.com/2017/07/uss-richest-boarding-school-dhowed-anti-gay-video/>

Lansing group helps adults with disabilities live on their own, in community with others By [Stateside Staff](#) • Jul 10, 2017 Related Programs: [The Next Idea Stateside TweetShareGoogle+Email](#) A volunteer landscaping crew stands outside LINC's first home, which will house three individuals in its pilot intentional community. Courtesy of LINC [The Next Idea](#) Parents of children on the autism spectrum face significant challenges in getting the right education, support and other life tools for their kids. But the difficulties don't go away when these kids grow up. Can they live alone, support themselves, be a part of society? And what happens when their adult caregivers age out of watching over them? Mary Douglass is one of many working to combat these challenges. Douglass is the president of Lansing Intentional Communities, or [LINC](#). The organization's goal is to promote the creation of spaces, called intentional communities, where adults with developmental disabilities live together. "We're putting these individuals in close proximity with each other so we can help them create community together and support them as they create community with their surrounding neighborhood," Douglass said. "Really the individual is making their own self-determined choices about where they live, who they live with, how they get supported, what the neighborhood looks like." Douglass says there's no one model or format the communities must follow. LINC recently bought its first house for three people, but several apartments, for example, could work just as well. "It doesn't matter how we acquire that housing. What really matters is that we're being intentional about keeping ourselves close together and creating community with each other." LINC then inserts what it calls a community builder, Douglass said, to live within the community. They might plan outings, or just help out when needed. "I like to think of it as an RA, like when you go to college," Douglass said. The intentional community model is different from a group home. It purposefully has less of a rigid schedule to give as much independent choice as possible to individuals. This is a fluid model that can change and improve with different circumstances, Douglass said, but it's a distinct improvement from the past. Source: <http://michiganradio.org/post/lansing-group-helps-adults-disabilities-live-their-own-community-others>

California Says Goodbye to Group Homes for Probation Youth by [Brian Rinker](#) July 12, 2017 | [Brian Rinker](#) Amiri Whisenton was 10 years old when he was sent to foster care. He tore through so many foster homes across Alameda County he can't remember them all. The foster families were often either too strict or too lenient. He'd get kicked out for either staying out past curfew, smoking cannabis, being disrespectful, or for doing all three. Sometimes he just ran away and didn't come back. "I wasn't bad, but I was wild," Whisenton said, now 19 and living in East Oakland. "I wouldn't listen to nobody. I was

disrespectful. I was off the hook.” Whisenton had found a pseudo-family on the streets. He hung out with older guys and started smoking cannabis. By 14, he was carrying a gun and robbing people. He went on a day-long crime spree that landed him in juvenile hall. After that, Whisenton was placed in group homes. After a judge extended his stay in a group home rather than releasing him to his father, Whisenton was so frustrated that he ran away and became homeless. Whisenton’s journey is not unique. Thousands of foster families struggle to support high-needs kids like Whisenton. Once inside the California’s probation system, kids who are removed from their home are usually sent to live with either a relative, a group home or juvenile hall. For Whisenton, his chances of getting back to a foster home after being locked up were near zero, at least while on probation. And in Alameda County, most kids who don’t have relatives to stay with are sent to a group home outside the county, sometimes out of the state. With the advent of new state laws that restrict the use of group homes, probation departments are looking to find ways to help youth like Whisenton so they don’t fall through cracks and come out more damaged than when they entered the system. Sabrina Forte, a juvenile justice attorney for Bay Legal Aid, said many of her clients struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder and depression as a result of poverty and growing up without a parent. And doing drugs is a common coping mechanism for them. To deal, “a lot of our kids self-medicate,” she said. Forte said that if Whisenton and others like him are going to get the help they need, probation has to begin to view these behaviors through a “mental health and poverty lens.” “Amiri’s behaviors are symptomatic of broader trauma or mental health,” said Forte, who represented Whisenton when he was 17. New California laws known as the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) have mandated that juvenile probation departments embrace the latest in child psychology. That is, youth do best when they are living in a family-like setting and receiving community-based services. Starting this year, California began rolling out the reforms, which will also heavily impact the state’s child welfare system. Under CCR group homes are no longer an option to house kids for more than six months. As a result, the new mandates have probation department across the state hustling to the make the necessary changes from a disciplinary corrections agency that relies heavily on group homes to one that now must place kids in the least restrictive setting possible — typically with relatives or friends or foster homes. And for high-needs kids like Whisenton, CCR requires probation to have a robust infrastructure of foster homes as well as a network of therapeutic and wrap-around services necessary for these families to support the youth. In additional, CCR will increase a number of resources — financial and training — so that families are better equipped to deal with kids who might smoke weed or have other behavioral problems. Not alienate them or kick them out. The Alameda County Probation Department has historically sent most of its kids who can’t live with a relative to a group home in another county or state. To meet the mandates of CCR, the department will need more family placements. It has contracted with two Foster Family Agencies, or FFAs, which are private organizations that place kids with foster homes. These agencies will help find placements for kids and help train family or relatives in becoming approved probation placements. “For the probation department, this is just a whole new game. So, there was a much steeper learning curve,” said Stacey Wooten, deputy chief of Alameda County’s juvenile probation. In preparation for CCR, Wooten said that probation has tried to place some youth with an FFA. But most of the kids didn’t get matched because they weren’t appropriate for their clientele. “We kind of expected that because of the stigma attached to probation youth,” Wooten said. They did place one youth, however, but Wooten wasn’t aware of his current status. In the past “if there was no friend or relative willing to work with the youth, we were sort of forced to send them to out-of-town residential placements,” Wooten said. “CCR has really caused a change in how we do our work in probation.” CCR provides more money for family and friends who want to step up and house a youth. But to become an approved placement requires 12 hours of training, background checks and psycho-social evaluation. All of which can be barriers for them. “It can be very daunting for some of our families,” Wooten said. “There is such a stigma attached to the probation youth that we think it may be difficult to find those families — not impossible but difficult.” To help place a probation-involved kid in the most appropriate setting, probation departments will now work together with child welfare services, the courts, the family or guardian to ensure the best options for the youth. All group homes in the state will have to get relicensed as short-term therapeutic centers. In June, Alameda had 51 youth living in out-of-home residential placements, but only three were located in-county, in Oakland. The rest were sent all over California or out of state, as far away as Pennsylvania. As CCR continues to be implemented, youth will still remain in out-of-county treatment centers or group homes. No effort yet is being made to bring them home. “I don’t think it is appropriate to bring them home in the middle of treatment just because of the change of how we do business in the future,” Wooten said. In the meantime, kids like Whisenton continue to get lost navigating a system in which they feel helpless and alone. Whisenton believes the old system set him up to fail. Whisenton now lives with his girlfriend, their nine-month-old daughter and his girlfriend’s brothers in East Oakland. He works as an in-home supportive services provider for his mom in West Oakland. With a son on the way, he also receives state foster care benefits, including \$889 for himself under the California’s extended foster care (AB 12) and \$900 for his daughter. He is hoping to get a warehouse job and a Section 8 voucher that would offer a new home to settle down with his growing family. Whisenton said he no longer admires the street life. “I just want to live a comfortable life and raise my kids,” he said. “I don’t want no drama.” Source: <https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/analysis/california-says-goodbye-to-group-homes-for-probation-youth>

Dayton group home operator could lose license over conviction Dayton group home owner could lose license over forgery conviction County says home’s 14 clients will be cared for if home shuts down. [local](#) By [Josh Sweigart](#) - Staff Writer ... Clark’s Boarding Home, 915 W. Grand Ave. Posted: 4:55 p.m. Tuesday, July 11, 2017 A mental health residential home in Dayton is at risk of losing its license to operate after its owner pleaded guilty to forging checks — and now faces additional theft charges. Clark’s Boarding Home, 915 W. Grand Ave., currently houses 14 clients, according to an employee of the home who wouldn’t give her name. State records show the home is owned and operated by Karen L. Clark, who told the newspaper she is appealing a June ruling by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services that bars her from owning a adult care facility for seven years. [RELATED: Dayton mental health agency has national impact](#) Under state law, individuals who have been convicted of certain crimes, including forgery, are prohibited from working in a residential facility, the department said in its ruling. Clark pleaded guilty to three counts of forgery in Delaware County in 2015. Those charges followed an investigation by Westerville police into allegations Clark deposited fraudulent checks claiming to be from two Dayton non-profits — Choices in Community Living and Senior Resource Connection — into a business bank account in the Columbus area and then withdrew money from the account before the checks were declined, according to Westerville police records. The investigation also revealed that Clark wrote fraudulent cashier’s checks from Day Air Credit Union to a Marriott Execustay in Westerville, those same police records show. Clark pleaded guilty in November 2015 and was given community control and ordered to pay \$5,240 in restitution to U.S. Bank and \$6,100 in restitution to Execustay. But a Montgomery County grand jury last month indicted her on theft charges stemming from checks cashed in 2014. [CLICK HERE FOR MORE FROM THIS REPORTER](#) The checks were from Senior Resource Connection for clients sent to Clark’s Boarding Home. Senior Resource Connection is a non-profit that provides support services for seniors, adults with special needs and their caregivers throughout the Miami Valley, according to the organization’s website. A Dayton police department report from last November shows Susan Spencer, supervisor of financial services for the non-profit, told police that Clark’s Boarding Home double-cashed rent checks from Senior Resource Connection four times in 2014, totaling \$2,652. “It appears from the copies of bank documents that the check was initially deposited and then a few days later taken and deposited at a ‘Check ‘n Go,’” the police report says. A call to Spencer to ask about the case was not returned. [RELATED: County strained by efforts to curb drug deaths](#) Clark said in an interview that she plans to appeal the ruling by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to suspend her license. Montgomery County property records show The Huntington National Bank purchased the property in March from KL Clark Property Management LLC. “The facility is not closing,” said Clark, who said another entity is taking over the business. When asked about the theft charges in Montgomery County, Clark said they were against a different Karen L. Clark. Both the Montgomery County case and the one in Delaware County, however, list the same name, mailing address, birthday and affiliation with Clark’s Boarding House. State business records say the trade name Clark’s Boarding Home was cancelled in May for failure to file required paperwork. The trade name was controlled by K & J Adult Day Care, which has a business license listing Karen Clark as its statutory agent. Ann Stevens, a spokeswoman with the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board of Montgomery County, said the residents at Clark’s Boarding House will be cared for if the facility closes. “They all have case managers who will work with the providers to find housing and whatever else they need,” she said. Source: <http://www.daytondailynews.com/news/crime-law/group-home-operator-risks-losing-license-over-forgery-conviction/iRtwuJ8eT1R8CXKnP6fM/>

17-year-old commits suicide in group home after assault at DOC halfway house Corrections won't explain lack of monitoring [Jessica Arp](#) Posted: Jul 17, 2017 08:29 PM CDT Updated: Jul 18, 2017 06:41 AM CDT 17-year-old commits suicide in group... MADISON, Wis. - Wisconsin Department of Corrections officials would not explain to News 3 why daily monitoring was not done of sex offenders at a home where a 17-year-old girl reported a sexual assault last year. That young woman later died inside a group home in Dane County that also closed following citations from the state. News 3 has spent the last year investigating the case and supervision in both homes. The sexual assault was reported in July of 2016, at 3150 St. Paul Ave. in the town of Blooming Grove.

The area, while seemingly in Madison, is under the jurisdiction of the Dane County Sheriff's Department. "We learned there had been a party hosted at an apartment that was actually housing individuals under DOC supervision as sexual predators," said Dane County Sheriff Dave Mahoney. Court documents show the 17-year-old girl smoked weed and took Ecstasy and was taken to the party by a man on the Dane County Bail Monitoring program. Investigators say she was told by the three men who lived at the house, who were all registered sex offenders, that "she wanted this" and she reported being repeatedly raped. One offender who was arrested for the crime, James Phillips, told investigators the four men were "taking turns," that the girl was "tossed around like a rag doll" and estimated she was assaulted 11 times. The apartments where the incident happened were emergency housing for recently-released sex offenders, a place the DOC says was used for offenders at risk of homelessness. Documents released to News 3 by the DOC show that regular daily monitoring of the offenders at the home did not happen. "You had to rely upon one another, one predator in charge of watching another one," Mahoney said of the situation his investigators found. "So kind of like putting the wolf inside the henhouse." Those probation and parole documents show that the sex offenders were only seen in occasional home visits over the year prior to the assault. The offenders largely also knew when agents were coming, as nearly all visits were scheduled ahead of time. There was an agent at the home the day of the alleged assault on July 7. She was meeting with Reginald Patton to move him into the house. Patton was later one of the four men charged in the case. Another offender charged, Stephon Hiler, [has already pleaded guilty to his role in the assault](#). His attorney says he has cognitive issues, and DOC documents from the day he was placed in the home show he was "low-functioning" and could not read or write. "It's a travesty what happened, but part of the blame lies in them putting this cognitively disabled person inside this facility with no one to supervise them," said attorney Michael Covey. Covey says he will ask for a shorter sentence for Hiler in part because he says the DOC bears some responsibility for what happened, and they set his client up to fail. "There were drugs being used, lots of sex happening in this building and that's from police reports and witness testimony," Covey said. "It was animal house." The Department of Corrections declined News 3's repeated requests for interviews. In a statement, a spokesman said the department discontinued the lease on the home and was no longer using any emergency housing locations in Dane County. Instead they're using "transitional housing" programs and have a policy that requires additional monitoring beyond monthly agent visits. "Contracted staff must conduct three site checks per day in addition to regular home visits from probation and parole agents," said spokesman Tristan Cook in an email. But the question remains why the Department of Corrections wasn't regularly monitoring the residence before this happened, especially given that it is just more than half a mile from the St. Paul Avenue house. Department officials would not tell News 3 if anyone was disciplined or fired and would not release any internal investigation results. The second home connected to this young woman, though, is where she met her end. The victim had been living at a group home in Dane County called the Spohn Avenue House for Girls, which has since closed. Jennifer Ginsburg, program manager at Safe Harbor Child Advocacy Center, is familiar with this case and the victim. "We have a teenager that was victimized by two failed systems," Ginsburg said. According to documents provided by the Department of Children and Families, the victim reported the rape to a staff member at the home at 1:30 a.m. on July 8. It wasn't until she told the group home director nine hours later that police were called, as is required by the state. Then one month later, on Aug. 5, 2016, the victim of this sexual assault hung herself from a rod in her closet at the group home. She later died at the hospital. "We know that kids who are sexually assaulted are much more likely to have suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts, and it's awful," Ginsburg said. "A group home should be a place where we're able to stop a suicide from happening." The group home was cited by the state in August of last year for violating abuse and neglect reporting requirements for not reporting the sexual assault immediately. In October, the nonprofit that ran the home was issued another order saying the home "failed to provide a safe, stable and humane environment" and ordering it to correct the environment or face sanctions. Rather than take corrective action, Orion Family Services, which ran the group home, chose to close its doors. The executive director of Orion Family Services, Hugh Myers, declined to be interviewed by News 3, but said that discussions to close the home were already underway at the time of the order. He also disputed findings in the state documents, saying they reflect "a highly inaccurate assessment of the situation." Those in the community say their hope is that the right people are watching next time. "I know that the only way for this tragedy to not be completely in vain is for there to be changes," Ginsburg said. News 3 reached out to the family of the victim, which declined to comment but said they had retained an attorney. Source: <http://www.channel3000.com/news/17-year-old-commits-suicide-in-group-home-after-assault-at-doc-halfway-house/589013743>

State's top child welfare agency is doing bad job overseeing foster care providers. DiNapoli study says OCFS is doing bad job overseeing foster care providers: report BY [Glenn Blain](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Friday, July 21, 2017, 5:40 PM [facebook](#) [Tweet](#) [email](#) State Controller Thomas DiNapoli's report blasted the Office of Children and Family Services for doing a poor job overseeing foster care providers in NY. (Mike Groll/AP) BY [Glenn Blain](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Friday, July 21, 2017, 5:40 PM ALBANY — The state's top child welfare agency is doing a poor job overseeing foster care providers in New York, according to an audit made public Friday. State Controller Thomas DiNapoli's report blasted the Office of Children and Family Services for failing to ensure that local governments and volunteer agencies provide foster care that meets state requirements. "The agency is not ensuring that caseworkers are making timely and frequent contact with children, their parents and their foster parents," DiNapoli said. "While the demands on the agency are significant, oversight needs to be improved." DiNapoli's auditors reviewed a sample of 150 cases from a group of upstate and suburban counties and found that in 33 instances there was no record of caseworkers making the required two visitations within 30 days of a child's placement. [DiNapoli hails volunteers at Citizenship Now! center as 'heroes'](#) In one instance, a foster child in Schenectady County did not receive a visit from a caseworker until 91 days after placement. DiNapoli's auditors also found instances where there was no evidence that foster care providers had been properly certified or that criminal background checks had been conducted on foster care providers or others who come in contact with the children. The failure to ensure certification increased the risk that children would be placed in an "unacceptable environment," the audit stated. In a blistering statement, OCFS officials rejected DiNapoli's findings. "This audit contains fundamental and egregious errors in the interpretation of state regulations," the agency said in a statement. "The OSC ignored voluminous documentation provided by OCFS refuting the accuracy of its findings. The audit is factually incorrect and cannot be responsibly viewed as reliable in assessing OCFS's performance in its oversight of New York State's foster care program, which currently helps 16,000 children whose parents are unable to care for them." Source: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/ocfs-bad-job-overseeing-foster-care-providers-report-article-1.3345871>

Arkansas girl announces St. George sexual assault lawsuit By [The Independent](#) - 07 25 17 - 6:00 am On July 26 at 11 a.m. in the conference room at Courtyard by Marriott in St. George, a mother and her teenage daughter from Arkansas will speak at a press event to discuss a lawsuit they will file earlier that day detailing alleged sexual assaults at a therapeutic boarding school and treatment center for troubled teenagers in the St. George area. They will discuss the alleged sexual assaults, betrayal of trust, and broken promises. Attorneys Craig Vernon and Wes Larsen represent this family and will be present as well. Source: <http://suindependent.com/arkansas-girl-announces-st-george-sexual-assault-lawsuit/>

Rolla woman pleads guilty in federal fraud case Posted: Jul 24, 2017 9:45 AM PDT Updated: Jul 24, 2017 9:45 AM PDT By Associated Press_Credit: KMOV ST. LOUIS (AP) — A central Missouri woman has pleaded guilty to federal charges for defrauding her employer. Prosecutors said Monday that 54-year-old Denise Rea Barner of Rolla pleaded guilty to access device fraud. She could face up to 10 years in prison at sentencing on Oct. 20. Court documents say Barner worked from 1991 through February 2016 for the **Robert L. Kyle Center for Semi-Independent Living** in Rolla, a residential treatment facility for people with mental and developmental disabilities. Barner became a director in 2004. Federal prosecutors say that starting in November 2007 she began using the organization's debit cards to make unauthorized purchases and ATM withdrawals. The U.S. Attorney's office in St. Louis says the center lost between \$95,000 and \$150,000. Source: <http://www.kmov.com/story/35956267/rolla-woman-pleads-guilty-in-federal-fraud-case>

Steep rise in police calls to Schenectady facility for troubled teens Paul Nelson Updated 5:32 pm, Wednesday, July 26, 2017 3 SCHENECTADY— City Councilman [Vince Riggi](#) wants to know what's behind the precipitous rise in calls for service over the past two years at the Northeast Parent & Child Society, a residential home for troubled youngsters on Park Avenue. "There's a cost associated with this. Yes, we have to provide the service, but do they have their facility under control?" Riggi said Wednesday. "My concern is if they can't control their residents, then that's a problem for the city of Schenectady, and then it becomes a taxpayer problem." Riggi requested an analysis of the call volume from the city police department, which revealed the upward trend of police and emergency calls to the facility after a neighbor who lives near Northeast brought the matter to his attention. There were 406 calls through July 14 of this year. For the same period in 2016, the number of calls was 427. It's not clear if every call required a police visit to the facility. The website for [Northern Rivers](#), the parent organization for the Northeast Parent & Child Society, states it is "committed to helping children, adults, and families." In a prepared statement, Northern Rivers CEO [William T. Gettman](#) said child-welfare employees "receive intensive, specialized training to address the challenges of youths placed with us in residential care." He said there is a 1-to-5 ratio of staff to residents, typically ages 12 to 18. "Nothing is more important than the safety and well-being of those in our care,"

Gettman said. "In the course of their treatment, our residents may experience issues that by both regulation and best practice require that police, fire and emergency medical professionals provide outside assistance." Gettman said administrators "monitor trends, explore causes of behaviors and train our staff to minimize the impact of issues that are not beyond our control," and staffing ratios are mandated by the state Office of Children and [Family Services](#), the regulatory body that licenses this facility. "We work closely with local authorities to reduce the number of calls for intervention and with officials in Schenectady to further refine our efforts every day," Gettman said. Residents are placed in the nonsecure facility by the court system because "they face challenges that require intensive treatment in a residential setting." Though the residents are not locked in, they cannot come and go as they please, Gettman said. The police analysis indicates that the department was called 135 times in 2014 through July 15. The next year during that period the number rose to 227. With the exception of 2014, "get a report" and "juvenile incidents" accounted for the vast majority of calls that brought police to the facility. Assistant Chief [Jack Falvo](#) explained that classification, which is generated by police dispatch system, is a catch-all phrase that could encompass "several different type of offenses" such as a runaway juvenile or a rules violation. Besides the cost associated with the police response, Riggi expressed concern about the potential adverse effect on the quality of life for people who live near the Park Avenue facility. He plans to ask for the matter to be placed on the City Council committee agenda for the Aug. 7. meeting and hopes to have police officials present then. Falvo said police met a few months with management at the facility to discuss thefts, mostly of cars in Schenectady and elsewhere, allegedly involving a few residents at Northeast. He said a follow-up meeting will be scheduled to discuss the jump in call volume and other matters. Source: <http://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Steep-rise-in-police-calls-to-facility-for-11438060.php>

Police: Phoenix group home worker accused of child molestation [Joe Enea](#) 11:50 AM, Jul 27, 2017 3 hours ago [glendale](#) | [west valley](#) Share Article Keith Wayne Harrington MCSO Copyright 2017 Scripps Media, Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. Copyright 2017 Scripps Media, Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. Keith Wayne Harrington MCSO PHOENIX - A man has been accused of molesting teenaged girls in the Phoenix group home where he works. Police report that in February, a teenage girl came forward accusing 47-year-old Keith Wayne Harrington of offering her dresses. "So she could wear them around the house without underwear, so he could touch her." He also allegedly offered to pay her to wear short clothing and dance for him. In another instance, Harrington reportedly touched the victim and himself in a sexual manner, saying, "This is mine, this is yours." Reports state Harrington offered the girl marijuana, clothes, and a cell phone for sex. Police say they are awaiting lab results of biological evidence they collected in this incident. In July, another teenaged girl came forward accusing Harrington of offering her marijuana for sex. She accused him of sexually assaulting her in the group home, until a family member rang the doorbell. Harrington was arrested Sunday at his home near 75th and Glendale avenues. He's being held on a \$100,000 bond for child molestation. Source: <http://www.abc15.com/news/crime/police-phoenix-group-home-worker-accused-of-child-molestation>

12 Images From Seneca Indian Boarding School From 1872 to 1980, Seneca Indian Boarding School assimilated Native American students [ICMN Staff](#) • July 29, 2017 Construction on Seneca Indian Boarding School, in Wyandotte, Oklahoma, began in 1871, and classes began in 1872, according to the [Oklahoma Historical Society](#). Wyandotte, a town named to honor the Wyandotte Tribe, is about one mile south of U.S. Highway 60 and 12 miles southeast of Miami, the county seat. According to the Oklahoma Historical Society, the land for the Seneca Indian Boarding School was donated to the Society of Friends (Quakers)—who established a mission in the area in 1869—by the Wyandotte Tribal Council to operate a boarding school for Seneca, Wyandotte, and Shawnee children. It was [Colonel Richard Henry Pratt](#) who coined the term "Kill the Indian in him and save the man," with the founding of [Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania in 1879](#). The goal of [boarding schools](#) was to remove Native American children from their homelands and traditional ways and assimilate them into Western religion and ways of life. [Download Today! Heroes of Native Resistance](#) Discover Native American Heroes! [Download our special Free Report Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, Geronimo, Tecumseh and other Heroes of Native Resistance](#). Joe Kagey, who served as principal of Seneca Indian Boarding School from 1928 until he retired in 1956 organized his school on a three-quarter day system. Native American students attended academic classes on day, then the next half-day participated in vocational exercises, wrote A.M. Gibson in "[Joe Kagey: Indian Educator](#)." Gibson also reported that the boys worked in the Seneca Indian Boarding School carpentry and machine shops, and were taught animal husbandry, modern farm management, and maintenance. The girls were taught cooking, sewing, home management, and grooming. Courtesy Department of the Interior/Bureau of Indian Affairs/Miami Agency/National Archives and Records Administration/Wikimedia Commons This image was most likely taken around 1905 by Charles R. Scott, an employee of the Seneca Indian Boarding School, for Superintendent Horace B. Durant. The boys at the school worked in carpentry and machine shops. Courtesy Department of the Interior/Bureau of Indian Affairs/Miami Agency/National Archives and Records Administration/Wikimedia Commons This image was most likely taken around 1905 by Charles R. Scott, an employee of the Seneca Indian Boarding School, for Superintendent Horace B. Durant. The girls at the school were taught cooking, sewing, home management, and grooming. Gibson noted that during Kagey's administration of Seneca Indian Boarding School, Native American students excelled in athletic competitions. "For many years, the Seneca team ranked with the State's best, placing high or winning most local and regional tournaments," Gibson said in the article about Kagey. "The school was involved in an interscholastic athletic program too, which included football, basketball, baseball, tennis, and track... The highlight of the athletic year was the Athletic Field Meet, held on the campus each year, and included all sorts of sports competition." [Lawrence Panther](#) talks about daily life in the 1960s at Seneca Indian Boarding School, and notes how the many different sports programs helped him adjust to being away from home. Courtesy Department of the Interior/Bureau of Indian Affairs/Miami Agency/National Archives and Records Administration/Wikimedia Commons This image was most likely taken around 1905 by Charles R. Scott, an employee of the Seneca Indian Boarding School, for Superintendent Horace B. Durant. Baseball was one of the many sports programs offered at the school. Panther was brought to the boarding school after a new admittance policy was passed requiring that Native American students were at least one-quarter Indian, reports Gibson. At that time, most of the students enrolled were Cherokee—173 students out of 273. The Seneca Indian Boarding School closed in 1980. Check out these 12 images from the boarding school. Source: <https://indiancountrymedianetwork.com/history/people/12-images-seneca-indian-boarding-school/>

Documents: Maple Leaf under investigation by AG's Office [Elizabeth Murray](#), Free Press Staff Writer Published 4:58 p.m. ET July 31, 2017 | Updated 10:07 a.m. ET Aug. 1, 2017 PMaple Leaf center filing for bankruptcy CLOSE Court papers show the drug treatment center in Underhill has total liabilities to creditors in excess of \$1.1 million. Wochit Buy Photo The Maple Leaf Treatment Center in Underhill on Wednesday, March 1, 2017. The Vermont Attorney General's Office's Medicaid fraud unit is investigating the now closed Maple Leaf Treatment Center, according to court documents filed in U.S. Bankruptcy Court. The state agency wrote in a motion that its investigation is in accordance with the Vermont False Claims Act and regards Maple Leaf's filing of Medicaid claims. As part of the investigation, the Attorney General's Office is trying "to ascertain the amount of damages suffered by the Vermont Medicaid program due to the Debtor's filing of false claims," a motion filed in May stated. VTDigger.org was first to report the existence of the investigation by the Attorney General's Office. The former Underhill drug and alcohol addiction treatment center closed unexpectedly in February and filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy. Maple Leaf had served as one of three residential treatment centers for opiate addiction treatment in the state. Staffing and financing were among a "combination of factors" considered when the board discussed the future of the nonprofit, the board's president, Jeffrey Messina, has said. Court documents filed by the Attorney General's Office in the bankruptcy case state that the former treatment center has been under investigation since at least late February when it filed for bankruptcy. Attempts on Monday to reach Assistant Attorney General Jason Turner, who leads the Medicaid fraud unit, were unsuccessful. Buy Photo The Maple Leaf Treatment Center in Underhill on Wednesday, March 1, 2017. The Attorney General's Office filed documents in the center's bankruptcy case in May to ask for an extension in filing proof of a claim against the estate. State investigators had asked for documents the state needs to "ascertain the precise value of its claim," but said the case's trustee, Douglas Wolinsky, had encountered "certain difficulties" in locating and accessing those documents, the motion stated. Wolinsky, of the law firm Primmer Piper Eggleston & Cramer PC, declined to comment Monday. However, a letter from Wolinsky was included with the state's May request consenting to an extension until either Aug. 1 or 45 days after the Attorney General's Office receives the documents — whichever was earlier. RELATED COVERAGE: [Maple Leaf to sell assets at Underhill location Documents: Maple Leaf had to fill 8 positions Maple Leaf Treatment Center files for bankruptcy Doctor: Maple Leaf's closure 'irresponsible'](#) On Monday, the Attorney General's Office asked the court for a second extension, saying investigators received the documents from Wolinsky on July 19, but would need more than 13 days to review the documents. Buy Photo The Maple Leaf Treatment Center in Underhill on Wednesday, March 1, 2017. "The Trustee encountered greater challenges in locating and accessing documentation ... than anticipated," Assistant Attorney General Charity Clark wrote in a motion filed Monday. She added that "given the quantity and nature of the responsive documents," the state and Wolinsky agreed to an extension of the deadline to file a claim until Sept. 22. The judge has not yet ruled on the motion as of 4:15

p.m. on Monday. The treatment center's indefinite closure followed what was described as a temporary 30-day closure during which Maple Leaf planned to restore staffing levels and conduct training. The nonprofit, which was licensed through the state, also ran an outpatient center in Colchester for addicts taking part in medication-assisted treatment. Bankruptcy filings show that Maple Leaf has total liabilities to creditors in excess of \$1.1 million. Buy Photo The Maple Leaf Treatment Center in Underhill on Wednesday, March 1, 2017. Contact Elizabeth Murray at 651-4835 or emurray@freepressmedia.com. Follow her on Twitter at @LizMurrayBFP. Source: <http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/news/local/2017/07/31/documents-maple-leaf-under-investigation-ags-office/526443001/>

Closed addiction treatment center investigated for fraud | Bradenton Herald Closed addiction treatment center investigated for fraud burlrlkm The Associated Press August 01, 2017 10:02 AM UNDERHILL, Vt. A now-closed residential addiction treatment center in Vermont is being investigated for possible Medicaid fraud. Court documents filed in U.S. bankruptcy court show the Medicaid fraud unit of the Vermont attorney general's office is investigating Maple Leaf Treatment Center regarding its filing of Medicaid claims. VTDigger.org first reported on the investigation. Maple Leaf's Underhill and Colchester locations closed suddenly early this year. The treatment center filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy protection in February. The Burlington Free Press reports (<http://bfpne.ws/2uUIQZA>) that it was one of three residential treatment centers for opiate addiction treatment in Vermont. The board's president said staffing and financing were among a mix of factors considered in discussing the future of the nonprofit. Read more here: <http://www.bradenton.com/news/business/article164709237.html#storylink=cpy>

Iowa Girls Sue Over Alleged Abuse at Wisconsin Youth Prison Two Iowa teenagers have filed federal lawsuits alleging they were placed in solitary confinement for months at Wisconsin's troubled youth even after they both tried to kill themselves. Aug. 2, 2017, at 8:38 p.m. [MORE LinkedIn StumbleUpon Google + Cancel](#) Iowa Girls Sue Over Alleged Abuse at Wisconsin Youth Prison Share × [Share on Facebook Post on Twitter Post to Reddit Email Share in LinkedIn Share on StumbleUpon Share on Google Plus](#) MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Two Iowa teenagers filed federal lawsuits alleging they were placed in solitary confinement for months at Wisconsin's troubled youth prison even after they both tried to kill themselves. One of the girls alleges she placed her head beneath a cot to hurt herself after she became suicidal in solitary confinement, the Wisconsin State Journal reported. A guard then walked on top of the cot in order to tighten it around her neck, her lawsuit alleges. She also claims she didn't get any medical attention was sent back to her cell alone after guards found her unresponsive with a nightgown around her neck in November 2015. The girls were sent to the prison in Iowa that year because Iowa officials had closed a similar facility over allegations of abuse, according to the lawsuits. They were inmates at the prison starting in March and July of 2015 and were held there until February and August of 2016. They were both 16 years old at the time. The girls allege they spent four and five months in solitary and were let out of their cells for two hours a day. They argue their mental health deteriorated during the isolation. The second girl alleged she tried to hang and cut herself and received more time in solitary as punishment. Department of Corrections spokesman Tristan Cook said the agency is reviewing the new lawsuits. The filings are the fourth and fifth lawsuits filed in federal court this year alleging prison staff have been placing inmates in solitary too often and using pepper spray and mechanical restraints too much. A judge earlier this year ordered prison staff to dramatically reduce the use of solitary, pepper spray and shackles. Department of Corrections officials have said prison staff will comply. The FBI is currently investigating conditions at the prison. Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker signed a bill Wednesday that makes guards at the prison mandatory child abuse reporters. That status protects them from retaliation for reporting incidents. Source: <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/wisconsin/articles/2017-08-02/iowa-girls-sue-over-alleged-abuse-at-wisconsin-youth-prison>

Police report 19 incidents at DHR home for teens Posted by [Jason Johnson](#) | Aug 2, 2017 | [Bav Briefs](#) | [0](#) It's been nearly a month since Ragen "River" Freil walked out of a group home in south Mobile County, but while the investigation launched to find him is still active, the 17-year-old is said to be communicating with the caseworkers who originally placed him there. Before Freil left, he was one of several residents at a "transitional age home" on Three Notch Road in Theodore. The 10-bedroom facility currently houses eight young men ages 17 to 20, all of whom are in the custody of the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR). On July 8, 2017, Ragen "River" Freil was reported missing by staff members from a group home where he was living in Theodore. (MCSO) The home is staffed and monitored by employees from AltaPointe Health Systems, which operates [more than 20 other groups homes licensed through the Alabama Department of Mental Health](#) serving the developmentally and mentally disabled. Unlike those homes, though, the transitional home Freil left last month is unique because it isn't intended for disabled residents. It's also the only facility serving the 17-20 age group within AltaPointe's network across Mobile, Baldwin and Washington counties. Transitional Age Services Coordinator Katherine Rouse said because AltaPointe is contracted to through DHR to run the home, children throughout Alabama may be placed there. "These kids have a variety of backgrounds, but typically, for some reason, they are not able to stay at home. It could be they don't have parents or that their home life was so chaotic DHR had to pull them out," said. "We focus on emotional and behavioral goals, but also educational and vocational goals because they're in this transitional age where their next step needs to be hopefully toward independence." In most situations, Rouse said DHR acts like each residents' parent would at home. Staff members take the boys to school, prepare their daily meals, provide them with transportation and chaperone them when they get haircuts, go shopping or meet a friend at the movies. Those of school age attend Theodore High School, where many have individualized education plans their case manager works with the school staff to implement. Currently, four residents are seniors, two are pursuing their GED and two have already graduated from high school. Even though the residents are in DHR custody, they aren't court ordered to live at the transitional age home. Rouse made it clear that living there is voluntary and said AltaPointe's policy forbids staff members from physically restraining residents. However, the policy can make things tricky if a resident decides he wants to leave. "If one of them says, 'Well, I'm leaving,' we will try to talk them out of it, but if they try to leave anyway, we're not going to tackle them or hold them down or anything like that," Rouse said. "They have choices." Despite those choices, when residents leave without supervision, it's immediately reported to local authorities, and according to the Mobile County Sheriff's Office, deputies have responded to 19 incidents at 9151 Three Notch Road over the past 12 months. Of those, 10 were related to missing persons, and Assistant Director of Children's Intensive Services Lorian Kriner told Lagniappe that half of those involved a single resident whom she described as "an adolescent boy who is no longer in the program." "They're teenage boys, there's going to be trouble and they're going to clash with other residents, but it doesn't happen often," Kriner said. "Ninety percent of [calls last year] are just kids that left the property because they wanted to go somewhere like Wal-Mart and we couldn't take them because it isn't in the day's schedule so they're going to walk. And they come back, but because of our policy, we do have to notify authorities, unfortunately." While those incidents occur, Kriner said the staff tries to accommodate as many requests from residents as possible, sometimes calling in additional supervisors if two groups are interested in different off-site activities on the same day. Because DHR cases aren't disclosed to the public, staff members declined to address Freil's case directly. However, Captain Paul Burch said an MCSO detective located Freil July 31, and he has since been placed back in the custody of social services. Burch said Freil had "been communicating with his DHR case worker" during his absence, adding that, even as he continued to be listed as a runaway, authorities hadn't suspected he was in any danger during the majority of the time he was missing from the home. Runaways aren't the only cases reported by MCSO, though. Police have also been called to the house for animal nuisance, harassment, attempted suicide, medical emergencies, an individual with a weapon, property damage and domestic violence since July 2016. In 2015, an 18-year-old resident from Cullman was charged with misdemeanor assault following an incident at the home. The same resident was later involved in [a separate altercation with guards at Mobile County Metro Jail that left him paralyzed](#). Despite those incidents, Children's Outpatient Services Director Olivia Nettles said there are plenty of success stories. She called the AltaPointe facility a "therapeutic home," and said when minor issues arise among residents the staff tries to address them constructively. "If there is a fight or some kind of a disagreement, we try to take that as an opportunity to help the kids work through it in an appropriate way," Nettles said. "I'm proud of this program because this isn't often an easy age group to deal with, and we've got a wonderful staff who really care and who really want these boys to succeed, and they go the extra mile to do that." Nettles said there are at least two residential staff members on the premises at all times, though the number increases as caseworkers and therapists visit the home for scheduled activities. Sabrina Davis is one of the members of the residential staff, one who can sometimes spend an entire 12-hour shift with residents. Davis said she sees her role as more than just providing basic needs; she hopes to "give them [the] love" that other children receive at home, too. "I'm basically the cook in the house, so they're really amiable with me, and they're thankful," Davis said. "Everybody has good days and bad days. That's life ... but they're good boys." Updated at 2 p.m., Aug. 3, to include new information about the missing person's case involving Ragen "River" Freil. Source: <https://lagniappemobile.com/police-report-19-incidents-dhr-home-teens/>

Eldora boys school accused of using isolation, restraints on troubled boys State school accused of using isolation, restraints on troubled boys who need treatment [Tony Leys](#), tleys@dmreg.com Published 3:59 p.m. CT Aug. 7, 2017 | Updated 4:17 p.m. CT Aug. 7, 2017 Eldora boys school mistreatment

allegation... CLOSE Disability Rights Iowa says the Boys State Training School has overused isolation and restraints on teens for misbehavior, which the school denies. Wochit "The wrap" is a restraint device used at Iowa's Boys State Training School at Eldora. (Photo: Disability Rights Iowa) 14 Iowa's main institution for troubled boys often puts teens with mental illness in isolation or straps them to beds in ways that are banned in most similar facilities, a new report alleges. The scathing report on the State Training School for Boys at Eldora, titled "Unlicensed and Unlawful," was released Monday by Disability Rights Iowa. The group's allegations about mistreatment [at the state's Toledo facility for troubled girls](#) helped spark that center's closure in 2014. The Boys State Training School at Eldora houses more than 100 teens who have been found to be delinquent in juvenile court. "There's a view of it as a punishment facility, but the statute says it's for treatment and rehabilitation," said Jane Hudson, executive director of Disability Rights Iowa. Hudson's group is not seeking an immediate closure of the Eldora facility but is demanding major changes. The school's superintendent, Mark Day, strenuously defended the program in an interview Monday. He said most of the school's residents proved too angry and violent for other programs. "They sent them to us because they could not manage their behaviors," he said. "We take kids they can't handle." Disability Rights Iowa defends the legal rights of people with disabilities, including mental-health issues. The new report says two-thirds of the Eldora facility's residents are on psychiatric medications. But the school has scant mental-health services, and it relies on seclusion rooms and physical restraints to control boys who act out, the report says. "Sadly, this continues to victimize youth who have high rates of childhood victimization," it says. The report's findings include: Three-quarters of the facility's residents have been placed in seclusion at some point. Six percent of those incidents lasted longer than 24 hours, which violates national standards, the report says. Staff members often restrain boys with an apparatus called "the wrap." The report describes the device as "a restraint bed with a strap for each arm and leg, and then a Velcro body wrap that is applied over the full body. This has been used multiple times on students with high mental-health needs and well-documented histories of childhood trauma instead of providing therapeutic interventions." The Eldora school is not required to have a state license, which means it is not subject to regular inspection by the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals. Licenses are required for most similar programs, such as Polk County's juvenile detention facility and state institutions for people with mental illness or intellectual disabilities. Under the licensing rules, such facilities would be fined and could be suspended if they used physical restraints on children the way the Eldora facility does, Disability Rights Iowa lawyers said. The school's shorthanded mental-health staff includes a full-time counselor who is referred to as a psychologist, even though he is not licensed as one. Disability Rights Iowa is a federally chartered group that can file lawsuits to try to force changes in how people with disabilities are treated. It [recently filed a federal lawsuit](#) against Iowa's governor and Department of Human Services for cuts in in-home services to disabled Iowans since the state hired private companies to run its Medicaid program. The new report says the group might file another lawsuit if the state doesn't improve treatment of boys at the Eldora facility. A building at the Boys State Training School at Eldora. (Photo: Disability Rights Iowa) The school was founded in the 1880s. Its residents average 16.7 years old and stay for an average of 10 months, [the department says](#). Day, the superintendent, said Monday he agrees with Disability Rights Iowa that mental-health services should be improved at the facility. "Like every other program in this state — and I would hazard to guess every other program similar to this in the country — we would love to have more resources," he said. But mental-health professionals are scarce, and so is money, he said. The school, like most other state programs, faced a significant cut this year, losing about \$800,000 out of last year's \$12 million budget. Department spokeswoman Amy McCoy said administrators will try to implement the budget cut without harming services. Day defended the school's use of "the wrap." He called it "a swaddling device," with no sharp edges, metal or leather. He said staff members try to minimize the need for restraints, but they use the cloth and canvas device in a way that's safer than trying to hold aggressive teens. He added that some out-of-control students ask to be placed in "the wrap" to calm down. Buy Photo Mark Day leads a tour of the auto-shop at the Boys State Training School at Eldora in November 2016. (Photo: Tony Leys/Des Moines Register) "It is a de-escalation chamber for them," he said. "They don't trust themselves. They know their propensity, their proclivity for violence, and they engage in that. We've had numerous students frequently say, 'I'm going to keep this up until you put me in the wrap.'" The wrap is generally used for 20 to 60 minutes, Day said. Its use did not draw objections from experts from the University of Iowa and Drexel University in Pennsylvania, he added. Nathan Kirstein, a lawyer for Disability Rights Iowa, countered Monday that Eldora students his group interviewed had been put into the wrap unwillingly. He added staff could use other measures, such as weighted blankets, to soothe agitated students without restraining them. Staff members at the Boys State Training School removed the minute and hour hands from this clock as a joke, to indicate time doesn't exist there. Disability Rights Iowa cites the clock as a sign of the staff's disregard for students' experiences. (Photo: Disability Rights Iowa) Day also denied the allegation his school overuses seclusion of students. Most such sessions last less than an hour and they are only invoked when necessary to calm outraged teens, he said. Day acknowledged that the counselor the Eldora school's "psychologist" does not have a state psychology license. He said the employee has 30 years of experience and has a master's degree in psychology. A spokeswoman for the Iowa Department of Health confirmed later Monday that state employees [are exempt from requirements](#) that they have doctorates and psychologists' licenses in order to legally call themselves psychologists. In his defense of the school, Day emphasized how serious the students' behavioral problems can be. They include teens who have assaulted, robbed, sexually assaulted or even killed other people, he said. "I've got students here convicted of murder, manslaughter, aggravated manslaughter," he said. "I've got 20 or 30 with charges of sexual offending. I've got weapons charges, gangbangers, dozens of convictions for robbery, many, many aggravated assaults and assault with injury, and assault against a police officer." The program's students typically have failed in eight to 10 other programs before being court-ordered into the Eldora facility, Day said. The school, which is not fenced, offers classes and training. Students learn skills, such as welding, carpentry and baking, and they can earn high-school diplomas, he said. "We keep them safe. We give them a successful discharge," he said. "We keep them from running away, we them from hurting themselves, and we keep them from hurting others." Day said if legislators required the Eldora school to comply with state licensing requirements, they would have to pay for significant changes on its campus. One of the main changes would be to stop having up to 30 students sleep in a large, open room, he said. That setup helps the staff keep students safe but would not be allowed under current licensing rules. Department of Human Services officials noted the facility is accredited by the American Correctional Association and can be investigated by state inspectors if problems are reported. Disability Rights Iowa lawyer contend the national accreditation is "toothless," and they want the school to undergo regular inspections by independent state experts who oversee most similar programs in Iowa. Disability Rights Iowa lawyers said many of the students suffered abuse or other traumas as children, which had not been sufficiently addressed. Many of their criminal charges stemmed from times when they lashed out in previous treatment programs, said Emily Ehlers, a staff lawyer for the group. "These kids are struggling with mental-health issues," she said. "Law enforcement looks at this as a behavior issue — that these kids are trouble." The group's allegations include that students who lack money are prevented from making long-distance calls to their parents or other relatives, whose support they need. Day denied the allegation. He said students can call home at least every other week at the school's expense, and they are provided with free paper, envelopes and stamps to write letters home. In the long run, Disability Rights Iowa wants to see the state strengthen programs in the community so they can handle all the students now at the Eldora school. But the group doesn't want to see the state abruptly close the Eldora facility the way former Gov. Terry Branstad closed the Toledo school for troubled girls or state mental hospitals at Clarinda and Mount Pleasant. "We don't want a knee-jerk political reaction that leads to chaos," Kirstein said. [Disability Rights Iowa report on the Boys State Training School at Eldora](#) by [dmronline](#) on Scribd Source: <http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/health/2017/08/07/eldora-boys-school-accused-using-isolation-restraints-troubled-boys/544892001/>

Report critical of methods used at Boys State Training School in Eldora August 8, 2017 By [Pat Curtis](#) A [report](#) from a nonprofit law center claims the Boys State Training School is overusing seclusion rooms and restraints in dealing with troubled youth who are placed at the facility in Eldora. Nathan Kirstein, an attorney for Disability Rights Iowa, says there is no independent State licensure or oversight of the Boys State Training School. "Right off the bat, we have issue with that because why is it that DHS (Department of Human Services) gets to exempt themselves from that? They don't have to have regulations, oversight or licensure," Kirstein says. The Training School, operated by the DHS, currently houses around 120 teenage boys. Kirstein says they are sometimes confined to seclusion rooms for over 24 hours at a time. "No other facility in Iowa is allowed to do that, 24 hours is the max," Kirstein says. "In fact, in detention facilities, after you go over 12 hours, you need a court order, and you have to notify the juvenile court officer and the defense attorney." Wraps. The report also takes issue with what Kirstein calls "the wrap" — a bed that involves straps placed over the arms and legs. The school's superintendent defended use of the bed to the Des Moines Register, calling it a "swaddling device." Kirstein says the wrap is not therapeutic and a weighted blanket would be more appropriate. "If you're putting someone in the wrap, it is the staff and others who have the control of when you go in and when you get out of that," Kirstein says. "What's important to recognize about that is locus of control is very important when you're talking about youth who've had adverse childhood experiences — meaning they've experienced early childhood trauma — abuse, neglect, and particularly sexual abuse." Disability Rights Iowa is not calling for the closure of the Boys State Training School, but Kirstein suggests youth with mental health needs should not be housed there. The report claims about two-thirds of the teens at the school

have been diagnosed as having a serious mental illness. "We hope this report also points out the gaps in services along the way for these youth who end up at the Boys State Training School. Not every youth that ends up there should be there necessarily. They're more suited for another placement, but no other places will take them in Iowa," Kirstein says. According to Kirstein, Disability Rights Iowa will consider filing a lawsuit in federal court against the Governor, the DHS Director and other state officials, "if they do not remedy the problems identified in the report." Amy McCorty the spokesperson for DHS, released this statement: Juvenile courts order youth with the most serious criminal offenses to the Iowa State Training School for Boys at Eldora. Criminal offenses that result in boys being ordered to the State Training School include assault, theft, robbery, weapons charges, sexual assault, attempted murder, and murder. The State Training School provides supervision and support to keep more than 250 youth each year safe from themselves and others, protect the community, keep staff safe, and rehabilitate youth to reduce the likelihood of re-offense. · The State Training School is independently accredited by the American Correctional Association (100 percent compliance), met or exceeded all Prison Rape Elimination Act requirements. · Eldora reports all suspected incidents of abuse to the Department of Inspection and Appeals for review and follow-up. · The academic school is accredited by the Department of Education. The State Training School has arranged and welcomed visits from a juvenile justice expert, psychiatrists from the University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics, school professionals from Oregon and Florida, and a Department of Education mentor. Visitors have high praise for the facility especially noting its high caliber leadership; excellent, dedicated, caring staff; and well cared for junior college type campus with no fences. The State Training School has goals for continuous quality improvement and more mental health resources that are similar to our partners, but the timelines may not align as we balance resources during tight budget times. DHS report on the school: [Heilbrun Report PDF](#) Source: <http://www.radioiowa.com/2017/08/08/report-critical-of-methods-used-at-boys-state-training-school-in-eldora/>

Ex-boarding school head gets 48 years for molesting student The former headmaster of a [Carlsbad](#) military boarding school was found guilty Monday on six counts of molesting a cadet at the campus nearly 20 years ago, but acquitted on five other charges involving the same student. The former headmaster of a [Carlsbad](#) military boarding school was found guilty Monday on six counts of molesting a cadet at the campus nearly 20 years ago, but acquitted on five other charges involving the same student. [Teri Figueroa Contact Reporter](#) The former headmaster of a [Carlsbad](#) military boarding school was sentenced Monday to 48 years in prison for repeatedly molesting a ninth-grade cadet starting in 1999. It was the maximum punishment for Jeffrey Barton, 59, who proclaimed his innocence during his sentencing hearing in a [Vista](#) courtroom, saying his accuser had lied and that he was a victim of a "witch hunt." "I cannot feel remorse for crimes I never committed," Barton told Superior Court Judge Harry Elias during a roughly 30-minute statement in which he tried to rebut minutia of case and said the accusations were prompted by people "gunning for money." "God knows I didn't do the crimes," Barton said. P After the hearing, Deputy District Attorney Patricia Lavermicocca, who had asked for the maximum term, said Barton's lengthy prison sentence "is what he deserves to bring justice to these kids who have suffered for many years." "He may want to deny it for the rest of his life, but we know what happened," the prosecutor said. "Forty-eight years is a small measure of justice." Charlie Neuman Defendant Jeffrey Barton argues his innocence in his conviction for molesting a cadet at Carlsbad's Army and Navy Academy during his sentencing hearing at the Vista courthouse Monday. At left is his lawyer Sherry Stone. Defendant Jeffrey Barton argues his innocence in his conviction for molesting a cadet at Carlsbad's Army and Navy Academy during his sentencing hearing at the Vista courthouse Monday. At left is his lawyer Sherry Stone. (Charlie Neuman) Barton did not react when he heard the length of his sentence. He will not be eligible for release until he is in his 90s. In June, a jury found Barton guilty of molesting the Army and Navy Academy student from 1999 to 2001, both on campus and during out-of-town trips. The victim said the abuse started when he was 14 and a cadet at the seaside academy where Barton lived and taught. The accuser did not disclose the alleged abuse until 2013, but the prosecution offered corroborating evidence, including contemporaneous suspicions from adults at the school, and other accusers dating back decades at different schools. Barton was not charged with molesting accusers from out-of-state schools; however, trial testimony from two of them was offered as corroboration. In handing down the sentence Monday, Elias said Barton is "a serious danger," and that a key aggravating factor for him was Barton's position of trust as a faculty member and a mentor — not just for the accuser from the Carlsbad school, but also for two other men who said Barton had molested them decades ago. "I believe there is evidence that shows that these offenses were committed in a serial manner over a significant period of time," the judge said. Related [Ex-headmaster convicted of molestation](#) After the allegations from the former Carlsbad cadet arose in 2013, Barton resigned after working 18 years at the private college-preparatory academy, the only military boarding school in California. In his final year at the academy, Barton had served as head of schools, which is the administrator in charge of academic and residential programs. An Army and Navy Academy spokesperson did not immediately respond to requests for comment following Barton's sentencing. When Barton was convicted in June, the school noted that his actions had happened long ago, under a different school administration and board of trustees. Barton's conviction came in his second trial. In 2015, another jury deadlocked on the charges involving the main accuser, known in court as John Doe. The victim, Doe, was in court and did not speak during Monday's hearing, but rather submitted a statement read aloud by prosecutor Lavermicocca. The victim wrote that Barton "sexually abused me many times, taking advantage of my youth, inexperience and vulnerability, forever altering the trajectory of my life." "He is a danger to society, and should spend the remainder of his adult years in prison," the statement read. Barton used his own statement to the judge as a chance to rail against his accusers, saying they had lied and that Doe was chasing money. The former cadet is suing Barton and the school. Trial is set for March. Later, as Barton was led from the courtroom at the end of the hearing, he yelled out "Enjoy your millions, bud." (Earlier this summer, the law firm representing Doe had represented another former cadet who had accused a different former Army and Navy employee of wrongdoing. The North County jury awarded that ex-cadet \$1.9 million.) Before the current case, Carlsbad police had twice before investigated Barton, once in 2000 and again in 2010, after adults reported suspicious behavior with particular cadets. In each instance, the cadets — including Doe — denied abuse, and the investigations fizzled. When Doe came forward in 2013, his delayed disclosure prompted a new police investigation, one in which six more former students from boarding schools in a total of three states came forward with allegations that Barton had abused them decades earlier. Among the new accusers was a man who said he had never spoken of the abuse until he read of Barton's arrest in October 2013 online. The man, now in his 40s, testified that he threw up, then drove home from work to tell his wife what had happened to him at a South Carolina boarding school in the 1980s. He later paid his own way to testify against Barton. The other out-of-state accuser said Barton had molested him during an overnight trip in the early 1990s, and that he had reported the incident to his mother the next day. That report eventually led Barton to leave a Tennessee school, but he was not criminally charged. In the current case, Barton was charged only with molestation involving former cadets at the Carlsbad school. At the end of his first trial, in fall 2015, a North County jury cleared Barton on four charges alleging he drugged and molested two middle-school cadets during a 1997 ski trip. But the jury deadlocked as to all counts related to Doe. Barton was retried this year solely on the charges involving Doe. Doe testified that Barton began molesting him not long after his mother shipped him off to the Carlsbad military boarding school in 1999, with promises the boy could come home if he did not misbehave during the school year. The accuser, who had been small, scrawny and reportedly bullied by other cadets — said that Barton had groomed him with gifts and special attention, and said that Barton threatened to tell his mother he was making trouble if he did not comply with the molestations. Elias, in explaining his findings behind the hefty sentence Monday, said that the "psychological injury" that John Doe suffered showed "callousness" from Barton. "I think the psychological impact of the relationship between Mr. Barton and the victim is tantamount to at least a psychological threat," the judge said. On Monday, Elias also heard from the two out-of-state accusers via video phone calls. Both asked for Barton to receive a lengthy sentence, and both spoke of guilt for either for not coming forward or for not pressing the matter further many years ago. "Other children were hurt because I didn't stand up," said the man who had attended the Tennessee school. Barton's second trial was not without controversy. During deliberations, one of the jurors was removed from the panel after other jurors accused her of refusing to deliberate. After an alternate juror was in place, the jury reached its verdicts, finding Barton guilty of six counts of molestation, and acquitting him of five other counts. Barton has indicated that he will appeal his conviction. Source: <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/communities/north-county/>

Boarding school finds evidence of sexual misconduct by former headmaster - CBS News Boarding school finds evidence of sexual misconduct by former headmaster The Willis Northampton School Google Maps [4 Comment Share Tweet Stumble Email](#) EASTHAMPTON, Mass. -- A private boarding school in [Massachusetts](#) says it has uncovered credible reports of sexual misconduct by a former headmaster that involved students. [Masslive.com reports](#) that Williston Northampton School in Easthampton sent a letter to the school community this week that said it had four firsthand reports that former headmaster Robert Ward "violated the standards of professional boundaries" during his tenure from 1972 until 1979. Williston Northampton began investigating after another private school -- The Loomis Chaffee School in Windsor, [Connecticut](#) -- said it had uncovered credible sexual assault reports involving Ward that dated to the 1960s. Ward died in 1986. The letter from current Williston Northampton headmaster Robert Hill III and trustees President John Hazen White Jr. said further details

will not be released in deference to privacy concerns. Source: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/boarding-school-finds-evidence-of-sexual-misconduct-by-former-headmaster/>

Employee of group home for troubled girls charged with sexual assault of resident, contributing to delinquency of a minor Employee of group home for troubled girls charged with sexual assault of resident, contributing to delinquency of a minor [Jesse Garza](#), Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Published 7:22 p.m. CT Aug. 9, 2017 | Updated 10:24 a.m. CT Aug. 10, 2017 Are the scales of justice equal when it comes to adjudication of traffic tickets?(Photo: Creatas / GETTY IMAGES) 1 CONNECT [TWEETLINKEDINEMAILMORE](#) An employee at a Wauwatosa group home for troubled girls is accused of sexually assaulting a resident after helping her run away from the facility. Anthony D. Johnson, 27, is charged with second-degree sexual assault of a child younger than 16, a felony, and contributing to the delinquency of a minor, a misdemeanor, according to the complaint. Johnson helped the 15-year-old girl run away from **Milwaukee Academy**, 9501 W. Watertown Plank Road, May 5 and allowed her to stay at his home, according to the complaint. He got the girl high on liquor and marijuana cookies and had sex with her multiple times between May 5 and May 23, when she was recovered by her family, according to the complaint, which does not describe the nature of Johnson's employment. Milwaukee Academy is a residential treatment center for adolescent girls, according to its [website](#). Treatment services at the facility include, "[recovery from/prevention of sexual exploitation](#)," according to the website. The facility is operated by [Clinicare](#), 11919 W. Bluemound Road in Wauwatosa, which was closed Wednesday evening. Johnson was in custody Wednesday at the Milwaukee County Jail, with his bail set at \$5,000, according to jail records. Source: <http://www.jsonline.com/story/news/2017/08/09/employee-group-home-troubled-girls-charged-sexual-assault-resident-contributing-delinquency-minor/554489001/>

Danger in R.I. group homes Providence-- Aug. 9, 2017---- At least three times in the last five months staff decisions at state-run group homes left children in their care hospitalized, exploited or endangered, a ProJo investigation has found The Providence Journal Hide caption A redacted report by the state Office of the Child Advocate to the Department of Children, Youth & Families on an incident July 28, when a resident of a Providence group home suffered paralysis and required emergency spine surgery after taking a fall during a reportedly unauthorized outing to a trampoline park. Child welfare officials have questioned why the 17-year-old boy was at the children's park, where he reportedly had been injured once before; the home lacked permission from his mother or a state supervisor. [The Providence Journal / Sandor Bodo] Hide caption 246 Sackett St., Providence: Last March a woman told police her 16-year-old foster daughter was missing. A worker from this Whitmarsh Corp. group home had picked her up in North Providence and brought her back to the home, where she spent the night with her 20-year-old boyfriend. [The Providence Journal / Kris Craig] Hide caption 35 Amey Drive, Pawtucket: A former worker at this group home, run by Blackstone Valley Youth and Family Collaborative, is charged with sex trafficking a 17-year-old girl in state care. [The Providence Journal / Kris Craig] Hide caption DCYF Director Trista Piccola, left, listens to Deb Buffi, head of contracts and compliance, talk about problems at state-regulated group homes. [The Providence Journal Steve Szydlowski] Hide caption Laura Kiesler oversees the Resource Families Unit with DCYF. [The Providence Journal Steve Szydlowski] Hide caption 164 Massachusetts Ave., Providence: A 17-year-old boy staying in this Whitmarsh group home underwent emergency spine surgery after injuring himself during a reportedly unauthorized outing at a trampoline park. [The Providence Journal / Kris Craig] Hide caption 120 Girard Ave., Newport: During a late-night argument, a former worker in this Child and Family Services group home allegedly ordered two teenage female residents outside, where they were assaulted by the his girlfriend. [The Providence Journal / Kris Craig] Hide caption The recommendations by the state Office of the Child Advocate to the Department of Children, Youth & Families about one of the state's group-home operators notes that "[Whitmarsh] staff admittedly falsified documentation and left youth alone and unattended for extended periods of time and relied on a maintenance worker to provide staff coverage." As a response in cases of staff members assaulting residents, the report says, "the Whitmarsh administration simply moves the perpetrator to a different location." [The Providence Journal / Sandor Bodo] Hide caption Providence-- Aug. 9, 2017---- Laura Kiesler, left, who oversees the Resource Families Unit with DCYF talks with the department's director, Trista Piccola, about problems at state-regulated group homes. [The Providence Journal / Steve Szydlowski] Hide caption At least three times in the last five months staff decisions at state-run group homes left children in their care hospitalized, exploited or endangered, a ProJo investigation has found The Providence Journal By Tom Mooney / and Jennifer Bogdan, / Journal Staff Writers Saturday Posted Aug 12, 2017 at 4:14 PM Share Prostitution. Assaults arranged by a staff member. A clandestine overnight visit by a teenage girlfriend as the police searched for her. A paralyzing injury. Investigators say they've found all this and more connected to group homes — places where Rhode Island is supposed to provide refuge to young people it has removed from unfit living conditions. At least four times in the last five months, workers at state-regulated group homes took actions that left young people in their care hospitalized, endangered or exploited, a Providence Journal investigation has found. In two cases, group-home employees attempted to cover up slack supervision and management with forged log books or falsified statements, investigators reported. In one Pawtucket home, an employee used the agency van to help run a teenage sex-trafficking operation, prosecutors allege. In addition: By the numbers 194: Children, up to age 21, currently living in state-regulated group homes 41: Group homes hosting these wards of the state \$29,644,257: Cost of Rhode Island group homes last fiscal year \$90 to \$420: Cost, per day, per child, depending on services they need Source: R.I. Department of Children, Youth & Families * At a Providence home, a worker drove the company van to North Providence to taxi a 16-year-old girl with autism — who had been reported missing to police — back to the all-male group home. When child-welfare investigators visited the home where the girl stayed the night, they found the building reeking of marijuana, a bedroom littered with garbage and condoms, little food, and a maintenance man left in charge. * A third incident happened July 28, when a resident of another Providence group home suffered paralysis and required emergency spine surgery after he fell during an outing to a trampoline park. Related content '[We need families](#)' — R.I. seeks foster homes for children [+ video](#) August 12, 2017 [Group-home troubles add to DCYF's woes](#) August 12, 2017 [Alan Rosenberg: Sleepless nights over DCYF](#) August 12, 2017 Child welfare officials have questioned why the 17-year-old boy was at the children's park where he reportedly had been injured once before; the home lacked permission from his mother or a state supervisor. * The latest incident occurred last Monday, Aug. 7, at a Newport group home for girls. During an argument at about 3:30 a.m., a man working at the Girard Avenue home challenged two residents to a fight outside, investigators say. The girls went outside and the worker's girlfriend emerged from a car and assaulted them, investigators say. Both girls suffered minor injuries and were taken to the hospital. Then the worker quit. Meanwhile, all four homes remain open under the auspices of the Department of Children, Youth & Families. The DCYF, however, has stopped placing children at two of the group homes, both run by the Providence-based Whitmarsh Corp. The Providence Journal interviewed employees of the group homes, and reviewed court and police documents as well as reports from the state's Child Advocate office, which serves as an independent watchdog for children in state care. Three DCYF officials, including Director Trista Piccola, declined in an interview to address many of the specific details in this story, citing ongoing investigations and client confidentiality. But Piccola said Wednesday that while the DCYF was no longer placing children in Whitmarsh homes, those already there would remain unless the department felt the children were endangered. "If we believed any of the kids placed with Whitmarsh today, sitting there right now, were unsafe, they would have been removed," she said. That goes for children placed in any group home, she said. "If we believe a child is unsafe, they're not staying there. I want to be really, really clear about that... If we feel the kid's safety can be maintained there, then we will continue to work with" the group homes. Across the state, 194 children of all ages and up to 21, currently reside in 41 state-regulated group homes. Many have complex behavioral and mental-health challenges. Many are traumatized. In the last fiscal year, the DCYF says, Rhode Island spent \$29,644,257 serving group home children (a combination of state and federal dollars). The daily cost per resident ranges from \$89.92 to \$420 depending on the level of services needed. These living arrangements are supposed to provide more stability and safety than the conditions from which they were removed. In an interview, the state's child advocate, Jennifer Griffith, said: "It is unacceptable that children are being removed from their homes due to varied circumstances with the promise of a safer, more therapeutic environment, only to be placed in substandard group homes riddled with drug use, improper supervision, criminal activity, inferior housing conditions, lack of appropriate support and mental-health treatment." The Providence cases The cases of the missing 16-year-old girl and the injured 17-year-old boy involved group homes run by Whitmarsh, which has been providing housing for children in state care for 45 years. (The Journal is not naming any group-home residents in this story.) Beyond the issue of safety, both cases raised concerns with investigators from the Office of the Child Advocate about the integrity of record-keeping in the homes: they allege that Whitmarsh employees doctored log entries of resident activities after they were called to produce them and also supplied false statements. Griffith said her office "remains extremely concerned with the [Whitmarsh] administrative team, documentation, lack of documentation and the validity of any and all reports." A child advocate report says that when investigators initially asked for documents relating to what happened to the injured boy, Laura Hay, residential director for Whitmarsh Corp, blamed missing entries for July 28 in the home's log book on a poor copying job. (A group home's log book is supposed to track all residents' and workers' whereabouts and activities.) But in reviewing a second copy of the log that Hay sent to the advocate's

office, "It was glaringly evident," a child advocate investigator wrote, "the dates were hand-written in today, August 1, 2017, along with the numbering of pages. None of which was evident in the first set of documents sent to this office." The advocate's report also criticized Whitmarsh workers for filing reports days after the boy's injury even though they were not witnesses to the incident. In an interview, Hay refused to discuss the allegations of forged logs and false reports, citing client confidentiality. "Sometimes things do come up," Hay said at her office on North Main Street, Providence. "But our agency is completely committed to our children and will do whatever is best for our children to ensure they're receiving the best services possible." On the March night that a woman reported to police that her 16-year-old foster daughter was missing, a veteran staff worker at Whitmarsh's group home on Sackett Street, Providence, had picked up the girl in the agency's van at a North Providence coffee shop parking lot around 8:30 p.m. and brought her to the group home to visit her 20-year-old boyfriend. As police in several communities searched for her, the girl spent the night in the group home. The staff worker later told a supervisor he had spoken to the girl's mother and expected she was going to pick up her daughter at the home, documents show. But child advocate investigators learned — and reported to DCYF officials — that the worker never spoke to the girl's mother, never checked the young man's bedroom, as required, to make sure she had left — and that the home's log book had no entries at all for that day. The 16-year-old returned to her foster mother's home, incoherent, three days later. An ambulance transported her to the hospital for suspected drug and alcohol abuse, as well as for being off her prescribed medication. Upon learning what had happened, the girl's foster mother was "extremely upset that a grown man would pick up a juvenile female without permission and bring her to an apartment and leave her unsupervised with a 20-year-old man," reads one report. Meanwhile, upset by the chain of events, the girl's boyfriend left the group home without permission. When he returned, he, too, was transported to the hospital for possible drug and alcohol abuse. Whitmarsh, which specializes in behavioral and special needs and transgender youth, fired the employee of 30 years who transported the 16-year-old girl to the Sackett Street group home, documents show. That worker declined to comment when reached by The Journal. Documents show that the DCYF inspected the group home a week after the girl went missing and noted numerous violations regarding safety, food supplies, cleanliness and drug use. The Pawtucket case: sex trafficking. A third group home, run by Pawtucket-based Blackstone Valley Youth and Family Collaborative, which also contracts with the DCYF, is part of a federal criminal investigation. An employee, Reysean Williams, 27, of Pawtucket, was charged in March with sex trafficking a 17-year-old girl in state care. At the time of the arrest, a DCYF spokeswoman told The Journal that the incident wasn't related to Williams' work at Blackstone. But a federal prosecutor described Williams in court documents as a ringleader of a prostitution enterprise who used the group home's van to collect money from young women who were being prostituted. Williams, along with Leandro "Leo" Gomes, 18, of Providence, allegedly booked hotel rooms in Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New York and advertised young women for prostitution online. Dan Brito, executive director of the Blackstone group home agency, said he fired Williams after the sex-trafficking allegation arose. But in an interview, Brito said the incident had not led to any new policy procedures at the home. "Honestly, I'm not sure what we could have done to foresee that happening," Brito said. Home workers have access to the vans to transport residents to work, school and social gatherings. A worker can stop in the course of the day for a meal or an errand, he said. Though the incident is "shocking and disappointing," Brito said he can't control "what's in someone's mind and heart." "The folks I've spoken with at DCYF, they're like, 'Dan, this is not something anyone can fix. It's circumstances you find yourself in.'" When the charges were filed against Williams in April, Brito told The Journal: "It's sad that we have people in this field who engage in this behavior." Brito said he hired Williams, who had passed criminal background checks, about nine months ago on the referral of his niece. She was dating Williams, he said. Standard group-home workers who provide only supervision and no actual services to children are not licensed social workers, the DCYF's Piccola said. But many undergo training on how to manage behavior and de-escalate tense situations, said Marty Sinnott, the CEO of Child and Family Services. Child and Family Services operates six group homes in Rhode Island — including the Newport home where last week a staff worker "miserably failed in his responsibilities," said Sinnott. The Newport case: Arranged assault. Police detectives are still investigating the incident that began early Monday morning when the house supervisor, whom Sinnott said was hired about 18 months ago, began arguing with two teenage girl residents. The argument had carried out into the street where the house worker challenged the two girls, both about 15 years old, to a fight. Investigators say he apparently had arranged for his girlfriend — to confront the girls once outside. In the scuffle, both girls suffered scratches and abrasions, Sinnott said, but no major injuries. "I'm angry that someone employed by us would treat kids in this manner," Sinnott said, adding the man probably would have been suspended or fired had he not quit. "This was bad behavior on the part of staff, not the kids." While DCYF officials won't talk about the specifics of these incidents, Piccola said far too many children are in group homes in Rhode Island, an "overused" system that she says costs taxpayers millions of dollars each year and yet too often fails to adequately prepare troubled youth for successful futures. "Long-term residential and group care for kids is really not what's best for them," she said. "It doesn't help them launch successfully into adulthood." tmooney@providencejournal.com

Emotional abuse substantiated at Catholic Charities group home Emotional abuse substantiated at Catholic Charities group home [Stephanie Dickrell](#), sdickrell@stcloudtimes.com Published 3:47 p.m. CT Aug. 12, 2017 | Updated 9:41 a.m. CT Aug. 13, 2017 Skip in [Skip](#) x Embed x Share CLOSE According to most recent CDC statistics, an estimated 1 in 4 children in America experience maltreatment at some point in their lives. Here is what to do if you suspect child abuse and how to report it. USA Today Network, Stephanie Dickrell Steve Pareja is the executive director of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Cloud. (Photo: Courtesy of Dianne Towalski and Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Cloud) 221 CONNECT [TWEET](#) [LINKEDIN](#) 4 COMMENT [EMAIL](#) MORE A state agency has substantiated claims of emotional abuse at a Catholic Charities group home in Paynesville, it said in a recently released report. The Department of Human Services determined a staffer's behavior in incidents earlier this summer constituted emotional abuse and maltreatment. The staffer was accused of mocking a vulnerable adult and sharing video of the adult on Snapchat, both of which are violations of privacy protections and the nonprofit's policies. In a statement released last week, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Cloud said that not only did the employee violate policy and statute, "they violated Catholic Charities' mission of enhancing human dignity." The department's report says the staffer told the vulnerable adult to pee in his or her pants, when they indicated they needed to use the bathroom. The same staffer said having that person in the house was "like having a dog in the house." The staffer also took a video of the adult dancing and asked the adult to make the sound a cat makes, and then sent the video on Snapchat. The department relied on interviews with staff and on a text message sent on June 9 by accused staffer to another Catholic Charities employee. (Note: The gender of the vulnerable adult is not indicated by the Department of Human Services to preserve confidentiality, so the singular "they" is used.) OMG...I love being here at work. It's better than cable. (The vulnerable adult) was sitting in (their) chair listening to (their) book and then (they) started chatting away while (another client) was watching TV. (They) kept saying (they) had to pee so I told (them) to pee in (their) pants and (they) did, because (they) couldn't hold it. But (the vulnerable adult) kept talking away and (another client) was like shut up you stupid bitch. (The vulnerable adult) got all pissed and started swearing at (the client). And then (they) called me a bitch and (the client) stood up for me and (they're) like no you're the stupid bitch. Then (another client) was like wow I came home to this shit...ha ha. Then when (the vulnerable adult) peed in (their) chair I was like dam it's like having a dog in the house and (the vulnerable adult) was like I'm not a (expletive deleted) dog. I couldn't stop laughing. After its own investigation, Catholic Charities fired the employee on June 22, before the department's investigation started. The fired staffer chose not to participate in the investigation. Catholic Charities said all current employees who were asked to participate in the investigation did so. The department found the policies and procedures of Catholic Charities were adequate, but the social media policy was not followed. "Social media is something that is challenging for all of us to monitor on a regular basis," said Executive Director Steve Pareja. "We are looking at how we can readdress or revise our social media policy to hopefully eliminate these types of events in the future." Catholic Charities plans to clarify which staffers can use social media as part of their job. They expect to complete that process in several weeks and will begin retraining the rest of Catholic Charities staff as needed. The nonprofit also retrained employees at the group home on when to report incidents to the Department of Human Services. The employee who didn't immediately report the text message to a supervisor received formal disciplinary action. "I think we have addressed everything that DHS had in their investigation, through the citation," Pareja said. "Many of the corrections were made prior to DHS initiating the investigation. ... We did act quickly." In addition to losing their job, the staffer in questions was also told by the Department of Human Services if the agency substantiates any more accusations of maltreatment by this person, they will be disqualified from working with vulnerable adults. Read the entire investigative memorandum from the Department of Human Services [here](#). Follow Stephanie Dickrell on Twitter [@SctimesSteph](#), like her on Facebook at www.facebook.com/sctimessteph, call her at 255-8749 or find more stories at www.sctimes.com/sdickrell. Source: <http://www.sctimes.com/story/news/local/2017/08/12/emotional-abuse-substantiated-catholic-charities-group-home/555851001/>

Employee at treatment center for teenagers accused of sexual assault Posted: Aug 16, 2017 3:36 AM PDT Updated: Aug 16, 2017 3:36 AM PDT Employee at treatment center for teenagers accused of sexual assault A staff member at a Torrington treatment center for teenagers has been charged with

sexually assaulting one of the girls in his care. A staff member at a Torrington treatment center for teenagers has been charged with sexually assaulting one of the girls in his care. According to police, Ulyses Alvarez, of Waterbury, sexually assaulted the girl at the **Touchstone Treatment Center** back in April. The residential treatment center is for teenage girls in the custody of the State Department of Children and Families. Police say in addition to sexual assault, Alvarez is charged with having child pornography. Source: <http://connecticut.news12.com/story/36146178/employee-at-treatment-center-for-teenagers-accused-of-sexual-assault>

Residential Treatment Center Staff Member Arrested August 15, 2017 6:42 PM Filed Under: [arrest](#), [Litchfield](#), [sexual assault](#) (LITCHFIELD,Conn./CBS Connecticut) – State Police have arrested a Waterbury man following an investigation into a complaint from a 15 year old girl at the Touchstone Residential Treatment Program facility in Litchfield in April, alleging she had been sexually abused by a staff member. 24 year old Ulyses Alvarez was arrested Tuesday without incident. He has been charged with Risk of Injury/Impairing the Morals of Children, Promoting a Minor in an Obscene Performance, Illegal Possession of Child Pornography and Sexual Assault in the 4th Degree. Alvarez posted the \$75,000 court set surety bond and is scheduled to appear in court August 29th. Source: <http://connecticut.cbslocal.com/2017/08/15/residential-treatment-center-staff-member-arrested/>

Debauchery, abuse at Florida youth program leads to 3 arrests | Miami Herald Youth academy steeped in sex, physical abuse, cover-ups, sheriff says By Carol Marbin Miller cmarbin@miamiherald.com [Linked In](#) [Google+](#) [Pinterest](#) [Reddit](#) [Print](#) [Order Reprint of this Story](#) August 18, 2017 3:26 PM Some of the youth workers were having sex with the underage boys in their care. Others were smuggling drugs, money, cellphones and porn. A top administrator reportedly sent a kid to the hospital during a violent restraint, bragging: "You gonna learn; this my program." But if conditions at the Highlands Youth Academy in Avon Park were not exactly conducive to the rehabilitation of delinquent youths, state juvenile justice administrators were doing little to turn things around. So, on Thursday, the Polk County sheriff arrested three former top administrators, saying the charges appeared to be the only way to clean the place up. The Department of Juvenile Justice, Polk Sheriff Grady Judd said Friday, "did not provide checks and balances and appropriate oversight. If they did, they would have discovered what we discovered." ADVERTISING A riot at the Highlands Youth Academy in 2013 left the premises trashed. Polk County Sheriff's Office In a prepared statement Friday afternoon, DJJ said it had taken "significant steps" to improve Highlands since a youth uprising four years ago, including the installation of security cameras, increased staff-to-youth ratios, and \$2 million in structural improvements. "Any assertion that DJJ has not worked to improve this facility's operations and services is false. We are 100% committed to youth safety and will hold anyone accountable who is not. We have not, do not, and will not tolerate staff who endanger the safety and well-being of youth placed in our care," the statement said. "We take every allegation of misconduct at our contracted programs very seriously and DJJ's Inspector General's Office is actively investigating the allegations at Highlands Youth Academy. We appreciate the efforts of our law enforcement partners to investigate incidents at Highlands Youth Academy and will work with them to bring a resolution to this matter." The Highlands Youth Academy has a long and troubled history: On Aug. 17, 2013, a full-scale riot erupted at the compound after a disagreement over a basketball game bet. About 150 law officers, including a SWAT team, were needed to quell the unrest, and 61 boys were arrested, records say. A grand jury in Polk County released a [blistering report](#) on the academy on July 14, 2015, expressing "grave concerns" over DJJ's inability to "intervene, to treat our troubled youth, while protecting the public." "We told them at the time, you've got to follow the law, appropriately report to [child abuse investigators] and you've got to quit doing this stuff," Judd told the Miami Herald Friday. "They ignored us." Juvenile justice administrators, Judd said, seemed "personally offended that we were messing around in their business." So, the sheriff said, he dug in his heels, and his detectives have been investigating the 80-bed mental health and drug treatment center ever since. In November 2015, detectives received tips about other "criminal activity," including sexual abuse, juveniles being beaten by, or beating up, workers — and supervisors covering it all up, a spokeswoman said. The far-ranging investigation that followed resulted in the May 12, 2016, arrest of former youth worker Deidre Baucom on charges of sexual misconduct and contraband smuggling. Deidre Baucom Polk County Sheriff's Office On Thursday, the department made three additional arrests: Norma Wynn, 56, of Sebring, the program's former top administrator, on 12 charges of child neglect, failure to report and evidence tampering; Jose Sanchez, 63, of Sebring, a former assistant administrator, on eight charges of child neglect and evidence tampering; and Johnny Hart, 40, of Okaloosa County, another former assistant administrator, on six counts of child abuse, child neglect and evidence tampering. Though he had been accused in May 2016 of slamming a youth to the ground, and then grinding his elbow into the teen's head and neck, [Hart was arrested](#) Friday at another DJJ youth program, the Okaloosa Youth Development Center in Crestview, where he is the program administrator. The youth whom Hart restrained suffered injuries to his shoulder, leg and neck, records say. "We hauled him away from that facility in handcuffs," Judd said of Hart. "The Highlands Youth Academy has been, and likely still is, a mess," Judd said. "Since the riot in 2013, warning bells have been ringing loud and clear. About the only thing I can tell that [DJJ] has done about it has been to turn the alarm off and circle the wagons," he added. In arrest records the department released Friday, the department says DJJ was not alone in concealing wrongdoing. In December 2015, detectives received an anonymous complaint about multiple female youth workers "having sexual relationships with the youthful offenders" housed at Highlands, the sheriff's office said. One of the suspects was now-27-year-old Deidre Baucom, a youth worker at the time. The previous March, a 16-year-old boy had disclosed having sex with Baucom in the bathroom of his dormitory. It is illegal under state and federal law to have sex with youth who are in custody. The incident, however, remained hidden for months. The 16-year-old wrote a statement detailing Baucom's misconduct, and gave it to a youth worker, and at least two other detainees alleged similar behavior. A shift supervisor later told detectives that he'd turned the witness statements over to Sanchez, one of the assistant administrators. But when a DJJ inspector asked for any records detailing Baucom's alleged misconduct, [Wynn told her](#) there weren't any. "The facility found no truth to the allegations," the inspector, Lori Hardyman, was told, an arrest affidavit said. The day she was arrested, May 12, 2016, Baucom "admitted to having sexual intercourse" with the teen, an arrest report says. She is now on probation, and is listed as a registered sex offender in Polk County. The sheriff's office's investigation also turned up "numerous concerns" about another female youth worker, records say. Around August of 2015, a colleague witnessed the worker sitting in the open doorway of a boy's bedroom. "Her left arm was extended into the door frame, at waist level, and was making a flexing motion," a report said. When the witness got closer, he "heard the sound of an elastic waistband snapping." Since the riot in 2013, warning bells have been ringing loud and clear. About the only thing I can tell that [DJJ] has done about it has been to turn the alarm off and circle the wagons. Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd Inside the bedroom was a detained boy, "with an erect penis, shrouded by his issued shorts," the report said. The youth later acknowledged the worker had been performing a sexual act. The witness also [notified Sanchez](#) about what he saw, and submitted an incident report. But later, Wynn told the witness' boss "to not document the incident on any other reports, as the incident was closed," an arrest report says. The witness was transferred to another unit. The youth worker was returned to her post. She was never charged "as there was not enough evidence to be able to prove it in court," said a Sheriff's Office spokeswoman, Carrie Horstman. "Although the victim was credible, it was not a prosecutable case. We believe it happened and we believe the victim," Horstman added. Another youth worker also told detectives that she was aware of the uncharged staffer's activities, and that they should have been reported and investigated. "Instead, the witnesses were called to a meeting after the incident and were told [by an administrator] 'if you didn't visually see anything, don't say anything about it,'" an arrest report said. The youth academy "wasn't reporting what was occurring to DJJ, and DJJ was ignoring the obvious," Judd said. "They ignored it all." The company that operated Highlands at the time, G4S, "stopped cooperating with or reporting crimes to local law enforcement," Judd wrote in a prepared statement. "There has been an ongoing pernicious conspiracy of silence and corruption. DJJ has coddled and covered up for G4S. Our investigation shows that G4S and their staff routinely covered up, or tried to cover up, fights, uses of force, contraband problems, children "huffing" gas, escapes, and even reports of staff having sex with children." Source: <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/state/article168011957.html#storylink=cpy>

Abuse reports, deaths, fall through the cracks in DHHS system Families can't count on a complex reporting system to work properly, imperiling adults with developmental disabilities who are vulnerable to abuse and neglect. By [Noel K. Gallagher](#) Staff Writer [Follow on Facebook](#) [Follow on Twitter](#) [Email Writer 207-791-6387](#) ARUNDEL, ME - AUGUST 19: Terri Earley of Topsham looks through photos of her late son while vacationing in her camper in Arundel. Bradley LaPointe, who was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, was 22 when he died in a group home. Staff photo by Ben McCanna Terri Earley had always cared for her nonverbal autistic son at home, but as he got older, she worried about being able to truly take care of him the way he needed. So about a year ago, 21-year-old Bradley started living in a group home. Six months later — in October — he was found dead in his bed, discovered not by one of the overnight caretakers, but by the manager arriving for work in the morning. Wayne LaPointe and Terri Earley of Topsham hold a portrait of their autistic son, Bradley, who died in a group home in October. He was 22 years old. Staff photo by Ben McCanna ARUNDEL, ME - AUGUST 19: Photos of Bradley LaPointe who died at age 22 in a group home. LaPointe's mother Terri Earley, center left, said the state failed her son, both in the care they provided to him and for the

lack of an investigation into his death. [Staff photo by Ben McCanna SHARE YOUR STORY Do you have an adult family member with a developmental disability who receives services through MaineCare? If so, we'd like to hear about your experience working with providers or the Department of Health and Human Services. Send an email to: tips@pressherald.com. We will not use your name without your permission. Search photos available for purchase: [Photo Store](#) →] "I wanted him to have a better life. I thought he would be better attended, not less attended," said Earley, of Topsham. Worse, she still has questions about just what happened. All she has is a death certificate, which says he died of a seizure. But she's still not sure there was ever an investigation or whether there was any corrective action taken to prevent the same thing happening to someone else. "I'm not here to say it's the home's fault, but I don't know. It was an unattended death," she said. "You would have thought there would be some kind of investigation – maybe it was a training issue, or they didn't follow procedures. He got nothing." In fact, there are many laws governing the care of people with developmental disabilities who live with community-based providers. The Maine Department of Health and Human Services has oversight of the very complex system, which includes multiple state agencies, a network of hundreds of providers across the state, formal and informal advocates and the families and clients themselves. Clients such as Bradley need transportation, help in the workplace and medical care. Funding is a mix of federal and state money, some of it determined by the Legislature and championed or decreased by any given governor, while legal issues can wind up in district attorney's offices, before family court judges or even the medical examiner. All of it requires clear delineation of duties and responsibilities, and intensive communication. AUDIT PROMPTS A STRONG RESPONSE An audit published Aug. 10 by the Office of Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services focused on how the state handled situations where something went wrong for 2,640 adults who receive community-based services under Medicaid. The audit compared hospital emergency room visit data to a state database where providers log all critical incidents – events that rise to the level that they must be reported to the state. Under the law, each critical incident must be reviewed, and perhaps investigated, starting with the three primary players: DHHS, the providers themselves, and Disability Rights Maine, which has a \$330,000 annual contract with the state to be the independent, third-party advocate for clients living with providers. The audit prompted a strong response from all three players. DHHS took issue with several of the audit's findings, adding that the department had already made changes and that the audit represented past practices. Providers, represented by an association, [said the root problem was money](#) and that the state needed to increase the providers' reimbursement rate and fix the system. Disability Rights Maine also pointed to a financial concern – but it thinks the state needs more money, specifically for Adult Protective Services, in order to hire more people and be more active in enforcement. So how is the system supposed to work when something goes wrong? It starts with the client and the provider. There is a list of events that qualify as "critical incidents" or "reportable events" that run the gamut from verbal abuse or a medication issue to sexual abuse or death. Providers must file a report within a day about that incident into a state database maintained and monitored by DHHS. Someone there reviews the incoming incident reports and routes them to the appropriate agency for follow-up. In cases of possible abuse, neglect, exploitation or a death, the Adult Protective Services unit of DHHS gets involved. If an incident falls into one of the other categories, the providers themselves do an administrative review and report their findings to DHHS within 30 days. Federal and state regulations define a reportable event or critical incident as "any event that has or may have an adverse impact on the safety, welfare, rights, or dignity of adults with developmental disabilities or autism." AUDITORS UNCOVER REPORTING GAP It all adds up to a huge number of reportable incidents, covering everything from a badly stubbed toe to a death. During the 30-month period – January 2013 through June 2015 – covered by the audit, there were 36,616 critical events reported, or about 40 a day. Providers, and the auditors, note that many incidents turn out to be relatively minor, and don't require full investigations. In one case, a client didn't take a vitamin for three weeks, generating 21 "incidents" even though the vitamin was not medically needed. In the audit, almost a third of the 13,039 medication "critical incident" reports were about patients refusing to take their medication, which the auditors said they didn't consider potential abuse, neglect or a rights violation. The audit found that community service providers were not always reporting critical incidents or doing follow-up reviews, and in turn cited DHHS for not properly overseeing the providers. Auditors uncovered the reporting gap by comparing hospital emergency room visit information with the state database where providers report all critical incidents within a day. The auditors found that, of 2,243 emergency room visits, there were 34 percent, or 769 visits, for which no critical incident reports were submitted to DHHS, cutting off any ability for the state to investigate the circumstances that led to the visits. Of those 769 unreported incidents, 104 were considered "high-risk," including head injuries, the auditor said. Providers gave "various reasons, such as staff turnover and clerical errors," for why they did not always report critical incidents, the auditors wrote. "We're dealing with human beings," said Bonnie-Jean Brooks, chief executive officer of OHI, a provider with services in Hermon and Brewer. During the audit period, her company reported 400 medication issues – but that was out of more than 900,000 medications handed out. As for failing to report incidents, she said caretakers can get busy, or distracted by a more serious situation. Advertisement The auditors wrote that DHHS did not give them an explanation for why it did not ensure that providers reported all critical incidents to the database. FLAWS IN THE REVIEW PROCESS Each incident that gets reported gets at least an initial review by DHHS. Officials don't want providers reviewing themselves on serious incidents, so DHHS is required to investigate all allegations of abuse, neglect, exploitation or deaths within 30 days. On all other kinds of critical incidents – medication issues, serious injuries, suicidal acts and dangerous situations – the providers do their own, internal, administrative review and file a report with DHHS within 30 days. At that point, DHHS can either accept their report and close the case, or request more information until it is satisfied the situation is resolved. The auditors found significant problems with the review process: Out of 8,678 critical incidents that required follow-up reviews from providers, DHHS did not have any reviews at all. Providers had done the reviews, but told auditors the state had told them to stop sending them in, a charge the state denied. The auditors said DHHS couldn't explain why it didn't notice or take action when providers stopped sending in reviews, or how the state could close the cases without the reviews. Advertisement The more serious incident reports submitted to DHHS are sent to the Adult Protective Services unit. If someone has died, Adult Protective Services reviews the circumstances, and if abuse, neglect or exploitation may have been a factor, it must notify law enforcement. Law enforcement in turn may refer the case to a district attorney or the Maine Attorney General's State Health Care Crimes Unit. Ultimately, the case is reviewed by the Mortality Review Committee. If a critical incident involves abuse, neglect or exploitation, it must be referred to Adult Protective Services. That unit, in turn, must report all suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation cases to a district attorney. Once Adult Protective Services completes its own investigation, any evidence that someone was abusing, neglecting or exploiting another person must be reported to a district attorney. In one case, the auditors found that the state didn't investigate two independent reports from mandatory reporters that a caretaker was making unwanted sexual advances and physically touching a client, including pulling her onto his lap and rubbing her thigh. The provider told auditors that the client had a "long history of making false accusations," but the auditors said the state should have immediately investigated the incidents and reported them to a district attorney's office. RIGHTS AND RESTRAINTS Finally, there are two kinds of incidents – restraining a client beyond what is recommended in that person's individual care plan, and any rights violation – that must be referred to Disability Rights Maine. Advertisement If it is a rights violation, Disability Rights Maine must do a preliminary investigation and attempt to contact the client within five days. Sometimes it intervenes with a simple phone call or email to DHHS, sometimes escalating to mediation or requiring a legal remedy. Ultimately, DRM reports the outcome of its actions into the same state database that tracks each incident. Incidents range from a client being denied access to food or to his or her own money, and could include an objection to not having enough privacy, according to DRM executive director Kim Moody. The agency has stepped in when, for example, a client was being abused by a particular staff person, which led to that staffer being fired. "We've gone in to shared living situations, and found (the client) was doing all the shoveling, all the wood stacking and living in the basement," Moody said. "The clients we represent are being abused. Our clients are not having good lives." The audit found the state wasn't properly sharing restraint data. However, Moody said that since January, DRM has begun to receive monthly summaries of restraint reports from DHHS. Ideally, Moody said, no one would ever be restrained beyond what was therapeutically recommended. But DRM has found that clients are routinely restrained by caretakers in community-based settings. Earley, the mother from Topsham, said she wants the state to improve its oversight of providers, and follow-up on all critical incidents. If the system were working the way it's supposed to, she'd know what happened to her son, Bradley, and what the state did about it. "I find it very disturbing that somebody dies and that's it, and nothing happens. Something obviously needs to change," said Earley. "I don't want his death to be in vain." Noel K. Gallagher can be contacted at 791-6387 or at: ngallagher@pressherald.com Source: <http://www.pressherald.com/2017/08/20/abuse-reports-deaths-fall-through-the-cracks-in-dhhs-system/>

Report Cites Abuse In Portsmouth Boarding School By Former Monks By [Chuck Hinman](#) • 8 hours ago [TweetShareGoogle+Email](#) Portsmouth Abbey School Campus Courtesy of Portsmouth Abbey School / Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 A new report commissioned by the Portsmouth Abbey School, a Catholic boarding school, describes what it calls "credible allegations" of sexual abuse by two former monks. The report identifies the accused abusers as Father Bede Gorman, who died in 1985, and Father Geoffrey Chase, who is in his eighties and critically ill. The school sent a letter Wednesday apologizing

to its students and community for the abuse said to have occurred between 1959 and the early 1980s. The Abbey is pledging to fund therapy for victims.

Source: <http://ripr.org/post/report-cites-abuse-portsmouth-boarding-school-former-monks#stream/0>

\$9.5 million lawsuit claims death of foster child, 15, was stress-related Updated on September 1, 2017 at 12:02 PM Posted on September 1, 2017 at 11:21 AM A friend of the family of Gloria Joya, who was a 15-year-old foster child when she died in April 2016, set up this gofundme page to help pay for the girl's funeral costs. (Screenshot from gofundme) 596 shares By [Aimee Green](mailto:agreen@oregonian.com) agreen@oregonian.com The Oregonian/OregonLive The estate of a 15-year-old Albany girl who died from severe gastrointestinal problems while under child-welfare workers' watch filed a \$9.5 million lawsuit Thursday against the state of Oregon. The estate of Gloria Joya claims the girl lived a life filled with abuse and neglect from her earliest years, and the stress from that contributed to gastrointestinal issues that weren't properly treated and led to her death in April 2016. According to the lawsuit and the state's own investigation into the circumstances leading to Gloria's death, state child-welfare workers failed to intervene in the girl's life despite reports of: Her parents fighting, throwing objects and breaking them -- causing Gloria and her frightened siblings to move to another room. Finger marks on the girl's neck and her statement that she'd been choked. Her mother repeatedly using methamphetamine and living with the girl in a shelter. The girl missing school. The girl witnessing her mother engaged in sexual activity with others. During a 13½-year period, child-welfare workers were contacted 28 times with concerns about Gloria's health and safety. The Oregon Department of Human Services closed many of the reports at screening without further investigation because it determined the reported conduct wasn't considered abuse or to be a threat to Gloria's safety. In one case, a screener determined a report that Gloria's mother was using meth shouldn't be investigated further because the caller was "unable to demonstrate how the mother's drug use impacted her ability to provide care for her child." The lawsuit claims DHS didn't remove Gloria from her mother's custody until about a year before the girl's death -- years after the first signs of stress-related gastrointestinal problems surfaced and shortly after the girl had contemplated suicide. The suit claims that in the days before her April 2016 death, she began isolating herself in her room in her temporary, emergency foster home. The suit claims the foster parents failed to check on her for a few days. The suit also claims that when the foster parents and a caseworker realized Gloria was in poor health physically and mentally, they sent her to her aunt's house instead of bringing her to the hospital on the night of April 26, 2016. The aunt was worried about the girl's severely distended stomach and pain and brought her to the hospital the next morning, the suit states. Gloria died the next day, according to the suit. DHS spokeswoman Andrea Cantu-Schomus declined comment Friday for this story. Under state law, DHS officials are required to conduct an investigation and [write a "critical incident report"](#) after children under their watch are badly injured or die. In Gloria's case, the critical incident report identified lapses in DHS's supervision of Gloria's care -- including that information about Gloria's gastrointestinal problems and schedule of taking medication weren't relayed to the emergency foster family she was placed with in the days before her death. But DHS also stated in its report that Gloria was embarrassed by her gastrointestinal problems and tried to hide them. "The Designated Medical Provider (DMP) reviewed the case postmortem and concluded that no adult in the home could have predicted or prevented the fatality, as they were not provided adequate information regarding G.J.'s medical and mental health history, how these concerns intersect, and how significant stress made the child vulnerable to severe complications," the critical incident report reads. Read DHS's [critical incident report here](#). Beaverton attorney Paul Galm and Steve Milla are representing Gloria's estate. Read [the lawsuit here](#). Gloria's parents are listed as the two heirs to her estate. But that's in dispute. An attorney for Gloria's 10-year-old sister has filed court papers asking that a judge void their claims to the estate because her father "willfully deserted" Gloria in the 10 years leading up to her death and her mother neglected her, the court papers say. If a judge grants that request, any cash settlement or jury award for the lawsuit would go entirely to Gloria's younger siblings. -- Aimee Green agreen@oregonian.com Source: http://www.oregonlive.com/pacific-northwest-news/index.ssf/2017/09/05_9.5_million_lawsuit_claims_fost.html

High school teacher hired just months ago suspended after sending nude photos of herself to at least FIVE students in her class Tracy Miller, 27, admitted to sending multiple images to male pupils over the course of several months through a social media app on her phone Logan High School officials were alerted of the matter after one of the teens came to them showing the explicit pictures she sent him It's unclear whether images were solicited by some students and why Miller had the teens' phone numbers to begin with Miller was arrested Friday on three counts of distribution of obscene matter to minors after she admitted to the incidents The Logan County Sheriff's Department is currently investigating further By [Jessa Schroeder For DailyMail.com](#) Published: 15:09 EDT, 2 September 2017 | Updated: 12:00 EDT, 3 September 2017 e-mail 2kshares [View comments](#) A teacher in Logan, West Virginia was arrested Friday on three counts of distribution of obscene matter to minors after she admittedly sent nude images of herself to students she mentored. Tracy Miller, 27, reportedly sent multiple images to male pupils over the course of several months through a social media app on her phone. Officials at Logan High School say they were alerted of the matter after one of the teens came to them and showed the explicit pictures he received via cell. Miller told police during questioning she recalled exchanging inappropriate pictures with at least five students this year, [WSAZ](#) reports. Scroll down for video +2 Copy link to paste in your message Tracy Miller, 27, was arrested Friday on three counts of distribution of obscene matter to minors after she admitted to sending nude pictures to students Copy link to paste in your message Investigators say the arrest comes after deputies were contacted Thursday by administrators at Logan High School +2 Copy link to paste in your message The Logan County Sheriff's Office is currently investigating the events further Officials at the school are currently investigating the matter further. Authorities will question other students to determine who else may be involved and whether or not Miller had physical contact with them. It's unclear as to when Miller got their cell numbers and why she had access in the first place. Miller was employed at the school since January as a health instructor. She is currently on suspension without pay until further notice. Logan High School released a public statement on the matter Friday. 'We are dealing with the situation by following county policy governing Employee Code of Conduct. The teacher in question has been suspended at this time.' The incident is just one of countless teacher-pupil related crimes to take place in recent months and years. Video playing bottom right... Last month, a teacher who led a group of troubled youth at the Village School near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was arrested after she sent more than 30 love letters to a 16-year-old girl. Nina Scott, 28, reportedly [referred to the minor](#) as 'her girlfriend' and said in the letters that her bed was 'our bed' and her two-year-old daughter was 'our baby girl', according to WCAU. Police were informed of the letters after the student transferred to a new school and a staff member found her journal with the notes inside during a routine search at the residence. The Village, an educational child-care facility where children with behavioral and emotional issues stay, said their goal is to help students change the direction of their lives for the better. 'We work together with children, families and communities impacted by trauma to support healing and resilience, to encourage hope and to empower them to realize their greatest potential,' according to its website. Scott is serving a minimum of three months on electronic home monitoring and faces five years of sex offender probation afterward. Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4846970/Teacher-arrested-sending-nude-photos-teen-students.html#ixzz4rl0vA8NJ> Follow us: [@MailOnline on Twitter](#) | [DailyMail on Facebook](#)

Posted September 2, 2017 08:29 pm - Updated September 2, 2017 08:42 pm By [Sandy Hodson](#) Staff Writer **Third arrest this year made at center to help troubled children** For the third time in the past year, an employee entrusted to care for troubled children was charged with sexually molesting them instead. Timothy T. Carroll, 47, was arrested Aug. 23. The charge of aggravated child molestation involves a 14-year-old girl committed to **Lighthouse Care Center**. The victim was at the facility because of a suicide attempt over the July 4 weekend, said her father. "This is the third incident in the past year, that's not acceptable," he said. Carroll was suspected of inappropriate contact with two other girls before his daughter was molested, the father said. "You can't keep just doing background checks and say that's enough," said the father, who is a teacher. "Lighthouse Care Center of Augusta is committed to providing high quality, compassionate care in a safe, therapeutic environment," reads a prepared statement from Lighthouse. While employees are already screened and trained, the center will conduct additional evaluation of recruiting, hiring and training, review all staff and assess existing security measures. Carroll and Jacey M. Haskell, 23, were immediately fired following an investigation of the allegations against them, according to Lighthouse's statement. Haskell has been indicted on a charge of sexual assault by a person with supervisory authority over another. He is accused of having a sexual encounter with a teen at the center on Feb. 7. A third person, Chris Calhoun, 29, had worked at Lighthouse where he met a girl he later molested. He was sentenced July 13 to 10 years in prison followed by 10 years on probation for child molestation. Assistant District Attorney McKenzie Gray said Calhoun picked up the victim from her Columbia County high school and took her to his home in Richmond County for a sexual encounter. While the father of Carroll's alleged victim said that there are a lot of great people at Lighthouse, more needs to be done to ensure the children are safe. Another father of a teen-age girl wasn't as forgiving of Lighthouse staff. His daughter went into the center in March. Carroll was one of the staff members who said she had to stay, said Robert Trinidad. She was there for three days and during half that time she was physically sick with a temperature and then the staff said she was good to go. What kind of treatment could she have received in such a short time, Trinidad asked. When he came to Augusta to pick up his daughter, the staff initially brought him another child, he said. "You expect that place to be safe for your kid," Trinidad said. "They're supposed to help recovery from trauma and then you hear about this." The leadership and staff at Lighthouse was shocked

and abhorred by the alleged misconduct of the individuals charged, according to the center's statement. Such conduct will not be tolerated. Reach Sandy Hodson at (706) 823-3226 or sandy.hodson@augustachronicle.com. Source: <http://chronicle.augusta.com/news/2017-09-02/third-arrest-year-made-center-help-troubled-children>

Law firm probes allegations against boarding school faculty Originally published September 6, 2017 at 8:05 am Updated September 6, 2017 at 8:16 am
Share story By [MICHAEL MELIA](#) The Associated Press HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — A Connecticut boarding school that earlier this year detailed allegations of sexual abuse spanning several decades has hired a law firm to look into new allegations of inappropriate behavior by faculty members, including some who remain on staff today. Choate Rosemary Hall said the new reports involve "boundary crossing behavior" by a few current faculty members that took place in the 1980s and early 1990s. In April, the school released a report on allegations of misconduct by a dozen staff members between 1963 and 2010 including kissing and sexual intercourse. Afterward, the school received additional complaints concerning past and current faculty members, and it hired the law firm Day Pitney to investigate. "Day Pitney has now reported back to Choate that it 'has conducted its investigation into allegations against current faculty and, based on evidence developed to date, Day Pitney has found no basis to take any action against any current faculty member,'" Head of School Alex Curtis and trustees chairman Michael Carr wrote Tuesday in a letter to the school community. F The school said the firm is still investigating reported instances of sexual misconduct by former faculty members. The new investigation was first reported last week by the Meriden Record-Journal. Sign up for the Morning Brief
Delivered bright and early weekday mornings, this email provides a quick overview of top stories and need-to-know news. Email address One of the former students who recently came forward, Amanda Hampton, said a teacher who is still employed by Choate said inappropriate things to her and attempted to start a relationship with her over a couple weeks in the 1980s. During a meal at a faculty house, she said, the man gave her Valentine's Day candies that said "Be Mine" and "Choose Me." Hampton said she knows of three current faculty members who have been accused of inappropriate behavior, though none are accused of sexual assault. She said she spoke out because she felt the school was not responding adequately to her concerns. "I don't know what they're going to do with these faculty but I'm not sending my kids to Choate," she said. "I think they are looking to the future but they have a big mess to clean up with people from my era." Famous alumni of the private school in Wallingford include John F. Kennedy, Michael Douglas, and Glenn Close. In the letter to the school community, Choate said it had updated its sexual misconduct policies and appointed a coordinator in charge of overseeing the school's misconduct prevention and response efforts. Source: <http://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/law-firm-probes-allegations-against-boarding-school-faculty/>

Audit Finds 134 Cases of Medicare Beneficiaries Who Were Abused or Neglected Cases of alleged rape, sexual and physical abuse, neglect, maltreatment, and sadism cited [Share Tweet Email](#) Getty Images BY: [Ali Meyer Follow @DJAliMeyer](#) September 5, 2017 2:15 pm There were 134 Medicare beneficiaries who were found with injuries that were the result of possible abuse dating back to 2015, according to an [audit](#) from the office of inspector general of the Department of Health and Human Services. The inspector general created the memorandum to alert the agency that abuse and neglect was affecting beneficiaries in skilled nursing facilities. Under the Social Security Act, when a beneficiary living in a long-term care facility is exposed to abuse or neglect, the incident is required to be reported to a law enforcement agency so it can be investigated. The audit found there were 134 cases from Jan. 1, 2015, to Dec. 31, 2016, where there was a beneficiary found with an injury due to abuse or neglect, and a large percentage of these were not reported. According to the report, included in the 134 incidents were cases of alleged rape, seduction, sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect, abandonment, maltreatment, and sadism. For example, one Medicare beneficiary who had verbal and mobile limitations was found victim to sexual assault. "According to the emergency room record, a male resident of the [skilled nursing facility] allegedly sexually assaulted Ms. Doe," the audit states. "Nursing aides found the man on top of Ms. Doe squeezing and touching her breast and ejaculating on her. The emergency room record further noted that Ms. Doe's right breast was an 'area of discomfort,' and 'two silver-dollar-sized bruises were observed on her breast.'" The audit finds that this incident was not immediately reported to law enforcement. Instead, employees at the facility told the patient's family, and the family had to report the incident. Auditors said the agency does not have proper procedures in place to ensure these cases are reported and identified. Additionally, this is not the first time the inspector general has seen problems with quality of care and neglect and abuse. The Office of Inspector General "has issued numerous reports that have detailed problems with the quality of care and the reporting and investigation of potential abuse or neglect at group homes, nursing homes and [skilled nursing facilities]," the report states. "For example, OIG's recent audit reports on critical incident reporting at group homes showed that group home providers did not report up to 15 percent of critical incidents to the appropriate State agencies." An estimated 22 percent of beneficiaries have been through adverse effects at skilled nursing facilities that include medication-induced bleeding, ulcers, and infections. A majority of these events—69 percent—could have been prevented. Auditors are suggesting the agency take immediate action to ensure these incidents are immediately reported. "The information in this alert is preliminary, and our audit is continuing," the auditors said. "We will issue a draft report at the conclusion of the audit and include the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Service's comments and actions taken in response to this Early Alert." Source: <http://freebeacon.com/issues/audit-finds-134-cases-medicare-beneficiaries-abused-neglected/>

Year 8 schoolgirl put in 'isolation' and 'treated like a prisoner' after teachers said her LILAC hair colour broke uniform policy By Carl Stroud 7th September 2017, 2:19 pm Updated: 7th September 2017, 4:06 pm A SCHOOLGIRL has been treated "like a prisoner" after being put in isolation for dyeing her hair lilac, her furious parents claim. Kadey Wood's punishment came on the first day of the new school year after her mum Carla coloured her locks at the start of the summer holidays. SWNS:South West News Service, 3 Year eight pupil Kadey was put in isolation after returning to school with hair dyed lilac Meopham School in Kent says hair must be a "natural" colour and Carla says she will keep her 12-year-old daughter off school until the dye has faded out. The 29-year-old mum-of-three said: "It's going to affect her learning not being with each subject teacher and not socialising with her peers. "It has upset her because she does like school and being able to see her friends. "I feel this will be much more detrimental to her education than a lilac tint in her hair." She added: "She's not even allowed out at lunch or break to see her friends - her lunch is brought to her. "She can only leave to use the toilet. SWNS:South West News Service, 3 Kadey's mum Carla is now keeping her 12-year-old daughter off school after she was put in isolation "We were told if other children see her walking round the school building they might think it is OK to dye their hair." Dad Chris, 36, said: "I understand they try to enforce conformity to all the students but this is just plain ridiculous. "Locking her up in solitary confinement? Like prison? "It's not acceptable to treat a child like this." Suzanne Dickinson, said: "We have extremely high standards at Meopham School. "Our uniform policy clearly states that hair must be of natural colour." Full-time mum Carla, who lives in Northfleet, said she cannot use a shop-bought product to remove the colour from Kadey's hair as it cannot be used over her natural-looking bleach highlights, and a trip to the hairdresser will cost up to £60. The lilac dye cost £9 for two packs in Superdrug. SWNS:South West News Service, 3 Kadey's mum Carla died her daughter's locks at the beginning of the summer holidays Carla claims the school have refused to let Kadey take work home and is classing the time off as unauthorised absence - meaning the parents could face a fine. [It comes as an 11-year-old girl was given detention on her first day at senior school because she didn't have a calculator.](#) Source: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/4413358/schoolgirl-isolation-treated-like-a-prisoner-dyeing-hair-lilac/>

Home For Troubled Girls On Gifford Street Closes By BRITTANY FELDOTT Sep 8, 2017 0 [Home Falmouth Falmouth News](#) Cape START, a short-term residential program for adolescent girls who have experienced trauma or family disruption, has ceased operations at its location on Gifford Street in Falmouth. Children's Study Home, the parent organization that oversees Cape START, plans to open a new location on its campus in Springfield. The decision to close the residential program in Falmouth has been under discussion at the organization for several years, due to the difficulties of operating a residential program from across the state. The previous program manager in Falmouth recently resigned, prompting the transition. "It's a question we've had over the years on and off, and recently we had a great opportunity to make a move," said Eliza Crescentini, executive director of Children's Study Home, last month. The nonprofit organization is headquartered in Springfield and operates several programs across Western Massachusetts and Cape Cod as a private provider for the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families. The Cape START (Short Term Adolescent Residential Treatment) house at 215 Gifford Street opened in 1993. Many of the teenagers in the Falmouth program—and other similar programs—struggled with mental or behavioral health challenges. The state refers adolescents to Children's Study Home if they are identified as having a need for structure; a therapeutic environment; or opportunities for sustained social emotional academic wellness. Cape START was a transitory program, providing young girls the support to help them plan for a more permanent living situation. The average length of stay in Cape START was six months. Although adolescents in this type of residential program are in custody of the state, they are not necessarily in foster care. Some of the adolescents come from disrupted families and transition to foster care after their stay, while others return to family care or independent living situations. At full capacity, CapeSTART housed 12 teenagers and employed six residential counselors, a program manager, assistant program manager and one licensed clinician. On August 10, Ms. Crescentini reported that seven girls were then living in the Falmouth residential facility. Yesterday,

DCF director of public affairs Andrea Grossman reported that all children in state custody had been moved to other placements. Some of the residents already had plans to transition out of the Falmouth house before the decision to close was made. Ms. Crescentini said some girls may relocate to the new Springfield location, but the state does not disclose actual placement locations of children. Ms. Crescentini emphasized that placing adolescents as close to their communities and families as possible is a priority for Children's Study Home. There are currently 30 residential programs similar to Cape START across Massachusetts, and the next closest one to the Cape is in Fall River. Other options for relocating the girls include group homes, residential schools or foster homes. Children's Study Home did not return several calls requesting information on the number of staff recently at Cape START, the recently resigned program manager, and future plans for the children. Assistant director of residential programs Christopher Langelier acted as interim program manager and oversaw the transition at Cape START. A statement prepared by the Department of Children and Families on August 18 reads: "DCF is working to ensure that the needs of all children served by Cape Start [sic] are met and will work with our providers, and foster families to ensure that the service needs of the Cape will continue to be met going forward. We greatly value our providers, and in this situation, Children's Study Home (CSH), based out in Springfield, determined that continuing to operate a program (CapeStart) on the Cape was no longer feasible." Children's Study Home operates three residential programs in total, but Cape START was the only one outside the Pioneer Valley region. Last month, Ms. Crescentini said the organization has had difficulty staffing the Falmouth program, particularly hiring clinical support. Cape START and other residential programs rely heavily on specialized staff because the participating adolescents have a diverse set of needs resulting from their history with trauma. Cape START offered its residents therapeutic and clinical groups, and the girls also received private counseling and treatment in the community. At times, Ms. Crescentini said, Children's Study Home had to partner with community organizations such as Gosnold on Cape Cod to provide treatment for its Falmouth residents while seeking an in-house clinician. The program's distance from the main headquarters also posed a challenge for training and providing ongoing support for staff. Children's Study Home's move to densely populated Springfield offers it better access to trained and experienced counselors and clinicians from nearby colleges and institutions, Ms. Crescentini said. Specifically, the Springfield location has a behavioral health and education school on the campus. "We're making a decision to move the program, so it can benefit from the effects of other like programs, other professionals," Ms. Crescentini said. Children's Study Home did consider relocating the program to Hyannis and began a search for a suitable property about a year ago, but ultimately decided the relocation would not solve all the challenges of operating a residential program so far from its headquarters. The nonprofit organization extended opportunities to Falmouth staff to relocate to its new campus in Springfield, but Ms. Crescentini did not know whether anyone would make the transfer. In addition to the Falmouth facility, Children's Study Home also offers therapeutic family after-school programs in Hyannis, which will continue their operation. Source: https://www.capeenews.net/falmouth/news/home-for-troubled-girls-on-gifford-street-closes/article_2e39b8a4-4843-5429-a083-bfde5ca09e58.html

Former Detroit Lakes group home worker from West Fargo gets 12 years for rape | Brainerd Dispatch Former Detroit Lakes group home worker from West Fargo gets 12 years for rape By [Nathan Bowe / Forum News Service](#) on Sep 12, 2017 at 5:24 p.m. AddThis Sharing Buttons Share to Facebook32Share to TwitterShare to RedditShare to EmailShare to Copy Link Jallah Sallah Kollie DETROIT LAKES, Minn. — A former worker at a Detroit Lakes group home has been sentenced to 12 years in prison for raping a woman resident with the mental capacity of a young child. Jallah Sallah Kollie, 39, of 219 Second Ave. W., West Fargo, was sentenced Tuesday, Sept. 12, in Becker County District Court on felony counts of first- and third-degree criminal sexual conduct-victim mentally impaired. "You are a predator of the worst kind," a grandmother of the victim told Kollie in a victim's impact statement. "You preyed on an innocent, vulnerable, beautiful woman with childlike innocence. You violated her body in the worst way. Hopefully, some justice will be found by putting a monster like you behind bars. It will save other women." The grandmother said that after the rape, her granddaughter sat alone and terrified at the group home for 27 hours before the grandmother was notified and took her home where she felt safe. According to the investigation memorandum filed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, the rape happened at a Lakes Home group home in Detroit Lakes. Authorities responded at the group home on Sept. 13, 2016, after another employee reported walking in on Kollie and the victim, who was naked in the bathroom. According to the DHS report, the victim is a vulnerable adult who has a "lack of understanding of sexuality," but is somebody "who does not need assistance in personal hygiene care." The report states that when the other employee saw blood on the victim's buttocks, they told Kollie to leave and began questioning the victim on what had happened. The victim described in graphic, childlike detail an assault that involved raping several parts of her body and that after she told him to "get out of here," Kollie told her to "shut up" and just "be touched." Authorities say a sexual assault kit administered at the hospital points to him. Throughout his jury trial Aug. 8 and on through his sentencing hearing on Tuesday, Kollie steadfastly denied having any sexual contact with the victim, who operates on the intellectual level of about a 6-year-old. The witness testified during the trial, as did the victim and Kollie. It took the jury about 2½ hours to convict him. On Tuesday, he told Becker County District Judge Jay Carlson that he is not evil, never touched the woman, and is going to appeal his conviction. Kollie's attorney, Simon George of Detroit Lakes, asked the judge for a lighter sentence than the state sentencing guideline, arguing, among other things, that Kollie has no prior offenses on his record. He asked the judge to stay execution of sentencing on the first count and sentence him on the second count, which would be about 50 months in prison. Becker County Attorney Tammy Merkins strongly objected, saying that would essentially nullify the jury verdict on count 1. She pointed to the vulnerability of the victim, the caretaker role of the defendant, and that the assault violated the sanctity of the victim's home. Judge Carlson agreed with Merkins. Noting that the first-degree felony charge of criminal sexual conduct carries a maximum sentence of 30 years in prison and a \$40,000 fine, he sentenced Kollie to the exact amount of time recommended by state sentencing guideline — 144 months — with 96 months of that served in prison and 48 months on supervised release, as long as there are no disciplinary problems while he is in prison. He was granted credit for 246 days served in jail and was fined \$50 plus court fees, including the public defender fee. He was ordered to provide a DNA sample and to register as a predatory sexual offender when he is released from prison. He was not adjudicated on the second count. Because of the length of the sentence, no civil commitment proceedings were initiated by the state. Source: <http://www.brainerddispatch.com/news/4326850-former-detroit-lakes-group-home-worker-west-fargo-gets-12-years-rape>

"I got so many conflicting stories." Mom wants answers after teen suffers serious brain injury at Norman boys home Posted 6:21 pm, September 13, 2017, by [Kelsey Gibbs Facebook Twitter Pinterest LinkedIn Reddit Email](#) NORMAN - A mother is desperately searching for answers as to what happened at a metro boys home. Josiah Hill is in a battle Wednesday night. The 15-year-old is facing a serious brain injury after an incident at a Norman boys home for teens. But, what happened is the question from the mother. "I got another call, stating that he was not going to Norman Regional, they were now going to send him to Children's Hospital," said Veonna Butler. It was the call no parent ever wants to receive. "He was intubated already. He was on a ventilator. He was not responding at all," Butler said. Hill is a resident of the Cornerstone Group Home for Boys in Norman. His mother admits her son's behavior and bad influences landed him here. But, she never expected her son to get seriously hurt while he was getting help. "Did he bump his head? Did somebody hit him on his head? He looks to have a spinal cord injury as well, like he was hit from behind," Butler said. All questions Butler wants answers to. She tells news 4 staff at the group home told her Hill collapsed while playing a game of basketball. However, it an excuse she's not buying. "When you see a kid like that and then you see him today laying there not talking, it's just mind-boggling," she said. Butler said this week's head injury wasn't her son's first. Just last week, during a visit, she noticed his face was swollen from an alleged attack by another resident. He told her he was attacked. "I was sitting down, and the kid came and started going in on me from behind" and he was like, "When I stood up, I started to fight him back to defend myself," Butler said. In a statement, Oklahoma Juvenile Affairs director Steven Buck tells us: "We are aware of a serious health event impacting a young person in OJA custody. Many of our staff has worked with this youth and their family, and we offer our best wishes during this challenging time. We are prepared to assist the family as needed. OJA stands ready to assist any agency involved in investigating the circumstances surrounding this person's health. By statute, the OKDHS Office of Client Advocacy has investigative authority for licensing group homes and local law enforcement is involved as appropriate. As any investigation unfolds, we will act accordingly on any issues that are identified." It's a challenging time for a mother who's seeking the truth. "I got so many conflicting stories," Butler said. Right now, Norman police investigators are looking into the situation. Source: <http://kfor.com/2017/09/13/i-got-so-many-conflicting-stories-mom-wants-answers-after-teen-suffers-serious-brain-injury-at-norman-boys-home/>

Norman Teen In Coma After Injury At Group Home Posted: Sep 14, 2017 4:05 PM PDT Updated: Sep 14, 2017 4:13 PM PDT By Aaron Brilbeck, News 9 NORMAN, Oklahoma - A Norman teen is in a coma after he was injured at a state-contracted group home. His mother says she can't get any answers about what happened. On Monday, Vionna Butler got a call that her son, 15-year-old Josiah Hill, overheated while playing basketball at the Cornerstone Boys Home for troubled teens in Norman. She went to the hospital, figuring she'd find him with an IV and a headache. Instead, "I saw my son laying basically lifeless. He

was on a ventilator of course not talking, not responding, and they basically told me that there was nothing that they could do." Butler says the director of the home told her Josiah got sick playing ball, but she says a social worker said her son was hurt racing with other boys. Butler says doctors told her a mass on her son's brain burst after he was hit. "They said that he did have a mass that was in his brain and some sort of trauma caused it to burst." And Butler says this isn't the first time her son was hurt at the facility and no one told her about it. Just last month she says, "I show up there and his face is swollen. You know? And I asked him what happened and he told me he was sitting down, some kid came up behind him and just started going in on him." Butler said. "I wasn't told about it. I wasn't called. I wasn't let know." The Cornerstone Boys Home is not commenting and the state Office of Juvenile Affairs released a statement that says: "We are aware of a serious health event impacting a young person in OJA custody. Many of our staff have worked with this youth and their family and will continue to do so as medical treatment is provided. We are prepared to assist the family as needed moving forward and extend our support in this difficult time. OJA stands ready to assist any agency involved in investigating the circumstances surrounding this person's health. By statute, the OKDHS Office of Client Advocacy has investigative authority for licensing group homes and local law enforcement is involved as appropriate. As any investigation unfolds, we will act accordingly on any issues that are identified. Additional comment is not appropriate as we have not received a conclusive summary of the situation." Butler wants answers. "At the end of the day you're the parent and it's really up to you to make sure that they're ok." Source: <http://www.news9.com/story/36370929/norman-teen-in-coma-after-injury-at-group-home>

Iowa boarding school owner charged with sexually abusing teenage students IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP) — Investigators say the former owner of an Iowa boarding school used his position to coerce one teenager into a sexual relationship and others to undress for his arousal. Former Midwest Academy owner Benjamin Trane is charged with third-degree sexual abuse, sexual exploitation by a counselor and child endangerment. He turned himself in Thursday after a 19-month investigation into abuse allegations at the private, for-profit boarding school Trane operated in Keokuk. The school, which had about 100 students from mostly well-off families, closed in January 2016. Investigators allege that Trane coerced one student to engage in sex acts in order to advance in the program and be allowed to contact relatives. Trane also allegedly had others undress for "body image therapy" sessions he led, and kept students in isolation for extended periods. Source: <http://www.nh1.com/news/iowa-boarding-school-owner-charged-with-sexually-a>

Neighbors say group home for children is out of control by: Tina Terry Updated: Sep 15, 2017 - 6:21 PM MINT HILL, N.C. - Frustrated neighbors are fed up with fights, violent outbursts and daily calls to police about a group home for children. Mint Hill town leaders are researching what it would take to close it down if things don't change. The home is not far from Albemarle and Lawyers roads. The state agency that regulates the home is investigating the report. Turn Around has been certified since 2001. The police chief said his officers have been called to the house 114 times since January. Neighbors said their area used to be quiet and peaceful. "They (are) throwing things, loud and fighting constantly," neighbor Veronica Tukan said. Teens reportedly threw objects at staff in some cases. "There needs to be a change. It's my opinion that the people that supervise these girls have is non-existent," neighbor Mike Bustetter said. One neighbor said an angry teen threw this metal pipe during a recent tirade. "It's like we on the battlefield," Tukan said. The owner said she knows there is a problem and is working with police, but neighbors are taking their own steps. They complained to town leaders during a board meeting Thursday night. The police chief said he's working with other leaders to possibly strengthen the nuisance ordinance to close a facility down in situations like this. The owner said clients who act out can be relocated, but it can take more than 30 days. Source: <http://www.wsocvtv.com/news/local/neighbors-say-group-home-for-children-is-out-of-control/610022900>

Numerous violations cited at Sacramento foster care shelter campus By [Karen de Sá](#), [Cynthia Dizikes](#), and [Joaquin Palomino](#) September 17, 2017 Photo: Paul Chinn, The Chronicle The Children's Receiving Home of Sacramento has been cited more than 120 times in the past few years for inappropriate staff conduct, mishandled medications and filthy dorms. The Children's Receiving Home of Sacramento has been cited more... A Sacramento agency running one of the few remaining foster care shelters in California has violated health and safety laws and the personal rights of children more than 120 times in recent years — a number matched only by state-licensed facilities that have been shut down or placed on probation. State citations since 2012 at the Children's Receiving Home of Sacramento describe poorly trained staff, mishandled medications and filthy dorms. This year, an employee was terminated for an "inappropriate relationship" with an underage client and for smoking marijuana with runaway foster youth. On Sept. 8, a state inspector was unable to remain in a bedroom because the stench of urine overwhelmed her. The privately run facility has a troubled history of poor performance it has not yet overcome. Three years ago, state regulators placed the Receiving Home on an extensive 12-month correction plan, after its failure to make earlier, promised reforms. Supervisors "failed to report multiple allegations of sexual and other inappropriate conduct by staff toward clients at the facility"; children were assaulted and injured due to lack of care and supervision; and staff failed to call 911 when a child nearly drowned in the facility's pool, a January 2014 letter from the California Department of Social Services states. The number of citations at the 89-bed facility on Auburn Boulevard "doesn't surprise me, not at all. It sounds about right," said foster youth Malik Pinckney, 18, who was sent as a younger teen to the Receiving Home campus. "It's almost like they want to get shut down, like they don't think people are going to check. It's just neglectful, pure neglect, of everything at the place — the buildings, and the kids." More on Foster Care [State demands fixes in San Joaquin foster care system](#) [State orders troubled Sacramento foster care office to close Foster children at risk in Sacramento intake center](#) Licensing violations can be found throughout California's network of more than 900 children's residential care facilities, which range from two to 216 beds. But the total number of citations at the shelter and adjoining residential programs run by the Children's Receiving Home of Sacramento stands out, state records show, with a notably high number of violations that pose "an immediate risk." David Ballard, longtime CEO of the nonprofit Children's Receiving Home, said his agency strives to provide the best of care for foster youth, and he attributed the high number of citations to particularly diligent reporting to state authorities. "We've made a decision to err on the side of caution and over-reporting," Ballard said. "If we think we have a problem, we don't debate it here, we report it to licensing and they come out. That's something we have asked for to make sure we have a crisp and clean operation." State and county officials declined to comment on the significance of the high number of citations, saying individual foster care facilities are unique and should not be compared. A [Chronicle investigation](#) published this year revealed additional hazards for youth placed at the facility. The report documented hundreds of questionable arrests on shelter campuses following minor misbehavior by foster youth. In Sacramento, there were more than 40 instances of foster youth being arrested and booked at the county's juvenile hall in 2015 and 2016 from the Children's Receiving Home campus, including some children as young as 9 and 10. Unlike group homes in California, which are shifting to short-term treatment centers, shelters simply house children that the foster care system can't place. Most California counties have moved away from the shelter model, which is considered outmoded. Next year, just seven of the state's 58 counties will operate shelters, under new requirements that children remain no more than 10 days. The Sacramento facility, however, is expanding its services to accommodate more children, and is set to receive an additional \$700,000 in county funding. The Children's Receiving Home is in some ways unique. Its main campus contains the 49-bed emergency shelter for newborns through children up to 18 years old, and several residential treatment programs. It also leases space to Sacramento County, which operates a central intake office where social workers and police bring children immediately after they've been removed from troubled homes. [As The Chronicle reported in July](#), for years, hundreds of children have been left to sleep on the floor of the county intake office, in an illegal, makeshift arrangement that left teenagers vulnerable to human trafficking in the neighborhood and other safety hazards. Following exposure, county officials responsible for the intake office are now taking steps to end the illegal housing practice — mainly by shifting children with more challenging behaviors into the adjacent shelter, with one-on-one staffing and additional mental health services. Pinckney, who now lives with a foster family, recalls some employees' kindnesses at the Sacramento facility — granting extra time on the basketball court, or simply listening when kids needed to talk. But twice in 10 days, he said, "savage" fights broke out that counselors failed to break up with any urgency, and girls left campus alone late at night with no one trying to stop them. Pinckney described conditions in the dorms and bathrooms as "nasty." Although foster youths' medical records are often hard to access amid their many moves, the Sacramento facility has repeatedly been cited for avoidable errors, such as an incident where a child was mistakenly given a sibling's medications. Authorities also noted: "There have been numerous incidents in which clients did not receive their medications as prescribed due to errors, communication problems and medications not filled timely." In some cases, employees' poor choices resulted in injuries, such as staff failing to take a child to the doctor in time to get stitches after a fight broke out. State citations also reveal shortcomings in ensuring children are provided structured activities to make their lives in institutional care more normal and less dull. The facility has not "utilized an activity plan to keep the children engaged," investigators noted in one report, canceling activities for some youth that prompted them to run away. On rarer occasions, abuse by staffers has also been documented, including a former counselor sentenced to a year in jail in 2013 for having sex with a 16-year-old client and furnishing her with marijuana. Another citation for a staffer smoking marijuana with clients was issued just last month. The licensing division of the state

Department of Social Services responds to complaints and conducts inspections of residential care facilities. When citations are issued, a facility must submit a plan of correction. If those plans fail, the department has a range of enforcement options, from issuing citations and civil penalties to revoking a facility's license. Observers say the repeated violations in Sacramento illustrate troubling patterns. Pay at the Sacramento facility is the lowest among 10 shelter programs reviewed by the newspaper, with a starting hourly wage recently raised to \$11.50 — \$1 less than at the local In-N-Out Burger. "It's most disheartening that they haven't cleaned up their act in any appreciable way — the staff has carte blanche to do whatever they want to do without any competent supervision by the administration there," said Sacramento psychologist and attorney Joseph George, who represented the abused 16-year-old foster youth and whose office interviewed more than 18 former employees. Director Ballard would not comment on specific staff abuse cases, but said he has been disturbed by the repeated incidents: "I've been very conscious of that, and I do see that pattern," he said. Ballard said the facility has responded to each citation through termination, discipline, improved training or policy changes. "It's still a work in progress, but my goal is to be responsive to the fact that I was seeing too many staff errors, and my goal is to see fewer errors." He later wrote to the newspaper to clarify those remarks, stating his facility "does critically needed work, for the best kids, delivered by the most dedicated staff, every day. We make mistakes. Everybody does. But the ledger here — the work itself — is overwhelmingly to the good." Sacramento County is heavily reliant on the Receiving Home to house foster youth who social workers have been unable to place with relatives or foster parents. The facility is well-known locally, visited regularly by local and state elected officials. Yet citations in recent years include "dirt and grime" throughout bedrooms, and soiled shower stalls. At the cottage housing children 6 years old and younger, water ran as hot as 129.5 degrees, well above scalding temperature. On Sept. 8, a state Licensing Program Analyst was repelled by what she found on an unannounced visit to a dorm: "Bedroom #5 has a very strong smell of urine and there were 6 flies observed over the bed of one of the clients," she wrote. "The odor was so strong LPA was unable to stay in the room." Foster youth Pinckney, who is now studying music and psychology at Cosumnes River College in Sacramento, said the shelter environment led him to one conclusion: "You just don't want to be there longer than you have to. It was just an overall terrible experience that I wouldn't recommend for anybody." Karen de Sá, Cynthia Dizikes and Joaquin Palomino are staff writers on The San Francisco Chronicle's Investigative Team. Email: kdesa@sfgchronicle.com, ipalomino@sfgchronicle.com, cdizikes@sfgchronicle.com Twitter: [@JoaquinPalomino](https://twitter.com/JoaquinPalomino), [@cdizikes](https://twitter.com/cdizikes) Source: <http://www.sfgchronicle.com/news/article/Numerous-violations-cited-at-Sacramento-foster-12203449.php>

No foster child will be forgotten: A state mandate means all kids in the system will have attorneys on their side [L.E. Baskow](#) Elliot Brittain, a (now) 22-year-old who received a lawyer through the Children's Attorneys Project, takes a little time at the Rainbow Family Park on Tuesday, September 12, 2017. By [April Corbin](#) (contact) Monday, Sept. 18, 2017 | 2 a.m. When Elliot Brittain was 17, the two people who'd been raising him — his grandparents — both died unexpectedly, and he found himself immersed in the Clark County foster care system. He was called to family court for a hearing to determine whether his mother, who had relinquished custody of him when he was 5, or his father, whom he had never met and knew only by name, were willing and able to take care of him. "I was not prepared for these circumstances," said Brittain, now 22. "Although I was almost considered an adult, I was unprepared to begin my life." Fortunately, he was not alone. Through the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada's Children's Attorneys Project, Brittain was assigned a lawyer to help him navigate the legal process and protect his interests. "He represented me and walked me through every step of the process," Brittain said, "everything from taking your shoes off at the scanner (when entering the courthouse) to what was expected of me. He made the language plain. He represented my wishes." Brittain described that lawyer as a mentor who helped him become the man he is today — a UNLV student who strives to someday work with people suffering from mental illness and substance abuse issues. As a member of the nonprofit's youth advisory panel, Brittain also is adamant that all children deserve the same legal representation and assistance he received. The state of Nevada agrees. During this year's legislative session, lawmakers passed Senate Bill 305, which requires courts to appoint an attorney to represent children during civil cases involving abuse or neglect and the termination of parental rights. The bill also allows counties to increase recorder fees by \$3 to help fund such lawyers. Clark County Commissioners are taking advantage of the funding mechanism. Recorder fees for most real estate-related documents (deeds and foreclosures, for example) already funnel \$3 to the Children's Attorneys Project, and the commission unanimously voted Sept. 5 to raise that by \$2 starting Oct. 1. The change is expected to bring in an additional \$1.4 million for the program. Some of those dollars will offset what is expected to be a halving of the appropriation given from the county's general fund budget next year, says Legal Aid Center Executive Director Barbara Buckley, a former assemblywoman. This fiscal year, the county provided \$680,000 to the nonprofit for all of its services, which also include domestic violence, consumer rights and other common legal issues. Commissioners noted that the funding change provides the county with some wiggle room if more lawyers are needed than currently anticipated. The Children's Attorneys Project has a staff of 20 as well as 300 volunteer attorneys, most of whom specialize in fields other than family court but are trained and supported by the Legal Aid Center. It represents 85 percent of the kids within the county foster care system, approximately 3,000. And increased funding is expected to bring independent counsel to the remaining 15 percent. "Having an attorney means your case isn't forgotten, that you are not forgotten," Buckley said. "If anyone deserves that, it's these kids." "This is the highest priority," said Commissioner Jim Gibson, an attorney. "The difficulty is there will always be constraints on government. We need to step up. This is a time when we can." Sometimes lawyers just need to thoughtfully explain the legal process to a child. Other times, they must fight against adults who are knowingly acting against the child's best interests. Buckley cited a recent case in which a victim of sexual abuse was denied counseling by her mother because the mother did not want her to testify against the alleged abuser — her stepdad. The child's lawyer went to court to force the mother to take her daughter to a mental health provider. In another case, a teenager fought plans that would have uprooted her from her neighborhood. "She said, 'High school and ROTC are the only things I have,'" Buckley recalls. "So we insisted. ... She was able to stay nearby. She felt empowered. She was able to hold onto something that she really needed." Such positive outcomes would have been far less likely a few decades ago. Nevada is the 41st state to mandate lawyers for children in foster care. "Thirty years ago, kids weren't seen as having rights," said Buckley, who founded the Children's Attorneys Project in 1999 at the request of the county. "Before this project, sometimes children were an afterthought. ... People sometimes say, 'How do the kids know what they want?' They are incredibly smart and resilient. They are the ones living this life. They know. And they want to be heard." Not feeling heard was a familiar issue for Stephanie. The 15-year-old graphic design student at Advanced Technologies Academy said she grew up dealing with case workers who never seemed to care about what was best for her. "Nobody asked me what I wanted," she said. So, when she was appointed a lawyer through the Children's Attorneys Project, she expected more of the same. Instead, the lawyer fought for what Stephanie wanted, which was to remain under the care of her grandmother and not be forced to return to the mother who had years earlier left her with a stranger and then forgotten where the stranger lived. "It was weird to be around (my lawyer)," Stephanie said. "I'd never had anyone stand up and fight for my rights before." Stephanie won. Legal guardianship was granted to her grandmother. "It was my 14th birthday," she said. "I was so surprised. It was the best birthday present ever, a gift that will stay with me forever." [10 Comments](#) [6Share](#) Source: <https://lasvegassun.com/news/2017/sep/18/no-foster-child-will-be-forgotten-a-state-mandate/#>

Civil Suit Alleges Hanna Boys Center Female Employee Had Sex With Teen September 19, 2017 4:10 PM Filed Under: [Civil Suit](#), [Hanna Boys Center](#), [Sonoma County](#), [Sonoma Valley](#), [unlawful sex act](#) SONOMA COUNTY (CBS SF) — A civil suit was filed Tuesday that alleges a female staff member at the Hanna Boys Center had sexual intercourse on several occasions last year with an underage boy at the residential treatment center in Sonoma for at-risk youth. The complaint alleges staff counselor Angelica Malinski took advantage of "virtually non-existent staff supervision" to groom the 17-year-old boy from the East Bay, eventually having sex with him at least three times between September and October in her staff room. The Sonoma County District Attorney's Office charged Malinski, 22, with a misdemeanor charge of engaging in an unlawful sex act. A settlement conference is scheduled Thursday in Sonoma County Superior Court. ADVERTISING In the complaint filed in Sonoma County Superior Court, Oakland attorney Micha Star Liberty said the Hanna Boy's Center's motto is 'turning hurt into hope,' but the Hanna Boys Center's negligent conduct turned "hope into hurt." "He was fractured in some ways and it shattered him," Liberty said. The teen was having issues with impulsive/reactive behaviors and enrolled in the Hanna Boys Center on June 16, 2016, according to the complaint. The center has an on-campus high school and was founded by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Santa Rosa. An attorney for the diocese did not return a call for comment on the complaint. The complaint alleges the Hanna Boys Center ignored concerns about the care and safety of the children at the Center. The Center's former clinical director, Dr. Timothy Norman, filed a whistle-blower lawsuit in June that contained his, parents' and staff members' concerns, according to the complaint. Norman subsequently was fired. The Hanna Boys Center's Clinical Director Kevin Thorpe, 39, of Rohnert Park, who was the teen's caseworker, [was arrested in June](#) for alleged sexual abuse at the Center. He is charged with 15 counts of forced oral copulation of two minors between Jan. 2, 2007 and Aug. 7, 2010. He is being held under \$1.5 million bail in the Sonoma County Jail and is scheduled to enter a plea Wednesday in Sonoma County Superior Court. The

civil complaint filed by Liberty today seeks damages for negligence in hiring, training, retention and supervision of employees, infliction of emotional distress, intentional and negligent misrepresentation and breach of contract. Liberty also is demanding a jury trial on the allegations. Source:

<http://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2017/09/19/civil-suit-alleges-hanna-boys-center-female-employee-had-sex-with-teen/>

Former Wordsworth staffer admits sexually assaulting 3 teen girls at W. Philly site Updated: September 22, 2017 — 3:47 PM EDT 4. by Joseph A. Slobodzian, Staff Writer [@JoeSlobo](mailto:JoeSlobo) | jslobodzian@phillynews.com Email [@JoeSlobo](mailto:JoeSlobo) Joseph A. Slobodzian Staff Writer Joseph A. Slobodzian has been a reporter for the Inquirer since 1982 and has covered a variety of beats, including the New Jersey Statehouse and state government, federal courts and agencies, and, since 2008, Philadelphia's criminal justice system. More by Joseph A. Slobodzian [Former Wordsworth staffer admits sexually assaulting 3 teen girls at W. Philly site](#) [Sep 22](#) [An ill-fated trip from the suburbs to the city to buy drugs](#) [Sep 21](#) [Out for the season](#) [Sep 20](#) [More from Joseph A. Slobodzian](#) A former staffer at the shuttered Wordsworth residential youth-treatment center pleaded guilty Friday to sexually assaulting three teenage girls who had been placed at the West Philadelphia facility. [More Coverage](#) [Wordsworth plaintiffs in deal to pursue insurance proceeds](#) [Death, rapes, and broken bones at Philly's only residential treatment center for troubled youth](#) [Re-think placing children in a facility like Wordsworth](#) The assaults to which Isaac Outten, 38, admitted during a hearing before a Common Pleas Court judge took place in fall 2015, one year before state officials ordered Wordsworth closed after a 17-year-old boy died in a fight with staffers who had come to his room looking for a stolen iPod. The Oct. 13, 2016, suffocation death of David Hess, 17, of Lebanon, Pa., <http://bit.ly/2f9mwaz> has been ruled a homicide but no charges have been filed. His death capped a decade of allegations and charges of sexual and physical abuse at what was the city's only residential treatment center for troubled youth, as chronicled by the Inquirer and Daily News in April <http://bit.ly/2oCBvVF>. In July, facing numerous lawsuits alleging sexual or physical abuse by employees, Wordsworth officials filed for bankruptcy and announced that the company would be acquired by the Philadelphia-based Public Health Management Corp. Outten, who now lives in a Richmond, Va., suburb, pleaded guilty to one count each of statutory sexual assault, institutional sexual assault, and unlawful contact with a minor from an Oct. 19, 2015, incident involving a 15-year-old girl. Outten also pleaded guilty to two counts of institutional sexual assault and two counts of unlawful contact with a minor from an Oct. 26, 2015, incident with a 17-year-old and an Oct. 11, 2015, incident with another 17-year-old. Philadelphia Police Isaac Outten All three assaults occurred at Wordsworth's facility at 3905 Ford Rd. Judge Roger F. Gordon ordered a presentencing and mental-health evaluation and set sentencing for Dec. 21. Assistant District Attorney Kelly Harrell said Outten's plea agreement did not include a recommended prison term, although her office agreed to drop a series of related charges that would have increased his prison time. The most serious charge to which Outten pleaded guilty — statutory sexual assault — is a first-degree felony that carries a maximum of 10 to 20 years in prison. The state's sentencing guidelines, however, could yield a recommended prison term of one to two years, according to Harrell. Outten, who has no prior criminal record, was allowed to remain free on \$10,000 bail until sentencing. Outten's attorney, David D. Wasson III, said after the hearing that Outten did not wish to comment. Wasson said Outten, the father of several young children, moved to Virginia in 2015 after Wordsworth officials learned of the sexual assaults and fired him. Harrell said judges had placed the three girls at the Ford Road facility as "juvenile dependents" because they were not able to live at home. Harrell said Outten lured the girls to the basement for sex and forced them to take naked photos of themselves with his iPhone. Outten promised the 15-year-old money for diapers and milk for her 1-year-old child in exchange for sex, Harrell said. He promised one of the 17-year-olds he would help with a criminal case. In addition to the criminal charges against him, Outten has been added as a defendant in a Common Pleas Court lawsuit filed against Wordsworth by his 15-year-old victim. Source: <http://www.philly.com/philly/news/crime/former-wordsworth-staffer-admits-sexually-assaulting-3-teen-girls-at-w-phila-site-20170922.html>

Children with disabilities abused at group home, complaints allege A state-funded group home that is supposed to help South Florida children with disabilities has racked up a history of complaints including child abuse and neglect, police and state records show. A state-funded group home that is supposed to help South Florida children with disabilities has racked up a history of complaints including child abuse and neglect, police and state records show. [Ryan Van VelzerContact Reporter Privacy Policy](#) A state-funded group home that is supposed to help South Florida children with disabilities has racked up a history of complaints including child abuse and neglect, police and state records show. **The Tate Center Inc.** is a nonprofit that runs group homes north of Palm Beach County as well as a destination for children with developmental disabilities and aggressive behavior. Its history is detailed in hundreds of pages of records the Sun Sentinel obtained from police, court cases and the Department of Children and Families. Among the cases: — Police held a teenager on charges he sexually assaulted an 11-year-old Boca Raton boy twice within a year while living at the Tate Center — once while staff watched a football game in another room. The assaults are alleged to have happened between 2015 and 2016. — A pending lawsuit alleges that a Tate Center employee left a 15-year-old Palm Beach County boy with scrapes and cuts on his head and an ear swollen with blood. — The Florida Attorney General's Office conducted a [Medicaid](#) fraud investigation in 2016 after a tip alleging that the Tate Center forged signatures on certificates for training that staff never received. In response to a Sun Sentinel investigation, the state agency that oversees the facility on Thursday decided to end its contract with the center, a spokeswoman said. The Tate Center declined to comment on how this will affect the facility. "We will begin working with families and waiver support coordinators to identify other providers around the state who may meet their needs," said Melanie Etters, spokeswoman for the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, which oversees the care of children with disabilities. The Department of Children and Families, which investigated the abuse allegations, declined to comment on specifics about the cases, citing confidentiality laws. Ivan Tate, 54, who started the company bearing his name back in 2008, has programs in three counties, including two homes that serve as a last resort for South Florida parents whose children have developmental disabilities: kids who can throw extreme temper tantrums, jump on desks, run away from school, yell at teachers and bite people. The center's Emerald House in Port St. Lucie and its Peridots program in Vero Beach are intensive-behavior group homes that house as many as five clients each. Often, they are children with severe autism, among other conditions. Last year, the Tate Center received about \$1.3 million from the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, which refers parents to the center's services. Ryan Van Velzer, Sun Sentinel Shown is the Tate Center's Emerald House in Port St. Lucie. Shown is the Tate Center's Emerald House in Port St. Lucie. (Ryan Van Velzer, Sun Sentinel) Today, two of Tate's homes are among 19 intensive behavior homes in the surrounding region, which includes Palm Beach, Broward, St. Lucie and Indian River counties, according to the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. Tate said the children in his homes make "a lot of allegations" because they have severe behaviors and disabilities, but he said that doesn't make them factual. Nonetheless, Tate said that when child-protective investigators find proof of abuse or neglect, he fires the people involved. "We are providing services to children whose parents truly cannot maintain them in their homes," Tate said. "We do due diligence and really, really try to help these kids." "Inappropriately investigated" The first report of sexual abuse inside the Tate Center group home in Port St. Lucie happened months after a 13-year-old boy moved into the home in August 2015, according to a police report. On the night of Oct. 10 that year, the 13-year-old teen called an 11-year-old Boca Raton boy into his bedroom, according to a police report. Both boys have severe forms of autism, state records show. Once inside, the teen fondled the boy, records allege. Meanwhile, in the living room, two on-duty staff watched the third quarter of a college football game, according to a police report. Two weeks later, on Oct. 26, the Department of Children and Families received a complaint about that night. The teen "raped another kid living with us," the complaint read. A DCF investigator didn't find any evidence of abuse, according to the report. Police held a teenager on charges he sexually assaulted an 11-year-old Boca Raton boy twice within a year while living at the Tate Center — once while staff watched a football game in another room. Police held a teenager on charges he sexually assaulted an 11-year-old Boca Raton boy twice within a year while living at the Tate Center — once while staff watched a football game in another room. Chris Fulcher, a Port St. Lucie police detective who later investigated and detained the teen, said child-welfare investigators "inappropriately investigated" the October 2015 abuse. "That's my professional opinion as a former child-abuse investigator and a police officer," Fulcher said of the DCF investigation, court records show. After the assault allegation, Tate put the teen on supervision that required staff to be within arms' length at all times, he said. "Even though DCF didn't substantiate things, we put him on a safety plan," Tate said. "We monitor him differently." Still, a second allegation of abuse happened almost a year later between the same two kids in September 2016, according to the police report. Staff learned of the abuse allegation from another child in the home. When confronted, the teen admitted to molesting the boy from Boca Raton, police said. One staff member arranged for a female friend of his to pretend to be the victim's mother, put her on speakerphone and forced the teen to apologize to her for sexually abusing the boy, police said. "If you don't tell his mother right here and now that you touched [the boy] inappropriately, [staff members] will put you on the mat," a staff member told the teen, referring to a mat where they are trained to restrain clients, according to a police report. "We are providing services to children whose parents truly cannot maintain them in their homes," says Ivan Tate, 54, who started the company bearing his name back in 2008. "We do due diligence and really, really try to help these kids." "We are providing services to children whose parents truly cannot maintain them in their homes," says Ivan Tate, 54, who started the company bearing his name back in 2008. "We

do due diligence and really, really try to help these kids.” When Fulcher told Tate of his findings, Tate replied that calling a client’s parents is a violation of the home’s procedures, police records state. Tate told the Sun Sentinel the teen made inappropriate comments but did not sexually assault anyone at the home, contrary to the police report. “There was no further incident of [the teen] doing anything,” Tate said. Other allegations Other families, too, have complained about the Tate Center. Tate Center staff improperly restrained a 15-year-old Lake Worth boy with severe autism, scraping his face on the ground leaving abrasions and bruises, according to a lawsuit pending against the center. The takedown was so hard it caused the boy’s ear to swell with blood, according to the lawsuit. The lawsuit, filed by the boy’s mother in Indian River County Circuit Court, alleges that the encounter happened inside a bedroom of the Peridots program house in Vero Beach in 2015. Staff violated protocol for restraining the boy, the lawsuit says. Ordinarily, staff are trained to take down children on a mat using special procedures emphasizing safety. The lawsuit argues that staff were inadequately trained and did not properly supervise the children. In another instance, staff neglected a West Palm Beach boy diagnosed with severe autism, the boy’s mother alleged in emails sent to the Tate Center and DCF. Once, his mother, Joanne Patsis, found him sitting in his own excrement, dried and crusted from sitting so long, Patsis told Tate in an email. On another visit, she found her son’s face painted with markers, she said in an email to Tate. The markers colored his mouth, face, neck and arms, and staff did not seem to have noticed, she said. Patsis pulled her son out of the home in June 2016 after a staff member allegedly grabbed his arm so hard he left a large bruise in the shape of a handprint, according to a DCF report. “I received at least four to five different versions of what staff at the home said about the bruise my son sustained, and the accident injury report was mismarked and showed a different area of the body,” Patsis wrote in a letter to Department of Children and Families Secretary Mike Carroll dated March 2017. Child-welfare investigators found no evidence of abuse, noting that the teen’s lack of communication skills made it difficult to learn how he was hurt, according to the Department of Children and Families report. Patsis said her son can answer questions if he is working with someone trained in speaking to children with autism. “[My son] had no voice in his injury,” she wrote to investigators. Earlier complaints Complaints against the center date to October 2013, when police arrested a staff member on charges of child abuse, according to a police report. Three children who lived next door to the Emerald House watched the staff member shove a boy with developmental disabilities twice, sending them both to the ground, the report said. The staff member then punched and choked the child from behind, causing him to bleed from the mouth, according to the police report. The worker, in an interview with police, called the strikes accidental. The St. Lucie County State Attorney’s Office concluded he was within his rights to use “corporal punishment” to moderately chastise for correction a child under his or her control and authority,” according to a memo from prosecutors explaining why they didn’t pursue charges. The office dropped the case but said The Tate Center could discipline the employee for violating the rules of his employment, according to the memo. Tate said he fired the employee after the incident. “If I have bad apples and bad employees, I get rid of those employees,” he said. The employee couldn’t be reached for comment. DCF inquiries DCF child-protective officials investigated 23 allegations, including abuse and neglect, at the Emerald House over a five-year span. Of those allegations, DCF determined there were two confirmed instances of the center providing inadequate supervision. DCF declined to release records of those two cases to the Sun Sentinel. The department doesn’t keep a total number of investigations for group homes, but it’s not unusual for group homes to have relatively frequent reports to the abuse hotline, said Jessica Sims, a spokeswoman for the Department of Children and Families. DCF “takes all allegations of abuse, neglect, and abandonment of children and vulnerable adults very seriously and thoroughly investigates all cases accepted by the Florida Abuse Hotline,” Sims wrote in a statement to the Sun Sentinel. The Agency for Persons with Disabilities found no indications of abuse during monthly inspections from December 2014 through the end of 2016, records show, even though police charged a teen with two counts of sexual molestation during that period. The agency said that’s because investigators write only what they observe while inside the homes in monthly inspection reports. Etters said the agency followed up on every complaint with unannounced visits and on-site reviews. The Agency for Persons with Disabilities has a zero-tolerance initiative in place “to combat sexual violence committed against persons with developmental disabilities.” The agency “holds our providers to the highest standards, and we place the safety and well-being of our clients above all else,” Etters said in a statement. The Agency for Persons with Disabilities canceled the contract without giving a reason, according to APD records. Etters didn’t explain why other than to say, “At this time, the agency feels it is in the best interest of all parties to terminate our relationship with the Tate Center.” State inquiry The Attorney General’s Office began investigating the Tate Center for Medicaid fraud last year when a subcontractor that worked with the Tate Center called in a tip. The caller alleged that the Tate Center failed to provide mandated training to staff and instead forged signatures on training certificates, attorney general’s records show. In the course of investigating, an attorney general’s investigator interviewed Elizabeth McDonald, a behavior analyst who worked with the Tate Center training staff, records show. The Florida Attorney General’s Office conducted a Medicaid fraud investigation after a tip alleging that the Tate Center forged signatures on certificates for training that staff never received. The Florida Attorney General’s Office conducted a Medicaid fraud investigation after a tip alleging that the Tate Center forged signatures on certificates for training that staff never received. McDonald told the Sun Sentinel that her signature was used to sign multiple documents certifying staff for training that she never provided. “I was furious,” she said. “That could possibly cost me my license. Because it was electronically done. It looked exactly like my signature.” When the attorney general’s investigator showed copies of forged certificates to the Tate Center, a staff administrator replied that she had never seen the documents before. In March 2016, a state investigator also interviewed Rita Castor, deputy regional operations manager with the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. Castor said she knew about “minor issues” with licensing the center and “significant problems” with how they cared for clients, but the attorney general’s report does not elaborate about what those problems were. The Sun Sentinel couldn’t reach Castor for comment. After the Florida Attorney General’s Office conducted its investigation, it referred the complaint to the Agency for Health Care Administration. That agency told the Sun Sentinel it could not provide information about the case “at this time.” It cited a state law that prohibits the agency from discussing pending investigations, even though it won’t say whether the case is open. Released from the center The day the boy from Boca Raton left the Tate Center last October, he was taken to the hospital with bruises across his body, records show. Port St. Lucie Police reported that the boy fought with staff over a DVD. Tate told the Sun Sentinel the boy was injured while trying to unscrew a light bulb. A protective investigator said he was jumping on the couch and fell off “hitting his face on [an employee’s] knee as he fell causing the black eye,” according to a DCF report. The boy had a 3-inch bruise around his eye; bruises on both arms, a knee and a leg; and a swollen ankle, according to photos taken after the incident. A child-welfare investigator said it was unclear how the boy was hurt and closed the case. A child-welfare advocate — Gordon Weekes, the chief assistant of the Broward County Public Defender’s Office, who has defended children charged as adults in Broward courts — said the boy’s bruises, and the discrepancies in how they happened, are enough to merit a second investigation by state officials. “Once this occurs very late in the game, you have to go back to all the previous stuff and look at it in a different light,” said Weekes, who is not involved in the Boca boy’s case. “Now you have to determine whether these issues are retaliation for coming forward.” Despite subsequent phone calls from the Sun Sentinel, Tate couldn’t be reached for comment about the lawsuit, the attorney general’s investigation and a state agency’s decision to end the center’s contract. The mother met her son at the hospital later that day, on Oct. 8. The Tate Center released him with only the clothes on his back — a filthy shirt and ill-fitting shorts, she said. “My son was entrusted in the care of other people after I swore I would never let anyone even baby-sit my son,” the boy’s mother said. “He was supposed to have gone there to get better, not worse.” The Tate Center’s contract with the Agency for Persons with Disabilities ends in December, Etters said. Rvanvelzer@sun-sentinel.com, 561-243-6544, or on Twitter [@RyanVanVelzer](https://twitter.com/RyanVanVelzer) Source: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/florida/fl-reg-tate-center-investigation-20170817-story.html>

Documents: State, Centralia Home for Boys Didn’t Report Dozens of Claims of Abuse Sheriff’s Office Never Received Many Reports at Long-Shuttered Kiwanis Vocational Home By Natalie Johnson / njohnson@chronline.com Sep 22, 2017 [4](#) Chronicle headlines in the 1980s and 1990s alluded to trouble at the Kiwanis Vocational Home, but nothing as explosive as claims included in a number of lawsuits filed in relation to alleged abuse, negligence and fraud at the facility, which closed in 1994. A number of allegations against state agencies and Centralia’s now-closed Kiwanis Vocational Home are being spoken aloud and taken seriously for the first time with the filing of four lawsuits by former residents since 2015. But they aren’t the first reports of child abuse, sexual misconduct and other crimes at the group foster home. “Amongst us, we always said, ‘Somebody will listen and somebody will understand,’” said former resident Bob Wallace. “It took 30 years.” The Chronicle has discovered about 40 instances in which KVH or the state Department of Social and Health Services staff investigated or received official reports of abuse and criminal activities that were never forwarded to the Lewis County Sheriff’s Office. In a number of cases, DSHS incident report forms indicate the case was referred to the Sheriff’s Office. However, no case number was ever generated, nor does the Sheriff’s Office have any record of receiving the reports. In other examples, DSHS conducted in-depth investigations into allegations of physical and sexual abuse without referring those reports to law enforcement — even when they confirmed instances of child abuse by top leadership at the facility. “It’s no surprise based on what we know of the Kiwanis Vocational Home operations that the Lewis County Sheriff’s Office was being kept in the dark,” said attorney Darrell Cochran, representing five former KVH residents in four lawsuits filed in 2015, 2016 and this year. “To have law enforcement looking in on what was

happening in the Kiwanis Vocational Home would have resulted in the shutdown of that home," he added. Residents at Kiwanis Vocational Home, open from 1979 to 1994, learned early that reporting abuse often meant worse treatment in the future. "You learn to keep your mouth shut," said a resident during the 1980s who asked not to be identified due to his family ties to the area. Soon after moving into the facility, Wallace learned the same lesson. He saw a staff member hit one of the boys, so he told his mom. She reported it to KVH's administration. The next day, Wallace was beaten up by another resident. Wallace learned his lesson. Boys at the Kiwanis Vocational Home were aged 11 to 17, although some as young as 10 lived there at one point. The boys were wards of the state taken from their families and placed into foster care. Several former residents told The Chronicle that staff and administrators at KVH used bigger, older boys as enforcers when other residents tried to raise an alarm. In 1985, a concerned KVH staffer reported that boys were being used to "keep order" at the behest of the administration, just as Wallace remembers. "All it takes is one time," he said. "When you're 13 or 14 years old and some 18-year-old comes up and knocks you out, you're not going to do that too many times." Chris Calk, a resident from 1985 to 1989, said he witnessed that firsthand. He said boys earned points for being loyal to staff and for dishing out beatings to those considered "narcs." "You lived on a point system. You had positive points and negative points," he said. "It gives the kids the opportunity to earn the positive points in order to earn the chance to go to the movies or go rollerskating." The boys also earned allowances of pocket money to go to the movies or other outings, he said. Former KVH board member Henry Meister told The Chronicle in a recent interview he believes students would have reported incidents if they had happened. "These kids were smart. These kids had all been schooled on appropriate and inappropriate behavior," Meister said. "All of these kids knew to talk about it." The former residents' stories of retaliation for reporting abuse are borne out in at least one series of Sheriff's Office records dating to the last months of the Kiwanis home's existence, when it was called the Coffee Creek Center. On Feb. 21, 1994, the Sheriff's Office responded to a report that two staff members assaulted a boy at the home. The boy, 14, is described as small for his age. He told police a staff member assaulted him after he argued about taking away his cigarettes, which were not allowed at the facility, and his stereo. One man allegedly slammed the boy's head into a table. The other punched him in the ribs. When deputies returned the next day, the two suspects had already been suspended. A doctor reported the boy had three cracked ribs and a minor concussion. One of the staff members reportedly threatened to assault the boys if they talked to the police. Both men who were accused were charged. Days later, the boy with the cracked ribs and concussion shows up in another Sheriff's Office report — a victim of an assault by an older boy. He reported being assaulted again two months later, on April 27, according to Sheriff's Office reports, again by other boys. It happened again two days later, when he was assaulted again, this time by a 16-year-old boy wielding a pipe. On May 3, the boy was assaulted by other students. As he was reporting that assault to a counselor, the suspects broke through the locked office door and attacked him again. A month later, the home closed. Still, caring staff members, parents and determined students reported numerous allegations of abuse and criminal activity over the 15 years the home was open. However, records obtained by The Chronicle show dozens of instances in which KVH or DSHS staff knew about claims of abuse, sexual misconduct or other criminal activity but never forwarded them to the Sheriff's Office. The Chronicle focused on records between late 1985 and June 1994, when the home closed, because of the availability of records from the Sheriff's Office. Special Services Chief Deputy Dusty Breen, of the Lewis County Sheriff's Office, who supervises the office's records department as part of his duties, said cases filed with the office before 1985 are preserved on microfilm. While the Sheriff's Office has them, records are organized by names of involved parties, making it difficult for records to be located regarding a specific location, such as the Kiwanis Vocational Home. Timeline: Allegations and Investigations of Crimes With No Police Reports January 1986: A boy reported that another boy assaulted him and pulled his thumbs back, according to a report by KVH staff. December 1986: A boy reported another boy climbed into bed with him and grabbed his crotch. June 1987: A boy no longer at KVH reported sexual abuse at the facility. State reports indicated the case was referred to the Centralia Police Department. A records request turned up no case matching that description. The Lewis County Sheriff's Office had jurisdiction over the school. June 1987: A resident allegedly molested a staff member's daughter. September 1987: A resident reports a staff member kneed him in the stomach. December 1987: The Department of Children and Family Services, a division of DSHS, received complaints of "unreported assaults," including three instances of staff assaulting students and two cases of assaults between students. August 1988: Sexual assaults reported by staff among three boys. According to the report, one boy was punished by another boy for "not performing" with punches to the genitals. No police report exists. September 1988: Staff member accused of assault by three residents in DSHS report. December 1988: Staff member accused of assault on resident. DSHS recommended he be reprimanded. January 1989: Guy Cornwell, administrator at KVH, reprimanded an employee for corporal punishment and using sexual language with students. April 1989: Female KVH staff reported sexual harassment. June 1989: A boy reported sexual assault to a counselor. KVH documents show the report was forwarded to the Sheriff's Office, which has no record of the case. Summer 1989: Drunken KVH staffer reportedly assaulted boy. March 1990: Sexual intercourse reported among boys as young as 10. No police report exists. June 1990: Anonymous caller reported sexual, physical abuse. No corresponding police report exists. June 1990: Group home monitor at KVH reported suspected rapes. June 1990: DSHS initiated investigation into reports of sexual, physical abuse. Still no Sheriff's Office case number generated. October 1990: Improper touching reported. November 1990: "Fondling" among 12- and 13-year-olds reported. January 1991: Cornwell accused of child abuse. January 1991: Mother complained to DSHS that KVH staff gave students cigarettes. January 1991: KVH employee told DSHS of requests to falsify reports. February 1991: State Office of Special Investigations report revealed allegation marijuana given by staff to students. February 1991: Cornwell accused of child abuse by staff during DSHS investigation. February 1991: DSHS rules Cornwell's actions "inappropriate." February 1991: Boys aged 11 and 14 caught in sexual act. April 1991: Boy twice accused in separate reports of grabbing others, making "humping" motions. An internal investigation was conducted, but law enforcement was not notified. April 1991: Gropping reported. Dismissed by staff as boys "goofing off." April 1991: A second OSI investigation concluded Cornwell committed child abuse. June 1992: "Sexual truth or dare" reported among boys. DSHS classified incident in letter as "manipulation and grooming." February 1993: "Sexual acting-out" among residents reported as behavioral issue. April 1993: Resident reported staff was abusive. DSHS investigation confirmed abuse recommended termination of staff. No Sheriff's Office case number exists. August 1993: Staff accused of pushing resident off porch. March 1994: DSHS letter addressed unspecified abuse by staff members. According to DSHS, its employees, along with doctors, law enforcement officers, and many other professionals, are legally designated as "mandatory reporters," meaning they are required to report instances of suspected abuse to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services, an office within DSHS. None of the incidents listed below are associated with a Lewis County Sheriff's Office case number. In 1986, KVH and DSHS records show a report of two incidents — a physical assault between students and a report of a sexual assault, neither of which were forwarded to law enforcement. In 1987, there were eight incidents. A boy no longer at KVH reported abuse while he was there. The young child of a staff member was reportedly molested by a boy. There were four reports of assaults on boys by staff and two of assaults between boys. In 1988, one report of sexual activity among boys and two alleged assaults by staff never made it to the Sheriff's Office. Meister told The Chronicle that, as he understood it at the time, KVH staff weren't particularly concerned to find boys engaged in sexual behavior, and most often did not report it. "The fact of the matter is, people have sex," Meister said. "Do you think anybody who winds up in that situation is sexually inexperienced?" The boys at the facility were as young as 10 and as old as 17. The age of consent in Washington is 16. Meister, who never worked at the facility but said he got a good sense of the boys during his visits while a member of the board, characterized the teenaged and pre-teen residents as liars, manipulators and juvenile offenders. Some were offenders. Some had been identified as sexual predators. Others were already victims of violence — sexual or otherwise — and came from broken or abusive homes into state care. Some had been in foster care their entire lives after being surrendered by or seized from unfit parents. KVH took in developmentally disabled boys as well, and received extra funding from the state to do so. "These kids will sit there and tell you the most atrocious stories," Meister said. "You have to identify your customers." In 1989, KVH administrator Guy Cornwell wrote to another staffer reprimanding him for using inappropriately sexual language around the boys and for corporal punishment in at least one case which Cornwell called a "reportable offense" that was never reported to law enforcement. Also that year, a female staffer reported sexual harassment and a male staff member previously accused of assault faced another allegation. In June 1989, a boy reported to his counselor that another boy tried to grab his genitals. The KVH report indicates the Sheriff's Office was notified, but no corresponding case number exists. As the years wore on, more and more incidents of alleged rape and assault were reported to state agencies, but not investigated as crimes by law enforcement. In March 1990, sexual intercourse among boys aged 10 and 15 was reported. The incident was reportedly forwarded to the Sheriff's Office, but no case number exists. When asked about such cases, Breen said if the Sheriff's Office received a report after 1985 regarding the Kiwanis home, it would have showed up in their response to The Chronicle's records request. "If something came in after 1985 ... it would have generated a case number," Breen said. "If we would have initiated an investigation based on something we got, it would have been included in those records." Breen said he is not aware of any incident in which records were lost, damaged or purged. [Investigations Showed Misuse of Funds, Violations and Obstruction at Centralia Kiwanis Home](#) In June 1990, an anonymous man called the Governor's Office to make complaints of sexual and physical abuse. The Sheriff's Office has no record of being made aware of those alleged crimes. That same month, a group

home monitor at KVH reported concerns regarding child sex offenders being housed with victims of sexual violence. "(T)here were periodic problems with these individuals and incidents of homosexual activity and even rape did occur," according to the report. The state Office of Special Investigations began investigating the allegations made by the anonymous caller to the Governor's Office on June 19. That month, administrators at KVH denied the allegations. Two more reports of improper sexual touching were reported by the end of the year but did not make it to the Sheriff's Office. Also in 1990, KVH director Charles McCarthy wrote a letter acknowledging that the home had come under scrutiny for not adequately reporting incidents to the state. In January 1991, Cornwell was accused of child abuse. Also that month, a mother reported to DSHS that KVH staff were giving boys cigarettes and medication without permission. An employee also reported being directed to falsify reports. In February 1991, the state Office of Special Investigations released its findings on the 1990 investigation, concluding that allegations of physical child abuse and "inappropriate touching" against McCarthy and other staff members were founded. The Sheriff's Office has no corresponding case numbers. Later that year, more reports came in to state agencies of students being "hogtied," of students being given marijuana by staff, and another accusation of abuse against Cornwell. DSHS ruled Cornwell's behavior was "inappropriate," at that time, but not strictly child abuse. DSHS also received several reports of groping and unwanted sexual advances among the boys, much of which was brushed off by KVH staff as "goofing off." In April 1991, a second OSI investigation concluded Cornwell committed child abuse. As in the previous year's investigation, in which McCarthy was confirmed to have assaulted boys, there is no record that the state's findings confirming child abuse were forwarded to local law enforcement. In mid-1992, a boy reported sexual abuse and exploitation described in a DSHS document as possible "manipulation and grooming." In 1993, reports of sexual activity among young residents continued, along with accusations of child abuse by staff. One staff member was fired after such accusations, then reinstated. In 1994, months before the facility closed, DSHS raised concerns about reports of unspecified child abuse with KVH. A handful of criminal allegations did make it to the Sheriff's Office. In 1982, a boy called 911 to report a staffer at KVH forced him to perform oral sex. KVH director Charles McCarthy intercepted the call and told police not to worry about the report, saying the boy just wanted to leave the home, according to a transcript of the call. "You never made a phone call without a staff member standing right there over your shoulder," Calk said. In a 2015 deposition in one of the lawsuits, McCarthy told attorneys he didn't remember the boy or the incident and said another staff member would have been responsible for reporting the incident. Attorneys showed McCarthy the transcript of the call. "Oh, I see it, yeah. But I mean, I'm not surprised," he said. "Because as a probation officer I would take statements and a lot of the times they were making them up and lying about it. So I had that training to know that (you) don't expect the, the truth the first time around." He then denied again being involved in the incident. He went on to deny any involvement with several documents signed with his name, according to the deposition transcript. The report was referred to the Thurston County Sheriff's Office after initial investigation in Lewis County, because the events reportedly happened north of the county line. In 1986, the Sheriff's Office received a report that a boy told counselors he was sexually assaulted by another boy at knifepoint. After investigation, police concluded the sexual contact was not unwanted after all, despite the alleged victim having a cut on his arm from the knife. Meister told The Chronicle the boys at the home were considered unreliable witnesses at the time and accused former residents coming forward now of lying in the hope of a payday from a lawsuit. "The issue I have, where these kids come from, I'm not being unsympathetic. I wouldn't trust any one of them as far as I can throw them," he said. "I don't care what the situation or the circumstances is. None of these kids is naive." In September 1988, the Sheriff's Office responded and made an arrest in the case of a sexual contact between boys. The next year, a student was arrested on suspicion of molesting a staff member's daughter. In 1990, deputies responded after a developmentally disabled 16-year-old boy, who had previously been a rape victim, reported another 16-year-old raped him and threatened him. A deputy wrote in an initial report that the suspect had been accused in the past and was at "a high risk to reoffend." The victim reported the suspect threatened him and his family if he told anyone about the incident. When a detective began investigating the case a month later, he reported the victim changed his story to say the sexual contact was all his idea. The detective concluded the incident was consensual. No charges were filed. Also in 1990, deputies received a report of a sexual assault involving a 12-year-old victim. The boy's mother told police school administrators asked her not to report the incident. A first-degree rape charge was filed against the 14-year-old suspect. That year a staff member was reported to have assaulted a boy, but was cleared after an investigation. Deputies responded in 1993 to a report of sexual contact involving a female teacher. No charges were filed. The same year, they responded to two reports of indecent exposure among students. In 1994, two staff members lost their jobs after allegations of abuse investigated by the Sheriff's Office. Not the First Time: Recalling the Olympia Kiwanis Boys Ranch By The Chronicle Founded in 1971, the Olympia Kiwanis Boys Home, or OKBR, was similar in many ways to Centralia's Kiwanis Vocational Home. Both homes housed troubled boys as young as 10 years old in the foster system. Both were accused of abuse and mismanagement throughout their lives, and both were shut down by the state in 1994. While Centralia's KVH stayed out of the news, boys who lived at the OKBR began filing lawsuits as early as 1995 against the state and the Kiwanis club. Like the allegations against KVH, OKBR allegedly hired unqualified staff and was a breeding ground for sexual and physical abuse among the residents as well as involving staff. According to law firm Pfau Cochran Vertetis Amala, representing plaintiffs in lawsuits for both the OKBR and the KVH, when the OKBR was shut down, reportable incidents of physical or sexual abuse were happening twice a week. Like KVH, OKBR started with a handful of boys and grew to about 70. Since it closed, the state has spent at least \$50 million settling cases related to OKBR, according to the law firm. In contrast, school staff were diligent in reporting incidents to law enforcement in which the boys were to blame, including dozens of reported assaults ranging from the serious — boys throwing stolen kitchen knives at each other — to the questionable — for out of control food fights and throwing a volleyball at a teacher. Between late 1985 and December 1990, only 10 assaults either between boys or involving staff were reported to police. Two months after that, in February 1991, DSHS released its findings of a special investigation into claims of abuse and financial mismanagement, and the school came under new administrators. It also decreased from more than 70 students to roughly a dozen. In 1991, the home reported 16 assaults with teens listed as suspects. All but one was a misdemeanor assault, and all but one were between boys. In 1992, KVH reported 23 assaults, again all misdemeanors but one and all perpetrated by students. In 1993, KVH reported 37 assaults, all misdemeanors but one, all perpetrated by students. In 1994, in which the school was open only six months, police responded to 15 reports of assaults. Two of those incidents involved a student being assaulted by a staff member and the rest were incidents between students. In addition to assaults, boys were regularly reported for burglary and theft for stealing candy and other items. Police responded and issued citations to boys for punching each other and pushing each other down — incidents not referred to the Sheriff's Office when allegedly committed by a staff member. Several students were cited for hitting a staff member while flailing their arms in the course of being tackled by staff. Staff members throwing boys to the ground is commonly referenced in KVH documents as an acceptable way to subdue them when they got out of hand. However, some accused staff of going too far, then trying to cover it up. Wallace recounted an incident in which a staff member slammed him into a concrete slab at the shop building, tearing the ligaments in his knee. The next day, Wallace's leg was blue and swollen, and he was taken to the doctor. Staff told him to tell the doctor he tripped and fell, he said. "If you deviate from that story then there will be hell to pay... because then they'd just turn kids on you," he said. Wallace stuck to his story. He'd already learned his lesson. "If you were caught snitching you were deemed as a narc ... nine times out of 10 you could look forward to getting a good a— whooping," Calk said. Wallace said many residents, himself included, spent most of their lives still hiding what happened at the facility, thinking that no one would believe their stories. In the decades since he left, he said he's only opened up to a handful of people. "It's 35 years after the fact, but they can't kick our butts anymore," he said. ••• Source: http://www.chronline.com/news/documents-state-kiwanis-home-failed-to-report-dozens-of-allegations/article_dd84565c-a01b-11e7-9521-b33114381fc4.html

Utah County therapist arrested for alleged sexual abuse of underage girl Posted 2:17 pm, September 26, 2017, by [Ashton Edwards](#). Updated at 09:32PM, September 26, 2017 [Facebook](#) [754 Twitter](#) [Reddit](#) [Pinterest](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Email](#) UTAH COUNTY, Utah - A licensed marriage and family therapist has been arrested for allegedly sexually abusing an underage girl in Utah County. The Utah County Sheriff's Office said [41-year-old Jason Scott Calder](#), of Bountiful, is facing charges of rape, forcible sodomy and forcible sexual abuse. Until recently, Calder worked at a youth treatment center in Utah County. Officials would not confirm the specific treatment center. One of his former patients, a 16-year-old girl, told her new therapist Calder had sexually abused her multiple times from March 2017 through June 2017. "He's brought on to work in these facilities as a counselor and a therapist. He's in a position of trust," said Lt. Eric Knutzen with the Utah County Sheriff's Office. "He's there to help whatever issue it is the person is dealing with and to provide some sort of council, not to overstep and take advantage a victim." "We did a search warrant on his house up in Bountiful, found some evidence that kind of corroborated what was said by our victim," said Lt. Knutzen. The victim said the alleged abuse happened during scheduled therapy sessions with Calder when she was a resident in the inpatient youth treatment facility where Calder worked. Authorities arrested Calder and booked him into the Utah County Jail on the following charges: one count of rape, 10 counts of forcible sodomy and one count of forcible sexual abuse. Authorities set bail for Calder at \$100,000, cash only. The Utah County Sheriff's Office said Calder had most recently been working at a residential treatment center in Salt Lake County. Officials did not confirm which facility but said his employment

there was terminated. Detectives said they would like to hear from anyone who believes they may have been abused by Calder, or if anyone knows of someone who might have been victimized by Calder. You can contact the Utah County Sheriff's Office at (801) 851-4010. [Calder's official provider information](#) on the government website lists his primary practice address as 1135 Vine St. in Murray. However, the webpage states it has not been updated since 2007. Photo Gallery [View Gallery \(4 images\) Inline](#) According to what appears to be Calder's Facebook page, he attended Woods Cross High, Brigham Young University and Indiana State University. The page also states he is a program director at **Live for Life Residential Treatment Center** in West Jordan and started in June 2017. Other posts on the page indicate he stopped working at the **New Haven Residential Treatment Center** in Spanish Fork in June of 2017 Jason Calder - NewHavenrtc.com [NewHavenrtc.com](#), which lists Calder as an employee, states it has locations in Spanish Fork and Saratoga Springs. According to its website: Jason is an award-winning psychotherapist who has been in the industry since 1999, working as a front-line staff, therapist or clinician. He has experience in both a residential and wilderness environment that makes it easy to relate to the students at New Haven. Jason chose to work at New Haven due to the program's long-standing reputation for clinical quality and restorative relationships. Jason gets satisfaction as he witnesses each student regain her sense of personal identity and value. Jason has given presentations around the country to mental health professionals, physicians and families on the neurological effects of process addictions, supportive treatments for Autism Spectrum Disorders and the experiential interventions to help adolescents find greater meaning and purpose in their lives. [He has appeared on 20/20 \(post-production\)](#), in [The Atlantic](#), and his work has been featured on CNN and CBS News. Jason was raised in Bountiful, UT where he enjoyed spending time in nature. His hobbies include canyoneering, snowboarding, reading, whitewater kayaking, cooking, backpacking, caving and spending time with his wife and daughter. Jason Calder - [allkindsoftherapy.com](#) [According to allkindsoftherapy.com](#), Jason Calder, LMFT, CMHC is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and a Clinical Mental Health Counselor. He graduated from Brigham Young University (2000) with a BS in Marriage, Family and Human Development. Jason's MS is from Indiana State University (2003) in Marriage and Family Therapy. On Dec. 1, 2015, [allkindsoftherapy.com](#) reported Calder was the clinical director at [Outback Therapeutic Expeditions](#) in Lehi, Utah, and said he also ran its Unplugged program. Calder's Facebook page states he also worked at the Summit Preparatory School in Kalispell, Montana, as assistant clinical director from Aug. 2007 to July 2014. Jason Calder - Facebook Previous posts on his Facebook page from 2011-2012 show him on outdoor trips with what he says is his Boy Scouts of America Varsity Troop. He also indicates he worked as a therapist **La Europa Academy** in Murray, Utah, until Aug. 2007. Source: [http://fox13now.com/2017/09/26/utah-county-therapist-arrested-for-alleged-sexual-abuse-of-underage-girl/](#)

State shuts down Pueblo treatment center after complaints that children were underfed, abused El Pueblo Boys & Girls Ranch was shut down by the state this week. A mental health and substance abuse treatment center for children was shut down by state authorities this week following complaints that children were abused and underfed. [El Pueblo Boys & Girls Ranch](#), with 12 cottages on 56 acres in Pueblo, was ordered to "immediately desist" caring for children by the Colorado Department of Human Services. The ranch, which treated children with severe behavioral or psychiatric needs, could lose its child care licence permanently. All 37 children living at the ranch had been moved by Tuesday night, some returning home to parents and others going to foster homes, group homes or other residential treatment centers, human services officials said. A child who ran away from El Pueblo last month and boarded a train alone later told authorities children bullied each other and stole each other's food because they were hungry, according to the state's suspension order. The child said they lacked medical attention and that staff did not intervene when children fought with each other. Related Articles May 24, 2017 [Foster care shift: Colorado kids removed from homes now more likely to live with relatives than in group setting](#) February 29, 2016 [Denver County Human Services to close center for foster teens](#) This month, child welfare authorities received complaints that a "high-needs child" did not receive prescribed medications while at the ranch and left with burns. And in another complaint, a staff member was accused of pulling a child's hair, scratching the child and hitting the child with an elbow and a knee, according to the suspension order. The child also was punched in the mouth, the document said. Also this month, a mentally low-functioning child escaped out of a bedroom window, was missing for more than hour and crossed two streets, according to another complaint. Other allegations involved a child who suffered severe weight loss after 10 months at the center and an administrator refusing to intervene for 25 minutes as a child pulled off their own skin "and was chewing and eating it." Staff repeatedly asked for permission to intervene and "the request was denied," the suspension order states. The privately run, non-profit ranch was licensed in 1995. It was authorized to care for up to 166 children ages 5 to 21. El Pueblo officials did not return a request for comment Thursday. Source: [http://www.denverpost.com/2017/09/28/el-pueblo-boys-and-girls-ranch-closed/](#)

Maryland school aide sentenced to 100 years in prison after sexually abusing at least a dozen boys | Fox News Maryland school aide sentenced to 100 years in prison after sexually abusing at least a dozen boys [Fox News Facebook Twitter Print Email](#) Deonte Carraway, 24, was sentenced Thursday to 100 years in prison after he confessed to sexually abusing at least 12 boys. (Prince George's County Police Department) A former Maryland school aide who confessed to sexually abusing children was sentenced Thursday to 100 years in prison. Deonte Carraway, 24, was [indicted in 2016](#) on 270 charges of child abuse and porn, and in January pleaded guilty in federal court to recording at least a dozen boys engaging in sexual activities inside of Judge Sylvania Woods Elementary School, where he volunteered, [Fox 5 DC reported, KINDERGARTEN TEACHER, 39, WHO HAD SEX WITH AT LEAST SIX TEENS AGREES TO JAIL TIME](#). Carraway pressured children ages 9 to 13 to send him inappropriate photos through social media, or the messenger app KIK. Authorities had said that Carraway, who also worked as director of a local youth choir group, used his position to take advantage of children. An investigation into the situation began when an uncle of one of the students involved discovered explicit messages and reported it to authorities. Carraway told children that he would give them cell phones -- but only if they joined a club he created and send him improper photos using the provided phones. He later threatened to call the police or their parents if they didn't continue to send him photos, [The Washington Post](#) reported. Carraway apologized last month, saying: "I wish I could go back and stop myself from doing it." At a previous court appearance, Carraway said that "kids have my heart... when I'm around kids, I feel like a child," according to The Post. [MASSACHUSETTS REGISTRY LACKS INFO ON 1,700 SEX OFFENDERS](#) His public defender reportedly argued that Carraway himself had been a victim of abuse, and also said his IQ was 60. In July, Carraway [wrote a letter](#) to the judge requesting all charges against him be dropped due to insufficient legal representation, alleging he hadn't heard from his lawyer in more than a year. The former aide agreed in January to a prison sentence of at least 60 years [as part of a plea deal](#). The Prince George County Public School system that Carraway volunteered with has reportedly created a task force in the aftermath of the abuse as a way to change how it handles reports of that nature. Source: [http://www.foxnews.com/us/2017/09/28/maryland-school-aide-sentenced-to-100-years-in-prison-after-sexually-abusing-at-least-dozen-boys.html](#)

Federal inspectors criticize Oklahoma's oversight of group foster care homes by [Randy Ellis](#) Published: October 2, 2017 5:00 AM CDT Updated: October 2, 2017 5:00 AM CDT 0 shares [facebook](#) [twitter](#) [pinterest](#) [email](#) [comments](#) Advertisement Holes in the walls of Oklahoma group foster homes, including one with exposed wiring, were among the problems uncovered by federal inspectors [PHOTOS PROVIDED] Cracked windows, holes in walls and celery so old that it had turned brown and begun to liquefy were among dozens of health and safety violations federal inspectors found when they visited Oklahoma's group homes for foster children. Seventeen of Oklahoma's 22 foster group homes were in violation of at least one state health and safety requirement, according to a newly released report by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General. Several had multiple violations. There are currently a little more than 9,000 children in state custody and about 150 to 160 of them are typically in group homes at any given time, state officials said. Windows with cracked or broken glass, peeling paint on interior walls, hazardous cleaning materials within reach of children and numerous holes in walls — including one hole with exposed wiring — were among the problems found during group home inspections. Examples of other violations included: • Refrigerators in four homes that had not been maintained in sanitary conditions, including one refrigerator that contained "celery that had turned brown and partially liquefied." • Group home vehicles with trashed out interiors, missing gas caps, a broken seat belt tied to a door, a shattered window, low tire tread, a broken signal light, broken passenger side mirror and unbolted driver's side mirror. • An emergency exit at one home was blocked by a bed and trash and broken glass were found on the patio behind one of the facilities. • Expired fire extinguishers. • Mold, mildew and calcium buildup were found in multiple bathrooms used by children in one group home. "Although Oklahoma performed the required on-site monitoring at all 22 group homes, this on-site monitoring did not ensure that foster care group homes complied with state licensing and federal requirements related to the health and safety of children in foster care," the inspector general's office said. Federal inspectors acknowledged that some of the violations may have surfaced after the most recent state inspection, but said "other issues of noncompliance represent a prolonged period of noncompliance and should have been corrected if those issues had been documented and resolved during the state's monitoring." Kristi Simpson, statewide licensing coordinator for the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, said steps already have been taken to fix some of the problems noted by the inspector general. The department "has already provided training to licensing staff regarding the documentation of non-compliances and

appropriate notices to comply," Simpson said in a letter to the inspector general's office that also was provided to The Oklahoman. "Licensing staff will monitor and document that all programs make the licensing requirements available to their staff and assure their knowledge of them," Simpson said. Simpson took issue with a recommendation that the state needs to revise its requirements for licensing and monitoring vehicles used by group homes to transport children, insisting that sufficient requirements were already in place. "Licensing staff have been trained to annually monitor each vehicle to determine compliance with requirements," she wrote. "The program's written maintenance logs are monitored at each monitoring visit." Source: <http://newsok.com/federal-inspectors-criticize-oklahomas-oversight-of-group-foster-care-homes/article/5566283>

They thought they were going to rehab. They ended up in chicken plants [Issues Reveal Staff](#) · Oct 5, 2017 Men sent to Christian Alcoholics & Addicts in Recovery, better known as CAAIR, work full time at chicken processing plants. The hours are long, the conditions are brutal and the program keeps all the wages. Gabriel Hongdsutit | Reveal By [Amy Julia Harris](#) and [Shoshana Walter](#) of Reveal from The Center for Investigative Reporting The worst day of Brad McGahey's life was the day a judge decided to spare him from prison. McGahey was 23 with dreams of making it big in rodeo, maybe starring in his own reality TV show. With a 1.5 GPA, he'd barely graduated from high school. He had two kids and mounting child support debt. Then he got busted for buying a stolen horse trailer, fell behind on court fines and blew off his probation officer. Standing in a tiny wood-paneled courtroom in rural Oklahoma in 2010, he faced one year in state prison. The judge had [another plan](#). "You need to learn a work ethic," the judge told him. "I'm sending you to CAAIR." McGahey had heard of Christian Alcoholics & Addicts in Recovery. People called it "the Chicken Farm," a rural retreat where defendants stayed for a year, got addiction treatment and learned to live more productive lives. Most were sent there by courts from across Oklahoma and neighboring states, part of the nationwide push to keep nonviolent offenders out of prison. Aside from daily cans of Dr Pepper, McGahey wasn't addicted to anything. The judge [knew that](#). But the Chicken Farm sounded better than prison. A few weeks later, McGahey stood in front of a speeding conveyor belt inside a frigid poultry plant, pulling guts and stray feathers from slaughtered chickens destined for major fast food restaurants and grocery stores. There wasn't much substance abuse treatment at CAAIR. It was mostly factory work for one of America's top poultry companies. If McGahey got hurt or worked too slowly, his bosses threatened him with prison. And he worked for free. CAAIR pocketed the pay. "It was a slave camp," McGahey said. "I can't believe the court sent me there." Soon, it would get worse. *** Records show that courts send about 280 men to CAAIR each year, coming from throughout Oklahoma, along with some from Arkansas, Texas and Missouri. Shoshana Walter | Reveal Across the country, judges increasingly are sending defendants to rehab instead of prison or jail. These diversion courts have become the bedrock of criminal justice reform, aiming to transform lives and ease overcrowded prisons. But in the rush to spare people from prison, some judges are steering defendants into rehabs that are little more than lucrative work camps for private industry, an investigation by Reveal from The Center for Investigative Reporting has found. The programs promise freedom from addiction. Instead, they've turned thousands of men and women into indentured servants. The beneficiaries of these programs span the country, from Fortune 500 companies to factories and local businesses. The defendants work at a Coca-Cola bottling plant in Oklahoma, a construction firm in Alabama, a nursing home in North Carolina. Perhaps no rehab better exemplifies this allegiance to big business than CAAIR. It was started in 2007 by chicken company executives struggling to find workers. By forming a Christian rehab, they could supply plants with a cheap and captive labor force while helping men overcome their addictions. At CAAIR, about 200 men live on a sprawling, grassy compound in northeastern Oklahoma, and most work full time at Simmons Foods Inc., [a company](#) with annual revenue of \$1.4 billion. They slaughter and process chickens for some of America's largest retailers and restaurants, including Walmart, KFC and Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen. They also make pet food for PetSmart and Rachael Ray's Nutrish brand. Simmons Foods now is so reliant on CAAIR for some shifts that the plants likely would shut down if the men didn't show up, according to former staff members and plant supervisors. Shane Bevel for Reveal Chicken processing plants are notoriously [dangerous](#) and understaffed. The hours are long, the pay is low and the conditions are brutal. Men in the CAAIR program said their hands became [gnarled](#) after days spent hanging thousands of chickens from metal shackles. One man said he was [burned with acid](#) while hosing down a trailer. Others were [maimed](#) by machines or contracted serious bacterial infections. Those who were hurt and could no longer work often were kicked out of CAAIR and sent to prison, court records show. Most men worked through the pain, fearing the same fate. "They work you to death. They work you every single day," said Nate Turner, who graduated from CAAIR in 2015. "It's a work camp. They know people are desperate to get out of jail, and they'll do whatever they can do to stay out of prison." To unearth this story, Reveal interviewed scores of former participants and employees, court officials and judges and reviewed hundreds of pages of court documents, tax filings and workers' compensation records. At some rehabs, defendants get to keep their pay. At CAAIR and many others, they do not. Legal experts said forcing defendants to work for free might violate their constitutional rights. [The 13th Amendment](#) bans slavery and involuntary servitude in the United States, except as punishment for convicts. That's why prison labor programs are legal. But many defendants sent to programs such as CAAIR have not yet been convicted of crimes, and some later have their cases dismissed. "You've got to be kidding me," Noah Zatz, a professor specializing in labor law at UCLA, said when presented with Reveal's findings. "That's a very strong 13th Amendment violation case." CAAIR has become indispensable to the criminal justice system, even though judges appear to be violating Oklahoma's drug court law by using it in some cases, according to the law's authors. Drug courts in Oklahoma are [required](#) to send defendants for treatment at certified programs with trained counselors and state oversight. CAAIR is uncertified. Only one of its three counselors is licensed, and no state agency regulates it. The program mainly relies on faith and work to treat addiction. Sharon Cain runs the drug court in rural Stephens County and decides where to send defendants for treatment. She said state regulators don't stop her from using CAAIR. "I do what I wanna do. They don't mess with me," she said. "And I'm not saying that in a cocky way. They just know I'm going to do drug court the way I've always done it." The American Civil Liberties Union of Oklahoma now is considering legal action in response to Reveal's reporting. About 280 men are sent to CAAIR each year by courts throughout Oklahoma, as well as Arkansas, Texas and Missouri. Instead of paychecks, the men get bunk beds, meals and Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous meetings. If there's time between work shifts, they can meet with a counselor or attend classes on anger management and parenting. Weekly Bible study is mandatory. For the first four months, so is church. Most days revolve around the work. "Money is an obstacle for so many of these men," said Janet Wilkerson, CAAIR's founder and CEO. "We're not going to charge them to come here, but they're going to have to work. That's a part of recovery, getting up like you and I do every day and going to a job." The program has become an invaluable labor source. Over the years, Simmons Foods repeatedly has [laid off paid employees](#) while expanding its use of CAAIR. Simmons now is so reliant on the program for some shifts that the plants likely would shut down if the men didn't show up, according to former staff members and plant supervisors. But Donny Epp, a spokesman for Simmons Foods, said the company does not depend on CAAIR to fill a labor shortage. "It's about building relationships with our community and supporting the opportunity to help people become productive citizens," he said. The arrangement also has paid off for CAAIR. In seven years, the program brought in more than \$11 million in revenue, according to tax filings. "They came up with a hell of an idea," said Parker Grindstaff, who graduated earlier this year. "They're making a killing off of us." *** Janet Wilkerson, CAAIR's founder and CEO, shows off the pantry that feeds the participants in her recovery program. Shoshana Walter | Reveal Janet Wilkerson had a problem. As vice president of human resources for Peterson Farms Inc., she was having trouble filling the overnight shift at her chicken processing plants. The hours were long. The pay was low. And there never seemed to be enough workers. Then a convicted meth dealer named Raymond Jones walked into her office in 2003 with a story and a proposal, according to a newspaper story at the time. After finding Jesus, Jones had overcome his addictions and decided to start a rehab. He asked Wilkerson to take a chance and hire his men. They were cheap, he promised, and they could work all hours. Their wages would fund his recovery program. Wilkerson eagerly agreed. She called the arrangement a "[win, win, win](#)" for the men, chicken plants and Jones. She was so taken with the idea that four years later, she created a nearly identical program of her own. Her brother had died from alcoholism, and her husband's drinking had nearly destroyed their marriage. She had long wanted to help others like them. The economics also made sense. The chicken plants needed workers, and Jones' program was bringing in revenue of more than [\\$2 million a year](#). Wilkerson had the connections to make it happen. In addition to working in human resources at Peterson Farms, she also moonlighted as a spokeswoman for Simmons Foods and other top poultry companies. Wilkerson enlisted her assistant and another poultry executive and brought Jones along as a \$250,000-a-year consultant. Then she pitched the idea to her bosses. The companies wouldn't have to pay workers' compensation insurance, payroll taxes or medical care. They could replace the workers for any reason at any time. Like a temp agency, her program would pay for everything: the men just needed to work. Simmons signed on. Later, Crystal Lake Farms and Tyson Foods Inc. did, too. Jones agreed to introduce Wilkerson and her business partners to court officials. But his reputation was deteriorating. Plant supervisors said Jones' workers sometimes would show up high. Workers complained that Jones wasn't feeding them. Wilkerson vowed to make her program better. She and her partners hired away one of Jones' top managers and used men from his program to build their first dormitory. They worked for free, as community service. Then she stopped [paying Jones](#) and they parted ways. By 2010, hundreds of men poured into CAAIR from courts across Oklahoma. So did the money, allowing the Wilkersons - Janet as CEO and her husband, Don, as vice president of operations - to draw combined salaries of

\$168,000 a year, nearly four times the median household income in their area. That's when Brad McGahey arrived. *** A county welcome sign stands near the Simmons Foods chicken processing plant in Southwest City, Mo. Shane Bevel for Reveal At Simmons Foods, McGahey first went to work in evisceration, suctioning guts and blood out of slaughtered chickens speeding past him on metal hooks. Then he became a grader, arranging raw breasts, thighs and legs into orderly piles as they moved up a conveyor belt to packaging. It was monotonous work. Growing up in the country, McGahey wasn't bothered by the sight of dead animals. He'd gutted catfish and skinned deer all his life. But the first time he stepped into the Simmons plant, the stench of chicken blood and feces was overpowering. "I almost threw up," he remembered. On May 27, 2010, three months into his time at CAAIR, something went wrong. A machine dumped a mountain of parts onto the conveyor belt, causing chicken to pile up faster than he and his co-worker could sort it. As they plunged their hands into the heap of cold parts, McGahey remembers hearing a scream. His co-worker's rubber glove was caught in the conveyor belt. McGahey grabbed the woman's arm, wrestling her hand free. But the machine snagged his own hand. In a matter of seconds, McGahey's wrist was jerked backward, lodged in the seams of the conveyor belt as it hurtled toward a narrow stainless steel chute overhead. Someone yanked the emergency kill cord, which should have stopped the machine, McGahey recalled. But it raced upward, dragging him along with it. He felt a flash of panic. Then an excruciating crunch. Medical notes later would say McGahey suffered a "severe crush injury." The machine smashed his hand, [breaking several bones](#) and nearly severing a tendon in his wrist. When he finally yanked his wrist free, his hand was bent completely backward. The pain was so bad that he nearly fainted. A nurse at the plant took one look at him and called CAAIR. "The kid's hand is mangled!" he recalled the nurse screaming into the phone. "He needs help!" McGahey expected an ambulance. Instead, one of CAAIR's top managers picked him up at the plant and drove him to the [local hospital](#). Doctors took X-rays of McGahey's hand, gave him a splint and [ordered him not to work](#). Back at CAAIR, he spent a sleepless night cradling his throbbing hand. He figured it would take months to heal and planned to rest. But CAAIR's administrators would have none of it. They called McGahey lazy and accused him of hurting himself on purpose to avoid working, former employees said. CAAIR told him that he had to go back to work - either at Simmons or around the campus until his hand healed, which wouldn't count toward his one-year sentence. Wilkerson said she doesn't remember the specifics of McGahey's case but acknowledged that CAAIR has given such ultimatums before. "You can either work or you can go to prison," McGahey remembered administrators telling him. "It's up to you." He already had made up his mind. "I'll take prison over this place," he said. "Anywhere is better than here." *** Most men sent to CAAIR are addicted to alcohol, meth, heroin or pain pills. They are usually young, white and can't afford stays in private rehab programs. Inside CAAIR's dormitories, Bible verses and Simmons Foods posters line the walls. Participants usually sleep six to a room, crammed onto wooden bunk beds. They attend church services in a common room down the hall, decorated with quilts and wooden crosses. During the one-year program, the men can't have cellphones or money. If they relapse or break the rules, they can be kicked out or punished with extra time. [In 2014](#), CAAIR reported that about 1 in 4 men completed the program. Former employees said work takes priority over everything. If counseling or classes interfered with the job, the decision was clear. "It's work," said Aaron Snyder, who participated in the program and later worked as a dorm manager. "You're going to work." The men also perform free labor for CAAIR's founders, family and friends. A group of men said they helped remodel the Wilkersons' master bedroom. Another said he helped one of their daughters pack boxes and move. Still others worked [on an egg farm](#) owned by the Wilkersons' other daughter. The program told the courts that it was community service, according to employees. The strict regimen has helped some men get clean. Those who arrive without a home, steady employment or food said they find their basic needs met at CAAIR. Those who complete the program without breaking any rules are eligible for a gift of \$1,000 when they graduate. "I have to say CAAIR was the hardest thing to do in my life," said Bradley Schott, who graduated in 2014. "I went to basic training at 16. And (Army) Ranger school. And it wasn't as hard as CAAIR, mentally or physically. But it saved my life." Jim Lovell, CAAIR's vice president of program management, said there's dignity in work. "If working 40 hours a week is a slave camp, then all of America is a slave camp," he said. Men who were injured while at CAAIR rarely receive long-term help for their injuries. That's because the program requires all men to sign a [form](#) stating that they are clients, not employees, and therefore have no right to workers' comp. Reveal found that when men got hurt, CAAIR filed workers' comp claims and kept the payouts. Injured men and their families never saw a dime. Following Brandon Spurgin's chicken plant injury, CAAIR filed for workers' compensation on his behalf. CAAIR got \$4,500 in insurance payments and Spurgin says he got nothing. Shane Bevel for Reveal Brandon Spurgin was working in the chicken plants one night in 2014 when a metal door crashed down on his head, damaging his spine and leaving him with chronic pain, according to medical records. CAAIR filed for workers' compensation on his behalf and took the [\\$4,500](#) in insurance payments. Spurgin said he got nothing. Janet Wilkerson acknowledged that's standard practice. "That's fraudulent behavior," said Eddie Walker, a former judge with the Arkansas Workers' Compensation Commission. He said workers' comp payments are required to go to the injured worker. "What's being done is clearly inappropriate." Three years later, Spurgin's still in pain and can no longer hold a full-time job. In addition to injuries, some men at CAAIR experience serious drug withdrawal, seizures and mental health crises, according to former employees. But the program doesn't employ trained medical staff and prohibits psychiatric medicine. A judge in Tulsa sent Donald Basford to CAAIR in 2014 despite a documented history of severe mental health [problems](#). The 36-year-old quickly unraveled, repeatedly complaining to staffers that he was "losing it" without his medication, Snyder, the former employee, recalled. Basford ran away and was found dead inside a car in a church parking lot a few weeks later, according to an [autopsy report](#). Medical examiners found no drugs in his badly decomposed body and weren't able to determine Basford's cause of death. Other CAAIR men who had mental breakdowns or manic episodes were kicked out, according to former employees, opening the door for them to be sent to prison. "You just don't do that to people who obviously need some kind of help," Snyder said. "It's not right." *** CAAIR has a sprawling, grassy compound in northeastern Oklahoma. The one-year diversion program mainly relies on faith and work to treat addiction. Shane Bevel for Reveal When the Oklahoma Legislature created the state's drug court requirements 20 years ago, it was part of a growing realization nationwide of the costs - both financial and human - of handing down long prison sentences for drug-related charges. In drug court, judges are required to put defendants through treatment rather than prison. Follow the rules, and defendants can have their cases dismissed. Lawmakers wanted to ensure the quality of treatment, so they wrote an important provision into state law: Drug courts must use treatment providers inspected and certified by the state Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. But affordable treatment is in short supply. Drug court defendants have waited up to nine months for a bed in a residential treatment facility, meanwhile relapsing or languishing in jail. As a result, some courts turn to uncertified programs such as CAAIR, even though it might violate the law, according to the law's authors. "That is insanity gone to sea," former state Sen. Dick Wilkerson said when told of Reveal's findings. (He is not related to CAAIR's founder.) "That's illegal. They can't do that. That is the law, and it has to be followed." In Pontotoc County, Judge Thomas Landrith sometimes uses CAAIR in place of certified treatment. He said there's never a wait list, and it costs the courts and state nothing. "We tried to get residential treatment programs down here, but we never could really pull it off," he said. "So recovery programs kind of fit that niche." Other judges said they were unaware of the law or have found ways around it. Tulsa's drug court, which sends the most defendants to CAAIR, said the law permits judges to use uncertified programs, as long as it's not for treatment. "The referral is to assist the participants in developing good job skills, life skills, work ethics and personal care skills," said Vicki Cox, court administrator. "Participants are not sent to CAAIR for drug or alcohol treatment." But Reveal found that Tulsa's drug court staff repeatedly described CAAIR as treatment in court records. Cox dismissed that as a record-keeping error. Oklahoma's Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services funds and monitors drug courts. The agency knows that judges are using uncertified providers such as CAAIR, but officials say there's little they can do. All they can do is cut some of the funding to drug courts that use those programs. But that's little disincentive to judges. No drug court judge has ever been disciplined for using uncertified programs, according to the Oklahoma Council on Judicial Complaints. *** After Brad McGahey injured his hand and left CAAIR, a judge sentenced him to a year in state prison. He was released after two months due to overcrowding. Credit: Oklahoma Department of Corrections Brad McGahey went straight from CAAIR to a Marshall County jail cell. Because he failed to complete the program, he had violated the rules of his probation. The judge [sentenced him](#) to a year in state prison. McGahey was released after [two months](#) due to prison overcrowding. His injury had not improved. One minute, his hand [throbbed with pain](#). The next, it tingled and went numb. Sometimes it turned blue. He found a lawyer and went to court for workers' compensation. The process was slow, and [CAAIR fought him](#) every step of the way. In court in 2012, the program's attorneys argued that McGahey's recurring symptoms weren't the result of the accident in the chicken plant. "If you want to get a lie detector test up here, I'll pay for it," McGahey [blurted in the middle of his testimony](#). "I know what happened. ... I ain't no liar, and you're calling me one." The judge sided with McGahey. "Sounds like you've succeeded successfully in delaying the treatment for this person, counselor," [the judge](#) told CAAIR's attorney. Three years after the accident, McGahey finally got his surgery. But [it didn't help](#). "I believe that we got to Bradley so late in his treatment ... that Bradley is going to have a permanent problem with his hand," the doctor [wrote](#) in a status update to the court in September 2013. McGahey grew depressed. He sold his four-wheeler to pay off his \$500-per-month child support debt. He tried welding for two weeks, but his hand injury got in the way. He sought out other opportunities, such as trading and selling used cars, junk and metal. But something always went wrong, and he got into more trouble with the law. When

CAAIR's attorney offered a settlement, McGahey took it. In 2014, he got a lump sum of [\\$11,000](#). But today, the pain persists. All that seems to help, McGahey says, are pain pills. Every morning and throughout the day, McGahey chugs a can of Dr Pepper with hydrocodone pills. When his doctor [cut him off](#) from his various medications, McGahey found another doctor to write a prescription. Before CAAIR, McGahey had no interest in drugs. Now, he says he can't live without them "I'm addicted to them pills," McGahey said. "I have to take them." Brad McGahey had surgery on his left hand in 2013, but today, the pain persists. All that seems to help, he says, are pain pills. Olivia Merriam | Reveal As McGahey sat on a plastic chair in front of his mother's house, littered with items scavenged from garage sales, he remembered when he still had the use of two hands, when he was good at [rodeo](#) and could work on his family's farm. "When you can't do something you love and it's the only thing you ever known, then it's taking part of your life away from you," he said. "I've accepted it now and learned how to do with what I got. I just don't want to see it ruin somebody else's life." Courts still send defendants to CAAIR, and the program is expanding. Simmons Foods even [donated funds](#) for a third dormitory to house dozens more men. "I was walking in the parking lot of the Simmons plant, and (Chairman) Mark Simmons told me he needed more men," Wilkerson told a local reporter at the ribbon-cutting ceremony in 2015. "I told him to build me another dorm." CAAIR is now planning a fourth dormitory. It's supposed to be the biggest yet. Source: <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2017/10/05/reveal-they-thought-they-were-going-to-rehab-they-ended-up-in-chicken-plants> (HEAL Note: HEAL does not support modern slavery in any form. Stop this practice now!)

Former Group Home Manager Arrested Rhonda Keisler facing charges [Ed Jensen](#) October 05, 2017 - 12:47 pm AddThis Sharing Buttons Share to TwitterShare to FacebookShare to PrintShare to EmailShare to More Categories: [Local News](#) A former Upstate group home manager is accused of stealing from several disabled residents to shop for herself at Wal-Mart and other stores. Union Police Department has charged 51-year-old Rhonda Keisler of Buffalo with three counts of exploitation of a vulnerable adult and three counts of breach of trust of more than \$10,000. Police documents accuse Keisler of stealing from the residents' bank accounts from 2012 through August, when a local disabilities official reported the potential missing money. Source: <http://www.1063word.com/articles/former-group-home-manager-arrested>

Head of boarding school, detained for child trafficking, suspected of torture 6 October 2017 Crime [RU MD Home News Crime](#) Head of boarding school, detained for child trafficking, suspected of torture The head of the boarding school No. 3 in Chisinau, Igor Sandler, arrested for child trafficking, is also accused of torturing several students of the institution he managed. The director of the boarding school, along with some employees, had allegedly abused several students for misbehavior. According to [canal3.md](#), the information has been provided by law enforcers in the public hearings, organized by the Parliamentary Commission for Education Issues. Police say the students informed them of the tortures they had been subjected to. Deputy Head of the Center for Combating Trafficking in Persons, Sergiu Olanschi, says that the students were tortured because of their academic failures and disciplinary misconduct. Thus, Igor Sandler is guilty of "torture, inhuman and degrading treatment". The deputy head master of the boarding school, Aurelia Nedascovscaia, denies the allegations and says, "We have been working together for 24 years and I hear this for the first time. He was like a father for these children and they had a good attitude towards him, they even loved him. The word has always been our weapon, we explain, we talk to them, but we never apply physical force." Additionally, for the camera, the students said that the director is "very good" and that they have never been punished. The headmaster of the boarding school was [arrested](#) in late September. He is accused of contributing to a "friendly" relationship of a businessman from Chisinau with a 14-year-old student of the boarding school. Several months later, the boy announced of having been sexually abused by the man in a rented apartment in Chisinau. Both the headmaster and the abuser risk sentences of up to 25 years in prison, or life imprisonment. Source: <https://en.crimemoldova.com/news/crime/head-of-boarding-school-detained-for-child-trafficking-suspected-of-torture/>

Mint Hill group home supervisor accused of sexually assaulting juvenile Friday, October 6th 2017, 10:01 am PDTFriday, October 6th 2017, 10:09 am PDT By WBTV Web Staff Email Connect webteam@wbtv.com Jackson MINT HILL, NC (WBTV) - A house supervisor at New Place, Inc. in Mint Hill is accused of sexually assaulting a juvenile in July. According to the Mint Hill Police Department, Reginald Jackson was arrested Wednesday and charged with three counts of sexual activity by a substitute parent or custodian. Police say the incident reportedly took place at the group home located on Batten Court in Mint Hill on July 6. No other information was released. Source: <http://www.wbvtv.com/story/36538863/mint-hill-group-home-supervisor-accused-of-sexually-assaulting-juvenile#>

Plea deal ends Allendale Association Lake Villa death case Lake County Sheriff's Office James Davis, 37, of Round Lake. James Davis, 37, of Round Lake. (Lake County Sheriff's Office) [Jim NewtonContact ReporterNews-Sun Privacy Policy](#) The criminal case surrounding the death of a 16-year-old Allendale Association resident, who died last year while being restrained at the Lake Villa facility, has concluded with the primary defendant accepting a plea deal that will spare him prison time. James Davis, 38, pleaded guilty to one count of obstructing justice Friday. In exchange, charges of involuntary manslaughter were dismissed and Davis was sentenced by Lake County Circuit Judge Daniel Shanes to three years in prison. ADVERTISING With day-for-day credit, Davis, a former Allendale employee from Round Lake, has already served that time in the Lake County jail. Because Davis cannot be paroled from a prison sentence at a county jail, he will be transported to an Illinois Department of Corrections facility sometime this week, processed, and released, defense attorney Eric Rinehart said Tuesday. "He'll be in and out in a few hours, Rinehart said. Following his release, Davis will serve one year of probation. "I'm glad the state did the right thing," Rinehart said of the resolution to the case. "James was defending himself and Allendale staff." Allen family Shaquan Alle. Shaquan Alle. (Allen family) Shaquan Allen of Chicago, a resident of the Lake Villa facility, died after being placed in a chokehold by Allen during a struggle stemming from disciplinary problems, authorities said. Assistant State's Attorney Scott Hoffert said Tuesday he had no comment on the negotiated plea deal. The plea deal undercut epic preparations for a trial, with several attorneys for Allendale, which had been asked to provide various records, defense attorneys and prosecutors frequently crowding pretrial hearings to discuss evidence that could have been introduced. After his arrest, Davis had pleaded not guilty to charges of involuntary manslaughter and obstruction of justice in connection with the March 2016 death of Allen. A second defendant, Justin Serak of Grafton, Wis., had pleaded not guilty to charges of obstructing justice for allegedly providing false information to police about the incident. The state dismissed the charges against Serak earlier this year on the condition that he would testify in the case if Davis went to trial. Prosecutors said the Allen was having a behavioral episode on the evening of March 30, 2016, when Davis and Serak each took an arm and tried to escort him back to his bedroom. Allen became combative, officials said, prompting Serak to grab his legs while Davis took control of his upper body and put him in a chokehold. When Allen became unresponsive, authorities said that the two employees agreed to a story that Allen had knocked over a cup of water, slipped and fell. Serak's defense attorney, Robert Ritacca, had taken the position in pretrial motions that a pre-existing heart condition, not a chokehold, might have been the cause of Shaquan Allen's death. Ritacca's motion stated that a diagnosis of "mild cardiomegaly," an enlargement of the heart, is mentioned in the autopsy report. The autopsy, conducted at the Lake County Coroner's Office, and the autopsy report, completed by Dr. Nancy Jones, a former pathologist, concluded that the cause of Allen's death was "asphyxia due to restraint." Paramedics were summoned to the scene, but attempts to revive Allen were unsuccessful. jnewton@tribpub.com [Twitter @jimnewton5](#) Source: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/lake-county-news-sun/crime/>

Family sues boarding school over teen's suicide By Associated Press [View author archive](#) [Get author RSS feed](#) Contact The Author Name(required) Email (required) Comment(required) October 12, 2017 | 3:55pm [Modal Trigger](#) [Google Maps](#) More On: [suicide](#) [Judge weighs trial for teen accused of taping girl's suicide](#) [Boyfriend suspected of killing teen leaves mysterious suicide note](#) [Girl whose prank led to 11-year-old's suicide won't face charges](#) [Climber who killed himself after girlfriend's death was haunted by sport's 'painful reality'](#) PIERRE, S.D. — A wrongful death lawsuit has been filed against a federal American Indian boarding school by the family of a girl who committed suicide. Emerson Little Elk says the Pierre Indian Learning Center failed to adequately monitor his 14-year-old granddaughter, who had a history of depression and had made prior threats of suicide. The girl died at the school in October 2015. The [Argus Leader](#) says the family's lawsuit claims the school was negligent and is asking a jury to award compensation for pain and suffering, funeral expenses and attorneys' fees. The Pierre boarding school is overseen by the U.S. Department of Interior's Bureau of Indian Education and serves Native American students with behavioral, mental health and emotional needs in grades one through eight. Source: <http://nypost.com/2017/10/12/family-sues-boarding-school-over-teens-suicide/>

Restraint Death In Bristol Group Home Ruled Homicide Lisa King of Hartford speaks of her son Joseph's death at a Bristol group home. Lisa King of Hartford speaks of her son Joseph's death at a Bristol group home. [Josh KovnerContact Reporter](#) Losing her son was a hard enough. Finding out that Joey King

died while under restraint at his Bristol group home and that his death has been ruled a homicide was more than Lisa King could take. Her resolve cracked Thursday as the grim picture of her son's last moments became clearer. He had Down syndrome. He was beloved, but he could become uncooperative and act out. On June 15, at dinner time, one or more staff members who work for the Vinfen Corp.'s group home at 35 Yale St. placed him in a restraint and took him to the floor of the kitchen. Then they apparently left him, because he was found a short time later by another employee who had entered the home and saw King lying on the floor. King said she has learned that CPR had not been attempted before the employee found him unresponsive and with no pulse. "He was found face down," said King, her face dissolving into anguish. "I think he was squeezed to death." A pathologist with the chief state medical examiner's office determined that the cause was "sudden death in the setting of physical restraint, in a patient with Down Syndrome and bicuspid aortic valve" — an inherited form of heart disease. The manner of death, Dr. Dollett T. White ruled, was homicide. Bristol police are investigating. Lt. Richard Guerrero, the police spokesman, has said he cannot comment on an active police case. In an earlier statement to The Courant, Vinfen executives said: "We are all devastated by the event. We offer our sympathy and prayers to the family. Vinfen is working to support all involved. We are cooperating fully with state and local authorities as they review this tragedy." The group home has a contract with the state Department of Developmental Services. A DDS spokeswoman, Kathryn Rock-Burns, has said the agency is unable to comment because of the police investigation. Joseph King was taken by ambulance to Bristol Hospital, where he was pronounced dead a short time later. Lisa King said her family wants to know why her son was left untended, why no CPR was performed immediately, and whether his treatment plan had placed any limits on the type or duration of restraint that could be used. At the hospital that night, King's cousin, Laceshia King, of New Britain, said she spoke briefly with two Vinfen managers. She said one of the managers told her that Joseph King had been restrained by staff members at the home for 10 minutes before losing consciousness. Records show that Vinfen received \$12.3 million from DDS in the fiscal year ending in June 2016, and \$3.5 million in a separate contract with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Vinfen is headquartered in Cambridge, Mass. Source: <http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-hartford-death-in-bristol-group-home-ruled-homicide-1013-story.html>

2 indicted in death of Webster group home resident Heather Roselli 2 women indicted in death of Webster group home resident Heather Roselli [Will Cleveland and Victoria E. Freile](#), Democrat and Chronicle Published 3:04 p.m. ET Oct. 12, 2017 | Updated 8:29 p.m. ET Oct. 12, 2017 P Two women are facing felony charges in connection with the June 18 death of a resident of a Webster group home. Sandra Abdo and Sarah DiLallo both pleaded not guilty to second-degree manslaughter in Monroe County Court on Thursday afternoon after Judge Victoria Argento unsealed an indictment charging the women in the death of 35-year-old Heather Roselli. [Roselli was found unresponsive inside 30 Pierce St. in the village of Webster around 1 p.m. June 18](#). She was taken to Rochester General Hospital, where she died later that night, according to Webster police. DiLallo, 25, and Abdo, 60, are also facing one count of first-degree endangering the welfare of the elderly or incompetent, a felony. Both women worked at the group home, which is operated by Finger Lakes Developmental Disabilities Services. The state Office for People with Developmental Disabilities oversees the group home. DiLallo worked at the home for a year. Authorities did not say how long Abdo worked at the group home. William Easton, attorney for Sarah DiLallo, on the manslaughter charge facing his client in death of Heather Roselli. [#roc@dandepic.twitter.com/bf7Ob69INp](#) — Will Cleveland (@WillCleveland13) [October 12, 2017](#) Monroe County Assistant District Attorney Leslie Schildt said Abdo and DiLallo were arrested Tuesday and charged by sealed indictment. Schildt said the incident involved "three months of intensive investigation" into the "unauthorized, unjustified attack" on Roselli. During the arraignment, Schildt said DiLallo was the "initiator" in the incident, and added that the entire incident lasted about 45 minutes. Schildt said police were not called until Roselli was unconscious. Schildt alleged the defendants ignored their training and put Roselli face-down on the ground after she wanted to call her stepfather on Father's Day. Schildt said Roselli was "slammed" to the ground and called "derogatory" names. More: [Death of Webster group home resident under investigation](#) Roselli had a lacerated liver, which caused internal bleeding, as well as broken ribs and rug burns on her feet, Schildt said. Schildt added DiLallo admitted to receiving proper training and knowing it was incorrect to put a resident in that position. "I know they're dealing with a lot of complicated issues right now," Schildt said of Roselli's family. "I know they just want to see justice and that's what we want, too." Webster Police Chief Joseph Rieger added, "I just want to thank them for their patience as we worked through this case. A lot of investigative work went into it and it did take a couple of months, but I'm happy that they are appreciative of the work." In June, OPWDD said two employees of the group home were fired following Roselli's death and a third was placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation. [@WebsterNYPolice](#) Chief Joseph Rieger on the investigation and indictment. [#roc@dandepic.twitter.com/kEvQ3TdokE](#) — Will Cleveland (@WillCleveland13) [October 12, 2017](#) "This is a case that I'm hoping will bring attention to group homes in general," Schildt said. "There are thousands of people who work in these group homes every day who are in it for the exact right reasons. ...They're in it because they care about people. "But one of the things with these homes is that you have a very vulnerable population." Schildt added that staff members at group homes have a "position of public trust. That type of situation also means that abuse can happen in these homes and go undetected." Both women are scheduled to return to court Nov. 30. Each woman was remanded to the Monroe County Jail in lieu of \$15,000 cash bail or \$30,000 bond. Abdo is being represented by James Vacca, while DiLallo is represented by William Easton. "We intend to defend this case," Easton said. "This case is charged as a non-intentional homicide, a reckless homicide, and an endangering case. My client has no record. She was faithfully employed there for nearly a year. We intend to contest this case, both on a legal basis and on a factual basis." Because it was a sealed indictment, "They did not commence with an arrest like most cases do," Easton said. "It started with a grand jury investigation we were not aware of." Schildt requested \$75,000 bail or \$100,000 cash bond for Abdo and \$100,000 bail or \$200,000 or cash bond for DiLallo. Both defense attorneys noted neither of their clients have a criminal record. "We have to start from scratch now and get up to speed and investigate the case," Easton said. "They've been investigating the case for three or four months. We're going to start, and I'm certain we're going to have a different version than was set forth at the district attorney's bail application." [WCLEVELAND@Gannett.com VFREILE@Gannett.com](#) Source: <http://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/2017/10/12/sandra-abdo-sarah-dilallo-death-webster-group-home-heather-roselli/758370001/>

Video shows confrontation between counselor, student at Mt. Juliet foster care facility By [Najaha Sherman](#) Published: October 12, 2017, 6:16 pm [Click to share on Twitter \(Opens in new window\)](#) [Click to share on Google+ \(Opens in new window\)](#) [39Share on Facebook \(Opens in new window\)](#) [39Click to share on Pinterest \(Opens in new window\)](#) (Photo: WKRN) MT. JULIET, Tenn. (WKRN) — Shocking video of a confrontation between a counselor and a foster student at a facility in Mt. Juliet has surfaced. The foster care facility is part of **Omni Care Services**, a facility for girls 12 to 17-years-old with trauma-related experiences. They attend a school called Mount Juliet Academy. An employee at the facility sent News 2 the video and asked that we not reveal her identity. In the video, one of counselors and a foster student are seen getting into a verbal argument. The video didn't capture audio, so it's unknown what they are saying. The counselor appears to point and instruct the child to sit down. The girl walks over to her desk and then explodes. She appears to start knocking things over. The counselor then walks over to the girl and takes her down, dragging her out of the room. The video was captured inside Mt. Juliet Academy, which is part of **Omni Visions** foster care services. Omni Visions declined News 2's request for an on camera interview but sent a statement that said, "When the incident shown in the video occurred, we reported it to Child Protective Services for investigation. The employee shown in this video did not follow organizational protocol for responding to non-compliant youth and is no longer working for Omni Visions or Mt. Juliet Academy." News 2 has learned the girl's family is considering taking legal action. DCS confirmed to News 2 that it opened an investigation into this case. DCS added it cannot reveal the results of its investigation. Source: <http://wkrn.com/2017/10/12/video-shows-confrontation-between-counselor-student-at-mt-juliet-foster-care-facility/>

OnTrack Reaches Settlement Agreement, Closes Teen Residential Pr - KDRV News, Weather & Sports. OnTrack Reaches Settlement Agreement, Closes Teen Residential Program Friday, October 13th 2017, 6:53 pm PDT by Emma Balkenbush Close X Embed Video Code Link to Video buffering Replay OnTrack Reaches Settlement Agreement, Closes Teen Residential Program More Videos Caption OFF ON Track :Presets : Aa Aa Aa Font :Edge : Size :Scroll : Color : Background : Edge : Window : Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet.. Apply Cancel Default Show Advanced Settings Opacity : LIVE 00:00 / 02:18 GO LIVE CC MEDFORD, Ore. -- There is no longer a residential drug addiction program for teens in the Rogue Valley. Now, other treatment facilities in Southern Oregon are wondering where those teens in need of 24/7 care will go. OnTrack, The Department of Human Services and The Oregon Health Authority have come to what they call a "voluntary" agreement, which includes OnTrack surrendering its license to DHS. NewsWatch 12 requested the 10-page document from OHA. It said DHS and OHA found multiple deficiencies at the program's location at the corner of Holly and 5th streets. The agreement said OnTrack denied those findings and put corrective action plans in place. It also said all three agencies agree it does not mean OnTrack admits to certain allegations against it. The agreement said DHS and OHA conducted a series of inspections and reviews at the HOME and Teen Programs. During those inspections, DHS and OHA found multiple deficiencies in meeting certain requirements. Notices: Feb. 24, 2017 - OHA issued a notice of intent to revoke

Alcohol and Drug Residential Treatment License Feb. 24, 2017 - OHA issued a Notice Imposing License Conditions and Notice of Opportunity for a hearing April 7, 2017 - DHS issued a Notice of Intent to Revoke License of Child Caring Agency and Opportunity for a hearing The three organizations have agreed not to comment to members of the media, but to direct them to this statement: "OnTrack has agreed to relinquish its license to admit clients under the age of 18 into its residential programs, but will remain certified by OHA to provide care and services in the HOME Program. OnTrack denies the allegations in DHS' Notice of Intent to Revoke, OHA's Notice of Intent to Revoke, and OHA's Order Imposing Conditions, and the parties have agreed that OnTrack's surrender of its license is voluntary and without admission of wrongdoing on the part of OnTrack." The agreement said former Executive Director, Rita Sullivan, will no longer be involved with OnTrack in any capacity. OnTrack's application for a new certification at the W. Main location is still pending. Maslow Project Executive Director Mary Ferrell said the program closing will make it more difficult for some teens to get the treatment they need. "As a community member as well as running a program that works with youth, it concerns me that we don't have a residential teen program. I think it's really hard for kids who are dealing with substance abuse issues and addiction to leave their hometown and family and support network to get treatment," Ferrell said. OnTrack is still certified by OHA to give care and services through its HOME Program. It cannot admit more than seven women to that program. OHA will monitor the program and decide after a certain amount of time if more women can be admitted if certain requirements are met. Jackie Lien, Executive Director for the Phoenix Counseling Center, said the program closing is leaving a hole in the adolescent treatment in the entire Rogue Valley. "At this point, adolescents will need to travel out of the area in order to get that level of care," Lien said. Lien said she sees this change having an affect on her facility. "What I see happening is that those adolescents who are unable to go to residential will be coming into our outpatient program and then we will need to be deciding whether they can stay abstinent in our program or whether they'll need to be referred to a residential program," Lien said. Source: <http://www.kdrv.com/story/36595150/ontrack-reaches-settlement-agreement-closes-teen-residential-program>

Why the Miami Herald's Fight Club investigative series matters to all Miami Herald Editorial Board [LinkedIn](#) [Google+](#) [Pinterest](#) [Reddit](#) [Print](#) [Order Reprint of this Story](#) October 13, 2017 10:12 PM The Editorial Board believes that a community is measured by the way it treats its most vulnerable members — and few are more vulnerable than the young and troubled. The Miami Herald's shocking [Fight Club investigation](#) and the atrocities it exposes in Florida's juvenile justice system should make us all wonder whether we're doing right by those in need. If the [tragic death of 17-year-old Elord Revolte](#) is any indication — and it is — the answer is clearly no. Elord, while in detention inside Module 9 of Miami's juvenile lockup, died of internal bleeding from a savage beating by at least 12 youths. The attack was captured on grainy security video. According to two detainees in the lockup that day, the attack was instigated by a detention officer. The brutality of that act is what makes the findings of investigative reporters Carol Marbin Miller and Audra D.S. Burch so infuriating. These are youths incarcerated due to poverty, drug use, street gangs, bad breaks, bad decisions, bad parenting. Florida's juvenile detention system is meant to reform them and get them back on track. Instead, Marbin Miller and Burch found, it can abuse them further. It can break their souls and spirits. It can even take their young lives. The story of Elord and the other youths, featured in the series published online this week and in a special section in Sunday's newspaper, offer irrefutable evidence that there is a dark side to juvenile justice in the form of incompetent detainee supervisors; questionable healthcare; willfully blind internal investigators; and staff members who make boys fight like pit bulls in exchange for something as trivial as a honey bun. Is this locker room behavior? Incarcerated boys being boys? Absolutely not. It's a horror. The Herald investigation reveals case after case where guards ordered teens to beat up other teens, children were sexually exploited, and sick young people were accused of feigning illnesses, sometimes with tragic consequences. Reporters found 12 young people — ages 12 to 18 — who died in the juvenile system under questionable circumstances since 2000. Even one would have been too many. The result of those deaths: Not one staffer served a day in prison. When a troubled teen dies in Florida's juvenile justice system, it has come to this: the Department of Juvenile Justice issues the required statement and conducts the perfunctory investigation; parents grieve, but can't do much more than that; kid is buried. End of story. The rest of us excuse it away. We think, he was a "bad kid" — that's why he was in the system. Elord was in the Miami detention center on armed robbery charges. So why should you care that a punk kid is beaten to death while in state custody? Or, if he survives the physical trauma, is emotionally battered and bruised? Because with your tax dollars, you finance this cruel system. In the end, it has to do with our humanity as a community. Elord Revolte was no angel. But this community owed him a chance at rehabilitation, not a death sentence. "They treated my child worse than a dog," Enoch Revolte, Elord's father, told the reporters. "My child wasn't a dog. My son deserves justice." Sadly, he's right. Read more here: <http://www.miamiherald.com/opinion/editorials/article178837336.html#storylink=cpy>

Minnesota spends \$90 million on mental health costs for patients who don't need the treatment The rising toll is a largely hidden but stark sign of gaps in the state's mental health safety net. By [Andy Mannix](#) Star Tribune October 14, 2017 — 8:01pm Glen Stubbe, Star Tribune When hospital staff in Anoka turned away three patients from the Hennepin County jail, a judge ordered DHS Commissioner Emily Piper into court to explain why. Text size [comment](#) [share](#) [tweet](#) [email](#) Print more Share on: [Share on LinkedIn](#) [Share on Google+](#) [Share on Pinterest](#) Copy shortlink: Purchase: [Order Reprint](#) Minnesota taxpayers have shelled out more than \$92 million over the past six years to house patients who no longer require mental health treatment at a state hospital but have nowhere else to go. The cost per patient, according to Department of Human Services records, now tops \$1,300 a day — enough to rent an apartment in Minneapolis for a month. The rising toll is a largely hidden but stark sign of gaps in the state's mental health safety net, particularly for Minnesotans accused of a crime but deemed mentally unfit to face the charges. Courts now send these patients primarily to a state hospital in Anoka. But once doctors there say the treatment is complete, there's often no place for them to transition back to society. They usually require more treatment or supervision after intensive inpatient care is finished, but places like adult foster care, residential treatment programs or group homes are often too full to let them in right away. As a result, the patients sit at state hospitals for weeks, months or even years longer than they are supposed to. One patient has been in Anoka for more than four years since being cleared for release. And those extended stays mean there are fewer beds available for vulnerable patients who do need the hospital-level care. The cost of housing residents who no longer require treatment mounts quickly. Hennepin and Ramsey counties, for example, were billed a combined \$15 million-plus for the past two years for unnecessary services, according to DHS records requested by the Star Tribune. In light of these high costs, mental health advocates and lawmakers say it's time to rethink the system and create more community-based treatment that would cut down on bed shortages. Beyond that, the state needs to find ways to intervene earlier and reduce how many people come to the criminal justice system already in the throes of a mental health crisis, said Sen. Tony Lourey, DFL-Kerrick. "We can't just simply wait for the crisis and respond any longer," said Lourey. "That's never going to work for us." Source: <http://www.startribune.com/minnesota-spends-90-million-on-mental-health-costs-for-patients-who-don-t-need-the-treatment/450926783/>

Disturbing details revealed in case of counselor charged with felony rape of teen patient in Utah County By [Gephardt Daily Staff](#) - October 16, 2017 [Share on Facebook](#) [Tweet on Twitter](#) Jason Scott Calder. Photo Courtesy: UCSO UTAH COUNTY, Utah, Oct. 16, 2017 (Gephardt Daily) — More details have been released in the felony rape and sodomy case against a Davis County counselor who is charged with assaulting a 16-year-old patient assigned to him as part of his work at a Utah County facility for troubled teens. Jason Calder, 41, of Bountiful, who formerly worked at **New Haven, a residential treatment facility** in Springville, is charged with: One count of rape, a first-degree felony Five counts of object rape, a first-degree felony Five counts of forcible sodomy, a first-degree felony Five counts of forcible sexual abuse, a second-degree felony One count of obstructing justice, a second-degree felony The charges stem from a sexual relationship Calder is alleged to have had with the girl, a facility resident, between March 1 and June 30 of this year. "During this time frame, Defendant was Victim's counselor/therapist, and thereby occupied a position of special trust," the probable cause statement says. "Soon after meeting, a sexual relationship developed between Victim and defendant. On at least one occasion, Defendant and Victim engaged in sexual intercourse." The statement details instances of fondling, sodomy and sexual exchanges of various types, alleged to have taken place inside Calder's office or in a wooded area behind the facility. Calder also scheduled the 16-year-old patient for therapy at night, which he did not do with any other patients, the statement says. "Therapist Calder had access to the victim's medical and mental health file, which made her very much at risk and this relationship put him in a position of trust," the probable cause statement says. "The victim stated that during these 'counseling' sessions, therapist Calder became very friendly with her, and these sessions turned into personal conversations. The victim was able to provide investigators with a number of details about therapist Calder's private and personal life that typically a juvenile patient in counseling would not have knowledge (of) in regards to her therapist." According to the statement, the obstruction of justice charge is related to Calder's repeated requests that the teen tell no one about the sexual relationship, "... otherwise he could be arrested and charged," the probable cause statement says. "At one point, Defendant discovered Victim had written information in her journal that might incriminate him, and he directed her to block it out with a black Sharpie, which she did." Court documents also asked that bail be set high. "Therapist Calder has worked as therapist/counselor for trouble youth in the Utah county/Salt Lake area for a number of years," the statement says. "This has provided him with access to a number of girls who were in similar circumstances as

the victim in this case. The potential for other victims in this case is extremely high. "In hopes that this arrest will encourage these other victims to come forward and due to the manner in which therapist Calder repeatedly sexually assaulted a 16-year-old girl to whom he was supposed to be providing help, counsel and support, it is requested that an extremely high cash-only bail be set in this case." Calder's bail was set at \$100,000, cash only. Source: <http://gephardtaily.com/local/disturbing-details-revealed-in-case-of-counselor-charged-with-felony-rape-of-teen-patient-in-utah-county/>

How a convicted murderer (and others) slipped past group home background checks Posted on October 18, 2017 at 4:30 PM 0 shares By [Susan K. Livio](mailto:slivio@njadvancemedia.com) slivio@njadvancemedia.com, NJ Advance Media for NJ.com TRENTON -- Nearly eight percent of workers hired to take care of people with developmental disabilities have evaded a state law requiring they undergo a criminal background check, [according to a report](#) Tuesday by the Office of the State Auditor. Even some who complied and were flagged for having a criminal record sometimes got hired anyway, the audit found. State law leaves the hiring decisions up to the 570 group home and supervised housing providers in New Jersey, who could decide an individual "has affirmatively demonstrated clear and convincing evidence of...rehabilitation," the audit said. The practice allowed one unidentified housing provider to hire a paroled convicted murderer. When the auditors pointed out the worker's record, the employer called it "an oversight" and fired the employee immediately, the report said. That law ought to change, according to the report submitted by State Auditor Stephen M. Eells and Assistant Auditor John Termyna. [10 years after man's death, Christie signs law to make group homes safer](#) The state will need to hire 200 employees at a cost of \$24 million to comply with the law. "Allowing the provider to make criminal history determinations stands in contrast to the manner in which criminal background checks are handled by other state departments," such as Education and Children and Families, the audit said. [People with autism and other developmental disabilities rely on direct care staff](#) for help with everyday activities -- feeding, dressing and bathing, transporting them to jobs and social programs. The pay is relatively low, starting at \$10.50 an hour, the work is demanding. Turnover is high. A review of 2,340 employee found 175, or 7.5 percent, did not have a record of a background check in their file, the audit said, urging the department to identify and close the loopholes. "The department should improve its monitoring of background checks by reviewing all employee files," according to the report. In a written response included in the audit, acting Human Services Commissioner Elizabeth Connolly said she would consider a change in the law giving her staff power "to make employment fitness determinations of all community residence provider employees." Connolly also noted that [Stephen Komminos Law, Gov. Chris Christie signed earlier this month](#), "will enhance the review of employees' fitness for work," as it requires drug testing as a condition for employment and random tests for cause. The majority of people who work in the state's 2,300 licensed group homes, supervised apartments and community care residents submitted to state and federal background checks and fingerprinting before they were hired, according to the report. The state Central Fingerprinting Unit logged 47,700 records from 2013 to 2016, finding 4,087 had committed a state crime. When investigators randomly pulled the files on 147 active employees, it found 19 had "criminal histories that may be disqualifying, including drug and assault offenses," and another 40 whose records did not contain enough information to make a determination, according to the report. ADVERTISING A separate federal criminal background check found 72 people out of 53,200 screened had committed "disqualifying offenses" such as murder armed robbery and endangering the welfare of a child. Still, auditors found nine of the 72 were working, including the paroled murderer. Tom Baffuto, executive director of The Arc of New Jersey, a statewide advocacy group for families and private agencies that serve them, said his organization helped pass the law requiring criminal background checks some 20 years ago. he expressed concern there are gaps in the system, "We want the system to be as safe as possible. If there are problems with the background checks, we would look to make (the law) stronger," Baffuto said. "Our responsibility is to dig deeper." Baffuto said The Arc is trying to improve the quality of life inside group homes by making the jobs more enticing. The Arc and other provider agencies persuaded [Christie](#) and the state Legislature to include \$20 million in the budget this year to boost the salaries of direct care staff by \$1.25 an hour. The goal is to raise the starting wage to \$16.25 an hour in the next five years, with continued state budget support, Baffuto said. "Then we will be able to attract and retain the workforce that we need," he said. Source: http://www.nj.com/politics/index.ssf/2017/10/audit_some_group_home_workers_skipped_or_slipped_p.html

Iowa Couple Arrested For Trafficking Teens October 18, 2017 5:56 PM Filed Under: [human trafficking](#), [Jim Gudas](#), [Sex Trafficking](#), [Waterloo](#) CHICAGO (CBS) — An Iowa couple has pleaded guilty to luring two Chicago teens to Waterloo to work as prostitutes. Assistant U.S. Attorney Tim Duax says Lawrence Edward Campbell Jr. and his wife, Sade Desire Campbell, used social media to convince two 16-year-old Chicago girls to go to Waterloo to be taken care of. Prosecutors say the Campbell's sent the teens bus tickets, brought them to the couple's home, then took them to two hotels and a home to meet men for sex. Duax says troubled teens are often targeted in the same way on social media, adding, "The predators tend to look for kids who are having difficulties at home." Duax says the Campbell's kept all of the money men paid for the girls, and brought them to a shopping center to shoplift items they could sell to make additional money. Waterloo police say they caught the girls shoplifting at a Target, which led investigators to the Campbell's. Source: <http://chicago.cbslocal.com/2017/10/18/iowa-couple-arrested-for-trafficking-teens/>

Senate Report Slams Public Management of Private Foster Care Industry [chronicleofsocialchange.org] [Alicia Doktor](#) 13 hours ago On Wednesday, Senators Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) issued a report scrutinizing the management of private foster care providers, and skewering one especially notorious foster care agency. Stirred by news stories chronicling dozens of child deaths because of management of foster care services by [The MENTOR Network](#), a national for-profit provider, Hatch and Wyden directed the Senate Finance Committee to study the matter. The [ensuing report](#), entitled "An Examination of Foster Care in the United States and the Use of Privatization," found troubling oversight of private foster care providers by child welfare agencies, and higher-than-expected rates of abuse and neglect within foster homes. [For more on this story by John Kelly, go to <https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/care-industry/28470/>] Source: <http://www.acesconnection.com/blog/senate-report-slams-public-management-of-private-foster-care-industry-chronicleofsocialchange.org>

7-year-old girl's head shaved in Massachusetts group home Posted on October 20, 2017 at 8:11 AM 191 shares By [Michelle Williams](#) Michelle.Williams@masslive.com A mother is demanding answers after her daughter's head was shaved. Denise Robinson's 7-year-old daughter Tru resides at Little Heroes Group Home in Dracut, a facility for children ages 5 through 11 who have suffered trauma, including abuse or neglect. Robinson said her daughter's curls were cut without her permission. When asked why, Robinson said she was told for hygienic purposes. The facility is run by Justice Resource Institute, funded by the state's Department of Children and Families. JRI said in a statement a review into the issue is underway. Source: http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2017/10/7-year-old_girls_head_shaved_i.html

Sex assault at group home Thursday, October 19, 2017 8:56 a.m. CDT Joel Nesler TOWN OF PACIFIC, WI (WSAU) - An employee is accused of sexually assaulting a client of a live-in facility for people with disabilities in Columbia County. 29-year-old Joel Nesler of Reedsburg was arrested Tuesday after the assault was reported the day before at the facility in the Town of Pacific. He's expected to appear in court this week. The Columbia County Sheriff's Department received a report Monday about an incident at the live-in care facility. The investigation suggested a sexual assault where the victim was a female client at the group home. Further details have not been released. Source: <http://wsau.com/news/articles/2017/oct/19/sex-assault-at-group-home/>

Parents slam charter boss for 'boot camp' discipline at Manhattan school Parents slam charter boss for 'boot camp' discipline at school BY [Ben Chapman](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Sunday, October 22, 2017, 3:42 AM [facebook](#) [Tweet](#) [email](#) Parents waiting for their children outside the Success Academy Hudson Yards Middle School on West 41st St. in Manhattan on Friday. The 20-member Parents' Opposition Committee has claimed that the school's disciplinary measures are overly harsh. (Shawn Inglima/for New York Daily News) BY [Ben Chapman](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Sunday, October 22, 2017, 3:42 AM Angry parents who claim their kids are being ruined by boot camp-style teaching are staging an uprising at Eva Moskowitz's flagship, \$68 million Success Academy charter school that opened in September. Moskowitz's heavily hyped Success Academy Hudson Yards Middle School, which so far enrolls about 200 kids in grades five and six, is meant to be a model for her to share her education gospel with schools from around the world through a new Education Institute that was launched at the school in June. But already Moskowitz has encountered some difficulties. An anonymous group of parents at the school has sent scathing letters to Moskowitz and Hudson Yards Principal Malik Russell that decry what they call draconian disciplinary tactics. [Teachers unions sue over charter's move to certify own educators](#) The parents charge Russell gives detention for minor infractions such as failing to clasp their hands, failing to make eye contact and inadvertently breaking wind in class. "It's like a military-style boot camp," said one of the parents, who asked to remain anonymous for fear of retaliation. "The kids have two hours of homework a night," the parent added. "They don't have time for playdates, they have no time for a life." The insurgent families' group — which calls itself the Parents' Opposition Committee and has about 20 members, according to parents — already held one marathon meeting

with Russell at the school on Oct. 5 to detail their concerns. [Charter schools flood de Blasio with letters asking for space](#) Then they followed up on the meeting with an angry letter to Moskowitz and the charter network's board on Oct. 10. "We are a large group of parents from Hudson Yards Middle School who are outraged by Principal Russell's policies and treatment of our children," the letter states. Moskowitz wrote the parents back and promised to meet with them at the school on Thursday. "I am sorry again that you are frustrated and concerned about the school design as well as the implementation," her letter says. "There seems to be some misunderstandings." [Success Academy needs and deserves more public school space](#) The controversial charter boss said she would ease their worries in person. "I look forward to seeing you there and further addressing your concerns," she wrote. "As always, appreciate your involvement and investment." Other parents said they had encountered glitches at the school, such as difficulties receiving homework assignments in time, but their overall experiences were positive. "It's been working for my daughter," said Omilania Buckine, 39, of Manhattan, whose daughter is in fifth grade at the school. [Success Academy boss slams de Blasio over charter space requests](#) "She has amazing teachers who are attentive and keep me abreast of everything going on with her." Russell admitted that the school had experienced some missteps but said staffers were working to negotiate solutions with parents. "Starting a new enterprise — especially one as ambitious as this — can have some challenges," Russell said. "But with the support of our great community that we have, we have been able to push ahead and build a wonderful school that focuses on joy as well as academic excellence." Source: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/education/parents-slam-charter-boss-boot-camp-discipline-school-article-1.3580283>

Mark of Honor group home closing by Friday Mark of Honor Youth Lodge closing doors by Friday
Closed Captions Share Video Copied Copied Rewind 10 Seconds Next Up 00:00 00:00 02:03 Closed Captions Share Video Settings Fullscreen By [Carly Jensen](#) | Posted: Mon 10:49 PM, Oct 23, 2017 | Updated: Tue 6:12 AM, Oct 24, 2017 LINCOLN, Neb. (KOLN) - A group home in Lincoln is closing its doors after only four years of helping troubled youth. The Mark of Honor Youth Lodge is in the same building as the Indian Center. The home said they've helped nearly 100 boys get back on their feet. 10/11 spoke to one of them who stayed at Mark of Honor Youth Lodge for a year. For him the home was a fresh start. "I really think it was a good positive thing in my life for me," said Jonathan. He was in a detention center in Hastings going through a chemical dependency program before coming to Lincoln. He found out today that they would be closing their doors. "It's honestly sad because I just I wouldn't really see where everyone would go and I'm not even sure how full the program is," said Jonathan. Staff said their census is the problem. Today they are only housing four boys but can hold 12. "We are funded by grants, and also we have contracts with the DHHS and the Probation system," said Devon Gall one of the youth caretakers. A lot of the money they get depends on how full they are. Documents from DHHS show the last contract expired on September 30th. It was for roughly \$150,000. Without that money they can't operate. "Mostly this is a trust building exercise with them. Yeah these guys are going to make dumb mistakes or bad choices and they're going to have to be punished for that but for the most part they're learning to be a part of a community," said Gall. Jonathan said it really helped him and thinks it could have been a great place for other boys to come. "When I was there I got a lot of help and a lot of support. And I figured out how to do a lot of things. But now I do feel prepared being out in the outside world," said Jonathan. Part of what Jonathan did at Mark of Honor was practice interviews and career prep. He said programs like that helped him get the job he has today. Source: <http://www.1011now.com/content/news/Mark-of-Honor-group-home-closing-by-Friday-452646773.html>

What's Foster Care Like? Learn From the Youth Who Lived Through It. Audio Player [Comments](#) [Download](#) pARTicipate [What's Foster Care Like? Learn From the Youth Who Lived Through It](#) October 25, 2017 00:00 01:06 02:51 [Use Up/Down Arrow keys to increase or decrease volume.](#) By [Rachael Myrow](#) October 25, 2017 [Share](#) [532](#) [Click to share on Facebook \(Opens in new window\)](#) [532](#) [Click to share on Twitter \(Opens in new window\)](#) [Click to share on Pinterest \(Opens in new window\)](#) [Click to share on Google+ \(Opens in new window\)](#) A San Francisco Bay Area museum is taking an unusual tack with an exhibition about foster youth in California. The [Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History](#) invited a team of former foster youth and advocates to help put the show together. Five months before the show [Lost Childhoods](#) went up, around a hundred former foster youth and advocates began meeting at the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History to talk about what the exhibition would look like. Community engagement director Stacey Garcia explains, "We are not experts in what foster youth have gone through, what they want to share. We know how to make an exhibition, but we don't know how to tell their story. They do." Jess Prudent works as an outreach assistant with [Court Appointed Special Advocates of Santa Cruz County](#), which supports children in foster care. Prudent was skeptical at first that the museum wanted anything more than superficial advice from the [Creative Community Committee \(C3\)](#), but was soon won over by the hands-on curatorial process. "Sophia," (2014) by Ray Bussolari. It's no secret older foster children are less likely to be adopted. What may be less known is the fact siblings are split when a family decides to adopt one but not the other(s). (Photo: Courtesy of Ray Bussolari) "We were making every decision: like, the layout of this place, the art pieces that we included, the artists, even what the collaborating artists were going to focus on," Prudent says. At the core of the exhibition is a collection of photographic portraits by [Ray Bussolari](#), as well as artifacts from Oakland's [Foster Youth Museum](#). Garcia says the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History added works by former foster youth who are on the museum's advisory committee, as well as by local artists they got to choose. "We really chose artists based on how willing they were to collaborate, and how much they wanted the youths' voices to shine versus their own," Garcia says. Take "Interwoven Voices," by Santa Cruz artist [Melody Overstreet](#). It's a tapestry of messages from committee members, written on paper strips. This is one written by Prudent: "We're not troubled kids. We're kids with troubles." "Interwoven Voices," by Santa Cruz artist [Melody Overstreet](#) is a tapestry of messages from Creative Community Committee members, written on paper strips. (Photo: Courtesy of Meghan Puich/Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History) Jamie Lee Evans is the founder of the Foster Youth Museum. "There is no other exhibit like this," Evans says. "This is the largest and probably only exhibition of artifacts, art and culture demonstrating the experience of foster care from a youth's perspective." That's something Lost Childhoods makes plain with personal mementos that highlight statistical truths. A college diploma and a photograph of a foster youth living in a dorm room at University of San Francisco is accompanied by a caption explaining that close to half of those who survive foster care will never graduate from high school, let alone university. A disproportionate number will instead become unemployed or even homeless when they "age out." "I've been told from plenty of people that I know that coming here, they relate to things that they couldn't before, whether or not they were in the foster care system," says Chad Platt, a transition age youth advocate at [Encompass Community Services](#) and a former foster youth himself. The local half of "Lost Childhoods" includes video interviews of former foster youth, paintings by them, and personal journals anyone can sit down and read. (Photo: Courtesy of Meghan Puich/Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History) Museum visitor Diane Lamott from Aptos was moved by the show. "Heart wrenching. Emotional," she said choking back tears. "Makes you wish you could have done something more to help." But the show's organizers want to do more than elicit sympathy from visitors. Right at the entrance of the gallery, there's a massive display of multi-colored "action cards." Each one suggests one way to help foster youth. Bake a cake. Donate a pair of pajamas. Teach a teen to write a resume. Or, if you're really inspired, volunteer as a court appointed special advocate. Pick a card, any card. (Photo: Rachael Myrow/KQED) Lost Childhoods is on view at the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History through December 31, 2017. More info [here](#). Source: <https://ww2.kqed.org/arts/2017/10/25/former-foster-youth-change-narrative/>

Repatriation Efforts Continue: Northern Arapaho advocate Yufna Soldier Wolf, boarding school healing coalition to host a roundtable on children buried at Carlisle School By [Angelica Leicht](#) on October 25, 2017 The work to return the Native American children buried at Carlisle Indian Industrial School to their rightful resting places continues. "Our efforts right now are to get everyone on the same page and to have a way to communicate to other tribes how we will go forward," Yufna Soldier Wolf, Northern Arapaho Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, advocate and tribe member, said. Soldier Wolf is working with the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, a nonprofit focused on pursuing truth, healing, and reconciliation from the U.S. Indian Boarding School policy, to host a Tribal Roundtable Discussion for Carlisle Repatriations in November in Minneapolis, MN. The purpose of the roundtable is to discuss ways to move forward with petitioning the U.S. government for return of the Native children buried on the grounds of what was once Carlisle Indian Industrial School, the first off-reservation boarding school in the nation. The school enrolled an estimated 10,000 Native American children from tribes all over the nation, many of whom died and were buried on the Carlisle grounds during their time at the school. "Over those 39 years that the school operated, roughly 190 to 195 were buried in that cemetery including infants of the students; a number of infant burials," Jim Gerencser, College Archivist for Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center, said. Soldier Wolf has been a critical voice in the fight for the return of the Native American children who are buried at Carlisle Indian Industrial School, and spearheaded the fight for the return of Little Plume, Little Chief — Soldier Wolf's great uncle — and Horse. The Northern Arapaho's fight for their children was the subject of the Planet "Return to Wind River" feature story earlier this year. The fight for the children from Wind River, a reservation that stretches across western Wyoming, was the first of its kind. It took over a decade of letters, petitions and studies for the government to agree to exhumate the three Northern Arapahoe boys buried at Carlisle. The exhumation took place in early August, and only Little Horse and Little Chief

returned to Wind River. Little Plume's grave contained the remains of two unidentified people, and Plume's true gravesite has not yet been identified. The number of unknown graves like Little Plume's has risen from 12 to 14 at the Carlisle cemetery—meaning there are 14 “unknown” children buried at a federal school that they were forced to attend, according to a press release from the NABSHC. That statistic shouldn't exist, according to the NABSHC, and is one that speaks to the ongoing impacts and historical trauma caused by the disastrous U.S. Indian Boarding School experiment. “It's extremely sad and disappointing for the family who is already grieving a loss that never should have taken place,” said Christine Diindiisi McCleave, executive officer of the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition. “It's showing that there's more that needs to be looked into about the boarding schools—the treatment and care and responsibility that they had to our children, in life and in death.” The Northern Arapaho are hopeful that the roundtable will help other tribes who have expressed interest in the Army War College repatriating their children's remains, and have been watching these events unfold with many questions about how the Army will proceed now that they can't find Little Plume. “Our goal is to reach all the 59 tribes who have children buried in the cemetery to present how the process went for the Arapaho and start a dialogue for other tribes who may want to repatriate or who would like for their children to stay in the Army's cemetery,” said Soldier Wolf. “We need people to know what's going on at Carlisle.” While Soldier Wolf celebrates the return of Horse and Little Chief who laid buried far from home for 134 years and now rest with their War Chief Families on the western Wyoming reservation, she said in the news release that she is committed to helping find Little Plume and helping other tribes navigate the repatriation process. Soldier Wolf is currently working as a consultant with the NABSHC to share information on the repatriation process, and will present a report at the roundtable in November. “The Boarding School Healing Coalition acknowledges the efforts of Mrs. Soldier Wolf in the repatriation of the Northern Arapaho children,” said McCleave. “We are eager for her to share her knowledge for others going through the repatriation process at Carlisle and we are excited about welcoming her onto our team.” Matthew L. Campbell, Staff Attorney at the Native American Rights Fund, will also speak at the Tribal Roundtable. Campbell is an enrolled member of the Native Village of Gambell on the Saint Lawrence Island in Alaska and has worked on repatriation issues in the past. The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition is sponsoring the Tribal Roundtable discussion in support of the other tribes requesting their children's remains as well as in support of the tribes who have requested that their children not be disturbed. All Tribal Leaders whose tribes have children buried at Carlisle Indian School Cemetery are invited or to designate a representative to attend. Tribes can apply for scholarship funds to assist with travel costs. The Tribal Roundtable Discussion for Carlisle Repatriations will be held on November 30 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. For more information about the Tribal Roundtable, please visit The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition at www.boardingschoolhealing.org/events. PJH Source: <http://planetjrh.com/2017/10/25/repatriation-efforts-continue-northern-arapaho-advocate-yufna-soldier-wolf-boarding-school-healing-coalition-to-host-a-roundtable-on-children-buried-at-carlisle-school/>

Foster Parents Facing Child Abuse Charges in Missouri A judge has found sufficient evidence for a southwest Missouri foster care couple to stand trial on charges that they abused a toddler in their care. Oct. 25, 2017, at 1:22 p.m. Foster Parents Facing Child Abuse Charges in Missouri Share × [Share on Facebook](#) [Post on Twitter](#) [Post to Reddit](#) Email [Share in LinkedIn](#) [Share on StumbleUpon](#) [Share on Google Plus](#) MOUNT VERNON, Mo. (AP) — A judge has found sufficient evidence for a southwest Missouri foster care couple to stand trial on charges that they abused a toddler in their care. The Joplin Globe reports that Shawn and Stefani Stovall were bound over for trial Monday on single felony counts of child abuse. The Stovalls, both 41, began caring for the 2-year-old boy in May in Mount Vernon. Police and state welfare officials began investigating in July after a call to the state's child abuse hotline. Court records say the child's biological mother noticed bruises on her son's forehead, neck, chin, upper torso, sides, buttocks, legs, ears and genitals during a supervised visit. The boy was taken for an examination. The couple's attorney didn't immediately respond to an email message from The Associated Press. Source: <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/missouri/articles/2017-10-25/foster-parents-facing-child-abuse-charges-in-missouri>

Woman accused of abusing, intimidating foster child Woman accused of abusing, intimidating foster child Joshua Kellogg, jkkellogg@daily-times.com Published 5:00 p.m. MT Oct. 28, 2017 Doctor found victim had multiple instances of bruising, black eyes Hope Graciano (Photo: Courtesy of San Juan County Adult Detention Center) Story Highlights Hope Graciano is accused of three felony counts of child abuse. One of the child abuse charges stems from an incident with an 8-year-old girl Graciano was fostering. Graciano's preliminary hearing is set for Nov. 29. [CONNECT TWEET LINKEDIN](#) 1 COMMENT EMAIL MORE FARMINGTON — A former foster mother accused of four felony charges, including child abuse, allegedly struck the 11-year-old victim with a piece of a bed frame after he got a math problem incorrect on his homework. Hope Graciano, 53, was charged Monday with one first-degree felony count and two third-degree felony counts of child abuse and a third-degree felony count of intimidation of a witness, according to the criminal complaint. Arlon Stoker, Graciano's attorney, said his client adamantly denies the accusations and looks forward to proving her innocence in court. Graciano was licensed through La Familia-Namaste Foster Care. The Albuquerque-based nonprofit organization is licensed through the state of New Mexico to provide adoption and treatment foster care for children and families. Beverly Nomborg, president and CEO of La Familia-Namaste, said Graciano was licensed to provide treatment foster care for about two years and was no longer a foster parent as of Sept. 28. Citing state law, Nomborg declined to share information related to the foster children and the number of children in Graciano's care. Other children previously in Graciano's care have been interviewed by employees for the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department, according to a Farmington Police Department press release. Farmington Capt. Taft Tracy previously told The Daily Times the foster children had been removed from the home. More: [Farmington woman faces child abuse charges](#) The first-degree felony count of child abuse stems from the 11-year-old victim accusing Graciano of beating him in late September with part of his bed frame at Graciano's home in Farmington, according to San Juan County Chief Deputy District Attorney Dustin O'Brien. The victim told a child forensic investigator in early October he was doing his homework when Graciano told him he answered a math problem incorrectly, and she repeatedly struck him with a piece of the bed frame, according to the arrest warrant affidavit. An investigation into the alleged abuse started when Graciano took the victim to San Juan Regional Medical Center for treatment following the alleged incident. The doctor treating the victim told a Farmington police officer that he had a "great concern of physical abuse" for the victim, adding the report from Graciano about how the victim was injured did not match the boy's injuries. Graciano told police the victim was playing with a soccer ball in the front yard the day before and that he struck his face on a railroad tie while practicing dives for soccer. The affidavit states Graciano allegedly changed her report of how the victim was injured at least twice, including a report that the victim tripped over his shoelaces. A crime scene investigator photographed the victim's injuries at the hospital. Those injuries include multiple instances of brown and purple bruising on his head, forearms, chest, cheeks and shoulders, according to court documents. The victim also has two black eyes that were so swollen, the victim had trouble seeing, according to court documents. For the intimidation of the witness charge, O'Brien cited multiple instances in which Graciano is accused of telling the victim not to discuss the alleged abuse. While at the hospital, Graciano allegedly told the victim if he told anyone about the alleged abuse that she would hunt him down and kill him, according to court documents. Graciano is also accused of making an 8-year-old girl she was fostering perform a plank, a type of exercise move. The girl was unable to perform the exercise, and Graciano grabbed the girl by her hair and started dragging her by her hair, according to court documents. Graciano made her first appearance in Farmington Magistrate Court Tuesday morning and was released on a \$25,000 unsecured appearance bond. An unsecured appearance bond is a written agreement signed by the defendant to appear in court. Her preliminary hearing is set for 8:30 a.m. Nov. 29. Joshua Kellogg covers crime, courts and social issues for The Daily Times. He can be reached at 505-564-4627. Source: <http://www.daily-times.com/story/news/crime/2017/10/28/woman-accused-abusing-intimidating-foster-child/808472001/>

Is Foster Care Safe Where You Live? [mike tikkanen](#) 1 day ago Abused and neglected State Ward children have already suffered enough when they enter *foster care. To be removed from a birth home by a judge means that the child's life has been in imminent danger of serious harm. Most of the children I've worked with as a volunteer CASA guardian ad Litem have stories that still make me shudder twenty years later. [Brandon Stahl's article in today's Star Tribune is one of those stories.](#) Many of you will disagree and some strongly, that Melissa Anne Sondrol is not the only reason this poor foster baby has 13 fractures that appear to be deliberately inflicted by a foster mother. I argue that that our community so undervalues children that way too many smart, trainable foster families stay away from what they see as a troubled and under-resourced system. Foster care of abused and traumatized children is really really hard. All Adults Are The Protectors of All Children Whether seven weeks, Seven years or seventeen years old, the habits and behaviors of traumatized children can be threatening and dangerous to themselves and those around them. Melissa did not have the skills to care for this “incredibly fussy, fussy baby” (her words) and was most likely one of few choices the system had to place the child. We should all be grateful to Brandon Stahl's investigative reporting for shining a light on the deep and dark problems of child abuse and foster care in our state. Without his efforts, and the efforts of other child friendly reporters, these children have no voice – in their homes, in the media or in the institutions that rule their lives. Keep in mind that of MN's 40,000 reports of abuse these last twelve months, maybe 1% have made it into the public eye. 80% of children aging out of foster care lead dysfunctional lives (the cost to our community is incredible). If we the public don't see

a thing, it doesn't exist and no one steps forward to demand that foster parents receive the oversight and resources that insures traumatized State Ward children live with caregivers able to care for them. How many more children will suffer the fate of this 7 week old baby or that of [Eric Dean](#) or [Kendrea Johnson](#) before our community stands up for the kinds of care abused and traumatized children need to have to live a safe and normal life? Keep in mind that it is not the money (MN had a billion dollars for the stadium, a billion dollars for the 35W bridge disaster & a billion dollars for transportation funding) it is a lack of concern for other people's children. *[Foster care has become a terrible problem](#) in most states. Some states pay higher daily rates for [boarding your dog than they pay foster parents for child care](#). Source: <http://www.acesconnection.com/blog/is-foster-care-safe-where-you-live>

Butler County youth removed from facility under investigation Two Butler County children have been removed from a residential treatment center in Perrysville, Ohio, and another will be soon, after Butler County Children Services was notified the facility was under state investigation for abuse. BUTLER COUNTY Two Butler County children have been removed from a residential treatment center in Perrysville, Ohio, after allegations of child abuse. Two Butler County children have been removed from Mohican Youth Academy — also known as Tri State Youth Authority — and another will be soon, after Butler County Children Services was notified the facility was under state investigation for abuse. [MORE: 42 people indicted in Butler and Warren counties](#) The mission of Mohican Youth Academy is "to create an opportunity for children to make positive changes in their attitudes and behaviors in order to become productive members of society," according to its website. Among its programs are anger management, behavioral and mental health services, drug and alcohol treatment, and juvenile sexual offender treatment. **ADVERTISER CONTENT: Regence Not All Insurance Providers Are Created Equal. Here's What You Need to Know** While the Butler County children did not have any complaints about the treatment center, they were moved to other facilities as a precaution, according to Bill Morrison, executive director of Butler County Job and Family Services. "We sent a worker up to it because we had a couple of kids in it to interview the kids, just to see if they had any complaints or concerns," Morrison said. "They didn't express anything but we decided to move them out anyway." Children placed at the facility in the past have had a lot of success with its program, but "we didn't want to take a chance," Morrison told this news outlet. Download the Dayton Daily News app Get the latest Dayton news you want, when you want, in this free app from the Dayton Daily News. Click a link below to get the app. [MORE: "Death threats" drive 1-19 Middletown coach to resign](#) The center is on notice its license may be revoked, according to documents obtained by this news outlet from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. A report details several instances when staff physically abused children at the center and on one occasion a child was taken to the emergency room. "On or about May 1, 2017, there was a physical interaction between Staff 4 and Child 2, which resulted in physical injury to Child 2. MYA staff transported Child 2 to the Emergency room where Child 2 received three stitches above his eye," the report reads. "Within 48 hours MYA staff took Child 2 back to the emergency room due to complaints of blood draining from his sinus cavity. Hospital staff identified a facial area fracture and tissue swelling. Lucas County substantiated physical abuse of Child 2 by Staff 4 on May 19, 2017." There are other incidents cited of physical and verbal abuse, invasion of privacy and other infractions. [MORE: 3 things to know about Butler County Children Services levy renewal](#) This news outlet has reached out to the facility for comment, but has not yet received a response. All agencies that have placed children at the center have been notified about the state's investigation into abuse allegations, according to Bret Crow, communications director for the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. "We have notified our partners and placing agencies about the allegations of abuse and neglect," Crow said. "Under state law, Tri-State requested a hearing regarding our proposed adjudication order to revoke its license. That hearing is scheduled for Feb. 6." Source: <https://www.daytondailynews.com/news/butler-county-kids-removed-from-facility-under-investigation-for-abuse/t22l5tcC7l8ieCXKfUYA40/>

Pace of therapist probe angers boarding school abuse victims. Associated Press 12:52 p.m Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2017 This Thursday, Jan. 7, 2016, file photo shows the campus at St. George's School in Middletown, R.I. Nearly two years after receiving complaints that a former boarding school psychologist didn't do enough to help abused children, Rhode Island officials still have not decided whether to discipline him or let him continue to practice. (AP Photo/Steven Senne, File) PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — Nearly two years after receiving complaints that a former psychologist at a prominent New England boarding school didn't do enough to help abused children, Rhode Island officials still have not decided whether to discipline him or let him continue to practice. Two former students at St. George's School in Middletown filed complaints with the state Department of Health in December 2015 against Peter Kosseff, a psychologist there for 35 years. Some of those abused at St. George's say Kosseff failed to protect them and say they're frustrated by the slow pace of the investigation. But at least one says Kosseff was the only adult who helped him. Both complaints were filed by women abused by athletic trainer Al Gibbs, who abused at least 31 girls at the school. One, Katie Wales Lovkay, told Kosseff about the abuse, but as far as she knows, he never reported it. "The fact that they still have not made a decision on this two years later is absurd. This is the welfare of children," she told The Associated Press. "If he had told authorities, or had believed me ... the whole outcome could have been different." The other woman has asked to speak to the Board of Psychology on Thursday to press them to revoke his license. "I don't know why it's taken two years," she said. The AP typically doesn't name people who have been sexually abused unless they come forward publicly, as Lovkay has. Joseph Wendelken, a spokesman for the Health Department, said in an email it is the department's longstanding policy not to comment on complaints or investigations. "Generally, cases take longer to adjudicate when they are more complicated and involve more witnesses, particularly when those cases are related to incidents that allegedly occurred decades ago," he wrote. Kosseff declined to comment on the complaints but said he acted ethically during his years as a part-time psychologist at St. George's from 1979 to 2014. He currently practices in South Kingstown and Newport. "I certainly have cooperated with the board fully and supplied them with everything that they've requested," he said. "I'm going to await the board's review." An independent report released in September 2016 found dozens of children were abused by staffers and fellow students from the 1970s to as recently as the early 2000s. The report found that Kosseff took action in some instances, such as helping fire a choirmaster in 1988 for inappropriate sexual contact with a student. But no one at the school ever notified authorities, and the choirmaster went to work at another school. One of the women who filed a complaint said she believes "you can't just assist one child. You can't just send this predator out. ... I don't think there's a lot of gray area here as to whether or not he conducted himself ethically." At other times, students came to Kosseff with reports about misconduct and he didn't move quickly to stop it, the investigation found. Felicia Johnson, a 1985 graduate, who is black, was stepping out of the shower her freshman year when a group of girls attacked her, using a vacuum cleaner and writing racist words on her body with permanent black marker. "I had been violated, I was held down, felt like I was being raped, and written all over," Johnson said. The headmaster sent her to Kosseff as a condition of remaining at the school. She said Kosseff then repeatedly violated her confidentiality during the following years. "I know full well that he would go right back to the headmaster and tell him anything I said, because the headmaster would turn around and tell me," she said. She called him a "minion" of the administration, and wants his license stripped. "He violated some of the oaths that he took as a doctor," she said. But one of the people abused by the choirmaster, who asked that his name not be used, said Kosseff took quick action when he learned of the abuse, and moved to get the choirmaster fired. Kosseff, he said, helped him when other adults at the school and his parents did not. "Peter Kosseff intervened in an extremely urgent, timely fashion as other boys were being groomed," he said. Source: <http://www.statesman.com/news/pace-therapist-probe-angers-boarding-school-abuse-victims/32Xetl1fw9GXSSBuLTovcM/>

Essex district attorney investigates group home after allegations of poor care [E-Mail](#) Share via e-mail To Add a message Your e-mail [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Google+](#) [LinkedIn](#) [11 Comments](#) [Print](#) [The Boston Globe](#) [Tweet](#) [Share](#) [11 Comments](#) Jessica Rinaldi/Globe Staff Ioannis Baglaneas and his mother, Anna Eves, at home in Rockport. The staff at the Peabody group home where he lived "risked my son's life for a Sunday off," Eves said. By [Michael Levenson](#) Globe Staff October 31, 2017 Ioannis Baglaneas was lonely after his four brothers and sisters moved away to start their lives. So when his mother showed him the Peabody group home where he would be living with other developmentally disabled adults, he showered her with hugs and kisses. But less than a year later, when Baglaneas, who is 29 and has Down syndrome, developed severe pneumonia, staff members at the home failed to give him proper care. Instead, they ignored his persistent cough and took him to a Special Olympics track meet because the group home planned to close for Easter, which was the following day. When his mother picked him up at the meet, Baglaneas was extremely lethargic, wheezing, and red in the face, an investigation later found. Source: <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2017/10/31/essex-district-attorney-investigates-group-home-after-allegations-poor-care/ar3tdkggveBhqvQ3DTGoPJ/story.html>

Teen with 18 assault convictions says she'd rather be in jail than group home By: Erin Debooy Posted: 11/3/2017 3:00 AM Tweet 41 Post 558 Reddit ShareThis [Print](#) Email 1 This is 1 of 2 complimentary stories. A 16-year-old girl handed a jail sentence for assault on Tuesday told the court she keeps assaulting people because she'd rather be in jail than her group home. "I have been trying to assault people to get in jail," the girl said via video conference in Brandon provincial court. "I dislike being in (the group home) that much." The girl, who cannot be identified under the Youth Criminal Justice Act, pleaded guilty to

assault and assaulting a peace officer. She already has a lengthy criminal record, said Crown attorney Kaley Tschetter, with 18 assault convictions to date. A 16-year-old girl handed a jail sentence for assault on Tuesday told the court she keeps assaulting people because she'd rather be in jail than her group home. "I have been trying to assault people to get in jail," the girl said via video conference in Brandon provincial court. "I dislike being in (the group home) that much." The girl, who cannot be identified under the Youth Criminal Justice Act, pleaded guilty to assault and assaulting a peace officer. She already has a lengthy criminal record, said Crown attorney Kaley Tschetter, with 18 assault convictions to date. "(The accused) has a history before this court and a complex history ... she often portrays herself as someone who is less intelligent than she is," Tschetter said. "She has successfully convinced people in the past that she has autism and other disorders where in fact she is actually quite an intelligent individual who does not suffer from these disorders ... she is very much someone who can learn from her mistakes, but is choosing not to ... This is very much a behavioural issue." In May, an employee of the group home reported to Brandon police the girl had assaulted her the day before while they were trying to get her into a vehicle, Tschetter said. The victim had to spend the night in the hospital after she was punched several times, bit on the arm and kneed in the ribs and the right shoulder. The girl also threatened to slit the employee's throat. Police arrived at the home to arrest the girl, who immediately became unco-operative and combative — trying to bite, kick and hit police as they placed her in handcuffs and chartered and cautioned her. In September, police were once again called to the home when an employee reported the girl was holding a knife to her own throat. She was eventually disarmed and taken to the Brandon Regional Health Centre for a mental health assessment. Police needed to call in a third officer after the girl became violent and kicked a psychiatric doctor. When she was told she was going home, the girl kicked one of the officers trying to restrain her in the side of the forehead, causing her glasses to fly off her face. As nurses tried to restrain her, she tried to grab the gun from the officer's belt, managing to unsnap her magazine pouch. "It's quite alarming that she's not only biting people ... but she reached for the officer's gun. But for the officers and nurses behaving appropriately, who knows what could have happened," Tschetter said. "She needs to be held accountable for her actions." Defence lawyer Philip Sieklicki said custodial sentences have not worked for the girl in previous situations, but improvements in her behaviour have been seen through specialized counselling and programming. "Custody has not formed the same sort of deterrence and denunciation in her mind that it has for other inmates," Sieklicki said. "On many occasions, it's been suggested that she has come into custody specifically because she wanted out of her group home and wanted more control over her circumstances." In addressing the court, the girl said she had been doing a lot better, but she didn't find the staff in the group home she had been placed helpful. "I have to hold you accountable for what you've done ... attacking a worker to get back into custody is a huge concern and something that is completely unacceptable," said Judge John Combs, adding she should be discussing her placement with her social worker rather than taking matters into her own hands. Combs noted the 43 days the girl has already spent in custody as time served, and sentenced her to 45 more days in custody followed by a year of probation. "Although you've been charged with two assaults, your record of assaults is improving," Combs said. "There needs to be no more assaults or violent behaviour." » edeboo@brandonsun.com » Twitter: @erindeboo Source: <https://www.brandonsun.com/local/teen-with-18-assault-convictions-says-shed-rather-be-in-jail-than-group-home-454857413.html> [HEAL Note: Group homes like this one engage in aversive behavior modification and it is a type of torture. It is no wonder she will do anything to escape, even if that means going to jail.]

Fracturing Families: The Sources of Segregation in New York's Foster Care [Gabriel Zimmerman](#) November 3, 2017 [Share on Facebook](#) [Tweet](#) [Share](#) [Share](#) [Pin](#) Morrisania is one of the most heavily policed neighborhoods in the Bronx. Despite living in a public housing complex there, Maria was surprised when police officers arrived at her home one March night in 2009, immediately searching the small, two-bedroom apartment where she lives with her children, Anthony, 17, and Ava, 12. Maria, who is in her early fifties and wheelchair-bound due to a disability, was not the target of the warrant. The cops had received a tip that Anthony, still in high school, had been selling marijuana out of his mother's apartment. Yet Maria and her husband were the ones zip tied and arrested in front of their children. Criminal charges against Maria and her husband were eventually dismissed. Despite this, New York City's Administration of Child Services (ACS), which investigates cases of child abuse and neglect, took Ava to a foster care facility on the East Side of Manhattan and opened a case against her parents. Ava would spend the next year shifting from group homes to foster families, only able to see her mother at ACS offices. Maria was forced to go to a drug treatment program in order to regain custody of her daughter, even though she did not test positive for any illicit substance. After a year of bureaucratic chaos, Maria was finally able to reunite with her daughter. That year was time neither of them would ever get back. Ava is not alone as a poor child of color wrestled from her family. New York City's child welfare system is arguably the most racially segregated in the country, with black and Latino children making up 92 percent of the foster care system. African-Americans, who represent only 25 percent of the population in New York City, account for 56 percent of the foster children in the city. Only 4 percent of children in foster care are white. America's child welfare system, originally set up by well-intentioned individuals trying to help children, is in reality destroying black and Latino families, especially those afflicted by poverty. A 2008 study revealed that an estimated 71 percent of the 3.3 million cases of child abuse recorded in the United States that year were cases of neglect, challenging the narrative that violent abuse is the most prevalent type. Child neglect is defined as "the failure to provide adequate health care, supervision, clothing, nutrition, housing as well as their physical, emotional, social, educational and safety needs." But economic resources are a fundamental factor in whether families can meet these needs: Those who lack the money to provide for their children are more likely to be charged with neglect, regardless of their intent. Simply put, what looks like neglect is often the result of constraints poverty places on families. The intimate relationship between poverty and charges of neglect means that families—and particularly families of color—are often punished and torn apart for even the smallest infractions. Families residing in marginalized communities, such as the South Bronx, are 22 times more likely than white families to interact with the ACS. Child welfare institutions are increasingly criminalizing mothers of color across the country for being poor. This fits into a larger trend of disproportionate increases in imprisonment of women. Since 1985, the number of women in the criminal justice system has increased at nearly double the rate for men, with many women being incarcerated for nonviolent drug offenses. A little-discussed side effect of locking up women is how the criminal justice system affects the more than 2.7 million children left behind when their mothers go to jail. In the United States, more than 60 percent of incarcerated mothers have children under the age of 18. Approximately half of those children are under the age of 10, and these young children may have an especially difficult time maintaining a relationship with a parent that's in prison. And the notorious Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 created incentives to construct prisons in rural areas, meaning imprisoned parents can be held more than 100 miles from their homes, making family visits difficult, if not impossible. While over-policing in urban neighborhoods—exemplified by the backlash and reversal of the NYPD's much lamented "stop and frisk" policy—is a well-documented disaster, the intrusive policies officials rely on to separate families remain under-covered. But for poor parents and children harmed by imprisonment, the disparities that these policies create are all too real. "When you walk into the court, you think 'white people must not deal with issues of mental health or substance abuse issues' because they simply are not present in family court, which we obviously know is not true" states Emma Ketteringham, the managing director of the Family Defense Practice at the Bronx Defenders. Even Gladys Carrion, former ACS commissioner under Mayor Bill de Blasio, acknowledged that along with racism, "over-surveillance of families in poor neighborhoods" plays an outsized role in creating these racial disparities. Families living in public housing or homeless shelters do not have much privacy. Spaces are staffed 24/7 by security guards and social workers who are legally obligated to report to ACS if they witness anything out of the ordinary, which can happen frequently and randomly in such cramped places. A system so powerful yet so capriciously applied leaves plenty of room for bureaucratic abuse. Across New York, the threat of an agency removing children has become a weapon landlords use to force out lower-paying tenants in gentrifying neighborhoods. Ketteringham explains that "we do see cases where neighbors or people who want to cause trouble call into ACS. Everyone knows it's the best way to blow up somebody's life." The combination of near-constant surveillance and extreme punishment for poverty-linked negligence frequently leads to the removal of children from their homes, spelling disaster for families. When children are taken away after a parent is charged with a crime, the family often becomes ensnared in a well-meaning but destructive system. "Parents can be kicked out of [public] housing for arrests, often leading them to resort to single-sex shelters. This then prevents them from getting their children back from ACS until they are in a family shelter—yet with no children, there is no access to family shelter," creating a vicious cycle, says Helene Barthelemy of The Nation. The kids face real harm, too: Research shows that children in foster care have worse outcomes on both short- and long-term measures. Placement in foster care has been linked to increases in behavioral, psychological, developmental, and academic problems. One in four foster children ends up behind bars two years after leaving the system. Only 3 percent of foster children graduate from college. Even short-term removals that are quickly reversed can have lasting effects on vulnerable children. If the goal of the child welfare system is genuinely to protect children from abuse and neglect, parents should be able to reach out and ask for support without risk of separation. But today, many families in the Bronx fear ACS social workers more than the police. When this is the understanding between the child welfare system and the community it serves, the system is failing. According to Ketteringham, in order to solve the problems deeply entrenched in the child welfare system, "we need to transform, not reform, it, starting with the idea that permanency is more important than reuniting families." As a nation, we

must address how we look at poverty. On both sides of the aisle, social welfare has become increasingly associated with behavioral expectations. Until we stop thinking of child neglect and child welfare issues as results of deficient characteristics and start acknowledging their deep relationship to poverty, we will continue to turn a blind eye to the larger problem of child welfare and continue to do harm to the children that public policy is trying to protect. For all the Avas and Marias of the world, maintaining the status quo is simply unacceptable. Source: <http://www.brownpoliticalreview.org/2017/11/fracturing-families-sources-segregation-new-yorks-foster-care/>

Teen Liberty News Archive

This section of our site contains news articles in mostly chronological order from earliest to most recent. We have included a .pdf copy of the full articles at the end of each teaser paragraph where the articles were available at time of archiving. News reports regarding individual programs are now shared primarily on the background information/staff list pages of our website unless the program referenced was closed prior to creation of a staff/background information page or is located outside of the USA.

Bashing Youth--March/April--1994--"Unplanned pregnancies. HIV infection and AIDS, other sexually transmitted diseases. Cigarettes, alcohol and drug abuse. Eating disorders. Violence. Suicide. Car crashes." The 21-word lead-in to a Washington Post (12/22/92) report sums up today's media image of the teenager: 30 million 12- through 19-year-olds toward whom any sort of moralizing and punishment can be safely directed, by liberals and conservatives alike. Today's media portrayals of teens employ the same stereotypes once openly applied to unpopular racial and ethnic groups: violent, reckless, hypersexed, welfare-draining, obnoxious, ignorant. And like traditional stereotypes, the modern media teenager is a distorted image, derived from the dire fictions promoted by official agencies and interest groups. During the 1980s and 1990s, various public and private entrepreneurs realized that the news media will circulate practically anything negative about teens, no matter how spurious. A few examples among many: * In 1985, the National Association of Private Psychiatric Hospitals, defending the profitable mass commitment of teenagers to psychiatric treatment on vague diagnoses, invented the "fact" that a teenager commits suicide "every 90 minutes"--or 5,000 to 6,000 times every year. Countless media reports of all types, from the Associated Press (4/4/91) to Psychology Today (5/92), continue to report this phony figure, nearly three times the true teen suicide toll, which averaged 2,050 per year during the 1980s (Vital Statistics of the United States). * In a 1991 campaign to promote school-based clinics, the American Medical Association (AMA) and the National Association of State Boards of Education published a report that inflated the 280,000 annual births to unmarried teenaged mothers into "half a million," and claimed a "30-fold" increase in adolescent crime since 1950. In fact, 1950 youth crime statistics are too incomplete to compare, and later, more comprehensive national reports show no increase in juvenile crime rates in at least two decades. (Contrast, for example, the FBI Uniform Crime Reports for 1970 and 1992.) The facts notwithstanding, the national media (e.g., AP, 6/8/90) dutifully publicized the organizations' exaggerations. * In the early '80s, officials hyping the "war on drugs" orchestrated media hysteria about "skyrocketing" teenage drug abuse at a time when, in fact, teenage drug death rates were plummeting (down 70 percent from 1970 to 1982). In the late '80s, the same media outlets parroted official claims of a drug-war "success" when, in reality, youth drug death rates were skyrocketing (up 85 percent from 1983 to 1991--see In These Times, 5/20/92). Today, official and media distortions are one and the same. Who's to blame for poverty? Teenage mothers, declares Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala in uncritical news stories (see Los Angeles Times, 12/12/93) that fail to note that teenage mothers on welfare were poor before they became pregnant. Who's causing violence? "Kids and guns," asserts President Clinton, favorably quoted by reporters (AP, 11/14/93) who neglect to mention that six out of seven murders are committed by adults. Who's dying from drugs, spreading AIDS, committing suicide? Teenagers, teenagers, teenagers, the media proclaim at the behest of official sources, even though health reports show adults much more at risk from all of these perils than are adolescents. For complete story, [click here](#).

Teens Claim Abuse at Prison--July 2nd, 1998--Eight boys formerly jailed at a privately run juvenile prison are claiming that employees assaulted them when they were hogtied. The boys claim in separate lawsuits that prison employees squeezed their crotches when the boys' hands and feet were bound behind their backs. The teenagers claim Corrections Corporation of America employees often choked and hogtied boys at the prison off Farrow Road near Interstate 20. The boys also allege workers improperly used pepper spray on them. "CCA's conduct in authorizing and condoning the practices... is extreme and outrageous and exceeds all possible bounds of decency in a civilized society," Gaston Fairey, the boys' attorney, wrote in the lawsuits. The lawsuits, filed in federal court in Columbia, don't identify the boys because they are juveniles. They are similar to one that another boy filed in February. James Cooper, a lawyer who represents CCA, said he couldn't discuss the lawsuits because he hasn't seen them. The firm denied any wrongdoing in response to the lawsuit that was filed in February. Five of the eight teenagers are home. Two are at state mental hospitals. One remains in prison. The youths and their parents declined to comment, Fairey said. After allegations of misconduct, Gov. David Beasley ended the state's contract with CCA. On July 1, 1997, the Department of Juvenile Justice started running the prison, now called the Northeast Center. Treatment has improved at the prison since the Juvenile Justice Department started running it, Fairey said. "I'm still struggling with the Juvenile Justice Department about programming and other issues," Fairey said. "But the agency doesn't authorize the techniques CCA taught its employees to control juveniles. It fires employees who are abusive." Several reports sent to Beasley showed CCA employees too frequently resorted to physical force to control juveniles. For complete story, [click here](#).

Senator: Videotaped CYA Beating Warrants Charges--April 1st, 2004--SACRAMENTO, Calif. -- A videotape released Thursday that shows the beating of wards by California Youth Authority guards has prompted one senator to call for local prosecutors to reconsider filing charges in the case. The videotape, taken Jan. 20, 2004, shows a correctional officer punching one CYA ward 28 times even after the teen was already lying face down on the ground. The videotape, shot inside Stockton's N.A. Chaderjian Youth Correctional Facility, also shows a second correctional officer punching and kicking a second ward. The Stockton District Attorney's Office has declined to file criminal charges against the youth counselors involved in the beatings. The matter is currently under review by the California Attorney General's Office. For complete story, [click here](#).

Pfizer Health Solutions Challenges Industry Leaders to Put Prevention and Wellness Models Into Practice at 2005 DMAA Leadership Forum: NEW YORK, Nov. 2 /PRNewswire/ -- Pfizer Health Solutions Inc (PHS) today announced it is donating \$10,000 in scholarship money to Healthy Living Academies (HLA), a division of Aspen Education Group, which operates the first therapeutic residential boarding school for overweight children and young adults. (Webmaster's Note: This isn't the first time the drug companies have openly funded abusive behavior modification programs. Just more evidence that they do.) For complete story, [click here](#).

9 Ways to Keep Tabs on Troubled Teens: November 1, 2005 -- One well-used specialty of Spy-Moms.com, two Moms Private Eyes, is taming out-of-control teens. Like them, you can find out exactly what is going on and where it is happening with the combination of these techno gadgets and Mom or Pop's intuition. We know that these methods can be distasteful and may seem over the top to some parents but desperate situations sometimes require extreme methods to secure the safety of our children. (Webmaster's note: Yes, instead of investing time, love, compassion, and earnestly listening to your children you can now be an ultra-spying police force to watch every move your child makes helping them get used to the police state we are slowly entering... Great!) For complete story, [click here](#).

Panel to begin work regulating youth homes: Is solitary confinement in an isolated "hobbit hole" appropriate behavior-changing therapy for a troubled, defiant teenager? Are leg restraints appropriate when bringing such teens to Montana against their will (but at their parents' insistence) to live in a private boarding school? Who is responsible when an untrained youth "counselor" seduces teenagers half his age while they're in his care at a church-based residential facility? These are some of the questions facing - but unlikely to be quickly answered - by the state's newly formed Board of Private Alternative Adolescent Residential or Outdoor Programs. (Webmaster note: Sounds promising but for the fact that WWASPS facilitator is head of the Board set to regulate facilities... What a slap in the face to all of us who desire real regulation. It's not a battle that will be easily won. But, it must and will be won. Keep on working!) For complete story, [click here](#).

Abuse of power: Recent coach, teacher misconduct no surprise to experts: Just two weeks before Giordano's Aug. 18 arrest, the director of a youth emergency response training program was charged with videotaping and having sexual relations with three teen-aged girls in separate incidents. He now faces up to 12 years in prison. In a third case, a highly-involved soccer coach and substitute teacher was convicted of giving alcohol to four 18-year-old women members of his private soccer club team. For complete story, [click here](#).

Doctor had revealed secret role as mentor: For years, Dr. Bill Schnall was to many the perfect pediatrician: a hardworking man who rose to the top of his field while going out of his way to help teens in trouble... On Tuesday, the state medical disciplinary board suspended Schnall's medical license, saying that relationship and others with male patients crossed ethical boundaries, endangering the public. For complete story, [click here](#).

Academy at Ivy Ridge Settles Over Diploma Issues: The Academy at Ivy Ridge has agreed to pay a \$250,000 fine and offer restitution to some parents of its students as part of a negotiated settlement with the New York State Attorney General's Office over its accreditation and granting diplomas... The Attorney General had accused the school of issuing diplomas illegally because the association did not have a license to do business in New York State and misleading parents into thinking the school could issue diplomas that would be recognized by colleges. For complete story, [click here](#).

New York Times Underplays Boot Camp Abuse, Lack of Success: The Times played down abuse allegations (and confirmed cases) which have long plagued the industry, quoting unnamed "officials at several companies" who blamed the incidents on "a handful of less reputable programs." That "handful," however, is made up of some of the biggest organizations in the industry. For complete story, [click here](#).

These kids face harsh reality: Regarding "Brat Camp"... It was exactly what Andrea Watson had feared. Since the show launched, the founder of the local advocacy group Parents for Residential Reform has been railing at ABC for returning kids to their communities with continued troubles and newfound public profiles. She has helped to circulate a letter calling for a boycott of the show's sponsors, and asked local ABC affiliate WCVB (Channel 5) to pull the show. And in part, she blamed SageWalk -- whose officials did not return calls seeking comment -- for agreeing to take part. "The more I look, the sicker I am," Watson said. "Any responsible provider would never allow this to be." Shay Bilchik, president and CEO of the Child Welfare League of America, said he fears the show sends desperate parents a dangerous message: that all outdoor programs are effective and safe. Bilchik said he is penning a letter to Congress asking for a General Accounting Office inquiry into residential treatment programs. For complete story, [click here](#).

Doctor sounds alarm over medicated juvenile inmates: January 9th, 2005-- Soon after taking over as chief psychiatrist at San Diego County's Juvenile Hall in 2000, Dr. Marjorie Shuer said she discovered many of the children were being given such heavy doses of psychotropic drugs that they couldn't function in school and didn't want to leave their cells. Shuer reported the problem to her superiors at the County Department of Health and Human Services. A few months later she was fired. In a wrongful termination lawsuit she filed in 2002, Shuer said she lost her job because she blew the whistle on staff psychiatrists she believed were endangering children in Juvenile Hall. For complete story, [click here](#).

An uncomfortably close look at nine troubled teens: There is something creepy and unfair about "Brat Camp," which premieres with a two-hour episode tonight at 8 on Channel 5. It reminds me of a despicable A&E series called "Intervention," in which addicts of all kinds are fooled into an intervention and scooted off to rehab, all on camera. Not only have the addicts been filmed for our entertainment at their lowest of lows, but they're clearly in no condition to have given away their permission to be filmed in the first place. "Brat Camp" similarly captures its confused kids undergoing extremely personal psychological breakdowns on TV. And really, what 14-year-olds -- on the edge or not -- are able to judge whether they want to cry, yell, and reveal their darkest secrets in prime time? Do they realize this isn't "The Real World"? Are they truly equipped to decide that they want to spend their lives as TV's Lexie, "Hostile Outcast," or TV's Jada, "Compulsive Liar"? I think not... But the show about SageWalk makes me uncomfortable, not least of all because the title itself reduces some pretty deep-seated problems to mere brattiness. It may be hard to turn away while seeing footage of these kids smoking pot and drinking, or of their parents sobbing with despair. But Jada, the 15-year-old from Boston who has trouble being honest, deserves privacy when she falls apart hours into the camp experience. Words like "crying" understate what she goes through on-screen, rocking madly and ranting. For complete story, [click here](#).

A Gay American Teen's 'Blog' Reveals the Hell Some Can be Put Through by Parents and Others: Excerpts from the story... "And perhaps describing his current mood as "worried" is a bit of an understatement. "My parents lied to me. ... [they said] that they didn't know what the rules were exactly. ... I see now why they "didn't know what the rules were". It's horrible.. they' posted below.. and I [am] so worried. It's like boot camp, but worse, I obviously was not supposed to see this, seeing the bottom say "Parental Rules (not to be given to client)," he writes... The next posting is [June 3](#): "It's been a week of torture -- anger, and crying." For complete story, [click here](#).

Youth prison officials have much to explain: Workers at the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility reported abuse of inmates and other problems to a legislative committee. HEARINGS before a state House-Senate committee have verified continuing abuse at the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility, despite efforts by the Lingle administration to deal with guards' mistreatment of inmates. Blaming the problems on the bureaucratic process will not satisfy complaints in lawsuits brought against the state or bring the facility into compliance with federal standards. For complete story, [click here](#).

Kids As Young As 12 Are Being Put On The Kansas Sex Offender Website: Just playing doctor could put your child on the Kansas sex offender website. The sex offender website is filled with information about people who have committed horrible crimes against children. But KAKE News has learned kids not even old enough to drive are being called sex offenders. For complete story, [click here](#).

Psychiatric Hospital CEO Target of Probe: Indiana authorities are investigating whether the top administrator of a troubled psychiatric program in Allegheny County violated state regulations in that state. An Indianapolis woman contends Southwood Psychiatric Hospital CEO Lisa Machado practiced counseling without a license at Resolute Treatment Facility in Indiana. The Indiana Attorney General's Office is investigating. Machado joined Southwood as CEO in September. Earlier this month, Pennsylvania welfare officials downgraded operating licenses for three Southwood facilities to provisional status. The Allegheny County Department of Children, Youth and Families responded by removing seven children who had been placed there for treatment. For complete story, [click here](#).

At Some Youth 'Treatment' Facilities, 'Tough Love' Takes Brutal Forms: If this was therapy, it sure didn't feel like it. From September to January, Claire Kent spent her days digging up tree stumps from a barren field, her mind and body battered by the elements. The work was part of her "treatment" for the drinking and sex that had landed her at a boarding school for "troubled teens." In the Montana woods, Kent and a couple dozen other adolescent girls had been committed by their families to a disciplinary program that included chopping wood, exercising to the point of physical breakdown, and being regularly bullied and insulted by "counselors" -- all in the name of what the private treatment industry calls "emotional growth." "It was just based on, 'How badly can I scare you?'," said Kent, now in her late twenties and still suffering from anxiety that she attributes to her experience. During her two-year stay, she said, "they gave me the reality that life was just completely unfair and was going to keep being that way." For complete story, [click here](#).

Behavior Modification Money Trail: The controversial world of youth behavior-modification facilities intersects with a web of intricate political connections. And where the treatment industry sees cooperation with government entities, activists warn, these links could cloud the prospects for public oversight of the "teen-help" market. The influence of the behavior-modification industry is felt on Capitol Hill. Four members of the House of Representatives and one senator serve as honorary board members of Kids Helping Kids, a company with corporate links to a now-defunct behavior-modification program for teen drug users

known as Straight Incorporated. The various franchises of that program dissolved in the early 1990s following allegations of child abuse, as well as criticism for using cruel, prisoner-of-war-style brainwashing techniques on adolescents. For complete story, [click here](#).

Mother, son found dead in apparent murder-suicide: OCALA - A woman whose 12-year-old son died in 2000 after being pinned down by a youth camp counselor was found dead in her garage with her 7-year-old son in an apparent murder-suicide, authorities said. Linda Ibarra, 36, was found late Tuesday lying outside the driver's side door of a sport utility vehicle. Her son Lorenzo was found dead in the passenger seat, Marion County Sheriff's investigators said. For complete story, [click here](#).

Del. illegally jails child suspects: They show up in pairs in the middle of the night, a cop and a kid. Some of the kids are silent, unsure about what's happening to them. Most appear indifferent, trying to maintain a semblance of cool in a situation they can't control. Some were hanging out on street corners late at night. A few got into shoving matches with family members. Some said the wrong thing in anger. All of them wound up in one of Delaware's two juvenile detention centers. None of them should have. For complete story, [click here](#).

Center for troubled U.S. teens shut down by Mexican officials: A center for troubled adolescents operating outside Ensenada has been shut down, and 13 American teenagers enrolled there have been returned to the United States, Mexican authorities announced yesterday. The U-Turn For Christ Youth Ranch, a behavioral modification center supported by the Perris-based Calvary Chapel, was closed Friday after Mexican inspectors said they found a range of violations. Four American adults at the center were expelled and have been banned from Mexico for at least five years. For complete story, [click here](#).

Science tries to find secrets of teen brains: New brain research is shattering assumptions held for generations about the adolescent mind, fueling a battle over teen mental health, the rights of parents and the effectiveness of treatment. (scary...We've recently read articles on surgical behavior modification aka lobotomies. Watch closely...) For complete story, [click here](#).

Boy Claims He Was Sexually Assaulted At Valpo Shelter: A 13-year-old boy claims in a lawsuit to have been sexually assaulted in May by a fellow resident of the Hanson House, an emergency shelter for troubled teens. For complete story, [click here](#).

Troubled teen escapee injured in shooting: An early morning shooting in New London leaves a teenager in intensive care. Police say the victim is a 14-year-old and had escaped from a facility for troubled teens... Police say the 14-year-old victim is not cooperating and is not providing police with information. They say he was shot either in the back or side and remains in the intensive care unit at Lawrence and Memorial Hospital... Police say several days before the shooting the teenager had escaped from Mount Saint John 25-miles away here in Deep River. (At time of archiving we were unable to locate full story. Source: [www.wtnh.com](#) Date: December, 2005)

Lawmaker seeks probe of teen boot camps to root out possible fraud, abuse: WASHINGTON - California Rep. George Miller is asking for a congressional investigation of teen boot camps, citing alleged child abuse and fraud at the facilities in the United States and abroad. Miller sent a letter Wednesday to the Government Accountability Office, the investigative arm of Congress, asking for a report on the how the boot camps and boarding schools are regulated and financed, as well as a review at allegations of abuse and fraud. For complete story, [click here](#).

Teen Mother Ruled a Sex Offender: SALT LAKE CITY The Utah Court of Appeals is upholding a judge's refusal to dismiss a sexual abuse allegation against a 13-year-old Ogden girl who became pregnant by her 12-year-old boyfriend. The appeals court on Friday ruled that the law's "rigorous protections" for younger minors include protecting them from each other. The decision leaves the teens in the position of each being both a victim and a perpetrator in the same offense. (At time of archiving, story was no longer available online. Source: [www.kutv.com](#) Date: December 31, 2005)

Bad Kids Inc.: What's to be done about out-of-control teenagers? The man who gave us Citi Habitats has a plan to turn a parental self-help group into a company as popular and profitable as Weight Watchers: According to the doctor, the symptoms are everywhere. The school shootings and the self-mutilation. The vulgar soaps in prime time. The designer drugs and the oral-sex orgies, which, the doctor is confident, are not a myth propagated to sell newsmagazines. "Twelve-year-old girls, in my office, I have them," he says. "They line up and give blow-job parties. No, it's for real. I did an MTV show about this." Ron Zodkevitch, a 47-year-old psychiatrist from Forest Hills who some twenty years ago migrated to Beverly Hills, is making these pronouncements in his office on Wilshire Boulevard. Seated in the sort of high-backed leather chair that gives one the look of being on a throne, he props up his feet on a grand wooden desk. He is wearing cowboy boots. Beat-up, knocked-around black leather cowboy boots that let you know he is not your typical child psychiatrist. For this reason, he prefers being called "Dr. Zod," although the talent agents who are grooming him for his as-yet-unconfirmed appearances on Oprah have informed him that Dr. Zod sounds a bit too out-there, kooky in an unmarketable sort of way. And so Dr. Zod was recently rebranded as Dr. Ron, which everyone is hoping is a more authoritatively casual persona to introduce to America. Dr. Ron is what you might call a psychological Renaissance man. His current professional duties can be described as follows: a therapist for the troubled children of entertainment executives; a paid confidant of pro athletes with confidence issues; a defender of insurance companies against workers'-comp hucksters; an associate clinical professor at UCLA; and a hand-holder to the diaspora of child actors who have grown up to be drug abusers, depressives, and serial divorcees. It is a living made in a shadow world of tormented egos and stunted maturity, though all of that, if Dr. Ron's plans come to pass, is about to change. A good deal of effort is currently being spent to turn Dr. Ron into the Dr. Spock of the teen pandemonium years. For complete story, [click here](#).

Academy at Ivy Ridge Withdraws From World Wide Association of Specialty Programs & Schools: OGDENSBURG, N.Y., Jan. 6/PRNewswire/ -- The Academy at Ivy Ridge (AIR), a boarding school in upstate New York, today announced that it had concluded its relationship with the World Wide Association of Specialty Programs & Schools (WWASPS). "On November 29th we received word from WWASPS that it had accepted our letter of withdrawal," said Jason Finlinson, director of AIR, "therefore we are officially no longer a member of the organization." While WWASPS has faced significant scrutiny over the years, Finlinson cited his primary reason for leaving the organization as being one of "not needing" the affiliation any longer. "The Academy is now capable of providing educational programs and seminars with its own staff or by contract," said Finlinson. (Webmaster Note: It is speculated and in cases confirmed that WWASPS is slowly dismantling in order to continue business through franchises that are independently owned and operated to avoid legal difficulties and prosecution.) For complete story, [click here](#).

Teen dies after admission to Panama City juvenile offenders camp: PENSACOLA, Fla. - A 14-year-old boy died Friday after officials said he had to be restrained by guards when he became uncooperative during the admission process at a boot camp for juvenile offenders. Florida's director of Juvenile Justice said the state will investigate procedures at Florida's six juvenile boot camps because of the death of Martin Lee Anderson of Bay County. (Unable to locate complete story for archive. Source: [www.bradenton.com](#) Date: January 6th, 2006)

Dateline's Disgrace: Soft on Tough-Love Teen's Manslaughter: Dateline NBC devoted an hour [last Sunday](#) to the appalling death of a 14-year-old boy in an Arizona boot camp for troubled youth and the recent trial and conviction of the man who ran the camp in that killing. Anthony Haynes died in the American Buffalo Soldiers Re-enactor's Association boot camp in July 2001 after being made to stand in 115-degree heat for hours and denied water and medical attention. Last year, the founder and operator of the camp, Charles Long, was convicted of reckless manslaughter in Haynes' death and of aggravated assault for menacing another teenager in the camp with a knife. But Dateline — like 48 Hours, which covered the case in a 2003 segment — failed to mention that there is absolutely no evidence that "tough love" programs like boot camps help kids. The Justice Department lists boot camps for youth under "What Doesn't Work," — and a [meta-analysis](#) of the research on youth boot camps that conducted for Congress in 1998 found that it was no more effective than juvenile prison. (Unable to locate complete story for archive. Source: [www.stats.org](#) Date: January 6th, 2006)

Details About Corrections Officer and Inmate: January 9, 2006 - Newly released court documents are revealing more about the alleged relationship between a former Fresno County corrections officer and an underage inmate. Adriana Rivera worked at the Elkhorn Boot Camp for troubled teens. That's where prosecutors say she met the then 17-year-old inmate. For complete story, [click here](#).

Teen Collapses, Dies At Boot Camp: PANAMA CITY, Fla. -- The family of a teen who collapsed during his admission to a boot camp is suing the Bay County Sheriff's Office and the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. The mother of Martin Lee Anderson says the 14-year-old was in good physical shape.

She says he had a broken nose, a cut lip and other bruises on his face when she saw his body. She was told her son "bled from the inside," but she says she doesn't know exactly how he died. For more on this visit: <http://www.workers.org/2006/us/boot-camp-0518> or [click here](#).

Attachment Therapy on Trial: The Torture and Death of Candace Newmaker: Candace, endured painful physical stimulation, was dangerously restrained, and eventually suffocated to death. In the name of "curing her" with Attachment Therapy, Candace's therapists ignored her begging, screaming, and gasping; eventually they were convicted in criminal court. The extent to which some therapists embrace such unvalidated fringe treatments is one of the greatest scandals in today's mental health system. This damning indictment should stir a badly needed national debate about these practices, and aid in the fight against them. For complete story, [click here](#).

SWAT Team Shoots Teen Carrying Pellet Gun: LONGWOOD, Fla. - It was in an instant, with a SWAT team surrounding him, that Christopher David Penley slipped into an alcove in a school bathroom and raised what officers believed was a black 9 mm Beretta handgun, authorities said. Moments later, a deputy shot him. For complete story, [click here](#).

Govt open to teen work camp idea for vandals: South Australia Premier Mike Rann says he sees merit in a plan by state Independent MP Bob Such to force vandals into work camps. Dr Such says vandals should be made to attend camps where they would fix damaged bus shelters or train stations, or carry out environmental work and attend seminars. For complete story, [click here](#).

Contraband communications: Children at Spring Creek Lodge Academy near Thompson Falls live highly supervised lives. They're sent to the secluded backwoods boarding school from all over the country for "behavior modification," isolated from the opposite sex and warned not to exchange phone numbers or e-mail addresses. Possession of a friend's contact info is considered a major infraction; punishable by extra months tacked on to the time it takes to graduate the program. "You come here alone, you leave here alone. That's what they always told us," recalls Scott Stewart, a 2001 graduate of Spring Creek. "They think if you meet up with these people outside of the program your 'non-working' lifestyles start coming back." Stewart says students used coded Bible passages and tiny notes stuffed into the tubes of Bic pens to exchange contraband information at Spring Creek. Now it's getting much easier for those same students to get in touch on the outside, thanks to the increasing popularity of Internet blog sites and forums. Online communities like MySpace.com and Fornits Home for Wayward Web Fora (www.fornits.com/wwf) now give former students of Spring Creek and other programs in the World Wide Association of Specialty Programs and Schools (WWASPS) a place to meet and share their thoughts and past experiences. For complete story, [click here](#).

No More Nightmares at Tranquility Bay?: ...As a teen at Tranquility Bay, you can't call home and are escorted between rooms by Jamaican "chaperones." Talk out of turn and your punishment might be that a trio of guards wrestles you to the ground. "They start twisting and pulling your limbs, grinding your ankles," a student told the British newspaper The Guardian. Not knowing when you'll go home, you might take cold showers and watch "emotional growth" videos. The promise is that you will return a respectful, happy teen. But many WWASPS alumni who've banded together at online survivor websites like [Tranquility Bay Fight](#) and [Fornits](#) say their lives haven't been saved, they've been devastated. Several WWASPS schools have been shut down after abuse claims. Tranquility Bay's counterpart, High Impact, a WWASP affiliate in Mexico, closed in 2002 after dark stories emerged. Teens said they were kept in dog cages. Two parents, Chris Goodwin and Stephanie Hecker, told the [Rocky Mountain News](#) their children were made to lie in their underwear for three nights with fire ants roaming over them and were threatened with a cattle prod if they scratched. For complete story, [click here](#).

Charter school lead fades in H.S.: Charter school students outperform conventional school students at the elementary level but not in high school, according to a state report released Monday. The report, based on state achievement tests, shows differences of only a few points between charters and conventional schools in reading, writing and elementary school math. But the gap is dramatic for high school math, with 10th graders in conventional schools scoring more than 12 points above charter school youngsters. The gap is more than eight points for ninth graders. The results come as no surprise, said Jim Griffin, the director of the Colorado League of Charter Schools. Many of the high school level charters are targeted at troubled teens who do not succeed in conventional schools. "Almost half of them are designed that way," Griffin said. For complete story, [click here](#).

Saving Troubled Teens Through 'Safe Schools': At Arizona's Department of Juvenile Corrections, there are pat downs, cell doors and razor wire. The arrivals come in handcuffs, are photographed and go through a 21-day evaluation to determine their issues — like anger, sex crimes, mental health or substance abuse. But the 300 boys at the Adobe Mountain School, and the 80 girls across the yard at the Black Canyon School, aren't exactly in prison. Arizona's juvenile corrections system calls these facilities "safe schools" — they are part prison, part school. For complete story, [click here](#).

The Trouble With Tough Love: ... Many anguished parents put their faith in strict residential rehab programs. At first glance, these programs, which are commonly based on a philosophy of "tough love," seem to offer a safe respite from the streets -- promising reform through confrontational therapy in an isolated environment where kids cannot escape the need to change their behavior. At the same time, during the '90s, it became increasingly common for courts to sentence young delinquents to military-style boot camps as an alternative to incarceration. But lack of government oversight and regulation makes it impossible for parents to thoroughly investigate services provided by such "behavior modification centers," "wilderness programs" and "emotional growth boarding schools." Moreover, the very notion of making kids who are already suffering go through more suffering is psychologically backwards. And there is little data to support these institutions' claims of success. Nonetheless, a billion-dollar industry now promotes such tough-love treatment. There are several hundred public and private facilities -- both in the United States and outside the country -- but serving almost exclusively American citizens. Although no one officially keeps track, my research suggests that some 10,000 to 20,000 teenagers are enrolled each year. A patchwork of lax and ineffective state regulations -- no federal rules apply -- is all that protects these young people from institutions that are regulated like ordinary boarding schools but that sometimes use more severe methods of restraint and isolation than psychiatric centers. There are no special qualifications required of the people who oversee such facilities. Nor is any diagnosis required before enrollment. If a parent thinks a child needs help and can pay the \$3,000- to \$5,000-a-month fees, any teenager can be held in a private program, with infrequent contact with the outside world, until he or she turns 18. For complete story, [click here](#).

'Benign neglect' leaves youth inmates in squalor, review finds: SACRAMENTO (AP) - California's youngest inmates are living in squalid conditions that endanger guards and youths, while managers operate in daily crisis because of a lack of funding, according to reports obtained by The Associated Press. Shower doors at some youth prisons are so rusty that wards can break off pieces of metal to use as weapons. Two-way radios and personal alarms worn by employees only work intermittently. And there are holes in dorm walls and perimeter fences. "Benign neglect ... appears to permeate" the Division of Juvenile Justice, a special security team found after touring four of the state's eight youth facilities last summer. For complete story, [click here](#).

Teen Opens Fire In Gay Bar: "He was shooting at everyone," said the bartender, who asked to be identified only by his first name, Phillip, because he was concerned about his safety. Police found the hatchet and a machete in the bar, he said. Robida graduated in 2001 from the city's Junior Police Academy, a "boot camp" that teaches discipline to 12- to 14-year-olds, Acting Police Chief David Provencher said. A family friend who answered at his home Thursday said his mother, Stephanie Oliver, had no comment. For complete story, [click here](#).

Devils in the Outfield: ... Huffman's side story is another tale, with a Utah link. His girlfriend had him kidnapped and sent to the Provo Canyon School to try to get him cleaned up. "I looked out my window at the mountains and thought, 'how the hell do I get out of here?'" he remembers. "The Mormons seemed so fascistic. I had a friend who tried running away in winter and got hypothermia from hiding in a snowbank." For complete story, [click here](#).

Boy, 6, hit with sex harass rap: An irate Brockton mother is refusing to let her 6-year-old son return to school after he was suspended for alleged sexual harassment, a term deemed "preposterous" for a first-grader by a leading sexual harassment expert. For complete story, [click here](#).

Two South Florida lawmakers who saw a video of a teen's final hours say he was abused at a juvenile boot camp. The boy died later that day: A 14-year-old boy was "brutally" beaten by guards and "flung around like a rag doll" at a boot camp for juvenile delinquents in Panama City hours before he died at a Panhandle hospital, according to two lawmakers who on Wednesday saw a videotape of the incident. The video, which recorded the last 20 to 30 minutes of the teen's stay at the Bay County Sheriff's Office Boot Camp, shows officers at times kicking, punching and choking Martin Lee Anderson after he refused, or was unable, to comply with officers' orders to run or do other exercises, the legislators said. To view video footage of the attack visit: <http://news.tbo.com/news/metro/MGBN7T3WSJE.html> and/or <http://www.wpbnews.com/news/7158290/detail.html>. For complete story, [click here](#).

Juvenile center study notes staff violence: Cook County's study of its Juvenile Temporary Detention Center, delivered Friday to commissioners, finds a pattern of violence by staff members toward the teenagers in their care. The report, compiled by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, cites "multiple instances of battery or assault by staff on residents." One staff member shoved a youth and threw him to the floor, the report recounts. Others used chokeholds. The 40-page study mirrors episodes previously reported in the Tribune and cited by the American Civil Liberties Union in its court action against the county. (Unable to locate complete story for archiving. Source: www.chicagotribune.com Date: February 11th, 2006)

Teen arrested in rape, slaying-Victim was employee at home for troubled youths: CLEARFIELD — Police arrested a 17-year-old boy accused of raping and stabbing a woman to death late Wednesday in a group home for troubled teens. Police were called at 10:45 p.m. to 286 Marilyn Drive where officers found a car that had crashed into the side of a small red-brick home. A pair of tire tracks extended from the street through the fresh snow, over the curb and through some bushes to where they abruptly stopped outside Doug Mahlsted's home. "I heard a loud pop like someone dropped something huge and heavy, and the house shook like it was an earthquake," Mahlsted said. Outside he found a Honda Accord against his house. A young man was in the driver's side of the car, barefoot but wearing a bloody shirt and jeans. Mahlsted reported the young man said he had committed a crime, "he was a bad person, and he should die," Mahlsted said. "He tried to kill himself by driving into the side of my house." (Webmaster Note: Whether it's rape, homicide, or suicide...the cause is the same. When children are abandoned in every way by their parents and sold down the river to be enslaved, brainwashed, and tortured instead of receiving actual help through patience, understanding, compassion, and love, things like this are bound to occur. The adults are to blame. The adults who refuse to take responsibility for the welfare of children in our care. Apathy and resentment are the two main characteristics of parents who end up subjecting their children to institutionalization. Our advice, help your kids get emancipated if you find the transition from child to adult too inconvenient for you. It's much more effective and loving than paying to have them enslaved and tortured by frauds. Thank you.) For complete story, [click here](#).

Teen crime, adult time: Laws converge to put teens away forever: A teenager serves life in prison because authorities found his fingerprints at the scene of a murder. But jurors doubted he killed the victim, and police failed to fully investigate other key suspects. "I'm just a ghost now," writes Sam Mandez, who was 14 at the time of the crime in 1992 and had no previous violent offenses. "I'm the living dead." Another teen faces life behind bars for killing his mother. Jurors didn't hear his story of parental abuse because his attorney never investigated. Testimony in the trial of 16-year-old Nathan Ybanez lasted only a day. A third teen with a history of alcohol problems is serving a life sentence for a fatal hit-and-run incident after a day of heavy drinking. Prosecutors cast the circumstances as a gang killing - a theory even the victim's mother discounted. At 17, Dietrick Mitchell became a "throwaway" into the prison system. For complete story, [click here](#).

Mother Of Teen At Boot Camp Says Guards Routinely Abused Juveniles: TALLAHASSEE, FL (AP) -- The mother of a teenager who was at the same bootcamp where a 14-year-old boy died after an encounter with guards says the guards routinely abused juveniles at the boot camp. Shauna Manning also accuses the Bay County camp's nurse of dismissing juveniles' medical issues because she believed the boys were faking to try to get out of the program. Martin Anderson died hours after a confrontation with camp guards. A medical examiner says an autopsy shows the teenager died as a result of complication with sickle cell anemia, a usually nonfatal disorder of the blood. Medical experts are casting doubt on that conclusion. For complete story, [click here](#).

Father seeks answers for Kern River crash: BAKERSFIELD - A 14-year-old teen on the run from Camp Owens died Sunday when he crashed a stolen truck into the wall of the Kern River Canyon. The boy's father wants answers in his death. According to California Highway Patrol, Curtis Eugene Vaughan escaped from Camp Owen, a minimum-security facility that serves as a boot camp for troubled teens, around 4 p.m. Sunday afternoon. The boy was on the run from the camp when he crashed the truck he was driving into the canyon's wall. His grieving father, Curtis Vaughan Senior, is questioning if more could have been done to keep his kid safe. He explains, "I was there an hour before and he was fine." "They said he'd be safe up there, and he's not safe he's dead," said Vaughan Senior. "If he'd had been with me, he'd be safe," he adds. Now Vaughan Senior says, "I'm not ever going to be able to see or hold my boy again." (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.kget.com Date: February 21st, 2006)

Superintendent fired over state juvenile prison problems: The Indiana Department of Correction responded to a spate of problems including excessive force at the Pendleton Juvenile Correctional Facility by firing the prison's superintendent and replacing her for up to six months with a team of senior agency officials. Correction Commissioner J. David Donahue fired Superintendent Jane Burns from the agency for what he termed "unacceptable practices" and "missteps of management at the facility," including not following department policies. Three guards currently face criminal charges over their actions at the juvenile center about 20 miles northeast of Indianapolis. The actions Thursday follow a settlement with the U.S. Justice Department this month in which the state agreed to correct civil rights violations at three state juvenile facilities dating to 2003. The violations included physical abuse by guards, physical and sexual abuse by other inmates, and mental health and special education problems. The department no longer operates one of the cited facilities as a juvenile prison. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.indystar.com Date: February 24, 2006)

Tough-love industry too rough on rebellious teens: When teenagers defy authority, as most do, their behavior might be seen as admirable, a stage in their path to adulthood. But admirable defiant behavior, like physical beauty, is located in the eye of the beholder. As a result, defiant behavior might be labeled as pathological by parents, schoolteachers, clergy, police officers and other authority figures. At that point, discipline behind a time-out or grounding might kick in. The forms of discipline constitute what journalist Maia Szalavitz has labeled the "troubled-teen industry." It might involve a boarding school far away from home. It might involve a 12-step program to deal with the abuse of alcohol and other drugs, or with sexual promiscuity, or with gambling. It might involve a psychiatric ward. It might involve a juvenile detention center if the police become involved. Or it might involve the specific sector of the troubled-teen industry that most troubles Szalavitz, a tough-love approach that often includes expensive fees that pay for teens to experience physical hardship in life-threatening wilderness areas such as mountains, forests or deserts. Szalavitz focuses on four specific tough-love programs that she considers especially greedy financially, often ineffective despite advertising claims and sometimes physically dangerous — so dangerous that parents enrolling their teenagers need to worry about sudden death. They go by the names of Straight Incorporated, North Star, KIDS and World Wide Association of Specialty Programs. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.desmoinesregister.com Date: February 26, 2006)

Highfields: Change must come at youth home: Upon allegations of abuse of children in the public charge, there is a natural revulsion - a desire to sever ties with those who would betray such a sensitive responsibility. But when it comes to the scandal at Highfields Inc., severing ties is at best a short-term strategy. What Ingham County and the state need is a properly managed, safe Highfields to continue its work with troubled teens. When abuse reports surfaced at Highfields, Ingham County judges pulled 18 boys they had sent there. Ingham County commissioners halted payments on a \$2 million contract with Highfields, and the state withdrew 15 teens under its supervision. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.lsi.com Date: February 27, 2006)

Judge to let DNA tests on youths start Federal database won't get access pending a final ruling: FRANKFORT, Ky. -- Kentucky can begin taking DNA samples from juveniles who have committed felony sex offenses or burglary under a temporary court ruling yesterday. But the state cannot share the results with federal authorities -- as it does with DNA from adult offenders -- until the judge rules on whether state law permits expanding DNA testing to juveniles. The data, which could go into a state databank, would be removed if the judge rules against the DNA collection. The state wants to collect the DNA samples to help solve crimes. State Juvenile Justice Commissioner Bridget Skaggs Brown said her department would start drawing blood from youths for the DNA samples within a few days. "We intend to take steps to protect the public, and we intend to start testing," she said after the ruling. But public defenders representing juveniles, who filed suit last month to block the procedure, said they will press to bar the Juvenile Justice Department permanently from testing. The plans have created a lot of concern, said Gail Robinson, a lawyer representing the youths. "The kids are scared, and their parents are calling," she said. State officials contend a 2002 change in the law gives them the right to carry out the DNA testing but it was never enforced. Lawyers for the youths say the change does not allow the Juvenile Justice Department to collect DNA from anybody. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.courier-journal.com Date: March 2, 2006)

Teens removed from troubled drug rehab center: Deputy Chief Probation Officer Michael Stauffer declined to comment on exactly why, on Feb. 2, he pulled the four probationers from Daytop Village Inc., the 43-bed residential rehab center with properties in Belmont and Redwood City. Four youth placed in rehab through the Human Services Agency remain at Daytop, HSA Director of Substance Abuse and Shelter Services Director Stephen Kaplan said... "It could be

that we're going to stop using Daytop, it could be that Daytop will have to reform some things ... there will be an examination as to whether Daytop is providing appropriate services for us at the moment," Gordon said. "This is absolutely the right course of action for the county to take." (Unable to locate full story at time of archiving. Source: www.examiner.com Date: March, 2006)

Florida empties boot camp where teen was beaten by guards: Dallas Morning News (subscription) - TX, USA TALLAHASSEE, Fla. - All juvenile offenders have been removed from a Panama City boot camp where a 14-year-old boy was hit and kicked by guards before he died... (Webmaster Note: They mean the boy that was killed by guards at the boot camp, not physically tortured until he died of "natural causes", right?) More on this story...: [Prosecutors confirm boot camp teen didn't die of natural causes](#). Bradenton Herald - FL, United States TAMPA, Fla. - The mother of a 14-year-old boy who was beaten and kicked in a Panama City juvenile boot camp said Tuesday she wants justice now that a second ... [Allegations Of Cover-up In Teen's Boot Camp Death](#) All Headline News - USA Tampa, FL (AHN)-A forensic pathologist observes a second autopsy on the teen who died at a juvenile boot camp and says results seem to show his death was ... [Teen in youth camp did not die of natural causes, 2nd autopsy ...](#) Myrtle Beach Sun News - Myrtle Beach, SC, USA... The teen entered the Bay County Sheriff's Office Boot Camp Jan. 5 after being convicted of going joyriding in his grandmother's jeep. ... For complete story, [click here](#).

Australia Does Expose' On WWASPS: To find out more, visit: <http://www.smh.com.au/news/tv-reviews/the-cutting-edge-tranquility-bay/2006/03/13/1142098386255.html> More on this story: [The Cutting Edge: Tranquility Bay](#) Sydney Morning Herald - Sydney, New South Wales, Australia... Here's a disturbing look at the murky world of the World Wide Association of Specialty Programs (WWASP), America's leading provider of so-called behaviour... For complete story, [click here](#).

Youths can use hot lines to report prison problems: The Indiana Department of Correction has installed hot lines at its seven juvenile prisons so offenders can confidentially report abuse and other problems by staff or other offenders. The hot lines will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and all "serious allegations" will be checked out by the DOC's internal affairs investigators, the agency said in a news release Monday. Among the incidents the hot lines are intended for are physical, verbal or sexual abuse by other offenders or staff or major breaches of security, the department said. The announcement followed a settlement last month with the U.S. Justice Department in which the state agency agreed to correct civil-rights violations at state juvenile facilities dating to 2003. The violations covered by the settlement included physical abuse by guards and physical and sexual abuse by other inmates. (Webmaster Note: If phones are not readily available to call these hotlines and a youth must ask permission to use the phone and the person that must grant permission is the person they wish to report, how likely is it that these so-called hotlines will do a damn bit of good? Not bloody likely!) (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.indystar.com Date: March 14, 2006)

From Foster Homes to the White House: It wasn't until Mickey Ibarra moved with his younger brother from Utah to California at age 15 that he routinely heard his name pronounced correctly... "It was tough," Ibarra said, yet he would grow up and out of those humble and difficult beginnings to work in the West Wing of the White House and to open a boutique lobbying shop specializing in Hispanic outreach... Ibarra had settled into a comfortable life in Utah, where he was a member of the freshman football team and was reluctant to leave. Still, Sacramento proved a good move and Ibarra now considers it a crossroads, especially for his brother, who grew up to be a successful businessman... At his foster parents' request, he returned to Utah to enroll at Brigham Young University. But out of money after one year, Ibarra joined the military, like his father before him, for the benefits of the GI bill, a risky move in the midst of the Vietnam War. Initial orders to go to Saigon were changed at the last minute, and he spent two years in Frankfurt, Germany, before returning to Utah to graduate, cum laude, from BYU with a bachelor's degree in political science. Ibarra then spent five years teaching, including at an alternative school for troubled teens in Spanish Fork, Utah. He went back to school at the University of Utah for a master's degree in behavioral disorders. "Both degrees have served me well in our nation's capital," he jokes. While a teacher, Ibarra volunteered with the local branch of Utah Education Association, an outgrowth of the powerhouse political lobby, the National Education Association. From there he made a jump in 1984 to a permanent spot in Washington as a "political education specialist." He helped organize local chapters of NEA. (Webmaster Note: Most (likely all) alternative programs in Utah are abusive. BYU is the leader in brainwashing and using "trauma-based" behavior modification. Anyone with a degree such as this and experience working for an abusive teen facility deserves to be jailed, not celebrated and promoted to powerful positions in the US.) For complete story, [click here](#).

Former juvenile prison guard convicted of assaulting inmate: DELAWARE, Ohio (AP) — A former guard at Ohio's only youth prison for girls, who was one of 12 corrections officers accused of a range of crimes including assault and sexual battery, has been convicted of assaulting an inmate. Stanley Gates, 38, of Columbus, could face up to a year in jail when he is sentenced in April in Delaware County Common Pleas Court. He entered an Alford plea Wednesday to charges of assault and falsification, which means he denied guilt but acknowledged prosecutors had enough evidence to convict him. Gates was fired from his job at the Scioto Juvenile Correctional Facility, located about 15 miles north of Columbus, in May 2004 and was indicted in December of that year. Assistant Prosecutor Paul Scarsella said Gates struck an inmate, puncturing her eardrum, in December 2003 and then gave false information to State Highway Patrol investigators questioning him. For complete story, [click here](#).

Boot Camp Death Leads to Questions in the Use of Force: Orlando, Florida (PRWEB) March 16, 2006 — The second autopsy of Martin Lee Anderson, the teen who died at a Bay County Sheriff's Office boot camp, indicates his death was caused by a beating and not a sickle cell trait. A videotape of the incident shows officers kicking and striking Anderson, after he stopped his exercises. For complete story, [click here](#).

More Kids Are Getting Anti-Psychotic Drugs: CHICAGO (AP) - Soaring numbers of American children are being prescribed anti-psychotic drugs - in many cases, for attention deficit disorder or other behavioral problems for which these medications have not been proven to work, a study found. The annual number of children prescribed anti-psychotic drugs jumped fivefold between 1995 and 2002, to an estimated 2.5 million, the study said. That is an increase from 8.6 out of every 1,000 children in the mid-1990s to nearly 40 out of 1,000. But more than half of the prescriptions were for attention deficit and other non-psychotic conditions, the researchers said. The findings are worrisome "because it looks like these medications are being used for large numbers of children in a setting where we don't know if they work," said lead author Dr. William Cooper, a pediatrician at Vanderbilt Children's Hospital. (Webmaster Note: Many physicians and psychiatrists believe in drugs over dietary and environmental improvements and psychotherapy. Many parents don't care about their child's welfare and are glad when drugs work to sedate their children. If you do not wish to sedate your child, but, wish to have a healthy family, please do not place your child on drugs. Thank you.) For complete story, [click here](#).

State agency has cited youth camp. Highfields board members say: The state Department of Human Services has cited Highfields, Inc., for a number of violations, according to board members of the Youth Opportunity Camp for troubled teens. The sanctions are contained in an investigative report sent Friday to the Onondaga-based social services agency. "I understand there are citations issued pertaining to incidents here," said Highfields board member Brian Cavanaugh of the residential treatment program for youth. "And it's our sincere desire to do whatever we have to in order to satisfy the state." The citations, which the members declined to detail, give Highfields a set amount of time to remedy, said Highfields Board Chairman Charles Corley. For complete story, [click here](#).

'Sky is falling' headlines a disservice to teens: Regarding "More teenagers engaging in risky behaviors" (Republic, Sunday): Nowhere in the article is a single fact that clearly supports the headline. It doesn't inform, but merely alarms already jittery parents. I know: I'm the mother of a teen. In reality, our kids are doing better than ever. U.S. government statistics show: *Murders of teens are down 47 percent since their peak in 1995. *Violent crime in schools dropped 50 percent between 1992 and 2002. *Teen drug use, drunken-driving deaths among 16- and 17-year-olds, teen pregnancy, the number of teens with more than four sexual partners, and teen abortion rates - all have dropped in recent years, in percentages ranging from 23 percent to 60 percent. Fueled by misinformation, the fears of parents, and urging "pre-emptive action" against kids, a billion-dollar-a-year "troubled-teen" industry has grown in the United States. Let's get the straight facts about how (and what) teenagers are doing so we can respond in loving and effective ways to our kids' real problems: physical, mental or spiritual. Let's skip the "sky is falling" headlines and marvel at how well our kids (and we parents) are doing in a complicated world - and then resolve to do even better. - Cynthia Clark Harvey, Phoenix (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.azcentral.com Date: March 18, 2006)

More Miami-Dade students face detention for misdemeanors: Tonia Green's sobs pierced the tiny courtroom, causing everyone to stare at her 13-year-old son who stood with cuffs gripping his wrists and ankles. "Judge, please ... the school didn't even notify me!" Green wailed. "They just carted my son away like

some criminal." The charge -- kicking another student during a school fight. Miami-Dade Juvenile Court Judge Lester Langer glanced at the boy's paperwork, set a trial date and ordered the teen released into the mother's custody. "Oh Lord Jesus, thank you," Green sighed. Minutes later the scene replayed itself, this time with an anguished Hailaine Jerome rocking in joy after Lester agreed to release her teenage son, who also got into a fight. Langer says his and other courtrooms in the Juvenile Detention Center are packed with more and more cases of kids arrested for minor offenses, as school officials strictly enforce a zero-tolerance policy in an effort to deter violent crimes on campus. "The juvenile judges are seeing a lot of school-related cases that could have been handled at the school, such as schoolyard fights and kids acting out in class," said Langer, who has been on the bench since 1992 and in juvenile court since 1997. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.miami.com Date: March, 2006)

We Are A Torture Nation: Simply put under the "leadership" of the Bush family the United States has become a torture nation. We have allowed ourselves to be reduced to reactionary violence blindly lashing out in disregard of all that makes us good people. The evidence of this is overwhelming ... going light years beyond a reasonable doubt into the galaxy of absolute proof. During Attorney General Gonzales Senate confirmation hearing Senator Leahy asked "Do you think that other world leaders would have authority to authorize the torture of U.S. citizens if they deemed it necessary for their national security?" And Gonzales reply? "Senator, I don't know what laws other world leaders would be bound by. And I think it would -- I'm not in a position to answer that question." (Text: [Gonzales Nomination Hearing, Washington Post](#)) Bush administration legal adviser John Yoo on 12/01/05 was asked in a debate "If the president deems that he's got to torture somebody, including by crushing the testicles of the person's child, there is no law that can stop him?" To which Yoo replied "No treaty." This was immediately followed by the this question/answer exchange: Doug Cassel: "Also no law by Congress -- that is what you wrote in the August 2002 memo..." John Yoo: "I think it depends on why the President thinks he needs to do that." ([full audio available here](#)) In a previous posting on this web site I asked "Have you ever wondered what it takes to get someone to masturbate in the dark dank halls of one of Iraq's most notorious prisons, Abu Ghraib, while guards took photos?" As shown in that article the answer is simple: the Bush doctrine of torture. ([We are a torture state, 10/21/05](#)) In Iraq the Bush led military has taken over not only Saddam Hussein's prisons and torture chambers, but under the Bush doctrine we've also assumed responsibility for carrying on the treatment we've so long associated with despicable tyrants: "In the windowless, jet-black garage-size room, some soldiers beat prisoners with rifle butts, yelled and spit in their faces and, in a nearby area, used detainees for target practice in a game of jailer paintball." ([Before and After Abu Ghraib, a U.S. Unit Abused Detainees, New York Times, 03/19/06](#)) Down in brother Jeb Bush's Florida this doctrine is given domestic illustration. "A teen who died after guards punched and kicked him at a boot camp likely was suffocated during the confrontation and was brain dead when he was brought to a hospital, a pathologist told lawmakers Friday." ([Update 4: Doctor: Boot Camp Teen Likely Suffocated, AP, 03/17/06](#)) Governor Bush passed on the torture apologists' line the death was result of illness, and in response called it "one tragic incident". ([Parents want charges in boot camp death, MSNBC, 02/18/06](#)) A fellow human being murdered by a deliberate Bush family doctrine of torture and beatings for those deemed unworthy. For complete story, [click here](#).

Gunned down: the teenager who dared to walk across his neighbor's prized lawn: "I just killed a kid," Charles Martin told the emergency services operator. "I shot him with a goddamn 410 shotgun twice." He had gunned down Larry Mugrage, his neighbors' 15-year-old son. The teenager's crime: walking across Mr. Martin's lawn on his way home. Mr. Martin opened fire from his house and then, according to the police, walked up to the wounded boy and pulled the trigger again at close range, killing him. Even in a country with a long history of gun violence, the killing of Larry Mugrage in a quiet Cincinnati suburb on Monday stands out as particularly senseless. Mr. Martin seems to have been liked well enough in the neat bungalow-lined streets of Union Township, but he appears to have been obsessed with the territorial integrity of his patchy lawn. Neighbors said he would work himself into a rage if they mowed a foot over the invisible dividing line separating their gardens. "He was really warped on that stuff," one local resident said. Even after killing a young boy, who was apparently running home to fetch a video game, Mr. Martin, 66, seemed indignant. "I've been being harassed by him and his parents for five years. Today just blew it up," he told the operator. "Kid's just been giving me a bunch of shit, making the other kids harass me and my place, tearing things up." For complete story, [click here](#).

Sex tourism thriving in Bible Belt: ATLANTA (Reuters)--In a sleazy hotel room, "Brittany", then aged 16 and drugged into oblivion, waited for the men to arrive. Her pimps sent as many as 17 clients an evening through the door. A "john" could even pre-book the pretty young blonde for \$1,000 a night, sometimes flying in and out from a nearby airport. None of this happened in Bangkok or Costa Rica, places that have become synonymous with sex tourism and underage sex. It took place in Atlanta, the buckle of the U.S. Bible Belt, where the world's busiest passenger airport provides a cheaper, more convenient, and safer underage sex destination for men seeking girls as young as 10. "Men fly in, are met by pimps, have sex with a 14-year-old for lunch, and get home in time for dinner with the family," said Sanford Jones, the chief juvenile judge of Fulton County, Georgia. A new federal law passed in 2003 ensures that American sex tourists landing on foreign soil and hiring prostitutes under the age of 18 can get 30 years in prison. But in Georgia, punishment for pimping or soliciting sex with a girl under 18 is only five to 20 years, according to Deborah Espy, the Deputy District Attorney of Fulton County. "Men are coming to Atlanta to have sex with a child," said LaKendra Baker, project manager for the Center to End Adolescent Sexual Exploitation (CEASE). Half of the street-level prostitutes in Atlanta are believed to be under 18, according to experts. For complete story, [click here](#).

Too much boot: Florida boot camps have long needed a thorough evaluation of their effectiveness in rehabilitating juvenile offenders. It's too bad it took the death of a Bay County teen to put the boot camp concept under the microscope. That is, however, the catalyst for a review by law enforcement and legislative officials into whether boot camps do more harm than good in motivating juveniles to turn around their lives before becoming hardened criminals. The videotape of Martin Lee Anderson's manhandling by burly guards before being pronounced dead hours after being admitted to the Panama City boot camp was a shocking example of the boot camp philosophy run amok. Boot camps were a product of a 1980s juvenile crime wave that threatened the state's tourism industry. After a series of violent attacks on tourists by young hoodlums that made sensational headlines, a boot camp program for adults was adapted to include younger offenders. It combined the "scared straight" approach of exposing delinquent youths to real jail conditions with the "tough love" approach then seen as an effective form of drug rehabilitation. It was thought that the harsh conditions of military-style boot camps would instill discipline and respect in youths to whom such principles were foreign. Angry, in-your-face confrontations with trained drill instructors, especially in the intake phase, were intended to break down the rebellious attitudes that got teens in trouble with the law and to establish a foundation for positive change. But many juvenile advocates dispute the effectiveness of the angry confrontations. Young brains still developing don't always connect consequences with actions, they say. And while the harsh discipline may bring about compliance after a time, it also builds anger - anger which the youths may suppress while there but which erupts when they are released. (Unable to locate full story at time of archiving. Source: www.bradenton.com Date: April, 2006)

Teen gets 30 years in fatal shooting: A teenage boy was sentenced to 30 years in prison this morning for fatally shooting a 34-year-old man last year. The first dozen years of 16-year-old Kevin A. Roy's sentence are minimum mandatory, meaning he will not receive time off for good behavior during those years. After his release, Superior Court Judge Charles H. Toliver IV ordered that Roy spend a year in a halfway house, followed by 18 months probation. "I think it was an appropriate sentence," prosecutor Cari Ann Van Dyke said, adding that Roy had been given opportunities in the past, such as boot camp, to straighten himself up, but didn't. (Webmaster Note: How anyone can call "boot camps" or "residential treatment programs" an opportunity to straighten up, is beyond me. These programs are not effective, do more harm than good, create anger and post traumatic stress, and likely directly contributed to this tragedy. That's the reality of it!) (Unable to locate full story at time of archiving. Source: www.delawareonline.com Date: April 5, 2006)

Police Searching For Missing Girl, 16: BOSTON -- Police are searching for a Pembroke, Mass., girl who left a school for troubled teens nearly a week ago and hasn't been seen since. Family members said Brenda Santos, 16, doesn't have her medication with her, so they're desperate to find her. NewsCenter 5's Mary Saladna reported that Santos' family is distraught. "We love her and we miss her and you know, she needs to know that if she has control of this situation, you know, we're not mad. We just want her home," her mother Amy said, breaking into tears. Amy and Bob Santos have not seen their daughter for six days. The couple adopted Brenda at age 5 to rescue the girl from a childhood of physical, sexual and emotional abuse. The teen attends Pelham Academy in Lexington, a school and residential treatment program where she receives medication, counseling and support for her special emotional needs. But last Friday morning, Brenda, who is supposed to be closely supervised, was allowed to walk out of the school with another student. "They have acknowledged the fact that the staff were not trained appropriately," Amy said. (Webmaster Note: If you know anything about Pelham Academy, [please report to us](#) so we can add them to [the list](#). Thanks.) For complete story, [click here](#).

Update: First Death by Suicide = Anthony Soltero, 14 Year-Old Son Terrorized by Vice-Principal: 04-09-2006: 14 year old Chicano who killed himself after his principle told him he was going to send him to jail for 3 years for organizing immigrant rights walkouts at his school, didn't let him take part in graduation activities, and told him he was going to fine his mother. (Webmaster Note: Public Schools are supposed to protect Constitutional Freedoms of students, not act as a police state using threats and abuse to insure conformity. Our hearts break for Anthony and his surviving family. What a sorrowful state of affairs. Ideas for actions on this? [Let us know!](#)) For complete story, [click here](#).

2 youth camp counselors sued in abuse case: Two counselors who shoved broomsticks, a cane, a flashlight and a mop handle into the rectums of 18 boys at a youth camp were sued this week in Maricopa County Superior Court. Two victims accuse Clifton Bennett, 18, and Kyle Wheeler, 19, of committing physical and sexual assaults on boys who were attending a leadership camp in Prescott. Bennett's father, state Senate President Ken Bennett, is also named in the suit. Bennett and Wheeler were initially charged with 36 counts of kidnapping and assault. But the Yavapai County Attorney's Office last week offered Bennett and Wheeler a plea deal that could result in probation and conviction on misdemeanor charges. (Webmaster Note: This is unfortunately what happens when uneducated, unqualified, and unsupervised people are allowed charge over children. Parents beware.) (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: [www.azcentral.com](#) Date: April 12, 2006)

Man who ran program for teens in Michigan charged in Minnesota: MINNEAPOLIS The former executive director of a Minneapolis agency that works with children and families who ran a program for troubled teens in Michigan has been charged with sexually assaulting a teenager. Police say the abuse began in 2002 and the teenager was known to Richard Pahl Junior -- but NOT through his work with the Minneapolis human services organization Freeport West. Pahl has been fired. Forty-four-year-old Pahl was a director of the Link Crisis Intervention Center in Saint Joseph (Michigan) before he moved to Minnesota in December. A criminal complaint says a search of Pahl's Eden Prairie (Minnesota) house yielded 18 binders with pictures of naked boys from ages five to 16. Many of them were engaged in sexual activity with other children. (Webmaster Note: Facilities for troubled teens are not regulated by any third party or gov't agencies. This is what happens when free enterprise runs amok. We must regulate these facilities. Tell your representatives to support HR 1738, the "End Institutionalized Abuse of Children Act" now!) (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: [www.wlns.com](#) Date: April, 2006)

Students cited for truancy at immigrant-rights rally: Sabado, 04-15-2006: Truancy citations were handed out Friday to 28 Chaparral High students who were at an immigrant-rights rally along Rancho California Road during school hours. "We are setting the tone that in Temecula the Police Department is not going to tolerate planned truancy," Capt. Mitch Alm said. School resource officers heard Thursday about the possibility of a march and notified the school district, he said. For complete story, [click here](#).

Military-style camps get boot after teen's death in Florida: TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) -- Putting juvenile delinquents into a military-style boot camp would seem to be a logical means of transforming rough-and-tumble kids into young ladies and gentlemen. Many camps were opened in the early and mid-1990s when corrections officials were convinced it was the best method to help troubled teens mature and stay away from further problems. But that idea has fallen out of favor nationwide in the wake of research by criminologists that indicates the programs simply don't work any better than normal juvenile detention facilities. The programs faced increased criticism after 14-year-old Martin Lee Anderson died in January after he was kicked and hit by guards at a Florida Panhandle camp -- an altercation that was videotaped by camp surveillance cameras and broadcast nationally. That camp, run by the Bay County Sheriff's Office, was closed last month, but Florida still has four open, housing about 130 teens -- down from a peak of nine camps and 364 inmates about eight years ago. At the concept's peak in the mid-1990s, about 4,500 teens were housed nationally in juvenile boot camps. Some expect that downward trend to continue. "As we know boot camps today, they're not going to exist," said Florida state Rep. Gus Barreiro, chairman of the House Criminal Justice Appropriations Committee. "Intimidation- based programming ultimately has very short-term results, and what we want is long-term results." But the boot camps still have powerful supporters who say the programs work, including Gov. Jeb Bush, who said he has no intention of closing any more camps or changing their methods. (Webmaster Note: If you expect the Bush family to do anything to protect human rights or children's welfare, you are an idiot! They are in partnerships and social relationships with the most notorious child torturers in the US. They will never side with justice. They must be impeached and removed from office now!) For complete story, [click here](#).

Students in governor's office protest boot camp death: TALLAHASSEE, Fla. A group of protesters is demanding arrests in the boot camp death of a 14-year-old -- and the protesters want to take that demand straight to Florida Governor Jeb Bush. About 30 college students took over the foyer of the governor's office in Tallahassee today. Students from Florida State University, Florida A-and-M University and Tallahassee Community College also want Bush to apologize to the boy's family. (For more on growing protests, visit: <http://www.bradenton.com/mld/bradenton/14399173.htm> and <http://www.wftv.com/news/8887440/detail.html>) (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: [www.wlns.com](#) Date: April, 2006)

Child Abuse for Profit is Occurring in America: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."-- Article 5, U.N. Declaration of Universal Human Rights... "You wouldn't believe the terrible things that were done to me," says Alexia Parks' niece in An American Gulag. [1] But she continues: "I know now it was for my own good." Thus ends Parks' account of her struggle to help her niece after she was enrolled in several behavior modification schools. The similarity to the end of 1984 is striking: a previously headstrong individual returns from months of torture as merely a shell of their former self, having learned to love their tormentors. The difference is that Parks' story is true. Usual definitions of torture include the use of practices such as solitary confinement, non-medical application of psychiatric drugs, unprovoked beatings, starvation, and verbal abuse as means to change a person's behavior. Many Americans are reluctant to support the use these techniques even on criminals, much less teenagers with behavioral problems. Unfortunately, this is exactly what is being done on a large-scale basis as "tough-love" programs have become a booming industry. These programs come in several varieties, including boot camps, "therapeutic" boarding schools or academies, and wilderness programs. At the cost of several thousand dollars per month (up to \$40,000/year), these schools supposedly provide a climate where troubled teens can continue their regular education while receiving treatments designed to improve their behavior. In the philosophy of these schools, reform involves two goals: to break kids down through strict discipline and routine, then to build them back up through self-examination and therapy of various sorts. Usually, only the former is accomplished. So successful is the breaking down process that former inmates of these institutions often suffer symptoms of post-traumatic stress syndrome, even years after being freed. Ex-students call themselves, with good cause, "survivors". For complete story, [click here](#).

License To Harm: To be a manicurist in the state of Washington, you must take 600 hours of training and pass both a written exam and a skills demonstration. To cut hair, you need 1,000 hours of training and the two tests. But to be a registered counselor, someone who will help guide troubled clients through some of their most difficult life challenges, you need take only a four-hour AIDS-awareness class. That's it -- that and a \$40 registration fee. You don't even need a high-school diploma. That sounds like an invitation for trouble -- and it is. In the past decade, the state has [sanctioned 104 registered counselors for sexual misconduct](#). That's more than for any other health profession, and more than the cases involving doctors, dentists and registered nurses combined. It's just a fraction of the actual incidents of abuse, since, experts say, most go unreported. "It's kind of scary," said David Kaplan, chief professional officer of the American Counseling Association, based in Virginia. "If someone who has an eighth-grade education can walk in and be a counselor, how in the world is Washington protecting the public?" For complete story, [click here](#).

Lives Lost: Brittani Head was set to graduate from Crossroads Christian Academy in May. Shortly before Brittani died, her mom just finished paying for her senior trip to Cancun, where Brittani planned to go with some local friends, and some friends from Florida. She loved sports: soccer, softball and cheerleading, and was a big LSU tiger fan, said her dad, Glynn Head. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: [www.theadvertiser.com](#) Date: May 7, 2006)

Tough love: Juvenile offenders say some discipline goes too far: ...Unlike most government-regulated industries, Michigan has no clear outline of what is and is not accepted when restraining out-of-control kids in youth institutions. A state administrative rule simply prohibits "cruel and severe discipline" and "excessive chemical, mechanical or physical restraint." Nowhere does it detail what that entails. "It leaves too much open for interpretation, and when you have a lack of policy, there is more room for error," said Fred Woelmer, director of the Genesee Valley Regional Center and vice president of the Michigan Juvenile Detention Association. "It makes a difficult job even more difficult." But for the first time in more than 30 years, that rule is up for review this summer by state officials. Those in the juvenile justice field hope to see significant changes made. Adding weight to their plea are recent problems at the

beleaguered Camp Highfields in rural Ingham County where the three above scenarios played out earlier this year. Counselors' reactions in two of those cases and another led to the suspension of the residential program in February and uncertainty about whether the program will continue. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.lsi.com Date: May 7, 2006)

Commentary: Behavior Modification Facilities Are Not Safe: The nation was recently shocked by the beating death of 14-year-old Martin Lee Anderson in a Florida boot camp. Sadly, this is not the first case of a death occurring in a "behavior modification" facility; in fact, there have been three deaths in such facilities throughout the country since December 2005. Although the camp that Anderson attended has recently been shut down, many similar ones are still in operation throughout the country. You've probably seen people from these programs on daytime TV. They're the "drill sergeants" that yell at kids until they break down (at least that's all they do on live TV). They say that their version of "tough love" is completely safe, and effectively treats problems such as defiance and drug use. The evidence shows otherwise. One hundred and nineteen deaths have been reported due to treatment received in these facilities. Many are caused by asphyxiation due to the use of restraints. These are not typical handcuff restraints, as you may be thinking. Some of these cases have involved arms being twisted behind the back to the point of breaking and staff members lying or sitting on top of the child for upwards of 30 minutes. Restraints are commonly used to punish such horrendous offenses as talking out of turn and making eye contact with another student. It should be noted that restraints have caused at least 30 of the 119 deaths. First-hand accounts from students and former staff members of these facilities are equally disturbing. Their statements and experiences make these facilities seem less like boot camps and more like Abu Ghraib. Stress positions, beatings, hog-tying, humiliation (including making students soil themselves), and sexual abuse are among the charges. Fox News ran a three-part expose last year on one of the main groups of facilities that operates under the name of WWASPS, or World Wide Association of Specialty Programs and Schools. The former president of WWASPS admitted under oath, in *WWASPS v. PURE*, that abuse "probably" happens. In the same court case the current president of WWASPS, Ken Kay, stated that most allegations of abuse are not investigated. He further explained that because these children are not the typical "college prep type," sexual relations between staff members and students may not constitute abuse. For those who doubt this, the court transcripts are available at www.isacorp.org. Much of the other information given above can also be verified at that site. (Webmaster Notes: You can also learn more at www.heal-online.org/childtortureusa.htm.) For complete story, [click here](#).

More Revealed About Teen Suspect Shot by Las Vegas Police: Metro is investigating the connection between a body found in the desert over the weekend and the deadly officer involved shooting that claimed the life of a teenager. (Webmaster Note: Swuave Lopez was handcuffed and not a threat to police at the time of his death by police gunshots. Lopez was a survivor of Summit View, a "program" for troubled teens. How many kids have to suffer before something is done to stop this torture industry?) For complete story, [click here](#).

Hope Youth Ranch Responds To Allegations of Negligence: "Our entire staff is heart broken and full of grief." Those are the words from the ministry administrator at the Hope Youth Ranch in Webster Parish. Eight former and current ranch employees were indicted Monday on charges surrounding the death a thirteen year old boy their care. The death is reminding people of recent national tragedy's involving young children sent to youth camps. In this case, the charge does not imply intent. In other words the accused did not intend to kill the boy, but they did nothing to stop it. The charge against the eight accused is negligent homicide. The allegation is denying a young boy a drink of water after making him run for bad behavior. For complete story, [click here](#).

Families: Boot camp medical examiner covered up other deaths: TALLAHASSEE, Fla. Some Florida families are accusing a medical examiner of botched work and cover-ups. Doctor Charles Siebert is currently at the center of controversy for ruling that a teenager kicked and struck by boot camp guards died of a blood disorder. A second autopsy concluded the teen died of suffocation from having ammonia pills forced up his nose while his mouth was covered. Another family accuses Siebert of covering up the 1977 death of a suspect allegedly beaten by police. At a news conference in Tallahassee, the families called for Siebert's license to be revoked. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.kxan.com Date: May or June, 2006)

Do you know your teen?: Navigating the teenage years isn't easy for parents or their children. Adolescence brings major physical and emotional changes. Today's world has grown more connected, competitive and complex in the past generation, only adding to the challenges. But two counselors at Quincy Junior High School say that's all part of growing up. Janice Pillay and Jackie Martin conducted independent research and came up with a snapshot of what life is like for a Quincy teen. Inspired by an article in the Aug. 8, 2005, issue of Time magazine, the two counselors surveyed 1,344 students at QJHS, then compared the results with those from the magazine's online survey of 501 13-year-olds. They asked about home life, school, dating and whether they think their life is tougher than their parents' was. The exercise was aimed at improving communication between the generations by asking parents: How well do you know your teen? (Webmaster Note: How dare any parent think of institutionalizing their child instead of communicating with him/her. If you are so far removed from reality that you no longer see your child as an individual human being, you are the one who needs help. Learn basic communications skills and take a parenting class!) (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.whig.com Date: May or June, 2006)

Prozac Found In System Of CYA Teen Found Dead: SACRAMENTO, Calif. -- An autopsy report on two teens who committed suicide in a California Youth Authority facility showed something that came as a big surprise to one of teen's parents. Deon Whitfield, 18, and former Stockton resident Durrell Feaster, 17, were found hanged inside a Preston youth facility dorm room in mid-January. Officials believe the acts were suicides. The autopsy report shows that at the time Feaster died, he had significant amounts of Prozac in his system. Feaster's mother, Gloria Feaster, said neither she nor her husband ever gave the California Youth Authority permission to administer such a drug. California Youth Authority officials did not comment specifically about the case Thursday, but they did explain their psychotropic drug policy for minors. The CYA says it always sends out a consent form to parents. If the parents don't respond within 21 days, a parole agent visits their home to try and gain consent. If that proves unsuccessful, the CYA can and does ask a judge to grant permission to administer drugs --like Prozac -- without the parents ever being notified. For complete story, [click here](#).

Woman distraught: denied visit with sister at Ivy Ridge Academy: A Michigan woman drove nine hours to Ogdensburg to visit her 18 year old sister at Ivy Ridge Academy. But Rachel Stachowicz says she was turned away at the door and told to leave the grounds. "She was out of bounds," said Ivy Ridge Executive Jason Finlinson. The Academy At Ivy Ridge calls itself "a boarding school for the future." Its website says "We are a passageway to assist in the forgiveness, healing and reconciliation of families." Parents pay \$30,000 per year to enroll their teenagers in the program, according to the Watertown Daily Times in a 2003 story. Stachowicz said she wanted to visit her sister Lindsey for Lindsey's 18th birthday and thought that as an adult, Lindsey would be free to receive any visitor she wanted, especially a sister. She also wanted to ask her sister whether she wanted to leave the facility. "I'm her sister," she said, her voice trembling. "Why couldn't I see my sister? She's 18; she has the right to choose to see me or not and they're saying she can't." (Webmaster Note: Apparently, you can take Ivy Ridge out of WWASPS, but you can't take WWASPS out of Ivy Ridge.) For complete story, [click here](#).

Psychologist's trial to begin on Tuesday--Group home operator accused of practicing medicine without license; PLYMOUTH --Associates in Clinical Psychology was supposed to be a safe place, where troubled teens could receive treatment for mental illness. But prosecutors allege that the group home was the scene of improper physical examinations performed on patients, by a man who was not licensed to perform them. On Tuesday, a jury in Marshall Superior Court will begin hearing the case leveled against psychologist Marc A. Zackheim, who is facing one Class C felony count of practicing medicine without a license and three Class B misdemeanor counts of battery for a series of incidents that reportedly took place at the home in 2004. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.southbendtribune.com Date: June 10, 2006)

Juvenile center restrictions draw fire: CHICAGO (AP) - When the school day ends at Cook County's temporary juvenile detention center, hundreds of students must leave essential education tools behind: their textbooks. Such centers commonly prohibit the unsupervised use of hardcover books and basic school supplies like pencils out of concern the youths could use the items for violence. Child welfare advocates, however, say the rules can create a prison-like atmosphere that discourages rehabilitation. "Any facility ought to be safe and secure enough for kids to have books," said Betsy Clarke, president of the Juvenile Justice Initiative. This month, a judge appointed a former state corrections official to oversee changes at the detention center, stemming from a 2002 settlement of a lawsuit that claimed the facility was mismanaged. Juvenile advocates say some of the problems cited in the lawsuit extended into the center's classrooms. "Teachers consistently said they do not assign homework because staff do not allow the youths to bring books or even pages to

come back up the unit," the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative concluded after reviewing practices at the facility in December. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.fresnobee.com Date: June 21, 2006)

Rough Love: Shannon Levy-Rowley is 21 years old and five feet seven inches tall. She weighs 108 pounds. During the past five and a half years, she has endured three major surgeries and diets ranging from fourteen weeks of consuming only liquids to sipping blended meals through a straw. But the brunet's meager weight has nothing to do with a tummy tuck or an eating disorder. In December 2000, Shannon's parents, Jayne Levy and James Rowley of Coral Springs, enrolled their only child in Tranquility Bay (TB), a boarding school in Jamaica for troubled teens. "I was smoking pot, I was popping pills, drinking, doing acid, just experimenting with everything 'cause I was just really unhappy with my life," Shannon says. Tuition would cost almost \$40,000 annually, but after attending a support meeting in South Miami and speaking with families who claimed the school had done a lot for their children, Jayne signed an enrollment agreement granting TB custodial rights. "It got very good reviews, and Shannon needed to go somewhere," Jayne laments. "I was fearing for her life." On a mild winter day about two weeks after the Rowleys signed up, three people Shannon had never met arrived at the family's home. "A lady and two big men came into my house and sat me down on the sofa," Shannon recalls. "They handcuffed me and said I could cooperate or they were gonna throw me over their shoulder." The group drove to the airport and boarded a plane. The journey ended in Treasure Beach, a remote hamlet on Jamaica's southern coast, where Shannon spent the next thirteen months. She describes it as an unforgettable nightmare and recalls being severely depressed, crying constantly, and within one week of arrival, trying to throw herself off a second-story balcony. Shortly after her failed suicide attempt in early 2001, Shannon alleges staff aggressively restrained her when she took a swing at one of them. "One staff held my arms behind my back when I was standing up so I couldn't grab onto anything," she says. "Another staff ripped my feet out from underneath me so I fell with all my weight right onto my chin. I immediately started gushing blood everywhere, but that didn't stop them. They still continued restraining me." Jayne Levy contends she wasn't told of the severity of Shannon's problems until school officials telephoned on Christmas eve 2001 to say, "You have to come and pick up your daughter; she can't open her mouth to eat." Shannon could barely open her mouth wide enough to insert a toothbrush, mother and daughter agree. They claim the injuries were largely untreated and consequently Shannon's condition deteriorated. (She has lost about 40 pounds since sustaining the injury.) (Webmaster Note: WWASP tortures children and should be closed down immediately!) (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.miaminewtimes.com Date: June 22, 2006)

State wards denied parole rights given to adult inmates, suit alleges: SACRAMENTO (AP) - About 4,000 juvenile offenders are routinely denied the parole rights granted to adult convicts accused of violating their parole, lawyers said in a class-action lawsuit filed Wednesday in federal district court in Sacramento. An earlier court settlement requires the state Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and parole board to supply adult parolees with legal representation and probable cause hearings. The settlement also requires officials to consider alternatives to sending adult parolees back to prison if they are found to have violated conditions of their parole. But young parole violators can be sent back to youth prisons without those protections, the suit alleges. Nearly half of all young parolees are reincarcerated within two years, the inmate rights attorneys said. "Youth can be warehoused at one of the terrible juvenile detention facilities for months before they receive any hearing, even for technical violations of parole such as drinking alcohol," Michael Bien, one of the attorneys, said in announcing the suit. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.fresnobee.com Date: June 22, 2006)

Youth facility faked records-Detention center workers missed required training, monitor reports: Officials at a state-run juvenile detention center in Prince George's County falsified records for more than a year to make it look as if workers were getting training, required by law, on how to deal with the troubled youths housed there, an independent monitor has found. In response to the findings by the state Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit, a spokesman for the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services said the training coordinator at the Cheltenham Youth Facility was dismissed last week and officials are reviewing training practices elsewhere to see whether similar problems exist at other juvenile jails and youth treatment centers. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.baltimoresun.com Date: June 29, 2006)

WWASP Slammed by Federal Court: SALT LAKE CITY, Utah (July 9, 2006) – The World Wide Association of Specialty Programs (WWASP), a highly controversial and monster-size corporation, with a reputation for crushing everyday moms and dads, lost yet again--this time in the U.S. Court of Appeals. Jeff Berryman, a Pennsylvania advocate for children, was vindicated in his efforts to blow the whistle on WWASP for child abuse, neglect, and fraud. Robert Browning Lichfield, the founder and self-described consultant to WWASP, met those claims of abuse by dragging Mr. Berryman into Utah with a lawsuit designed to silence him once and for all. Mr. Berryman, however, prevailed. The Federal Court of Appeals gave examples of news media description of child abuse and neglect at World Wide schools: "[T]he news magazine 48 Hours reported a child's allegation that he had been handcuffed for two consecutive days and had his mouth covered in duct tape. The Miami Herald ran an article describing a mother's report that her teenager came home from a World Wide school with ringworm scars and chemical burns. Forbes Magazine reported that children were punched, kicked, thrown, and forced to sit on cement floors for twelve hours at a time. The teenager quoted in the article also claimed that students who tried to flee from such punishment were locked in a small cell for days." For complete story, [click here](#).

Update: Highfields Reopens Doors: Four months after closing its doors, Highfields is open for business. The residential treatment center finally re-opened. In February, claims of abuse forced Highfields to temporarily shut the facility down. The first new tenants are arriving. (Webmaster Note: This is the main problem. Even when programs are proven to be abusive, after a slap on the wrist, they get to re-open and continue harming kids. This has to stop. Real criminal and civil penalties should be imposed on these greedy child abusers.) (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.wlms.com Date: July 11, 2006)

Comment: Bad discipline hits too many students: Texas may be known for its oil and gas pipelines, but the newest Texas pipeline funnels children from schools to prison, by way of alternative education programs and juvenile detention centers. While students who present a danger to classmates must be segregated, too many students are falling into this pipeline. The Legislature must stem the tide of schoolchildren who are being unnecessarily written up and written off. For complete story, [click here](#).

Man defied order, saw Youth Ranch girl: A 20-year-old Nashville man accused of having sex with a female minor at the Youth Ranch in Lebanon had been ordered to stay away from her, court records show. Christopher Carver is mentioned by name as the person barred from any contact with the 15-year-old girl during her stay at the privately run facility for troubled teens, according to court documents. Carver was arrested Thursday on a charge of statutory rape, Lebanon Police Chief Scott Bowen said. Two other adults wanted in the case are: Amy Morrison-King, 40, a former Youth Ranch worker accused of bringing men to the workplace to have sex with teens; and Geary Jackson, 24, accused of having sex with a juvenile at the ranch. "Apparently, there was some kind of involvement between the two before," Bowen said referring to Carver and one of the girls. Youth Ranch is a nonprofit program that the state Department of Children's Services has used for several years to work with and house children and teens who were neglected or convicted of minor crimes. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.fairviewobserver.com Date: July 14, 2006)

Controversy surrounds Tranquility Bay: Since 2002 the Cayman Islands Government has quietly been sending troubled youth to a high security privately run educational institution in Jamaica called Tranquility Bay. The facility treats special cases as an alternative to juvenile detention on Grand Cayman. The first young Caymanian was sent at the family's request in 2001. The Cayman Islands Government has since sent five young people; three boys and two girls over the past five years. The last government-funded student left in July 2005. Health and Family Services Minister Anthony Eden has confirmed that despite the fact that no students are currently at the facility, the Ministry has no intention of eliminating the just-in-case Tranquility Bay funding of \$30,000 allocated in this year's budget...Billed to have a positive effect on troubled young people aged 13 to 18 going through problems associated with the difficult teen years, the Tranquility Bay website states it is a "specialty boarding school and therapeutic behavioural modification facility, with an excellent academic program and therapy for kids who have been very defiant and hard to manage..." The site describes how its program opens up new ways to help young people build character in order to achieve family peace and harmony. The facility opened in 1997 and is in a remote area of Treasure Beach near St. Elizabeth, west of Kingston, on the premises of a former oceanfront hotel. It is owned and operated by the World Wide Association of Specialty Programs and Schools, a 19-year old organization that holds about 2,400 children and youth ranging from seven to 18 in facilities in the United States, Jamaica and Mexico. The benign name masks a different reality: In the past four years, five WWASP facilities, Casa by the Sea, Sunrise Beach and High Impact, all in Mexico,

Dundee Ranch in Costa Rica, Morava in Czech Republic, and Paradise Cove in Western Samoa, have all been shut down for child abuse and neglect. The High Impact Mexico operation was shut down when investigators discovered children being held in dog cages in the desert, reported John Gorenfeld of AlterNet. Chris Goodwin of San Francisco said his son was forced to stay outside in his underpants for three nights at the Mexico facility, lying on his stomach with his chin on the ground. If he moved to try to brush off fire ants that roamed over him, he was threatened with a cattle prod, said Goodwin. The punishment left scars on his son's chin, he said in a news story in the Rocky Mountain (Colorado) News in January 2002. For complete story, [click here](#).

Rep. Matheson holds big money edge: ...Christensen received \$12,000 from the Lichfield family of southern Utah, owners of several treatment facilities for troubled teens. The Campaign for America's Future donated \$5,000 to his campaign. And the two-term state legislator collected donations from several of his GOP legislative colleagues, including Draper Rep. Greg Hughes, Spanish Fork Rep. Mike Morley, St. George Rep. Brad Last and Kanab Rep. Mike Noel. (Webmaster Note: With the GOP in the back pocket of child torturers, it's no wonder why more isn't done to stop this evil industry.) (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.sltrib.com Date: July 15, 2006)

Police search for missing teens, 14 and 19: NEWPORT, N.H. --Newport Police are looking for a 14-year-old boy and 19-year-old woman believed to have left the state together. Chief David Hoyt said police are seeking leads on the whereabouts of Randy Gentner of Salem, who ran away from a group home in Newport on Wednesday. Hoyt believes Gentner met up last week with Jennifer Newcomb of Croydon, a teacher's aide at his middle school. Police have issued an arrest warrant for Newcomb on a charge of interference of parental custody, taking a minor over state lines without permission. Newcomb's car was found on Saturday night in Lime Rock, Conn. The two are believed to have traveled through New York City and on their way to Florida or Mexico, said Rodney Forey of New Hampshire Juvenile Justice Services. Police in Ocala, Fla., were asked to check the bus and train stations for the pair. Gentner's parents said they're worried about their son. The teenager had been receiving court-ordered drug and depression counseling at the Orion House in Newport, WMUR-TV reported. Letters written by Gentner were found in Newcomb's bedroom, but authorities aren't sure what the nature of their relationship is. "There's nothing we've uncovered that says they're involved in an intimate relationship," Hoyt said. "In fact, we have just the opposite -- that it's more a mother-son-type relationship." For complete story, [click here](#).

WWASPS Back in Court: SYRACUSE, NY (July 28, 2006) Attorney Christopher Todd of Hancock & Estabrook, LLP, confirmed their firm filed a class-action lawsuit Tuesday on behalf of 25 plaintiffs and against Academy of Ivy Ridge, WWASPS, Robert Lichfield, Lifeline Family Services, Premier Educational Systems, Jason Finlinson, among others (see link to Complaint below.) Plaintiffs alleged in their Complaint that defendants fraudulently advertised Academy of Ivy Ridge (AIR) as an accredited boarding school licensed to issue credits and diplomas to its students. AIR allegedly falsely and fraudulently certified to educational lending institutions, including Sallie Mae and Key Bank, that they were a licensed and accredited private boarding high school authorized by the State of New York to issue diplomas in order that parents could qualify for restricted educational loans to pay their monthly tuition of about \$2,800 to \$4,000. Jason Finlinson, Alyn Mitchell, and Joseph Mitchell, allegedly failed to operate under the laws of the State of NY. Robert Lichfield allegedly purchased the property for AIR and used his personal connections with Ivy Ridge's accreditation agency, Northwest Assoc. of Schools, to blindly allow WWASP to claim accreditation though they did not meet Northwest's own standards. For complete story, [click here](#).

Christian Military Academy's Training and Leadership Corps campout. The students, who are around ages 9 to 15, had been camping since Wednesday, Lynda Browne, the school's principal and owner, told the South Florida Sun-Sentinel for Sunday's edition. The boy got out of bed in the middle of the night to tell a drill sergeant he didn't feel well, Browne said. He boy collapsed on the way to the restroom. For complete story, [click here](#).

Teen Boot Camp Cadet Dies During Orientation in Florida: NORTH MIAMI, Florida — A 13-year-old cadet at a private military academy died during an orientation camping trip, the school's principal said. Authorities rushed the child from [Oleta State Park](#) to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead Saturday, North Miami police said. The cause of death was undetermined, pending a medical examiner's report, police said. No additional information was released. The boy was one of 33 cadets attending the [Back to Basics](#). For complete story, [click here](#).

For parents and kids: Summary: How does a parent deal with a child who has behavior, alcohol or drug problems? Boot camp-style programs have tried to deal with these issues through participant isolation, hard labor, restraints, name-calling, humiliation, sleep and food deprivation and hiking into the wilderness or desert. These programs often hire kids off the street to be counselors working for minimum wage. Some workers, she discovered, had criminal records or little training, education and experience with troubled children. She says it was rare if there was even a psychologist on the grounds. Among the programs she tackles are Synanon, Tough Love, The Seed, Straight Incorporated, the Challenger Camp, Elan School, KIDS and World Wide Association of Specialty Programs (WWASP). Public officials including Nancy Reagan promoted these programs in the 1980s as the solution to drug abuse. Talk shows used them to teach ungrateful rich kids how to behave, and other media outlets publicized boot camps as a miraculous cure. Some children were sent because they admitted to being gay. Parents thought the camps could "straighten their children out" and make them heterosexual. Szalavitz examines these programs through the eyes of the children who endured them. She also speaks to parents of children who died horrific deaths in these programs. There were about 30 kids who died, many of them because counselors had little training to deal with desert conditions and lack of water. Szalavitz investigates the lack of education provided to these kids during camp. She also looks at the way panic-stricken parents are manipulated into sending their children. For complete story, [click here](#).

Foster Boy's Death Ruled Homicide: Foster Boy's Death Ruled Homicide The Wayne County Medical Examiner has ruled the death of a 2-year-old boy at a Detroit foster home was a homicide, Local 4 reported. Isaac Lethbridge suffered bruises to his face and burn marks to his chest, according to police. Police said there was also evidence that he was sexually assaulted. The child was dead on arrival at Children's Hospital Wednesday, according to police. Emergency crews said the toddler stopped breathing. he child was living at the foster home for more than a month along with his 4-year-old sister, according to police. Child Protective Services removed the sister and several other children from the home, Local 4 reported. No arrests have been made in connection with the boy's death. For complete story, [click here](#).

Rights group sues youth hall-Suit claims abuse and neglect, asks for reforms: A lawsuit filed Monday by a prisoners rights group claims that Sacramento County juvenile hall is filthy and overcrowded and that its staff members routinely douse teens with pepper spray and grind their faces into the floor. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.sacbee.com Date: August 30, 2006)

Troubling Times for Troubled Teens: A jury will likely decide whether a counselor at the Ella J. Baker House raped a 17-year-old in one of the center's bathrooms, as she alleges. But do we really need any more evidence to prove the Rev. Eugene Rivers has lost control of the ex-cons working at the Baker House under his supervision and serving as "role models" for troubled kids who come to the center for help? (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: <http://news.bostonherald.com> Date: August or September, 2006)

Behavior Modification Money Trail: The controversial world of youth behavior-modification facilities intersects with a web of intricate political connections. And where the treatment industry sees cooperation with government entities, activists warn, these links could cloud the prospects for public oversight of the "teen-help" market. The influence of the behavior-modification industry is felt on Capitol Hill. Four members of the House of Representatives and one senator serve as honorary board members of Kids Helping Kids, a company with corporate links to a now-defunct behavior-modification program for teen drug users known as Straight Incorporated. The various franchises of that program dissolved in the early 1990s following allegations of child abuse, as well as criticism for using cruel, prisoner-of-war-style brainwashing techniques on adolescents. For complete story, [click here](#).

The Franklin Scandal Tried in Civil Court: U.S. government mind control programs, like MK-Ultra and Monarch, directed against helpless victims--human guinea pigs--have been virtually ignored by the Big Media Cartel. On Feb. 27, 1999, however, U.S. District Court Judge Warren Urbom found former Franklin S&L manager Lawrence E. King guilty of numerous crimes committed against mind control victim Paul A. Bonacci. King, serving a 15-year sentence for his role in the theft of \$40 million from Franklin, an Omaha, Neb., credit union, was ordered by Judge Urbom to pay Bonacci \$800,000 in compensatory damages and an additional \$200,000 in punitive damages. This legal judgement against a notorious perpetrator of satanic-ritual child abuse is unprecedented. In the Memorandum of Decision, Judge Urbom wrote, "King continually subjected the plaintiff [Bonacci] to repeated sexual assaults, false imprisonment,

infliction of extreme emotional distress, organized and directed satanic rituals, forced the plaintiff to 'scavenge' for children to be a part of the defendant King's sexual abuse and pornography ring, forced the plaintiff to engage in numerous sexual contacts with the defendant King and others and participate in deviate sexual games and masochistic orgies with other minor children. "He [Bonacci] has suffered burns, broken fingers, beatings of the head and face and other indignities by the wrongful actions of the defendant King," the judge declared. "In addition to the misery of going through the experiences just related over a period of eight years [1980-1988], the plaintiff has suffered the lingering results to the present time. "He [Bonacci] is a victim of multiple personality disorder, involving as many as 14 distinct personalities aside from his primary personality," wrote the judge. "He has given up a desired military career and received threats on his life. He suffers from sleeplessness, has bad dreams, has difficulty holding a job, is fearful that others are following him, fears getting killed, has depressing flashbacks, and is verbally violent on occasion, all in connection with the multiple personality disorder and caused by the wrongful activities of the defendant King." Franklin Cover-up--Bonacci's lawyer, John DeCamp, has waged a long, lonely and expensive legal campaign in exposing crimes involving an international pedophile-pornography ring. In 1991, DeCamp filed a 12-count suit in federal court, charging 16 prominent individuals and institutions, including Lawrence E. King, Omaha World Herald Publisher Harold Andersen and the Omaha Police Department with conspiracy to deprive Paul Bonacci of his civil rights. DeCamp's suit detailed slander, false imprisonment, child abuse, assault, battery and infliction of emotional distress suffered by Bonacci. The complex case also involved high-level politicians, business leaders, judges and police officials with connections to the drug distribution/money laundering operations known as "Iran" -Contra which goes back to then Vice-President George Bush. DeCamp, a former Nebraska State Senator, even wrote a groundbreaking book about the sordid history of the case called *The Franklin Cover-Up: Child Abuse, Satanism and Murder in Nebraska*. Monarch Project--The horrendous Monarch Project "refers to young people in America who were victims of mind control experiments run either by U.S. government agencies such as the Central Intelligence Agency or military intelligence agencies," writes DeCamp. "The story told by Monarch victims--one of whom was Paul Bonacci--is that they were tortured for the purpose of creating 'multiple personalities' within them," DeCamp continues from his book. "These multiple personalities could then be programmed--as spies, 'drug mules,' prostitutes or assassins." An article by Anton Chaitkin, quoted in the book, states that "professionals probing the child victims of 'Monarch' say there are clearly two responsible elements at work: the government/military, and cooperating satanic cults. These are multi-generation groups, whose parents donate their own children--who are proudly called 'bloodline' or simply 'blood' cultists--to be smashed with drugs and electric shock and shaped. Other children are kidnapped and sold into this hell, or are brought in gradually through day care situations. For complete story, [click here](#).

Congress Considering Strip Searching Students --Congress to vote on HR 5295 Tuesday or Wednesday 18 Sep 2006 (drugpolicy.org) The Student Teacher Safety Act of 2006 (HR 5295) is a sloppily written bill that would require any school receiving federal funding (essentially every public school) to adopt policies allowing teachers and school officials to conduct random, warrantless searches of every student, at any time, for essentially any reason they want. These searches could be pat-downs, bag searches, or strip searches depending on how far school administrators wanted to go. For complete story, [click here](#).

Guard accused of sex with juvenile girl is fired State Police will conduct criminal investigation of case at former Girls School: A state prison guard was fired Wednesday after he was accused of having sexual contact with a girl at the Indianapolis Juvenile Correctional Facility on the city's Far Westside. Octavius Tyler, 25, was terminated after an internal affairs investigation at the state-run facility, formerly called the Indiana Girls School. The case has been handed over to the Indiana State Police for a criminal investigation, as well as Child Protective Services. The Department of Correction did not disclose when the contact occurred, whether it happened more than once or any details about the girl involved, including her age. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.indystar.com Date: September 22, 2006)

Governor planning a frugal campaign: Gov. Jon Huntsman Jr...Since the last disclosure deadline, the special projects fund reported raising \$40,000 from Utah's dietary supplement industry, \$10,000 from Robert Lichfield, founder of a controversial chain of schools for troubled teens, and \$25,000 each from Ian Cumming's Leucadia National Corporation and venture capitalist James Swartz. Huntsman used the money to cover much of his out-of-state travel, the cost of holiday receptions at the Governor's Mansion, a state dinner for outgoing Mexican President Vicente Fox and for china plates and coasters emblazoned with the Utah State seal for Asian ambassadors. After paying more than \$8,000 in accounting fees, another \$6,100 for a business summit at the Davis Convention Center and \$15,300 to Huntsman for Governor, the special initiatives fund has \$101,000 in cash on hand. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.sltrib.com Date: September, 2006)

Teens Killed By Train Identified As Azleway Runaways: Officials confirm two teens, killed by a train in Hawkins, were runaways from Azleway Boys' Ranch, a facility for troubled boys in Chapel Hill. Officials say they were Harry Rutledge, 15, of Bestrop and Chris Hill, 17, of Dallas. Officials say the teens had been living at Azleway for the past few weeks, but ran away last Saturday, hiding out behind Hawkins High School in a pine thicket. For complete story, [click here](#).

Report: Girls Are Abused in Jail: A new report says girls at New York's two detention facilities for juvenile females are sexually and physically abused by staff members. They are also denied mental health, educational and other rehabilitative services. Human Rights Watch and the American Civil Liberties Union released the report. The inmates, ages 13 to 17, are in for offenses ranging from shoplifting to assault. For complete story, [click here](#).

Finding The "Straight Edge" In Fiji: The \$14 million psychological thriller "Straight Edge" starts shooting October 2nd in Fiji with Peter Stormare, Mila Kunis and Gregory Smith headlining reports [Variety](#). Story's about a group of troubled teens sent to a rehabilitation program housed in a remote camp on the island of Fiji. What their parents believe is a state-of-the-art deluxe institution in a beautiful natural environment turns out to be a prison- like boot camp where they are abused and brainwashed. (Webmaster Note: Art imitates life. This film's name was changed to "Boot Camp") For complete story, [click here](#).

State Supreme Court says no right of jury trial for juveniles: The Tennessee Supreme Court has overturned a 36-year-old ruling by a state appellate court that said juveniles can appeal their convictions to an adult court system and have the case decided by a jury. The appellate court first issued the ruling in 1970. A year later, however, the U.S. Supreme Court opined that the U.S. Constitution did not guarantee a jury trial for appealing juveniles. Despite that decision, Tennessee's courts continued to uphold a juvenile's right to a jury trial. (Unable to locate complete story at time of archiving. Source: www.tennessean.com Date: September 28, 2006)

Supporters rally for teen who killed grandparents: A woman who says Christopher Pittman changed her life held a vigil on the steps of the South Carolina Supreme Court on Wednesday night, the eve of the teen's appeal of his murder conviction for killing his grandparents when he was 12 years old. "We're going to show support to Chris, and his family and the attorneys," said Janet Sisk, director of the North Carolina-based Juvenile Justice Foundation. "It's kinda like it's coming full circle." Pittman was convicted last year of murder in the 2001 shooting deaths of his grandparents in their Chester County home and sentenced to 30 years in prison. Defense attorneys argued that Pittman, who was 12 at the time of the slayings, was involuntarily intoxicated by the antidepressant Zoloft and did not know right from wrong. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.thestate.com Date: April 9, 2007)

School Says Police, Social Services Will Snatch Kids Of Late Parents Indiana junior high threatens prison custody if child not picked up on time from mandatory homework class: A junior high school in Indiana threatens parents with police and child protective service involvement if they fail to pick up their child on time after mandatory Friday classes for missed homework. Outraged parents forwarded us a letter from the Tell City Junior High School in Indiana in which they were given a days notice that their child had to attend a Friday class to catch up on missed homework. The letter stated in bold that if a parent didn't arrive at the agreed time to pick up their child, "arrangements have been made with the Tell City Police Department to have them housed at the police station." The letter then states that intervention by the police will also necessitate involvement of the Perry County Office of Family and Children. For complete story, [click here](#).

New claims of abuse at boys camp: GREENVILLE - Three separate state agencies are investigating whether caretakers used banned, excessive and harmful restraints at a camp for delinquent boys, some of whom are mentally retarded or have other special needs. At least one youth might have suffered a broken collarbone at the Greenville Hills Academy in Greenville just last week, according to records obtained by The Miami Herald. One 16-year-old claimed he was "choked." And in another episode, guards also reported using a technique called a wrist lock that was banned two years ago by Anthony Schembri, secretary

of the state Department of Juvenile Justice, an agency still reeling from the death of a 14-year-old at another Panhandle facility earlier this year. For complete story, [click here](#).

Parents of child-sex suspect ran youth home: TORONTO -- Michael Stratton knew how to identify with troubled kids -- he'd spent a lot of time around them. The Globe and Mail has learned that the man now facing almost 300 charges in connection with alleged sexual abuse of children spent several months living in a home for troubled children in Richmond Hill. Mr. Stratton, in his early 20s at the time, wasn't there because he was sent by an aid agency or because he was employed there, but because his parents ran the home and he needed a place to stay. Police now fear the 39-year-old may have learned how to build trust with troubled children from his time at the home in the 1980s. His mother and stepfather, who ran the Richmond Hill home for 14 years until 2000, were described by those who knew them as exemplary foster parents to children over the years. And those who met Mr. Stratton during his time at the home had no suspicions he may have been involved in anything criminal. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.theglobeandmail.com Date: October 26, 2006)

Teen referred to ex-officer as his girlfriend: The former Elkhorn boot camp officer accused of having a relationship with a teenage cadet had a reputation for being intimate with cadets at the juvenile facility, the boy told police in reports issued Tuesday. Adriana Rivera pleaded no contest in August to a felony charge of accessory after the fact and a misdemeanor charge of obstructing police. She was sentenced to three years of probation and four months in a work-furlough program. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.fresnobee.com Date: November 1, 2006)

Teen Accused In Counselor's Death Finishes Testing: SALT LAKE CITY A teen accused in the rape and slaying of a youth counselor has completed his psychological testing. However, 17-year-old Robert Cameron Houston's lawyer says he needs two more weeks to work out a trial schedule with prosecutors. Houston is charged with capital murder in connection with the February killing of 22-year-old Raechale Elton. She worked for an agency that housed and counseled troubled teens. The teen also faces rape and aggravated sexual assault. His next court appearance is set for November 14th. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.kutv.com Date: November, 2006)

Foster parent pleads guilty to sex assault: Kenneth Charles "Ken!" Puhler, a Durango resident who trained adults who worked with troubled teens and took in at least 130 foster children, has pleaded guilty to sexual assault on a child in a position of trust. Puhler, 50, formerly sheriff of Dolores County, pleaded guilty to one of 10 counts and was sentenced Nov. 1 to 10 years to life in prison, according to court documents. If he is released, he will be placed on parole for 20 years to life. As part of the plea agreement, District Attorney Craig Westberg dropped the other nine counts, which alleged abuse of children younger than 15 as far back as 1993. In return, Puhler stipulated that he sexually abused a 14-year-old boy who was in his care as a foster child in February 2004, and that "there were various times, both previous and subsequent to this event, when the defendant had sexual contact" with the boy. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: <http://durangoherald.com> Date: November 7, 2006)

Sexual exploitation trial begins for ex-youth worker: A lawyer defending a former Batshaw youth worker charged with abusing his authority by having sex with troubled teens tried Wednesday to stop the media from publishing details of the trial, including her client's name. But Quebec Court Judge Gilles Cadieux rejected the request, saying the argument that publication could damage Evon Smith's future career prospects could apply to anyone accused of a crime. Smith faces charges of sexual exploitation, sexual interference and invitation to sexual touching involving two teens from a Batshaw group home. For complete story, [click here](#).

Just Listen: ... "You know," Elaine Roberts told Denton, "as parents we're so used to staying positive. Instead stop and say, 'What do you mean by that?' How does that make you feel?" They might not answer you because teens are very private. But just maybe they will." In the flash of that remark, I saw my own shortcomings. I realized how guilty I have been at times of not really listening to people -- my children in particular -- but instead of simply jumping in with proposed solutions to their problems, or stock reassurances. In this, I know, I am not alone: Roberts is right -- parents want to stay positive and want to fix things. But there's a lot to be said for simply listening, asking gently probing questions, and listening some more. Unfortunately, many of us are not very good at it. And as a rule, we seem to be getting worse with each passing year. I'm not just talking about listening to troubled teens or depressed friends. I'm talking about our capacity to listen in all spheres of life... (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.portfolioweekly.com Date: November, 2006)

Guidance counselor charged with molesting teen: A guidance counselor who, investigators say, molested a 16-year-old girl at a Hollywood center for troubled teens is now facing jail time. Felman Reddick, 41, abused the girl at the Starting Point, the non-profit agency where he worked at the time, said Capt. Tony Rode, a Hollywood police spokesman. The center provides rehabilitation and counseling services for local youth. Reddick is charged with six counts of unlawful sexual acts with a minor, Rode said. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.miami.com Date: 2006)

Eight Charged With Manslaughter In Florida Boot Camp Death: PANAMA CITY, FLA---Seven former guards at a now closed Bay County juvenile boot camp and a nurse have been charged with aggravated manslaughter in the death of Martin Lee Anderson, the teenager who died in January while in custody at the camp. For complete story, [click here](#).

Ivy Ridge Academy accreditation rejected: The Academy at Ivy Ridge will not be allowed to resume issuing high school diplomas. The State Education Department has rejected the Academy's application, according to stories Friday in St. Lawrence County newspapers and The Watertown Times. A letter from the State Education Department to Ivy Ridge quoted in the Watertown Times says, "The Department's review revealed that AIR is principally a behavior modification program and not a school..." For complete story, [click here](#).

Second suit hits juvenile facility: As one major lawsuit against the Sacramento County juvenile hall nears an end, with millions of dollars promised to teens who were strip-searched, another suit is gaining momentum that claims a culture of abuse and neglect prevails at the hall. Together, the suits highlight a history of problems at the crowded, understaffed and aging facility on Kiefer Boulevard, say the civil rights lawyers who filed the complaints. So far, nearly one-third of the 8,000 juveniles who were strip-searched have applied for payments under a \$6.28 million court settlement, a response rate that Sacramento attorney Mark Merin, who filed the suit, said is unusually high. The deadline for applying is Jan. 8. Search practices have been changed, but Merin said serious problems persist at juvenile hall. "They're overwhelmed, and they don't have a good, productive method of dealing with the kids who are incarcerated," Merin said. "Instead they're just sort of warehousing them, and it doesn't lead to positive results." (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.sacbee.com Date: Uncertain--Likely Late 2006)

Woman kidnapped teenager by seducing him, prosecutor says: NASHUA, New Hampshire: A woman who ran off to Florida with her teenage lover entrapped the 16-year-old with sex, a prosecutor said as her trial on kidnapping charges opened Tuesday. A national search for the couple ended in June when a worker at a bus depot saw them "making out." "This case is about a 32-year-old woman enticing, befriending and seducing a 16-year-old boy," Assistant Hillsborough County Attorney Justin Shepherd said. Jennifer Malone is charged with kidnapping Christopher Cole, whom she met while working as a teacher's assistant at a residential school for troubled teens. For complete story, [click here](#).

The Trouble with Troubled Teen Programs--How the "boot camp" industry tortures and kills kids: ...Every time a child dies in a tough love program, politicians say—as Florida Gov. Jeb Bush initially did on hearing of Anderson's death—that it is "one tragic incident" that should not be used to justify shutting such programs down. But there have now been nearly three dozen such deaths and thousands of reports of severe abuse in programs that use corporal punishment, brutal emotional attacks, isolation, and physical restraint in an attempt to reform troubled teenagers. Tough love has become a billion-dollar industry. Several hundred programs, both public and private, use the approach. Somewhere between 10,000 and 100,000 teenagers are currently held in treatment programs based on the belief that adolescents must be broken (mentally, and often physically as well) before they can be fixed. Exact numbers are impossible to determine, because no one keeps track of the kids in these programs, most of which are privately run. The typical way to end up in a government-run program, such as the camp where Martin Lee Anderson was killed, is for a court to give you the option of going there instead of prison. The typical way to end up in a private program is to be sent there by your parents, though judges and public schools have been known to send kids to private boot camps as well. Since they offer "treatment," some of the private centers are covered by health insurance. For complete story, [click here](#).

Police ponder arrests of teens: ..."That's why it's important for parents to listen to their children. Be involved with them. Watch them. Watch their friends. Be respected as a parent. Give them a deadline, and make them stick to it." About 21 percent of the more than 2 million juvenile arrests in 2003 were for burglary or larceny-theft, according to the 2006 National Report of Juvenile Offenders and Victims, published by the U.S. Department of Justice. The study defines juveniles as ages 10 through 17. Smith said troubled teens could benefit from parental attention... (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.myrtlebeachonline.com Date: January 8th, 2007)

Troubled times at youth facility: The Berkshire Farm residential center for troubled teens is under investigation by the attorney general's office as former staffers and at least one former resident claim the institution continues to be plagued by sporadic violence and, some say, poor supervision of the residents there. Among the problems: One youngster's parents went days before they were told he had tried to commit suicide. In another instance, a grandmother didn't learn for months that her grandson had run away from the facility. "I was worried sick. I thought maybe he was dead," said Elaine Fiske. Located in rural Canaan, Columbia County, Berkshire Farm has long been known as a progressive facility for young men aged 12 to 17 who have been sent there by family courts across the state. The farm includes residential and educational programs. Some of the clients are juvenile delinquents; some suffer emotional disturbances or were chronically truant. Others may come from unstable families. Approximately 150 youngsters live there, although there have been as many as 250. The farm made headlines in 2005 when the board of directors said it had hired a former federal prosecutor, Zachary Carter, to investigate allegations of drug dealing and sexual abuse at the center. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: <http://timesunion.com> Date: January 21, 2007)

Pregnant Girls Attack Group Home Director. Escape: Three pregnant teens living in a group home in [Utah](#) whacked the director in the head with a frying pan, tied her up and fled in a minivan, police said. According to a report by CBS affiliate KUTV-TV in [Salt Lake City](#), the girls, two 15-year-olds and a 16-year-old, are from California, [Texas](#) and Illinois. Police believe they left the state after restraining the director with power cords Tuesday and tying up another pregnant teen. The director "was able to break free and then she went up and untied the 17-year-old female and then they contacted the police," [American Fork](#) police Sgt. Shauna Greening said. New Hope, a privately owned maternity home in [Utah County](#), is a place for struggling pregnant teens, 30 miles south of Salt Lake City. Girls attend school in the area and are taught prenatal care, child birth, adoption and parenting skills. A call to a phone number listed for New Hope went unanswered Thursday. But the owner, Spencer Moody, tearfully told a Salt Lake City TV station that he would close the rural home. He said about two dozen girls had given birth after living at New Hope. (Webmaster Note: Rumor has it that the directors of New Hope are affiliated with WWASP. WWASP is notorious for torturing children. No wonder these girls felt desperate to escape.) (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.topix.net Date: January 19th, 2007)

The REAL School?: Brian was so doped up on something that he could not keep his head up. He slumped over the desktop. The bottom line was that he had taken too many Valium before coming to the REAL School. "REAL" equals "Regional Educational Alternative Learning" and the building is located in South Windham, ME. That's where I tried to teach. The school's director phoned Brian's mother at her work. That meant she had to take time off, drive to the school, and somehow get her son to slosh himself into her car for a ride home. Was this the first time she had been called at her work about her son? No. Of course if Brian had been in his clear head, I had no teaching materials by which to see through another day at this alternative learning school. It was alternative learning all right. It was so alternative that it fell off the charts. As teaching staff, we had a shared stapler, some chalk, erasers, no textbooks, no teachers' manuals, no supportive supplies, a meager stash of lined paper, pencils and pens. There were a few cast off computers that tried to work. No wonder the Superintendent of Schools praised the director for being the most outstanding alternative learning head in the state. That was even printed in the local newspaper. After all, he kept below budget. There was rarely a visit from anyone close to the Superintendent's office. We basically were left to warehouse these troubled teens on our own. If one of the bureaucrats came into the school, it was a swift in and out. I would see the car drive up to the building, a well-dressed individual disembark, and then climb the stumps for stairs. (The school was a very old brick building buried in a residential neighborhood). Then that educator would click heels down the hallway, disappear into the director's office, and in short order reappear for exiting. When I was hired at that school, I actually felt that I could make a difference in teen lives. So I gave it my all. It takes some time for naivete to strip away until there is nothing left but bald, needling facts. With that, I trudged on. Because there were no teaching supplies, I went to the shopping mall where homeschoolers bought their materials. I purchased the paperback math, English and spelling texts. Then I duplicated the pages on the school's copy machine to use as handouts to pupils. That's how I managed to get through lessons. When I presented the receipt for the purchases to the director's secretary, she looked up with a scowl to ask if I really needed to spend that much. The amount was less than fifteen dollars. The director was an Australian. He sported quite the charming accent as well as packaged his own brand of vulgarity. Somehow his potty mouth did not seem to turn off the Superintendent's office. With such charisma, he managed to hoodwink the officialdom, slip far below budget, and thereby hoist the teaching burden sans materials onto frazzled teachers. When I asked him one day how I could teach with nothing to teach with, director responded by saying that that was what made the alternative learning school so marvelously different from other schools. We were left with our own unique creative skills, our sparkly imaginations by which we could manufacture our own curricula. So it was that teachers daily bent their brain cells in attempts to create something from nothing. Most of the time it did not work. That's why the police cruisers drove up to the school several times a week. When desks flew across rooms, doors were punched through and teachers were told to go to hell, there were occasions when the cops had to be called in. Yet this was the REAL School. There was no other school quite like it. We were the example for other schools to follow. The director reminded us that we were a model showcase. That's when I drove out to Pineland estates to investigate their Collaborate School, another term for alternative learning. The director took me on a tour. There I noted rooms laden with supplies, teachers smiling as they went about their daily routines, nary a sound from the students, and well-lighted rooms, carpeted floors and a staff kitchen. The student population was composed of the same troubled sorts as those enrolled at the REAL School. We had a kitchen at the REAL School. The problem was that its sink was crudded over with mold. Dirty trays lined the counter tops. Pots and pans were left to clean themselves. Fill in the blanks. After three-plus years on the job, I appealed to the teachers' union. I was told that my union representative would go to bat for me. In short, she did nothing of the sort. Nothing but stall. I provided her with copious detail as to what was actually going on at the school. She rarely responded to my appeals. Keeping hope alive, I believed that when it came down to the final push, she would be there to hold me up. Not. As finally the message was coming through loudly and clearly that I was standing alone in the middle of a dark warehouse for messed up adolescents, I prepared my voluminous copy for the governor's desk. Then I mailed it to his office, telling no one. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.theconservativevoice.com Date: January, 2007)

Staff Thought Teen Was Faking In Prep School Death: WJZ/AP) KEYMAR, Md. Staff at a private residential school for juvenile offenders where a 17-year-old Baltimore youth lost consciousness and died after being restrained, initially believed he was pretending to be asleep, according to the school's report to the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services. As WJZ's Mike Hellgren reports, Isaiah Simmons was pronounced dead at Carroll Hospital Center last week after staff at Bowling Brook Preparatory School, about 40 miles northwest of Baltimore, placed him in prolonged physical restraint confrontation with staff. The death is being investigated by the Carroll County's sheriff's department amid allegations from some witnesses that staff restrained Simmons inappropriately. (Webmaster Note: Just one of hundreds of deaths in this industry. When will the excuse "we thought he was faking" be revealed for what it is? A rationalization for killing.) (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: <http://wjz.com> Date: January 23, 2007)

Youth restraint challenged: The head of a Maryland association of juvenile programs said yesterday it would be "indefensible" for staff to sit on a struggling youth for three hours to restrain him - something at least four youths have told their lawyers happened last week in the death of a teenage boy at Bowling Brook Preparatory School. But Jim McComb, executive director of the Maryland Association of Resources for Family and Youth, said it isn't clear that such behavior by staff at Bowling Brook - a private residential program for juvenile offenders - would have violated state law. "We have regulations that prescribe what is doable and not doable in every private and public school, and in treatment centers for children with mental and emotional problems. But we don't have anything comparable for children's residential programs," McComb said. The death of Isaiah Simmons, 17, after being restrained by staff at Bowling Brook has raised questions about state law governing privately run facilities, the training required of their staff and the way the state monitors and regulates such programs. The Carroll County Sheriff's Office is investigating the death. For complete story, [click here](#).

Sex Allegations Prompt Methodist Youth Home to Move Teens: VERSAILLES, Ky. (AP) - Officials said a central Kentucky church-affiliated home for troubled youth has moved more than 30 teenagers to other facilities after accusations that a worker had sex with a girl in the home's care. The Rev. Alex

Carmichel said the incident between a male employee and the teenage girl led to the firing of that employee as well as another employee who did not immediately report "indicators" that something had happened. Carmichel is the president of the Kentucky United Methodist Homes for Children & Youth in Versailles. Janis Stewart, spokesman for the state Cabinet for Health and Family Services, confirmed that the state Inspector General is investigating the home. For complete story, [click here](#).

Troubled indeed: In his State of the State speech, Gov. Martin O'Malley reserved just two words for Maryland's juvenile justice system - "deeply troubled" - and the governor isn't usually a man of few words. The juvenile offenders in state custody deserve more than a mention, especially after the questionable death Jan. 23 of a 17-year-old boy at the private facility in which the state had placed him. The state's juvenile services system isn't only deeply troubled, it's dysfunctional, understaffed, overwhelmed, inefficient, poorly funded, ill-equipped and, most alarming, impervious to change. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.baltimoresun.com February 4, 2004)

Davenport boot camp scrutinized for resident treatment: DAVENPORT, Iowa (AP) -- A boot camp for delinquent boys is under scrutiny after a state investigation showed its juveniles often went hungry, were subjected to corporal punishment and were sometimes denied timely access to the bathroom. SUMMIT's troubles come five years after former director John Bolsinger was charged with molesting teenage boys under his watch. He was convicted and is serving a prison sentence scheduled to end in 2012. The camp's latest problems were documented in a state report based on interviews and an onsite inspection last month. For complete story, [click here](#).

Chinese clinic treats teen internet addicts with hypnosis, shock therapy: According to the Post, one clinic in the Beijing suburb of Daxing keeps some of its 12 to 17-year-old patients locked in rooms with barred windows for most of the day, treating them with a combination of counseling, medication, and military-style discipline. While some residents clearly have no need for such a facility -- one young man who only surfed four to five hours a week said he came to Daxing to "get away from my parents" -- there do seem to be more [hardcore cases](#) of lonely individuals spending all their free time online at the expense of their careers and social lives. At the Daxing clinic, these troubled teens whose "souls are gone to the online world" are housed together on the third floor of the building, where they are subjected to hypnosis and even mild shock therapy in an attempt to rid them of their love of surfing. It's not really clear from the article what the success rate is for veterans of the clinic, but we imagine many of them find the conditions so distasteful that they swear off technology altogether simply for fear of being sent back. (Webmaster Note: It's happening in the U.S. too! Manchurian Candidate, try Manchurian World!) For complete story, [click here](#).

Committee looks into sex abuse claims at youth prison: AUSTIN — Allegations that troubled youths at a West Texas juvenile prison were sexually preyed on by staff members despite repeated warnings to supervisors are "the tip of the iceberg" in a system where "wrongdoing is becoming the norm," a state senator said Monday. Sen. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa, D-McAllen, said his office has received 90 allegations of Texas Youth Commission staff members sexually assaulting juvenile offenders since 2000, with only a few instances of disciplinary action taken. "This is a problem all over the state," said Hinojosa, vice chairman of the Senate Criminal Justice Committee, which today will hear testimony on the sex abuse allegations in the state-run facilities. For complete story, [click here](#).

Three Teens Arrested for Rape at School for Troubled Kids: MOUNT PLEASANT, N.Y. (AP) -- Staffers at a school for the emotionally disturbed conducted their own investigation of a 13-year-old girl's rape and even tried to collect evidence before reporting the attack, a police chief said Tuesday. "I'm not certain it's criminal but it's certainly not advisable," said Mount Pleasant police Chief Louis Alagno. "They should be calling, notifying the police and calling in the professionals." He said the school delayed calling police for nearly four hours after the Monday night attack at the Hawthorne-Cedar Knolls School in Hawthorne, about 25 miles north of New York City. Three teenage boys were arrested and charged as adults. For complete story, [click here](#).

O'Malley criticizes juvenile officials: Gov. Martin O'Malley sharply criticized juvenile authorities yesterday for failing to respond to a school nurse's formal complaint last year about mistreatment of youths at the Bowling Brook Preparatory School, where a Baltimore teenager later died. "It's just unacceptable that a health professional would notify authorities there were problems and they didn't follow up," O'Malley said. The Sun reported yesterday that Bowling Brook's nurse notified the state Department of Juvenile Services in August that a youth had been badly bruised and scraped while being restrained by staff members. Five months later, 17-year-old Isaiah Simmons of East Baltimore died after being similarly restrained at the privately run residential program for juvenile offenders. Bowling Brook officials responded to the publication of nurse Janis Miller's complaint by imposing a gag order on the school's employees, threatening to fire any who speak to the press. Nancy Forster, the state's chief public defender, urged Bowling Brook employees to speak candidly to police and investigators, even if workers choose to abide by the gag order. "Whether or not employees of Bowling Brook speak to the press is inconsequential," Forster said. "What is important is that those employees feel free to ... cooperate fully with those investigating Isaiah's death and the reported mistreatment of other children there." For complete story, [click here](#).

Claims about 'orphans' key in shady adoptions: ...Federal authorities say the FOC scam involved more than 80 children - eight to 10 of whom were placed in Utah - and began no later than March 2002 and operated until June 2005. The birth parents believed the youngsters were being temporarily placed in U.S. homes and would return when they reached adulthood, according to the indictment. Instead, FOC placed the children permanently with U.S. parents, the indictment says. Facing federal charges are Scott and Karen Banks, of Wellsville; Dan Wakefield, of Utah; Tagaloa Ieti, of Samoa; Julie Tuiletufuga, of Samoa; Coleen Bartlett of Evanston, Wyo.; and Karalee Thornock, of Tooele. The defendants are charged with conspiracy, immigration violations - including visa fraud - and money laundering. The maximum prison terms for the offenses range from five years to 20 years. Wakefield, who for years lived in Samoa, will have an initial appearance Monday at 9:30 a.m. in U.S. Magistrate Judge Sam Alba's courtroom. FOC charged adoption fees of \$13,000 for one child and \$20,000 for two. In addition, adoptive parents had to pay other expenses, including the cost of traveling to New Zealand to file immigration forms at the U.S. consulate there. The agency reportedly persuaded Samoan parents to turn over their children to FOC, offering money, food and other "humanitarian assistance" and promises the children would be educated abroad and later returned home. The agency also allegedly claimed to be affiliated with the U.S. government or The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the indictment said. At least one of those charged has ties to another troubled venture. Wakefield was a partner in New Hope Academy, a residential treatment facility set up in Apia, Samoa, in mid-1998. It closed just months later, stranding five teens. Wakefield blamed the failure of New Hope Academy on a consultant it hired, Steve Cartisano, who left Utah after a teen died in a wilderness therapy program he founded. The indictment alleges Wakefield lied to Samoans and adoptive parents about the circumstances surrounding the adoptions, the conditions in which the children lived and why their birth parents would relinquish them. Allegedly, he and other recruiters also actively solicited and pressured Samoan parents to give their children up for adoption. (Unable to locate complete story at time of archiving. Source: www.sltrib.com Date: March 3, 2007)

Police investigate claims of sexual abuse at 22 Texas youth prisons: AUSTIN, Texas — Police were sent to 22 Texas Youth Commission facilities and the agency headquarters Tuesday to investigate claims that young inmates were sexually abused and that agency officials covered it up. Jay Kimbrough, appointed by the governor to look into the allegations at a West Texas youth prison, said the officers would conduct interviews at the prisons and halfway houses, secure equipment and collect documents if necessary. He also issued a warning to agency employees. "If you are part of this gig, you need to move on or we're going to find you and prosecute you," Kimbrough said. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.usatoday.com Date: March 6, 2007)

ACLU lawsuits seek release of kids from immigrant detention center: The American Civil Liberties Union said today that it has filed lawsuits on behalf of 10 immigrant children, challenging their detention at the T. Don Hutto Family Residential Facility, an immigrant detention center in Taylor. The lawsuits filed in federal district court in Austin charge that the children are being held under inhumane and prison-like conditions while their parents await immigration decisions. They name U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff and five officials with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. "There is simply no justification for imprisoning innocent children who pose no threat to anyone," Vanita Gupta, ACLU lawyer, said at a press conference in Austin. "This is an affront to our core values as a nation. We need practical, realistic immigration policy, not draconian methods that are harming vulnerable kids." (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.statesman.com Date: March 7, 2007)

High-powered therapy targets troubled teens, families: ...Unlike detention centers, boot camps or some other youth programs, multi-systemic therapy doesn't isolate the teens. Rather, it deals with them in their own environment. Therapists visit the juvenile's family, relatives, neighborhood and school several times a

week, keeping the youths away from undesirable peers and making sure they stay in school. The therapists also help the parents set rules. It's a tough job that puts them on call 24 hours a day. Sometimes they respond in the middle of the night, often in unsafe neighborhoods. In about 60 percent of cases, officials say, a single parent is raising several children while overburdened with two or three jobs, leaving little time or energy to deal with a difficult teen. "A lot of these children do not have good relationships with their parents," said Linda Baker, who supervises the four therapists in the Bergen County programs... (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.northjersey.com Date: March 14, 2007)

Area teen learns tough lesson through door-to-door sales: Pope spent six months in an industry under growing scrutiny for allegations that its young sales people are encouraged to spin stories to meet quotas and are either induced or coerced to stay on the job by easy access to drugs, limited access to their paychecks and mental and even physical abuse from managers. Earlene Williams, whose organization Parent Watch Inc. filed a racketeering lawsuit against the door-to-door magazine sales industry in 1982, says she has been trying for 25 years to get Congress to end the industry's exemption from labor practices laws. For complete story, [click here](#).

Ex-employees question safety for troubled teens at rehab facility: PHOENIX A lockdown rehabilitation facility for troubled teens in north Chandler is under fire from former employees who claim the place is plagued by violence, poor management and lax care. Several say they are in talks with child advocates at the Arizona Center for Disability Law and are seeking legal action against the facility. Also named is the facility's operator, Austin, Texas-based Youth and Family Centered Services. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: <http://kvoa.com> Date: March 17, 2007)

Ivy Ridge students run away: Police went door to door, even buggy to buggy, looking for the missing boys. "If you see them, let someone know," a trooper said. Early Monday morning, four students ran free from the Academy at Ivy Ridge, a school for troubled teens. Tom Nichols, Academy at Ivy Ridge Spokesperson, said, "These individuals forced their way out of the building and the dorm parents tried to stop them and there were just a few individuals who managed to get outside the building." (Webmaster Note: Run boys run!) (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: <http://news10now.com> Date: March 19, 2007)

Abuse trial ends deadlocked: A Charlottesville jury deadlocked Monday on the question of whether a former mental health specialist at Whisper Ridge sexually abused two girls receiving treatment at the facility for troubled teens. After three and a half hours of deliberation, the 10-woman, two-man panel revealed it was hopelessly deadlocked in the case of Bryan Antwann Vaughan, one of five former Whisper Ridge employees charged with misconduct. Vaughan, 32, faces 10 years in prison if he's convicted on two counts of custodial sex abuse in December 2005 and January 2006. Prosecutors will seek to try Vaughan again for the charges, according to Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Elizabeth Killeen. Vaughan's was the first of five cases stemming from allegations of abuse at Whisper Ridge, a facility that had previously changed names but remains plagued by allegations of misconduct in recent years. Formerly known as the Brown Schools, Whisper Ridge is a 60-bed facility on Arlington Boulevard that provides psychiatric care for 13- to 17-year-olds suffering from mental health or drug abuse problems. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.dailyprogress.com Date: March, 2007)

Teen terror? British society confronts its fear of the young: ...The government has its own lexicon for dealing with troubled teens, from NEETS - young people "not in employment, education or training" - to ASBOs, or "anti-social behavior orders," used to control the wayward... With such an attitude, children's advocates say, it's no surprise Britain placed last in a recent UNICEF survey of children's well-being in 21 developed countries. A British think tank has a catchy term for it: pedophobia. "There has always been a culture in Britain that's a bit anti- children," said Julia Margo, one of the authors of a report on British youth for the Institute for Public Policy Research, a center-left think tank. "In the newspaper letters pages, you see constant debates about noisy children on trains." "There are (also) a great number of children on the streets without anything to do," she said. "This is what's contributing to pedophobia." The institute's research found that British adults, more than those in other European countries, view teenagers as a menace. Britons were much less likely to intervene than those in other countries if they saw teens vandalizing a bus shelter - 34 percent said they would try to stop it, compared with 65 percent of Germans and 52 percent of Spaniards. Surprisingly, many kids share that view. It turns out that they're afraid of each other. The group of hoodie-wearing skateboarders honing their skills on the concrete steps and sidewalks of London's financial district may appear just the type to annoy their elders... The UNICEF report, released in February, said Britain's young people were the unhappiest in the developed world. While Britain sat in the middle of the table for health and safety, it came second from bottom - just above the United States - for child poverty, and last in "family and peer relationships," which measured indicators such as single-parent families and time spent with friends and family. In the UNICEF study, only 40 percent of British respondents said they found their peers "kind and helpful," compared with more than 80 percent in Switzerland. British youth scored on top for risky behavior such as drinking, drug use and sex. Almost a third of 11- to 15-year-olds reported having been drunk twice or more, the highest level of any country surveyed. The report claimed a country's wealth was not a sufficient guarantee of happy children, saying there is "no strong or consistent relationship between per capita GDP and child well-being." Britain's poor performance may be one of the downsides of the country's embrace of American-style free-market competition - a move that has unleashed enormous economic energy since the 1980s, but widened inequalities and left many without a safety net. The countries that scored highest - the Netherlands and the Nordic countries of Sweden, Denmark and Finland - displayed relatively low poverty rates with supportive networks of family and friends and low levels of risky behavior by teens. (Webmaster Note: So, basically, a sick over-capitalistic society that puts profit over people creates unhappy, unhealthy, and therefore "troubled" children and families. Let's keep that in mind and stop the "pedophobia" and scapegoating of society's ills onto those most powerless to change things, our children. See "Reclaiming Our Children" by Dr. Peter Breggin for solutions.) (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.azcentral.com Date: March 20, 2007)

ADHD drug use for youth obesity raises ethical questions: ...Several pediatricians contacted by CNN say they suspect other pediatricians are prescribing ADHD medications off label for weight loss. "No one admits it," says Dr. John Lantos, professor of pediatrics at the University of Chicago. "It's morally and medically questionable, so I don't think anyone's proud of doing this." The Food and Drug Administration warns that some patients on ADHD drugs with pre-existing heart problems have suffered sudden death. The agency also warns that some on Adderall develop psychiatric problems, such as hearing voices and becoming manic. Pediatricians like Lantos say it's wrong to prescribe Adderall for weight loss when risks are known and the benefits are questionable. The drug has never been studied for weight loss, so they suggest that Ziai's success stories may be anecdotal. "Doctors who prescribe this could end up killing kids by giving them a medication that doesn't work for the reason they're prescribing," Lantos says. (Webmaster Note: Parents and pediatricians put kids on amphetamines as "treatment" for quack diseases of ADD/ADHD (see www.ablechild.org), yet, punish their children for using amphetamines recreationally... Hmmmm... Hypocrisy? Are parents and doctors creating lifelong addictions through pharmaceuticals as opposed to environmental/social/psychological/nutritional solutions? Let's stop introducing kids to addictive substances and creating confusion... Okay?) For complete story, [click here](#).

Girl's Overdose Death Raises Questions: HULL, Mass. (AP) - In the final months of Rebecca Riley's life, a school nurse said the little girl was so weak she was like a "floppy doll." The preschool principal had to help Rebecca off the bus because the 4-year-old was shaking so badly. And a pharmacist complained that Rebecca's mother kept coming up with excuses for why her daughter needed more and more medication. None of their concerns was enough to save Rebecca. Rebecca - who had been diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity and bipolar disorder, or what used to be called manic depression - died Dec. 13 of an overdose of prescribed drugs, and her parents have been arrested on murder charges, accused of intentionally overmedicating their daughter to keep her quiet and out of their hair. (Webmaster Note: See www.ablechild.org for alternatives and opposition to ADD/ADHD/ODD diagnoses and medications.) For complete story, [click here](#).

TYC Abuse Scandal Continues To Unravel: The Texas Youth Commission abuse scandal could have been going on for years in secrecy. Dr. Ben Raimor heads UTMB's program to provide medical care to kids in the TYC and brought attention to unusual fractures in TYC inmates three years ago. "We saw a trend and were told corrective action was being taken." The UTMB's findings have been published in a medical journal and turned over to the Inspector General investigating the case. The first top official to be arrested is Jerome Parsee, Superintendent of the intake facility in Marlin. He is accused of lying to a Texas Ranger about activity in his facility. There are more than 1000 active investigations underway into abuses of TYC kids by prison guards, including over 200 cases of sexual abuse. For complete story, [click here](#).

[The great ADHD myth:](#) The psychiatrist who identified attention deficit disorder - the condition blamed for the bad behaviour of hundreds of thousands of children - has admitted that many may not really be ill. Dr Robert Spitzer said that up to 30 per cent of youngsters classified as suffering from disruptive and hyperactive conditions could have been misdiagnosed. They may simply be showing perfectly normal signs of being happy or sad, he said. 'Many of these conditions might be normal reactions which are not really disorders,' he continued. Dr Spitzer developed the bible of mental disorder classification in the 1970s and 1980s, which identified dozens of new conditions including ADD and obsessive-compulsive disorder. Since then hundreds of thousands of children have been diagnosed with ADD, a behavioural disorder linked to poor attention span, and ADHD, which adds an element of hyperactivity. The disorders describe disruptive and restless behaviour that results in children having difficulty focusing their attention on specific tasks. ADHD is most commonly noticed at the age of five, and as many as one in 30 British children is said to have it. It is often treated with drugs, with Ritalin being the most commonly prescribed. Some scientists say ADHD is a genetic disorder that does not disappear with adulthood. But sceptics believe the diagnosis is a 'biobabble' label, which has evolved from a soundbite culture that is too prepared to medicalise anti-social human traits. Dr Spitzer, professor of psychiatry at Columbia University in New York, now says the classification led to many people being diagnosed as medically disordered when their mood swings and behaviour were simply normal feelings of happiness and sadness. For complete story, [click here.](#)

[Every child to be screened for risk of turning criminal under Blair justice plan:](#) A new-style "11-plus" to assess the risk every child in Britain runs of turning to crime was among a battery of proposals unveiled in Tony Blair's crime plan yesterday. The children of prisoners, problem drug users and others at high risk of offending will also face being "actively managed" by social services and youth justice workers.* New technologies are to be used to boost police detection rates while DNA samples are to be taken from any crime suspect who comes into contact with the police. The "early intervention" approach is part of a package of proposals on security, crime and justice produced by Downing Street which underline the scale of criminal justice reform Mr Blair believes is still needed despite passing 53 law and order bills since he came to power in 1997. The shadow home secretary, David Davis, focused his criticism on the extension of the DNA database to any crime suspect and the early intervention plans for children. He described the proposal to assess every child for risk of offending as the "nanny state gone mad" while he said the Conservatives would have "great and grave concerns" about any extension of the DNA database. For complete story, [click here.](#)

[At Some Youth 'Treatment' Facilities, 'Tough Love' Takes Brutal Forms:](#) If this was therapy, it sure didn't feel like it. From September to January, Claire Kent spent her days digging up tree stumps from a barren field, her mind and body battered by the elements. The work was part of her "treatment" for the drinking and sex that had landed her at a boarding school for "troubled teens." In the Montana woods, Kent and a couple dozen other adolescent girls had been committed by their families to a disciplinary program that included chopping wood, exercising to the point of physical breakdown, and being regularly bullied and insulted by "counselors" all in the name of what the private treatment industry calls "emotional growth." "It was just based on, 'How badly can I scare you?'," said Kent, now in her late twenties and still suffering from anxiety that she attributes to her experience. During her two-year stay, she said, "they gave me the reality that life was just completely unfair and was going to keep being that way." The facility where Kent was held, the Mission Mountain School, is still in business today. Though staff declined repeated requests for comment, the recent explosion of hundreds of other so-called "private residential treatment facilities" speaks to the growing popularity of the "tough love" approach to "reforming" youth. Behavioral health experts estimate that the industry deals with roughly 10,000 to 14,000 children and teens, charging typical tuition rates of tens of thousands of dollars per year. The patrons are anxious parents hoping for a solution to issues ranging from attention deficit disorder to drug abuse. Worth approximately \$1 billion, emotional growth programs thrive on the promise of turning "bad" kids "good." ALSO see: [Behavior Modification Money Trail:](#) Government connections enable "teen help" industry to thwart regulation...Growing alongside the teen "help" industry is the political and legal backlash against tactics that some view as cruel and bizarre. In recent years, several facilities have closed following abuse investigations. Activists are also promoting the End Institutionalized Abuse Against Children Act, which would fund state and local monitoring of treatment facilities, along with the Keeping Families Together Act, which would enhance access to community-based behavioral healthcare. Yet youth advocates and former program participants caution that legislative action would merely dent the complex culture surrounding institutions that aim to "fix" youth...Advocates calling for tighter regulation of residential facilities say that some programs bank on desperation and lure parents with deceptive advertising. Critics of the industry say consultants and recruiters market programs to families by rapidly "diagnosing" serious emotional problems in children and sometimes offering help in securing a fast tuition loan. Meanwhile, parents are left unaware that the program is not clinically licensed, or lacks an adequate trained staff. Nicki Bush, a psychology graduate student who interned at a rural residential treatment facility, said administrators convinced parents to sink their savings into behavioral treatment that their children supposedly needed. While many children did have serious psychological disorders, she observed it was not uncommon for kids to end up at the facility "because they were having sex with some 20-year-old guy, and [the parents] found a joint, or something like that." Cristine Gomez, one of the plaintiffs in the WWASPS lawsuit, said aggressive marketing persuaded her to send her son, who was having trouble in school and suffering from attention deficit disorder, first to Spring Creek Lodge and eventually to Tranquility Bay. She told TNS, "I took for granted that they were licensed and regulated. I assumed that somebody was keeping track of basic indications of the safety of the children." In the end, troubling letters describing the conditions in the Jamaica facility compelled her to bring her son home. Four years later, she said he suffers from deep psychological trauma and refuses to speak openly about the experience. Calling the decision to send her son away "the biggest mistake I ever made in my life," Gomez said, "It's just the opposite of what our intent was, what we were sold."...Mental health advocacy groups say that in order to prevent mistreatment, the government must hold private treatment facilities to some clinically based standard of care. As an initial step, they are pushing the End Institutionalized Abuse Against Children bill, which would provide seed money to develop state-level regulations. While some service providers, including WWASPS, have publicly supported moderate state-based regulation, the industry group National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs has contended that bureaucratic monitoring could hinder innovation, and that the government should defer to the industry's own internally developed guidelines. But Robert Friedman, chair of the Department of Child and Family Studies at the University of South Florida, warned that given the evidence of mistreatment, "there's a danger that if left to self-regulate there may be the illusion that there's adequate accountability. And that, in some cases, could be worse than at least not having any illusion."...But enhancing treatment options is only part of the picture, according to Shelby Earnshaw, who underwent a behavior modification program as a teen and now directs the advocacy association [International Survivors Action Committee.](#) What fuels the private treatment industry, she argued, is a societal willingness to stigmatize youth with behavioral problems. For complete story, [click here.](#)

[Child Psychiatrist Accused of Molesting:](#) SAN MATEO, Calif. -- A child psychiatrist who once headed the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry was arrested amid allegations he had molested male patients dating back to the 1960s. Dr. William Ayres, 75, was taken into custody Thursday at his San Mateo home and charged with 14 felony counts of lewd and lascivious acts with a child under 14. The charges involve multiple victims, but authorities declined to say how many. The arrest followed a four-year investigation. Ayres, a prominent psychiatrist who retired last year, had been honored in 2002 by the San Mateo board of supervisors with a lifetime achievement award for "his tireless effort to improve the lives of children and adolescents." He also served as president of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry from 1993 to 1995. "The real tragedy here is that parents entrusted their children to this doctor for help, and they were victimized while in his care," San Mateo police Capt. Mike Callagy said. "That's so tragic." (Webmaster Note: And, tragically, NOT uncommon) (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: [www.chicagotribune.com](#) Date: April 6, 2007)

[2 Juvenile Justice Employees Fired After Teen Is Choked, Thrown:](#) TALLAHASSEE, Fla. -- Two Department of Juvenile Justice employees will be fired after an ongoing investigation revealed the use of inappropriate force that knocked an 18-year-old resident unconscious at a Marianna facility, department Secretary Walt McNeil said Friday. The investigation into the incident has made it clear that the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys has widespread deficiencies, McNeil said. The department has made management changes and hired an independent consulting firm to oversee the facility, which is a high-risk residence currently housing 162 boys from 14 to 21 years of age. "We recognize that there are systemic operational problems at our Dozier facility that span the chain of command from top to bottom," McNeil said. "It is clear that we have to act decisively to change the culture of our Dozier facility." On Feb. 11, resident Justin Caldwell was choked and thrown to the floor by Alvin Speights, a residential officer at the Dozier school, McNeil said. On the way down, Caldwell hit his head on a table and was knocked unconscious. For complete story, [click here.](#)

SON OF A BITCH: THE grandfather of Cho Seung-Hui said yesterday: "Son of a bitch. It serves him right he died with his victims." Kim Hyang-Sik, 82, said he had a doom-laden dream of Cho's parents the night of his murderous rampage - and woke to hear the news of the massacre and his grandson's death. He watched Cho's sick video of himself holding a gun to his head. His sister Kim Yang-Sun, 85, who also saw it, told the Mirror that afterwards her brother was so distraught he had "gone away for a few days to calm himself down and avoid more questions". She too repeatedly referred to the killer as "son of a bitch" or "a***hole" and said his mother Kim Hyang-Yim had problems with him from infancy. (Webmaster Note: See how cruel, demeaning, and hateful families create disturbed children. See how they take no responsibility for their hateful and cruel ways and blame the innocent child. See how they send him to involuntary behavior modification treatment. See how cruel families and institutionalization creates a mass murderer. Now, how many are responsible for the massacre?) For complete story, [click here](#).

How Free is Free Speech?: ...Over the course of time, I discovered (Sue) Scheff referred families to the World Wide Association of Specialty Programs (WWASP) before becoming their competitor. I learned Sue Scheff was also responsible for placing kids into unregulated and risky programs. I discovered Sue Scheff does not have the education or professional credentials that qualify her to determine if a program is safe and meets the necessary requirements to treat at-risk teens. When I learned of Sue Scheff's prior affiliation with WWASP and realized Scheff was doing the same things she accused WWASP of doing, I shared that publicly on internet bulletin boards, specifically [www.fornits.com](#). Sue Scheff sued me for defamation of character. She claims that the words I used to describe her business and business associates caused her harm. What she shares with the public is the names and terms I used when describing her and the industry as a whole. I used terms such as "ed con", "fraud" etc. What she doesn't share with the public is why I used these terms. And the why is what this case is all about... (Webmaster Note: Anyone or any organization that works with PURE or CAICA, or works under the guise of helping families while fraudulently making money off the illegal incarceration, false imprisonment, and torture of children is a shill for the "troubled teen" industry and should not be trusted by the survivor community or the public.) For complete story, [click here](#).

HISD claims charter 'falsified records': APRIL 28th, 2007-- An HISD charter school for at-risk teenagers inflated its attendance by more than 200 students last year and must now repay the extra \$358,000 in state funding that it pocketed for those students, Houston school district officials said Friday. ALTA Academy "falsified records either by intention, improperly trained staff or by failure to perform its due diligence," according to a report by the HISD inspector general's office. Allegations levied last year by a former ALTA employee led to the investigation. Though leaders of the southeast Houston campus admit to some recordkeeping mistakes, they said they plan to appeal the \$358,000 repayment figure to the school board. "I am deeply troubled and embarrassed about the allegations and subsequent findings," said Roberto Gonzalez, manager of Houston-based School House Management, a for-profit company that runs the school. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: [www.chron.com](#) Date: April 28, 2007)

PAC donations from Utah raise doubts in Maine: May 6th, 2007--At \$250,000, it was the largest private contribution of the 2006 Maine governor's race, helping to pay for TV commercials supporting Republican Chandler Woodcock in his bid to unseat Democratic Gov. John Baldacci. But the money didn't come from a donor in Portland, Lewiston or Bangor. State records show that it came from a small city near Zion National Park in southwestern Utah, from a contributor listed as RECAF Inc. What is RECAF Inc.? And why did it donate \$250,000 to a political action committee established in Maine by the national Republican Governors Association? There is no sign of any such company at the firm's listed address. But the paper trail links RECAF to a controversial network of treatment centers for troubled teenagers affiliated with Robert B. Lichfield, a fundraiser for Republican Mitt Romney's presidential campaign. Among Maine political contributions, the RECAF payment stands out. It raises questions about the effectiveness of both Maine's Clean Elections law, which is designed to reduce the influence of money in politics, and of disclosure requirements, which are meant to identify donors to the public. And it illustrates how the stream of unregulated money through the U.S. electoral system allows out-of-state donors with no apparent stake to have the potential to shape the outcome of Maine elections. (Webmaster Note: The "teen help" industry is enmeshed in politics and works to undermine democracy at every turn. From violating the civil and human rights of families and children...And, using brainwashing techniques to convert children and families to their political/social/religious beliefs...To "buying" our representatives, using wealth to quash regulatory laws, and shutting down any attempt to effectively regulate their abusive, torturous, and deadly industry. [Bush Administration liaisons recently applauded the abusive and torturous methods used at Provo Canyon School and other programs affiliated with NATSAP, a shill "accreditation" agency founded and regulated by "teen help" industry leaders. Andrea Barthwell, associate of George W. Bush, spoke at this event stating, "While H.R. 1738 is a bill to 'End Institutionalized Abuse Against Children' and intends to improve the quality of care in therapeutic settings serving our young people, its most recent iteration could have caused a collapse of the system of care that your clients depend upon."](#) As you can see, regulation of this industry will cause its collapse because it is nothing more than an industry of fraud, abuse, torture, and death. Just say "NO" to behavior modification!) For complete story, [click here](#).

Electroshock Children: The estimated 1 in 155 children in the U.S. said to be autistic, represent an untapped and apparently growing market waiting to be exploited by the electroshock (ECT) industry. And now a first move has been made. At least two electroshock proponents are promoting the notion that ECT may be an effective treatment for children diagnosed as autistic. Psychiatrists D.M. Dhossche and S. Stanfill (Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior, University of Mississippi Medical Center, Jackson) have recommended that "All child specialists -- psychiatrists, neurologists, psychologists, and developmental pediatricians -- should independently review the feasibility, potential, and risk of using ECT in autism." To back their recommendation, the psychiatrists wrote, "ECT is considered as a safe, effective, and life-saving treatment in people of all ages who suffer from affective disorder, acute psychosis, and, in particular, catatonia. There are recent speculations that certain types of autism may be the earliest expression of catatonia and that both disorders have identical risk factors. Therefore, ECT may improve autism and, if started early enough, may prevent further development of autistic symptoms in some children. The use of ECT in autism has never been systematically assessed. There have been two large ECT studies in children in the 1940s. Autism was not assessed in these studies because the autistic syndrome was just then being recognized as a separate entity. Findings from these studies add little to the hypothesis that ECT may be effective in autistic children, but attest to the safety and feasibility of ECT in children.... Unless anti-ECT prejudice can be overcome, it is unlikely that any ECT trial in autism is forthcoming. Research areas that may support the hypothesis that ECT is effective in autism should be pursued." ("Could ECT Be Effective in Autism?" Medical Hypotheses, 63(3):371-6, January 2004) Dhossche and Stanfill have falsified and omitted certain key facts about ECT. Not only is electroshock unhelpful, it is also a memory-destroying, intelligence-lowering brain-damaging, and life-threatening procedure that has worsened the lives of millions of people since its introduction almost 70 years ago. For complete story, [click here](#).

Psychiatrists, Children and Drug Industry's Role: When Anya Bailey developed an eating disorder after her 12th birthday, her mother took her to a psychiatrist at the University of Minnesota who prescribed a powerful antipsychotic drug called Risperdal. Created for schizophrenia, Risperdal is not approved to treat eating disorders, but increased appetite is a common side effect and doctors may prescribe drugs as they see fit. Anya gained weight but within two years developed a crippling knot in her back. She now receives regular injections of Botox to unclench her back muscles. She often awakens crying in pain. Isabella Bailey, Anya's mother, said she had no idea that children might be especially susceptible to Risperdal's side effects. Nor did she know that Risperdal and similar medicines were not approved at the time to treat children, or that medical trials often cited to justify the use of such drugs had as few as eight children taking the drug by the end. Just as surprising, Ms. Bailey said, was learning that the university psychiatrist who supervised Anya's care received more than \$7,000 from 2003 to 2004 from Johnson & Johnson, Risperdal's maker, in return for lectures about one of the company's drugs. Doctors, including Anya Bailey's maintain that payments from drug companies do not influence what they prescribe for patients. But the intersection of money and medicine, and its effect on the well-being of patients, has become one of the most contentious issues in health care. Nowhere is that more true than in psychiatry, where increasing payments to doctors have coincided with the growing use in children of a relatively new class of drugs known as atypical antipsychotics. These best-selling drugs, including Risperdal, Seroquel, Zyprexa, Abilify and Geodon, are now being prescribed to more than half a million children in the United States to help parents deal with behavior problems despite profound risks and almost no approved uses for minors. For complete story, [click here](#).

Fat camp 'horribly damaging': May 20th, 2007--OBESE teenagers taking part in a new weight-loss show could be left psychologically scarred, health experts warn. Channel 10's Teen Fit Camp will follow the journey of six obese Australian teenagers at an American boot camp, where food is controlled and exercise is unavoidable. The show was titled Teen Fat Camp, but was changed to avoid controversy. Dieticians and psychologists say the show is exploiting overweight youngsters for the sake of entertainment. For complete story, [click here](#).

Question troubled teens' treatment: June 1st, 2007--...Dr. Derele Miller, a leading child and adolescent psychiatrist at Northwestern University, said: "The truth is that too many people are making money and not enough concern about the effects on children. Many parents have forgotten to be parents." Everybody wants two Volvos and a suburban home. The narcissism of the '60s has led America to abandon limits for their children and disregard the concept of self-sacrifice. Americans are now searching out experts for every kind of thing, how to manage their children. In 1989 research at the University of Michigan found that as many as 75 percent of adolescent psychiatric hospitalizations are inappropriate during a long-term stay in a hospital...In any case, there should be a lot of investigating before a child is placed with the services of many of the burgeoning clinics. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: <http://news.galvestondailynews.com> Date: June 1, 2007)

Teacher, Aide Accused Of Sex With Troubled Teens: June 4th, 2007--ORANGE COUNTY—A teacher and teacher's aide at a New York school for troubled children have been charged with performing sexual acts on two 16-year-old boys during a Memorial Day weekend of sex capades at a house in New Windsor. Rebecca Becker (left), 28, of Walden and teacher's aide Maria E. Zurita (right), 28, of New Windsor who worked at McQuade Children's Services, are facing charges of third degree rape and endangering the welfare of a child. They have been terminated by the school which serves children who have been referred by family court, social service agencies and school districts from Westchester, Rockland, Putnam, Orange, Dutchess, Ulster and Sullivan Counties. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.northcountrygazette.org Date: June 4, 2007)

Site recruits summer-camp predators: June 6th, 2007--Now, get ready for this mom and dad. Make sure you prepare Jane and Jimmy with mace and a sawed off shotgun when they leave for summer camp. Several months ago, I received an email from retired **Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, U.S. Army**, one of the nation's leading law enforcement trainers. Lt. Col. Grossman stumbled on a massive cache of children and "teens" enslaved by the business of prostitution we now dub Internet pornography. He then started looking for the government justice agency that would clean out the vipers nests and help these youngsters. "The **National Center for Missing and Exploited Children** line doesn't seem to be set up for anything but reporting a single URL," he said. "The matter is a little more complex than that." He discovered that one site links to another (feeder) site and another to another until finally staring up at you, here in the USA, are thousands of very young brutally violated girls – modern sexual slavery. I checked out Grossman's "first-level feeders" several times and landed at an "incest" site. The pimping incest site, however, also advertised a list of bona fide "teenage camps." How could that be? The incest feeder site claims to have "3,056,886 listings" of pedophiles and pederasts who enjoy sadosexual violence, degradation, child sexual abuse and such activities. How many of those 3 million-plus deviants will visit or apply for work in those "teen camps"? On the "incest" site, predators can link to a teenage science camp and then to a teenage wilderness camp. The "incest" site links their "community" of sexual deviants to a camp for "troubled children" and another for "struggling teens." Professorial pedophiles might apply to "academic camps" or become advisers and counselors at "teen adventure" camps on the site. Some might try the "boot camps" or "travel camps," etc. Clerical predators could volunteer at the Christian teen camps that are advertised. The link is there, phone numbers, all the information any sexual psychopath needs. For complete story, [click here](#).

Cook County chaos: June 6th, 2007--The Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center is out of control. Children languish there like warehoused animals, while millions of dollars are wasted on do-nothing jobs filled by unqualified workers and patronage stooges. ... Kids live in filthy surroundings, with little guidance, under the supervision of workers whose behaviors cheat the residents even more than they cheat Cook County taxpayers. That's how this page described Cook County's juvenile center in August 2005. Nothing has changed since then. In the last two years a slew of experts has detailed that the facility, which houses children ages 10 to 17 who are accused of crimes, remains plagued by filth, professional incompetence and dangerous conditions. Children at the center face "an alarming risk of suicide and inadequate mental health services" and "a climate of fear and violence," say attorneys who represent them. Kids are beaten by staff members and other kids. Attorneys point to "a culture of chaos and incompetence" and "a persistent failure to provide basic necessities." More than four years ago, the federal court mandated a step-by-step plan to rescue the juvenile center. Cook County leaders agreed to that plan, but they have utterly failed to honor the agreement. And now things have reached a perilous state. For complete story, [click here](#).

FDA grants priority to test antipsychotic drug for use by teens: June 6th, 2007--Bristol-Myers Squibb yesterday announced its application to market Abilify for schizophrenia to teenagers was granted priority review by the Food and Drug Administration. If approved, it would keep Bristol-Myers in step with its competitors and expand the market for Abilify, whose sales last year surged 41 percent to \$1.3 billion. Eli Lilly announced last month it received conditional approval to market its schizophrenia drug, Zyprexa, to adolescents. Johnson and Johnson's application has been pending since December to sell Risperdal, its schizophrenia and bipolar disorder therapy, to teens. While no drugs are currently approved in the U.S. to treat schizophrenia in adolescents, all three medicines awaiting FDA approval, known as atypical antipsychotics, are widely prescribed off label for teenagers, despite concerns about side effects, including weight gain and involuntary movement syndromes. Antipsychotics rang up \$18.2 billion in sales last year, with Risperdal accounting for \$4.6 billion of the total, according to IMS Health, a pharmaceutical information clearinghouse in the United Kingdom. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.nj.com Date: June 6, 2007)

DCFS pulls teens from school: June 12th, 2007--ROCKFORD, Ill. -- The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services is pulling 22 teenagers out of a Rockford residential school called The Mill as it investigates recent incidents there -- a move that may threaten the nonprofit facility's future. Officials at the treatment facility for emotionally and mentally troubled youth recently reported an allegation by one female resident that another female resident had been having sex with a male staff member. The staff member also allegedly gave both girls marijuana. "Less than 24 hours later, I got a call from DCFS saying they were going to begin to remove all of their youth from The Mill," said Jim Spruyt, president of facility. "It shocked me. I was stunned." Spruyt said the state's action would force the center's closure, putting 110 staff members out of work. For complete story, [click here](#).

Taking Time to Save Our Teens: June 15th, 2007 (July, 2007 Issue)--...What is the cause of messed-up teens? We could point the finger at many things: our failing school systems, the entertainment industry, the music industry, drug pushers, pornography, violent video games or any other modern malady. But the stark truth is that the main cause for troubled teens is troubled parents. Too many parents are so self-absorbed and caught up in their own personal crises that they can't focus on the right rearing of teens. To save our teens, parents must take on their God-given responsibility to nurture, love, lead, teach and discipline their children. Let's face it: We have become the generation that has abandoned our teens. Mr. Armstrong warned about the damaging effects of parental neglect. He wrote over 20 years ago, "Family life has undergone a radical revolution! Teens have sex games at home in bed while Dad and Mom are at work. Children do not eat with parents. They seldom go to movies with parents. Parents have their lives, associates and friends apart from the children. Parents never think of teaching children, being with children, maintaining a family relationship! Parental responsibility is totally neglected. In due time parents are going to be brought to account for this neglect of basic responsibility" (**The Missing Dimension in Sex**). Admitting responsibility for teen neglect is difficult for any parent. Yet it is the only means to an effective solution for our teen crisis... For complete story, [click here](#).

MGH psychiatrist's work stirs debate: June 17th, 2007--...Part of the criticism of Biederman speaks to a deeper issue in psychiatry: the extensive financial ties between the drug industry and researchers. Biederman has received research funding from 15 drug companies and serves as a paid speaker or adviser to seven of them, including Eli Lilly & Co. and Janssen Pharmaceuticals, which make the multi billion-dollar antipsychotic drugs Zyprexa and Risperdal, respectively. Though not much money was earmarked for bipolar research, critics say the resources help him advance his aggressive drug treatment philosophy. Numerous psychiatrists say Riley's overdose suggests that bipolar disorder is becoming a psychiatric fad, leaving thousands of children on risky medications based on symptoms such as chronic irritability and aggressiveness that could have other causes. Riley's father, for example, had only recently returned to the home after being accused of child abuse, according to police. Since the girl's death, state officials have stepped up a review of the 8,343 children taking the latest antipsychotic medications under the Medicaid program for conditions including bipolar disorder, to be sure the treatment is appropriate. Psychiatrists too often prescribe these medications, which carry side effects such as weight gain and heart disease risk, without addressing problems in the children's lives, said Dr. Gordon Harper, director of child and adolescent services at the state Department of Mental Health. He likened the approach to "tuning the piano while the subway is going by."... For complete story, [click here](#).

Lawsuits hit a Romney money man: June 20th, 2007--Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney (R) has collected hundreds of thousands of dollars through the fundraising efforts of a supporter targeted by several lawsuits alleging child abuse. In a lawsuit filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Utah, 133 plaintiffs have alleged that Robert Lichfield, co-chairman of Romney's Utah finance committee owned or operated residential boarding schools for troubled teenagers where students were "subjected to physical abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse." (George W. Bush also received much of his financing from Lichfield and other teen torture facility leaders. And you wonder why these programs remain unregulated and protected? Think about it.) For complete story, [click here](#).

Justice Department: Abuse remains at Ohio youth prisons: June 20th, 2007--COLUMBUS, Ohio - A crisis atmosphere continues to exist at a state girls' prison where a dozen guards were indicted in 2005 on charges of sexual assault and inmate abuse, and boys at a second prison remain at risk of excessive force, abuse and trauma, a federal investigation concluded. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.ohio.com Date: June 20, 2007)

Teen ranch evades law: Case shines light on child programs that go unlicensed in Utah: Call it the "problem child" of Utah's teen-help industry. Majestic Ranch in Randolph - one of four Utah boarding schools that cater to troubled teens - has, until recently, failed to become licensed as required by law. It is the only school to fall short of health and safety benchmarks imposed in October 2005. The hang-up: minor changes to an employee handbook, say regulators, who permitted the school to operate without a license for the past 18 months. Regulators say no harm was done; because Majestic is in good standing, they granted the school a probationary license on June 25. But the school's slow road to compliance points to a larger problem with Utah's oversight of adoption agencies, wilderness camps, schools and other programs for vulnerable children: a loophole in state law. Operating these businesses without a license is a class A misdemeanor - but only if someone is harmed, said Ken Stettler, Human Services licensing director. "Usually if it's a new program just coming on, then they simply don't begin operation until they're licensed," said Stettler. "What was uncommon in [Majestic's] case was that we had an existing program that was already operating when the laws went into effect. In this case we don't close them down." But at least one new business venture - an adoption agency - slipped through the loophole. Focus on Children, now defunct and facing federal charges of running a baby smuggling operation in Samoa, did business in Utah for 2 1/2 years without a license. The agency's owners applied in March 2001, but did not submit all the paperwork. After nudging from regulators, they were licensed on August 1, 2003. No one, to Stettler's knowledge, is lobbying to give regulators stronger powers to insist on licensing. Utah's Republican-dominated Legislature has traditionally opposed government meddling in the private sector. "Therapeutic" boarding schools, including 21-year-old Majestic Ranch, went unregulated until 2005. The law defines "therapeutic schools" as serving students "who have a history of failing to function at home or public school" and that offer room and board. Majestic initially fought regulation through its partner World Wide Association of Speciality Programs, a Utah-based chain of get-tough treatment programs. Later, after it came to light that Majestic had been investigated three times for abuse, the boarding school became a proponent of regulation. Only one probe ended in a criminal charge and conviction when a staffer - who was eventually fired - pleaded guilty to misdemeanor assault. Child welfare caseworkers received another complaint of abuse in 2005, but dismissed it as having no merit, said Carol Sisco, Human Services spokeswoman. Tammy Johnson, Majestic Ranch director, said the licensing process has helped foster better relations with the state, but it hasn't changed the school's curricula or practices. "The only thing that changed is we have to file more paperwork; quite a bit more paperwork," said Johnson. Johnson blames some of the licensing delays on regulators who took a year to review Majestic's policies, but stressed, "they've been wonderful to work with." Bad press, stemming from "frivolous" complaints from disgruntled employees, have hurt Majestic, said Johnson. Over the past two years enrollment has dropped from about 60 students to 32, Johnson said. The school caters to 7-to-14-year-olds; annual tuition costs about \$42,000. "We lose on average of five kids a month to negative publicity on the Internet. It's unfortunate," said Johnson. "I wouldn't be able to come to work every day if I didn't feel I was making a difference in these families' and students' lives. It's not an easy job." (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.sltrib.com Date: July 16, 2007)

Mississippi Sued Over Alleged Abuse at Girls Detention Center: July 12th, 2007--JACKSON, Miss. — Girls at a Mississippi detention center were sometimes shackled for 12 hours a day and subjected to "horrendous physical and sexual abuse," a youth advocacy group claims in a federal lawsuit. The Mississippi Youth Justice Project sued the state Wednesday on behalf of six girls, ages 13 to 17, and called for the shutdown of the troubled Columbia Training School. For complete story, [click here](#).

The Police State Takeover Of Schools-Conditioning the kids for their future on the global plantation: July 24th, 2007--Schools have become hi-tech prisons. Children all across America and the UK are being conditioned to accept that they are not free and that they must submit to draconian laws and measures for their own safety. Soon enough children will not even know what it is like to act as a private individual within society. Don't believe this? Read on. All over the United States and Britain children are increasingly being subjected to measures that wouldn't look out of place in maximum security prisons. Everyday we post reports from mainstream news sources documenting this disturbing trend. Today The Philadelphia Inquirer reports that schools across America are banning backpacks that are made of non see-through materials. If students walking between classes want to use a backpack, it must be made of clear plastic or mesh so its contents can be seen at a glance. Cloth backpacks can be carried into the school in the morning but must be stored in lockers. So the students should all now feel much safer due to the fact that they can all see each other's personal items right? Wrong. The move has unleashed a torrent of protest from some Wissahickon students, who say high schools are coming to resemble "prisons or police states," in the words of one. Brandon Hemmen, a senior, said the clear bags will make it easy for thieves who already rip off students every day. And "bags will get mixed up; we'll have to use name tags," he added. "This is wrong. They can't take all our freedoms away." A second item today comes from Security tech website Security Park which reports that Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania is to deliver the convenience and security of contactless payments by cell phone to students and the faculty. Beginning in July, Slippery Rock University's 8,500 students, faculty and staff will receive a new official campus ID card and a separate contactless token designed for use with their mobile phones. Using either the card or the phone, they will be able to make payments at on-campus locations as well as participating merchants in the surrounding community.... The new mobile phone tokens incorporate the same standards-based contactless technology (ISO 14443) used worldwide by MasterCard, Visa and leading card issuers in the payment and identity sectors. Good, prepare the kids first and then bring in the cashless society nationwide, with an ID card of course, which you will need to be able to buy and sell. We have long warned of the dangers of a cashless society putting total control into the hands of state regulated and private corporations and the break down of basic freedoms that it encompasses. Still don't feel there is anything to worry about in schools? Do a prisonplanet.com google search on the word "school", you will be confronted with literally hundreds and hundreds of news articles from the past few years that detail the police state takeover of schools all over the US and throughout the UK. For complete story, [click here](#).

Friends Talk About Teen Accused Of Capital Murder: July 23rd, 2007--News of 17-year-old Joshua Lofton's alleged involvement as the gunman in the murder of 40-year-old Dean Worden Sunday afternoon spread quickly through the Argenta District of North Little Rock. "That's my homeboy and everything. I can't believe he did this," said Lamar Tenner. "I never thought he'd commit a crime like that or anything," said Lashara Bryant. But police believe Lofton was capable of pulling the trigger outside the Wal-Mart on East McCain, killing Worden in cold blood. They arrested the teenager Monday around 3 a.m. which is something his neighbor, who wishes to be known only as "Pamela," says she couldn't believe. "I was in shock, like I am now," she said. "He was a nice, respectable, caring young man." But "Pamela" says that kind, caring side of Lofton wasn't always so easy to see. "He was heading down the wrong path," she said. "He went to boot camp for a couple of months." She says he'd been back home for about two months, showing a considerably different attitude. "He was more mature, more grown, more stable and not rowdy." She says that change in behavior makes news of his alleged involvement as both purse snatcher and fatal gunman so difficult to understand. "I don't know. Something clicked," she said. "He's not that type of person, out to hurt anyone." (Or, at least, he wasn't, until he survived a "troubled teen" boot camp.) For complete story, [click here](#).

SkYROCKETING numbers of kids are prescribed powerful antipsychotic drugs. Is it safe? Nobody knows: July 29th, 2007--More and more, parents at wit's end are begging doctors to help them calm their aggressive children or control their kids with ADHD. More and more, doctors are prescribing powerful antipsychotic drugs. In the past seven years, the number of Florida children prescribed such drugs has increased some 250 percent. Last year, more than 18,000 state kids on Medicaid were given prescriptions for antipsychotic drugs. Even children as young as 3 years old. Last year, 1,100 Medicaid children under 6 were prescribed antipsychotics, a practice so risky that state regulators say it should be used only in extreme cases. These numbers are just for children on fee-for-service Medicaid, generally the poor and disabled. Thousands more kids on private insurance are also on antipsychotics. Almost entirely driving this spiraling trend is the rise of a class of antipsychotic drugs called atypicals. These drugs emerged in the 1990s and replaced the older, "typical" antipsychotics

like Haldol or Thorazine, which are often associated with Parkinson-like shakes. The atypicals were developed to treat schizophrenia and bipolar disorder in adults. But once on the market, doctors are free to prescribe them to children, and for uses not approved by the Food and Drug Administration. There is almost no research on the long-term effects of such powerful medications on the developing brains of children. The more that researchers learn, the less comfortable many are becoming with atypicals. Initially billed as wonder drugs with few significant side effects, evidence is mounting that they can cause rapid weight gain, diabetes, even death. (Webmaster Note: Please see www.ablechild.org for alternatives and support for parents and kids dealing with ADD/ADHD/ODD/etc. diagnosis. Thanks!) For complete story, [click here](#).

Ex-TYC guard indicted in sexual assault case--August 8th, 2007--ABILENE — A former guard in the Texas youth prison system has been indicted on charges of sexual assault and indecency with a child for allegedly having sex with a female inmate younger than 17, officials said. Jaime Segura, 30, of Brownwood, was suspended without pay Friday as the Texas Youth Commission began the process of firing him, said Jim Hurley, a commission spokesman. Segura had been on paid suspension since Feb. 24 from his job at the Ron Jackson State Juvenile Correctional Complex in Brownwood, 120 miles southwest of Fort Worth. Segura is the fifth former guard at the Brownwood facility to face felony charges since Texas officials launched investigations and sweeping reforms to the state-run youth prisons in response to a sex scandal and a possible cover-up by agency officials. A Brown County grand jury indicted Segura on felony charges including one count of sexual assault, three counts of indecency with a child and four counts of improper sexual activity with a person in custody. He was also indicted on four misdemeanor counts of official oppression. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.chron.com Date: August 8, 2007)

Local Minister, Helper Charged With Assault--August 10th, 2007--SAN ANTONIO -- A local minister and one of his assistants Friday were charged with aggravated assault in connection with a Nueces County dragging incident. The accuser is a 15-year-old girl who attended their summer boot camp for troubled teens. KSAT's Johanne Lochard reported that Rev. Charles Flowers is the minister at San Antonio's Faith Outreach Center. On Friday, he had to answer to a higher authority -- a magistrate judge. Flowers was charged with aggravated assault along with Stephanie Bassitt, 20. "These are the specific people she says caused her injuries," said Nueces County Lt. Mike Lowrance. The injuries that the victim's mother had photos of were suffered while attending the boot camp, police said, where Flowers served as the self-proclaimed "commandant" and Bassett acted as training assistant. The teen said Bassett held her down while Flowers tied her to the back of a vehicle, Lochard said. She was dragged after being forced to run behind a moving van. Bobbi Greer said she witnessed the dragging. She worked as a cook at the Nueces County Ranch, where the alleged assault happened in early June. "Every time she would fall, they would drag her," Greer said. For complete story, [click here](#).

The Cult That Spawned the Tough-Love Teen Industry--August 20th, 2007--The idea that punishment can be therapeutic is not unique to the Rotenberg Center. In fact, this notion is widespread among the hundreds of "emotional growth boarding schools," wilderness camps, and "tough love" antidrug programs that make up the billion-dollar teen residential treatment industry. This harsh approach to helping troubled teens has a long and disturbing history. No fewer than 50 programs (though not the Rotenberg Center) can trace their treatment philosophy, directly or indirectly, to an antidrug cult called Synanon. Founded in 1958, Synanon sold itself as a cure for hardcore heroin addicts who could help each other by "breaking" new initiates with isolation, humiliation, hard labor, and sleep deprivation. Today, troubled-teen programs use Synanon-like tactics, advertising themselves to parents as solutions for everything from poor study habits to substance misuse. However, there is little evidence that harsh behavior-modification techniques can solve these problems. Studies found that Synanon's "encounter groups" could produce lasting psychological harm and that only 10 to 15 percent of the addicts who participated in them recovered. And as the classic 1971 Stanford prison experiment demonstrated, creating situations in which the severe treatment of powerless people is rewarded inevitably yields abuse. This is especially true when punishment is viewed as a healing process. Synanon was discredited in the late 1970s and 1980s as its violent record was exposed. (The group is now remembered for an incident in which a member placed a live rattlesnake—rattle removed—in the mailbox of a lawyer who'd successfully sued it.) Yet by the time Synanon shut down in 1991, its model had already been widely copied. In 1971, the federal government gave a grant to a Florida organization called The Seed, which applied Synanon's methods to teenagers, even those only suspected of trying drugs. In 1974, Congress opened an investigation into such behavior-modification programs, finding that The Seed had used methods "similar to the highly refined brainwashing techniques employed by the North Koreans." The bad publicity led some supporters of The Seed to create a copycat organization under a different name. Straight Inc. was cofounded by Mel Sembler, a Bush family friend who would become the GOP's 2000 finance chair and who heads Lewis "Scooter" Libby's legal defense fund. By the mid-'80s, Straight was operating in seven states. First lady Nancy Reagan declared it her favorite antidrug program. As with The Seed, abuse was omnipresent—including beatings and kidnapping of adult participants. Facing seven-figure legal judgments, it closed in 1993. But loopholes in state laws and a lack of federal oversight allowed shuttered programs to simply change their names and reopen, often with the same staff, in the same state—even in the same building. Straight spin-offs like the Pathway Family Center are still in business. Confrontation and humiliation are also used by religious programs such as Escuela Caribe in the Dominican Republic and myriad "emotional growth boarding schools" affiliated with the World Wide Association of Specialty Programs (wwasp), such as Tranquility Bay in Jamaica. wwasp's president told me that the organization "took a little bit of what Synanon [did]." Lobbying by well-connected supporters such as wwasp founder Robert Lichfield (who, like Sembler, is a fundraiser for Republican presidential aspirant Mitt Romney) has kept state regulators at bay and blocked federal regulation entirely. By the '90s, tough love had spawned military-style boot camps and wilderness programs that thrust kids into extreme survival scenarios. At least three dozen teens have died in these programs, often because staff see medical complaints as malingering. This May, a 15-year-old boy died from a staph infection at a Colorado wilderness program. His family claims his pleas for help were ignored. In his final letter to his mother, he wrote, "They found my weakness and I want to go home." For complete story, [click here](#).

Young people say family, friends make them most happy--August 20th, 2007--NEW YORK — So you're between the ages of 13 and 24. What makes you happy? A worried, weary parent might imagine the answer to sound something like this: Sex, drugs, a little rock 'n' roll. Maybe some cash, or at least the car keys. Turns out the real answer is quite different. Spending time with family was the top answer to that open-ended question, according to an extensive survey — more than 100 questions asked of 1,280 people ages 13-24 — conducted by The Associated Press and MTV on the nature of happiness among America's young people. Next was spending time with friends, followed by time with a significant other. And even better for parents: Nearly three-quarters of young people say their relationship with their parents makes them happy. "They're my foundation," says Kristiana St. John, 17, a high-school student from Queens in New York. "My mom tells me that even if I do something stupid, she's still going to love me no matter what. Just knowing that makes me feel very happy and blessed." Other results are more disconcerting. While most young people are happy overall with the way their lives are going, there are racial differences: The poll shows whites to be happier, across economic categories, than blacks and Hispanics. A lot of young people feel stress, particularly those from the middle class, and females more than males. You might think money would be clearly tied to a general sense of happiness. But almost no one said "money" when asked what makes them happy, though people with the highest family incomes are generally happier with life. Having highly educated parents is a stronger predictor of happiness than income. (Webmaster Note: Love, respect, and spend time with your children!) For complete story, [click here](#).

In the shadow of sexual abuse--August 20th, 2007--Vera has learned to walk softly through the emotional minefield left behind by the man who sexually abused her husband three to four times a week for 11 years. "He can flip back and forth so much and so quickly," says Vera, who asked that we not reveal her last name. She lives south of Seattle with her husband, Mark. "The toughest thing is to constantly remind myself that there's something bigger here than us." Vera represents an often-forgotten population — the partners of childhood sexual-abuse victims. For these couples, ordinary relationship struggles are often compounded by the legacies of abuse. Adult survivors often experience depression, anxiety, substance abuse, career problems, inability to achieve physical or emotional intimacy and shame about sexuality. Janice Palm, a therapist and executive director of Shepherd's Counseling Services on Capitol Hill, recites the oft-quoted stats — one in three girls will be molested by the time they're 18; one in five boys. Unwanted sexual experience affects different people differently. As Palm notes, not all such experiences cause lifelong trauma. As in Mark's case, the effects were significant. As he and other survivors of abuse mature and move into adult relationships, they take with them all the baggage of their abuse. (Webmaster Note: If your child is exhibiting behavioral or emotional problems, they are likely dealing with a trauma such as sexual abuse, humiliation, or other abuse. Even if you've never abused your child, they may have been abused by another trusted adult. If you find yourself too busy to actively engage in a relationship with your child, you may be guilty of neglect which is

abusive and can result in behavioral and emotional issues. Please take inventory on your own action/inaction and areas for improvement prior to and/or instead of scapegoating or blaming your child for your own errors.) For complete story, [click here](#).

What Works for Troubled Teens?--August 20th, 2007--The most effective treatments for troubled teenagers have these things in common: They use family-based therapies; they treat adolescents with empathy, dignity, and respect; and, except for very short periods of emergency stabilization, they keep teens at home. Research has proven the effectiveness of a number of methods for treating youth with behavioral and other problems— including functional family therapy, cognitive-behavioral family therapy, and multisystemic family therapy (the latter, ironically, is available almost exclusively to kids in the juvenile justice system). All of them focus on improving communication between children and parents, setting clear boundaries, and ensuring that teenagers' developmental needs for increased freedom, social connection, and responsibility are recognized and met in safe and healthy ways. Inpatient treatment happens only on a short-term basis when a child is a threat to himself or others. For complete story, [click here](#).

How Faith Based Initiatives help unlicensed reform schools thrive--2007--When George W. Bush became president, he created the White House Office of Faith-Based Initiatives (www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbci/mission.html). Mr. Bush created Centers for Faith-Based Initiatives in seven cabinet departments: the United States Agency for International Development, and the Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Justice, Agriculture, Labor, and Education. The purpose of the Centers was to eliminate regulatory and contracting obstacles for faith-based and other community organizations. This act has made it possible for religious boarding schools to avoid becoming licensed and regulated leaving those inside no protection. It began when Mr. Bush was Governor of Texas. Texas' legislature passed the Faith Based program there in 1997 allowing deregulation for faith based boarding schools. The legislature then passed a bill allowing the creation of alternative accreditation programs in which faith-based child-care centers could forego state licensing and instead receive accreditation from one of these newly created private agencies. Deregulation was an essential component of the faith-based initiative because it ensured that more faith-based providers would be eligible for government funds (see Texas Freedom Education Fund at www.tfn.org/aboutus). This plan created new licensing laws for religious facilities; self-regulation that substantially reduced health and safety requirements and oversight. The state of Texas approved the Texas Association of Christian Child-Care Agencies (TACCCA). The board of TACCCA was comprised of eight pastors, three of whom also operated homes accredited by TACCCA. Upon TACCCA's creation, the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (TDPRS) no longer held jurisdiction over these programs. Therefore, TDPRS could not investigate complaints of abuse. Also upon creation of TACCCA, then-Governor Bush invited the Roloff Homes to return to Texas, even though the State of Texas closed down the Roloff Homes in 1985 after numerous allegations of abuse. The State's position was that the Roloff Homes should either comply with licensing requirements or close its doors. The Texas Supreme Court agreed and the United States Supreme Court dismissed the appeal from this decision (State v. Corpus Christi People's Baptist Church, Inc., 683 S.W.2d 692 (1984) and Corpus Christi People's Baptist Church, Inc. v. Texas, 474 U.S. 801 (1985)). TACCCA was supposed to uphold the same standards as TDPRS. TACCCA, however, never conducted a single legally required surprise-inspection at any of its facilities (see letter from Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services to Rev. Davis Blaser, Texas Association of Christian Child-Care Agencies (Mar. 8, 2001) (on file with the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services)). In 1999, the state of Texas found evidence of physical abuse and neglect at the Roloff Homes' Rebekah Home for girls. Charges were filed against Faye Cameron, the home's supervisor (and wife of Pastor Wiley Cameron). As a result of the charges, Faye Cameron was convicted and banned from ever working with children in Texas again. Nonetheless, TACCCA reaccredited the home. Pastor Cameron served on the board of TACCCA at the time of reaccreditation. Sadly, this would not be the first case of conflict of interest we would see with these faith based self-appointed organizations. The rate of confirmed abuse and neglect at alternatively accredited facilities was 25 times higher than that of state-licensed facilities. This can be confirmed by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. Because of the problems incurred, the Texas legislature had to discontinue its alternative accreditation program in 2001. Luckily someone was watching and paying attention: because of past problems with these facilities, the Texas Freedom Network was created by concerned citizens. This is a watchdog group that was founded in 1995 and is a nonpartisan, grassroots organization of more than 23,000 religious and community leaders - www.tfn.org/aboutus - it monitors far-right issues, organizations, money and leaders. FACCCA - Florida is the new safe haven for unregulated religious schools. Although Texas was forced to abandon its alternative accreditation program, those who wished to avoid state interference were not left without options. The Florida Association of Christian Child Caring Agencies (FACCCA) was created to do the same thing TACCCA did in Texas. When Faye Cameron was banned forever from working with children in Texas and TACCCA was discontinued, FACCCA and the State of Florida welcomed the Camerons. FACCCA also welcomed the Palmers after the State of California shut down their facility in Ramona, California; the school I was in. There have been numerous complaints of abuse against FACCCA facility employees. Rebecca Ramirez's sexual assault allegation against VCA's Palmer (Secrets in the Schoolhouse by reporter Mollye Barrows) is not an isolated allegation. In 2003, a former student of FACCCA's Camp Tracey filed a lawsuit against the facility alleging that he was forced to perform sex acts with two camp counselors (Paul Pinkam, Man Sues Church, Alleges Abuse - Harvest Baptist's Camp Tracey Cited, THE FLORIDA TIMES-UNION, May 10, 2003, available at <http://www.nospank.net/n-k92r.htm>). A grand jury investigated Camp Tracey in 1987 after years of physical abuse allegations by children and parents. Allegations leading to the investigation included excessive corporal punishment and the use of ropes and handcuffs to restrain children. The grand jury criticized the absence of procedures allowing residents of Camp Tracey to contact authorities in the event of abuse (www.isaccorp.org/faccca/camptracey1.pdf). In 2004, John Burt was convicted of molesting a fifteen-year-old girl at another FACCCA-accredited facility, Our Father's House (Activist Gets 18 Years for Molesting Teen, AP, May 12, 2004, www.isaccorp.org/faccca/ourfathershouseconviction.pdf). Shockingly, FACCCA allowed Burt to open the home, even though he had served jail time in the eighties for his anti-abortion activities. In May 1993, Burt was present at the fatal shooting of a Pensacola Medical Services doctor (Associated Press, Troopers Nab Anti-Abortion Figure Sought in Sex Case, ST. PETERSBURG TIMES, June 11, 2003, www.isaccorp.org/faccca/johnburtarrested.pdf). He led a demonstration on one side of the clinic, while his follower, Michael Griffin, shot Dr. David Gunn on the other side of the clinic. When Burt was arrested on the molestation charges, FACCCA President Ed MacClellan said the charges were "out of character with his public persona." (Associated Press, Preaching Life While Preying on Their Fears, ST. PETERSBURG TIMES, June 12, 2003, www.isaccorp.org/faccca/ourfathershouse1.pdf). In 2003, authorities shut down Teen Transformation Ministries, another FACCCA-accredited school, after a former resident made an abuse complaint against the facility (Associated Press, Boys' Home Closes after Abuse Reports, ST. PETERSBURG TIMES, June 11, 2003, www.isaccorp.org/faccca/teentransformation.pdf). The thirteen-year-old boy was denied medical attention for a broken shoulder. He also alleged that he was thrown into a septic tank and made to stay there for ten minutes. He further alleged that he was forced to pull down his pants and sit on a fire-ant mound. Each of these complaints show what program participants may be subjected to in the absence of state regulation. There have been other allegations made against FACCCA's facilities, but because FACCCA seems not to require the facilities to allow participants access to victims' services, it is impossible to provide statistical data about the actual occurrence of abuse. The allegations that have been made, however, indicate the absence of any real regulation by FACCCA. Deregulation systems such as those in Texas and Florida are unconstitutional. Deregulation violates the program participants' Fourteenth Amendment Equal Protection rights by placing them in a less protected class than children in state-regulated programs. Deregulation also violates the First Amendment Establishment Clause by allowing special treatment for religious groups. In a state regulated program, it would be rare to find staff members who are child molesters or abusers because in order to work in a state run facility, you must pass a criminal background check to work with minors. Anyone with a questionable background would be immediately disqualified. But at these unregulated FACCCA run schools, a staff member's background goes unchecked and they rarely have anything but a high school diploma making them unsuitable candidates to work with kids who have mental health issues. All they have to say is that they are a "Christian" and they are deemed suitable to work in the facility with your kids. This is horrifying at best. This paper written and researched by Candice Aiston, and edited by Michele Ulriksen. Contact Michele Ulriksen at: www.westhillscommunications.com For complete story, [click here](#).

DHS asks U.S. judge to dismiss abuse suit lawsuit--August 23rd, 2007--The state Department of Human Services asked a federal judge this week to throw out a lawsuit alleging eight girls were abused at Columbia Training School in May. DHS Executive Director Don Taylor said he could not comment on Monday's request to dismiss the case before U.S. District Judge Dan Jordan. In court documents, officials argue the girls, who allege they were shackled for 12 hours a day, have no basis to ask for a financial payment. One girl also alleges she was sexually abused. "It's so unfortunate that the state's going to use its resources to defend the indefensible instead of using its resources to resolve this matter in the best interest of the children," said the girls' attorney, Sheila Bedi of the Mississippi Protection and Advocacy System. Bedi states in court documents the state should have provided mental health treatment to the girls, some of

whom were suicidal while in custody. Assistant Attorney General Shawn Shurden argues in court documents that legal mandates to provide mental health or rehabilitative treatments applies only to the mentally ill, not teens. He does not address whether the treatment would be mandatory for teens if they were suicidal and might have been mentally ill. Since several of the teens have been released or soon will be released from the campus, their claims are moot, he states. The school houses teenage girls who committed crimes, including drug possession and assault. They typically stay six weeks to a few months, depending on the sentence. After allegations surfaced that girls were shackled for longer than a week, the investigation widened when state representatives learned male guards asked one girl for sexual favors and guards gave the teens cigarettes. Taylor said his agency's investigation is ongoing. One employee has been fired and five have been suspended with pay. In 2006, the state agreed to end a lawsuit federal officials filed two years earlier over allegations of abuse. A federal monitor visits both Columbia and Oakley Training School for boys and recommends improvements. (Webmaster Note: It is very common that the government agencies charged with child welfare are complicit in the abuse of children. Often, abuses are covered up by the very people who should be investigating and taking action.) (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.clarionledger.com Date: August 23, 2007)

'Kid Nation' Parents Gave Show Free Rein--August 23rd, 2007--LOS ANGELES (Aug. 23) - Children who participated in "Kid Nation," a CBS reality show that has come under fire over questions of whether it violated child safety and labor laws, were required to do whatever they were told by the show's producers, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or risk expulsion from the show, according to a copy of the contract signed by the children and their parents. The contract also specifies that while the children could be paid for their participation, those payments or the agreement to be fully under the producers' direction did not constitute employment under the producers' interpretation and therefore was not subject to any state or federal labor laws. The agreement, which was provided to The New York Times by the New Mexico attorney general's office under an open records act request, appears to anticipate the arguments that were later made by New Mexico state authorities that the show's producers might have violated state labor laws and licensing requirements for child housing. "Kid Nation," which is scheduled to have its premiere on CBS on Sept. 19, took 40 children, ages 8 to 15, and placed them in a New Mexico desert "ghost town" near Santa Fe for 40 days, during which they had little to no contact with their parents. The program has been criticized by New Mexico state authorities who have said that they were not notified in advance of the conditions, which they said appeared to violate state laws. The parent of at least one participant has complained to New Mexico authorities that the conditions were abusive and that several children were harmed during the production. The 22-page agreement leaves little room for parents to argue that they did not know what their children might encounter. As is standard in such agreements, the parents and the children agreed not to hold the producers and CBS responsible if their children died or were injured, if they received inadequate medical care, or if their housing was unsafe and caused injury. But while such agreements might be standard for adult participants in a reality show, it also takes on a different tone when the minor and the parent are being held solely responsible for any "emotional distress, illness, sexually transmitted diseases, H.I.V. and pregnancy" that might occur if the child "chooses to enter into an intimate relationship of any nature with another participant or any other person." The agreement also imposes extensive confidentiality requirements on the parents and the children, including that any interviews they grant must be approved by CBS. Those confidentiality conditions extend for three years beyond the end of the show, not the individual 13-episode cycle in which a child participates but the entire series, however many cycles it includes. The producers of "Kid Nation" have already begun interviewing children to take part in the second installment. Violating the confidentiality agreement carries a \$5 million penalty. CBS and the production companies, Good TV Inc. and Magic Molehill Productions, retained the rights to the children's life stories "in perpetuity and throughout the universe." And that right includes the right to portray the children either accurately or with fictionalization "to achieve a humorous or satirical effect." To ensure that parents and the children abide by the agreement, the payment of the \$5,000 stipend promised to the children who complete the series and the \$20,000 that some of them received for being voted the best participant in each of the 13 episodes can be withheld, according to the contract, until after the broadcast of the entire series. The contract also specifies that the children are able to leave the production at any time, but that in doing so they will lose their right to receive payment and will still be bound by confidentiality provisions. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: <http://news.aol.com> Date: August 23, 2007)

Zyprexa blamed for son's death, parents sue--August 22nd, 2007--Valedictorian of his high school class and honor graduate from Rice University, Scott Sexton's future promised greatness. However, sometime between graduating from Rice with a masters in business administration and working at the accounting firm Deloitte Touche, Sexton was diagnosed with a mental disorder and prescribed Zyprexa. He died of pancreatitis on Dec. 7, 2006. Sexton's grieving parents, Charles and Kaye, believe Zyprexa was at the root of their son's untimely death and are suing the drug's maker, Eli Lilly & Company - filing suit on Aug. 20 with the Jefferson County District Court. For complete story, [click here](#).

Tough Love and Free Speech--August 24th, 2007--...At some point, Sue Scheff became aware of online bulletin boards where teens who had been in WWASP programs were telling horrific stories of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. Users also posted media accounts detailing how nine WWASP-affiliated programs were closed following police investigations, regulatory infractions and/or [allegations of child abuse](#). Scheff later wrote on [her website](#) that she had become uncomfortable with some of the organization's methods. She removed her daughter from the program, and began posting her own allegations against WWASP on online forums, under several different names. She also set up her own consultant business, called Parents Universal Resource Experts (PURE), and began taking referral payments for placing teens, just as WWASP does. While this sort of practice isn't illegal, it's widely considered unethical. Conflicts of interest arise when consultants get higher referral fees from some programs than they get from others. The temptation arises to place kids in the programs that pay more, even though these may not be the programs best suited to a particular child. Once you're being regularly paid by a program, it's hard to be objective about its quality. This is why codes of ethics in psychology and psychiatry [typically bar](#) such "dual relationships." Under the [Lanham Act](#), which bans business competitors from making false and inflammatory claims about rivals, WWASP sued Scheff over her critical online posts. Because the court was able to substantiate Scheff's claims with [vivid testimony from victims](#), WWASP lost. Soon, however, the online boards buzzed again with yet more reports of abuse at new programs, and this time they included programs where Sue Scheff was referring children. It was around this time that Scheff launched her own lawsuit against Bock. Scheff had helped Bock remove her two sons from a WWASP program, but Bock eventually became outraged by what she considered to be Scheff's unethical referrals. The \$11 million judgment resulted only after Bock [didn't show up in court](#) to defend herself. Meanwhile, child welfare investigators substantiated charges of abuse in 2005 at the Whitmore Academy in Utah, a program to which Scheff made referrals. Regulators [shut the program down](#). Just last month, another complaint was filed against Scheff and another program where she places teens, the Focal Point Academy in Nevada. In that filing, a Florida couple alleges that Scheff failed to disclose that she was being paid by Focal Point, nor did she tell them that the business was licensed only as a foster home, not for residential treatment. The complaint describes these failures to disclose as "fraudulent misrepresentations" and "kickbacks." For complete story, [click here](#).

Trial for Royal Gorge Academy official begins Monday--August 25th, 2007--A week-long trial is scheduled to begin Monday for the Royal Gorge Academy co-founder who faces allegations that he assaulted several teenagers who once attended the private boarding school. Randall Hinton, 32, is set to defend himself against seven counts of third-degree assault and two counts of false imprisonment. All charges Hinton faces are misdemeanors that carry potential jail time, if convicted. The trial is the culmination of an investigation that began in January and was carried out by the Cañon City Police Department. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.canoncitydailyrecord.com Date: August 25, 2007)

3 Arrested In Connection With Drugs-For-Cash Ring--August 27th, 2007--(CBS) MURRIETA, Calif. Three more arrests were made in connection with an alleged drug-prescription-for-cash ring that authorities say was run by a Murrieta psychiatrist. James Dylan Hall, 21, Saeger Hall, 18, and Janine Hall, 45, all of Temecula, were taken into custody Friday by deputies serving a search warrant in the 29700 block of Calle Pantano, said Murrieta Sgt. Tony Conrad. Psychiatrist Joel Dreyer, arrested July 24 at his Murrieta home, was charged with five counts of issuing a false prescription. He remains behind bars on \$50,000 bail, awaiting a preliminary hearing...Dreyer, 69, worked with troubled teens in group homes, as well as in private practice. None of the teens was suspected of involvement in the alleged scheme, Vrooman said. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: <http://cbs2.com> Date: August 27, 2007)

Breaking: Larry Craig quits Romney campaign as news of lewd-conduct allegation spreads 27 Aug 2007 U.S. Sen. Larry Craig (R-Idaho) pleaded guilty to disorderly conduct this month after his arrest in a Minneapolis airport men's room by an undercover officer who said Craig was sending signals that he wanted to have sex. Craig agreed today to resign as the U.S. Senate co-chairman of Mitt Romney's presidential campaign. Craig served as co-chair with Robert Bennett of Utah. For complete story, [click here](#).

Graduate of a school for troubled teens describes therapy: Click [here](#) for audio clip. (Provided by www.nospank.net)

Controversy Surrounds Tranquility Bay: Click [here](#) for article. Or, [click here](#).

Why girl was sent to child-rape suspect Adhahn--July 21st, 2007--A Kansas woman said she let her daughter move to Pierce County with child-rape suspect Terapon Adhahn six years ago because she thought it was the best option for the then-rebellious 12-year-old girl. The girl and her family met Adhahn when he moved to Texas in 2001 after he was laid off from Boeing's plant in Auburn. Adhahn and the girl moved to Tacoma a short time later and lived at two different Spanaway addresses. According to charges filed earlier this week, Adhahn repeatedly raped the girl over the four years they lived together, at least once at gunpoint. Charging papers say the girl went to live with Adhahn with her mother's blessing, because the woman was having difficulty with the girl's behavior. The girl's mother said Adhahn, the cousin of a man she was dating at the time, offered to take the child off her hands. "I never thought he'd do anything to hurt my daughter," said the woman. "I asked her all the time. She said nothing happened." On Thursday, Pierce County prosecutors charged Adhahn, 42, with one count of first-degree rape, three counts of second-degree rape and three counts of child rape in connection with the repeated assaults on the woman's daughter. He also faces several rape charges and a kidnapping charge in connection with the abduction and sexual assault of an 11-year-old Tacoma girl in 2000. Pierce County prosecutors said they plan to charge Adhahn Monday with one count of aggravated-first-degree murder in connection with the slaying of 12-year-old Zina Linnik, who was abducted from outside her Tacoma home on July 4 and whose body was found July 12 in eastern Pierce County. Prosecutors haven't said whether they intend to seek the death penalty. (Webmaster Note: There is no excuse for irresponsible parenting.) For complete story, [click here](#).

Romney Fires One Teen-Abuse Linked Financier, Keeps Big One--September 6th, 2007--Radar has the news that Mitt Romney [has kicked troubled-teen titan](#) Robert Lichfield to the curb. Lichfield's organization, the World Wide Association of Specialty Schools and Programs (WWASPS, previously WWASP), is being sued in a class action suit by over 100 plaintiffs, alleging serious sexual, emotional and physical abuse. In the worst cases, teens were beaten, kept in stress positions, sleep deprived, made to walk thousands of laps on a hot desert track, forced to eat their own vomit and held in dog cages. Mexican police shot footage of the dog cages and the track, which was aired on Inside Edition. Another lawsuit alleges educational fraud by one facility--that facility was already made to pay parents back over \$1 million for falsely claiming to provide legitimate New York state high school diplomas, in one of the largest educational fraud judgments in New York history. Lichfield was Romney's Utah co-chair for finance--and he has been relieved of that position "until the lawsuit is resolved in the positive, which we are confident will happen," WWASPS spokesperson Ken Kay told Radar. This is the same Ken Kay who said under oath in another civil suit that he did not know whether sex between staff and teens in WWASPS programs was necessarily abusive. But Romney's national finance co-chair, Mel Sembler, remains. While Sembler has not been linked with any abuse personally, the organization he co-founded, Straight Inc., paid out millions of dollars in similar suits during the 1980's and 1990's. The abuse included kidnapping, false imprisonment, beatings, sexual humiliation (boys were called "fags," girls, "whores"), punitive use of isolation and restraint and bizarre incidents like teens being gagged with Kotex and held on the floor for hours until they wet or even soiled themselves. In every state where Straight had a facility, regulators and/or lawsuits eventually documented serious abuse. For complete story, [click here](#).

Texas Juvenile Detention Centers Cope With Charges of Rape, Abuse--April 16th, 2007--"You need to get both hands on the wheel," Genger Galloway urges her son, as he steers her mini-van down a side road near Crockett, Texas. She shakes her head from side to side. "I need a Xanax is what I need." At 19 years old, Joseph Galloway seems too old for driving lessons. But Joseph's teenage years have been tumultuous ones. Arrested at 15 for inappropriate sexual contact with a sibling, he expected to spend nine months in one of the 13 secure facilities or nine halfway houses run by the [Texas Youth Commission](#) (TYC); instead, he remained incarcerated for four years. During that period, he claims that guards deliberately placed him in a cell with a larger boy who raped him and encouraged gang members to break his jaw. He also said he was molested by a female staff member. As his mother protested -- interviewing 150 parents of other TYC inmates and petitioning legislators for changes in the system -- Joseph said he was singled out. "If your parents complain, you get your sentence extended," Genger insists. The TYC's official spokesman tends to agree with her. "We have no confidence that these extensions have been used uniformly," said Jim Hurley, the agency's interim communications director. "We have suspicions that some of these may have been done to punish kids." Now, in the wake of a scandal that has rocked the state of Texas, 1,100 extensions are being reviewed. On April 5, Joseph became one of 473 inmates released amid pressure from the Texas state legislature and [Gov. Rick Perry](#). During his first week home, Joseph savored his new freedom, catching catfish and perch at a nearby lake, even participating in an Easter egg hunt. For complete story, [click here](#).

Statesville Man Who Worked With Troubled Children Faces Sex Charges--September 12th, 2007--STATESVILLE, N.C. -- A man who worked with troubled children in Iredell County faces sex assault charges. James Fredrick Frank, 38, of Statesville faces three counts of first-degree rape, three counts of first-degree sex offense and one count of indecent liberties. Detectives said the charges stem from more than six years of rape of a young female relative, but Det. Cheryl Hilderbrand said the fact that Frank worked on a daily basis with children is alarming. "If I had to give a rating on a scale one to 10, for the severity and the length of time my victim has had to endure, it's going to be a 10," said Hilderbrand, who has worked in the Special Victims Unit for 15 years. "It's the worst I've personally worked on." Frank had been helping students deal with their behavior in the classroom at Barium Springs Home for Children for about three years. The president of the home said authorities informed him of the charges early Wednesday and Frank has been suspended without pay. For complete story, [click here](#).

Counselor accused of abusing teenager--September 13th, 2007--A mental-health counselor is under investigation for alleged sexual misconduct with a teenage inmate at the King County Juvenile Detention Center. According to authorities, a then-17-year-old boy was serving time at the detention center for assault when he was allegedly abused by the female counselor, who reportedly gave the teen extra privileges and gifts, such as additional phone time and snacks. Seattle police said the allegations are being investigated by an officer with the Special Assault Unit. The alleged misconduct was discovered when jail officials intercepted communications between the two, according to a spokesman for the King County correctional facilities. The counselor, a contract employee through the University of Washington, has been banned from the detention center, said Maj. Willie Hayes of the King County Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention. Hayes said the allegation is also being investigated internally. "It's a big deal any time somebody is alleged to have committed sexual misconduct with a juvenile," Hayes said. "We're taking this very seriously." The current investigation follows the prosecution of four King County corrections officers who were charged with sexual misconduct with inmates. For complete story, [click here](#).

Experts Question Study on Youth Suicide Rates--September 14th, 2007--Last week, leading psychiatric researchers linked a 2004 increase in the suicide <http://health.nytimes.com/health/guides/disease/suicide-and-suicidal-behavior/overview.html> rate for children and adolescents to a warning by the Food and Drug Administration about the use of antidepressants in minors. The F.D.A. warning, the researchers suggested, might have resulted in severely depressed teenagers going without needed treatment. But the data in the study, which was published in The American Journal of Psychiatry and received widespread publicity, do not support that explanation, outside experts say. While suicide rates for Americans ages 19 and under rose 14 percent in 2004, the number of prescriptions for antidepressants in that group was basically unchanged and did not drop substantially, according to data from the study. Prescription rates for minors did fall sharply a year later, but the suicide rates for 2005 are not yet available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention "There doesn't seem to be any evidence of a statistically significant association between suicide rates and prescription rates provided in the paper" for the years after the F.D.A. warnings, said Thomas R. Ten Have, a professor of biostatistics at the University of Pennsylvania. In the report published last week, the authors analyzed data on suicides and antidepressant use over several years in the United States and the Netherlands. They argued that drug regulators may have created a larger problem by requiring pharmaceutical companies to place warnings on antidepressants, scaring away patients and doctors. The F.D.A. warning label says that a potential side effect in young people is an increase in suicidal thoughts and behavior. "The most plausible explanation is a cause and effect relationship: prescription rates change, therefore suicides change," said Dr. J. John Mann, a psychiatrist at Columbia University and a co-author of the study. But Dr. Ten Have and other experts, while noting that it may still turn out that a reduction in prescriptions is leading to increased suicides among young people, said that the new study neither proved nor disproved this. Instead, some experts say, the study illustrates why suicide trends are so difficult to understand - and why this debate has been so polarizing and confusing. In an interview, Robert D. Gibbons, a professor of biostatistics and psychiatry at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the lead author of the journal article, acknowledged that the data from the United States that he and his colleagues analyzed did not support a causal link between prescription rates and suicide in 2004. "We really need to see the 2005 numbers on suicide to see what happened," he said. But Dr.

Gibbons defended the paper, saying that when taken in the context of previous studies that linked falling antidepressant use to increased suicide rates, "this study was suggestive, that's what we're saying." Other experts, however, said that the problem with such studies is precisely that they are suggestive rather than conclusive and are open to interpretation. Suicides are rare and uniquely personal events that can be driven by many factors: worsening depression or other mental illnesses, breakups or job loss, lack of drug or psychiatric treatment, even easy access to guns. In calling for the labeling change on antidepressants, F.D.A. scientists based their decision on data from drug makers' clinical trials, considered the gold standard in medical research. Those trials have shown that young patients who took antidepressants were about twice as likely than those on placebos to report suicidal thoughts or attempts, though the numbers in both groups were small. Yet none of the youngsters in the trials, most of which ran for no more than a month or two, actually committed suicide. And most psychiatrists with long experience using antidepressants in children say the benefits far outweigh any risk. In studies of data collected before 2004, Dr. Gibbons, Dr. Mann and others found clear associations between prescription patterns and suicide rates. For instance, prescription rates for patients from ages 10 to 24 rose steadily in the 1990s, while the suicide rate in that age group fell 28 percent from 1990 to 2003, according to a government report released last week. In another study, researchers at Columbia University, analyzing data from 1990 to 2000, found that for every 20 percent increase in the use of antidepressants among adolescents, there were five fewer suicides per 100,000 people each year. Psychiatric researchers have found similar patterns among some age groups in other countries, including Sweden, Japan and Finland. But many uncertainties remain. While the suicide rate for adolescents has fallen over the last decade, it has remained largely unchanged for the overall population, though prescriptions for psychiatric medicines have risen sharply in all age groups. Adjusted for the demographic changes, about 11 Americans per 100,000 killed themselves in 2004, the same as in 1994. Demographics can play a role: White people kill themselves about twice as frequently as African-Americans and Hispanics, so as the population becomes more diverse, the suicide rate ought to drop, all else being equal. And suicide rates also appear to be negatively correlated with economic growth, which was exceptionally strong from 1994 to 2000. Advances in medicine also mean more lives can be saved now. With so many potentially confounding factors at play, interpreting the relationship between prescription rates and suicides is difficult, said Andrew Leon, a professor of biostatistics at Weill Cornell Medical College who has served on F.D.A. panels studying suicide risk and antidepressants. "These kinds of studies are very important in giving us a sense of the rates of disease and death in a population and how those may correspond to other things," Dr. Leon said. "But what they don't do is tell us whether the two trends are directly related." (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: <http://topics.nytimes.com> Date: September 14, 2008)

Federal Prosecutor Arrested In Child Sex Sting--September 17th, 2007--DETROIT -- A U.S. Justice Department official has been arrested on suspicion of traveling to Detroit over the weekend to have sex with a minor. John David R. Atchison, 53, an assistant U.S. attorney from the northern district of Florida, was arraigned in U.S. District Court in Detroit Monday afternoon. An undercover officer posed as a mother offering her child to Atchison for sex, according to police. Prosecutors said Atchison flew from Pensacola, Fla., to Detroit on Sunday intending to have sex with the 5-year-old girl. He was arrested at Detroit Metropolitan Airport. He is charged with enticement of a minor to engage in sexual activity. According to authorities, Atchison made contact with a detective working undercover for the Macomb County Sheriff's department's. The detective, acting as the child's mother, allegedly arranged a sexual encounter between Atchison and her 5-year-old daughter, police said. In deposition, detectives said Atchison suggested the mother tell her daughter that "you found her a sweet boyfriend who will bring her presents." The undercover detective expressed concern about physical injury to the 5-year-old girl as a result of the sexual activity. Detectives said Atchison responded, "I am always gentle and loving; not to worry, no damage ever, no rough stuff ever. I only like it soft and nice." For complete story, [click here](#).

Should teachers be able to bring guns to school?--September 18th, 2007--ASHLAND, Ore. — In court documents, she's known as "Jane Doe." Innocuous enough, but the woman behind that pseudonym pushes one of the nation's hottest political buttons: guns and school safety. What Ms. Doe wants to do is take her Glock 9-mm pistol to the high school in Medford, Ore., where she teaches. She's licensed to carry a concealed weapon, and she has what many supporters say is a legitimate reason for being armed: a restraining order against her ex-husband based on threats he's allegedly made against her and her children. But district policy prohibits anyone except a law-enforcement officer from bringing a weapon onto campus. When word got out that she had a concealed-carry permit, administrators reminded her of that policy... "Jane Doe," who agreed to be interviewed by phone on condition of anonymity, says she does not want to be viewed as an "Annie Oakley." Trying to extricate herself from an abusive relationship led her to buy her first gun just a few years ago, she says. Before that, she had not been a gun-rights activist... According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, 37 states have laws specifically banning guns at schools. In Washington state, the law prohibits teachers from carrying firearms on school property. In general, administrators, teachers organizations and law-enforcement agencies favor such laws. In the confusion of a school shooting, police officials have said, adding guns to the situation just makes it more dangerous. The state panel investigating the April 16 shootings by a mentally disturbed student who killed 33 people at Virginia Tech University, the nation's deadliest school shooting, agreed. "If numerous people had been rushing around with handguns, the possibility of accidental or mistaken shootings would have increased significantly," the panel wrote... In Michigan last week, 16 state lawmakers sponsored legislation allowing teachers, administrators and other school employees to carry concealed weapons on school property. Ohio has a similar bill pending. South Carolina, Alabama and Virginia are among several other states that have considered lifting school-campus gun bans this year, according to Stateline.org, which tracks state issues... So far, just one state — Utah — allows concealed weapons on campus. Utah's law applies to public colleges and universities. The University of Utah opposed the 2004 legislation that allows weapons on campus, but lost in the state supreme court. For complete story, [click here](#).

U.S. military uses moderate clerics to try to change radical minds--September 19th, 2007--WASHINGTON — The U.S. military has introduced "religious enlightenment" and other education programs for Iraqi detainees, some of whom are as young as 11, Marine Maj. Gen. Douglas Stone, the commander of U.S. detention facilities in Iraq, said Tuesday. Stone said such efforts, aimed mainly at Iraqis who have been held for more than a year, are intended to "bend them back to our will" and are part of waging war in what he called "the battlefield of the mind." The religious courses are led by Muslim clerics who "teach out of a moderate doctrine," Stone said, according to the transcript of a conference call he held from Baghdad with a group of defense bloggers. As a result of the increased U.S. troop presence in Iraq this year, the number of Iraqis in U.S. detention has swelled from about 10,000 last year to more than 25,000. That includes more than 820 juvenile detainees, most of whom are held in a facility that the military calls the "House of Wisdom." The schooling there "tears apart" the arguments of al-Qaida, such as "Let's kill innocents," and helps to "bring some of the edge off" the detainees, Stone said. The effort to reshape attitudes among the growing detainee population is aimed at addressing a problem that has vexed U.S. troops in Iraq for the past four years: Military detention facilities have served as breeding grounds for extremist views, transforming some prisoners into hard-core insurgents, according to military analysts. Stone said he wants to identify "irreconcilables" — those detainees whose views cannot be moderated — and "put them away" in permanent detention facilities. Psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors and interrogators help distinguish the extremists from others, he said. (Webmaster Note: Now it all makes sense, doesn't it? See: www.beyondbusiness.net/openletter.htm and www.heal-online.org/root.htm) For complete story, [click here](#).

Award reduced in Mormon church abuse case--September 19th, 2007--The state Court of Appeals has overturned a portion of a 2005 civil court verdict that found The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints financially liable after a church member sexually abused his two stepdaughters. The appellate court ruled on Tuesday that while the Mormon church still owed the two stepdaughters a little more than \$1.2 million because a bishop kept one from reporting the abuse, the church was not financially responsible for the stepfather's liability in the case. That decision will reduce the amount that was awarded to the girls in 2005, although attorneys were not immediately sure by how much. The two sisters, Jessica and Ashley Cavaliere, had originally won a \$4.2 million award in a King County civil trial that held the stepfather, Peter N. Taylor, and the church liable for the years of abuse. (Webmaster Note: Don't send your child to Utah!) For complete story, [click here](#).

Witness in polygamist trial: Sex awkward but not forced--September 20th, 2007--ST. GEORGE, Utah — A member of a polygamous sect who entered into an arranged marriage with his 14-year-old cousin testified Wednesday that he never forced himself on his wife. Allen Steed took the stand in defense of Warren Jeffs, 51, the leader of the Fundamentalist Church of Latter Day Saints (FLDS) who is facing two counts of being an accomplice to rape. Prosecutors claim Jeffs used his iron-fisted influence to force the marriage, and later sex, in 2001. The alleged victim, now 21, testified last week that Jeffs forced her to marry Steed and that her husband ordered her to have sex. When she complained to Jeffs that Steed was "touching her" in ways she did not like and asked that the marriage be dissolved, she said, the self-styled prophet refused... Steed, 19 when church leaders told him to marry his cousin, acknowledged Wednesday that

he had been a clumsy suitor. Socializing between the sexes before marriage is prohibited in FLDS society. "I'm sure it wasn't easy ... knowing now how I was then," Steed said softly. Visibly uncomfortable, Steed had to stand to be heard and occasionally dabbed at tears. "I've never been really good at communication," he said. Steed acknowledged that his cousin was standoffish to him and had made clear at times that she didn't desire the marriage. But other times she was affectionate, he said... The two remained married until 2004, when the accuser left Steed for another FLDS member and fled the church. Jeffs then dissolved the marriage. Steed said he understood his testimony could be used against him if he were to be charged but was willing to speak anyway. Under cross-examination, Steed said he did not believe the government's laws apply to him. Steed said, however, that he would never lie for Jeffs. "It'd be against God's law," he said. The defense ended its case after Steed's testimony, and prosecutors called a sole rebuttal witness. Jane Blackmoore is a midwife who attended to the accuser when she had a miscarriage in 2002. Blackmoore testified that the accuser said her husband was abusive. "She felt like she had been forced," Blackmoore said. "She didn't use the word 'sex' but said, 'My husband doesn't take no for an answer.'" (Webmaster Note: Please don't send your child to Utah or a program founded by or headquartered in Utah. Keep your children safe. Keep your children at home.) For complete story, [click here](#).

Seattle counselor fired after being caught in online sex sting--September 20th, 2007--A Seattle-area counselor surrendered his health-care credentials last week after he told the Department of Health he engaged in a sexually explicit online chat with an adult posing as a teen three years ago. Malcolm McKay was a counselor in private practice and also counseled troubled youths at the Ruth Dykeman Children's Center when the activities came to light. The Internet site for the Seattle Institute for Sex Therapy, Education and Research also lists him as one of its "educators." The Dykeman Center immediately "terminated his employment," according to Tom Rembiesa, president and CEO. The center reported him to police, Child Protective Services and the DOH. The investigations did not turn up any evidence of inappropriate behavior with his clients. McKay was never charged with a crime. DOH documents say that over two days in September 2004, McKay chatted online with an adult posing as a 14-year-old boy. The adult worked with [Perverted-Justice.com](#), a group that targets online child predators. McKay transmitted "naked, graphic photos" of himself and appeared "to be grooming his chat-mate for a sexual relationship," the DOH statement of charges said. For complete story, [click here](#).

Honored Utah teacher admits sex crimes--September 21st, 2007--A man honored as among the best teachers in Utah pleaded guilty Thursday to felony sex charges involving 11 students in his suburban classroom. Frank Laine Hall, 37, who taught first grade at Rosamond Elementary School in the Salt Lake City suburb of Riverton until his arrest in March, could get up to 30 years to life in prison, prosecutor Rodwicke Ybarra said. Hall remains free on \$500,000 bond until his sentencing Nov. 14. Hall received a Huntsman Award for Excellence in Education in 2006, for being one of the best teachers in Utah. (Webmaster Note: Again, please don't send your children to Utah!!!) For complete story, [click here](#).

Wanted: good foster parents--September 21st, 2007--To Joey Charlton, a supervisor at the Children's Administration office that handles the placement of abused and neglected children from King County, Wednesday was a good day — only seven crises for his team to handle. That's seven kids who were pulled from their parents' homes and were in need of immediate placement — immediate, as in right this minute, today. On any given day, Charlton's five placement coordinators also juggle dozens of other cases they consider long-term, where there is perhaps an extra day or two before the youth gets out of juvenile detention, or a week before a foster parent calls it quits. Last week, Charlton said, it took nine straight hours of phone calls before they could find a temporary home for a 3-year-old boy. Not long before that, they had to find a home for six siblings whose parents had been arrested — and who spoke only Cambodian. It is a difficult job under the best of circumstances. But it's made even tougher because Washington has a shortage of foster parents. State workers first try to find relatives; next, they look for a nearby licensed foster home that will accept the child. When that doesn't work, they're sometimes forced to go across the state to find space. Statewide, only three in 10 of these children stay in the same city. For those who wind up far from home, their trauma is magnified. Not only do these kids lose their parents, but they lose most everything else they know: their teachers, their friends, their local park. "The common denominator is they're all scared and they're all loyal to their families," Charlton said. Now, DSHS has launched an agency wide focus on foster parenting, recruiting foster parents in places and in ways they never have before, reaching out to everyone from struggling migrant workers to well-paid Microsofties. In addition, they're urging people in the community to get involved with abused children's lives in other ways. And they're turning to unusual tools, such as marketing campaigns and demographic studies, to improve the statistics. (Webmaster Note: Many pre-teens and teens in the foster system are placed in abusive behavior modification programs such as Provo Canyon School when no other placement is available. If you have the room, the time, and the love, please become a foster parent.) For complete story, [click here](#).

ITV under fire for attack on teens--September 23rd, 2007--ITV's flagship current affairs series, Tonight With Trevor McDonald, has been accused of deliberate misrepresentation in one of its programmes, 'Ann Widdecombe v The Hoodies'. Sir Trevor McDonald has promised to investigate the complaints personally, after community leaders and a cross-party alliance of politicians in the north London borough of Islington said Widdecombe falsely depicted the Andover estate there as a 'dump' terrorised by gangs of out-of-control youngsters. 'Ann Widdecombe was basically out to get a specific story and, by hanging around at night time and shoving her camera into the faces of young people, demanding that they account for themselves, she made sure she got it,' said Terry Stacy, deputy leader of Islington council. 'It was a cheap way to demonise young people.' For complete story, [click here](#).

Ex-Teacher Charged With Teen Sex in S.C.--September 24th, 2007--COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) - A former teacher was charged with having sex with a teenage boy, the [third teacher](#) in the same county accused of such crimes in the past year and a half, authorities said Monday. Karen Robbins, 49, was arrested over the weekend and charged with three counts each of criminal sexual conduct with a minor and committing a [lewd act](#) on a child. The sex occurred with a 15-year-old in her car and twice at her home between September and November 2005, according to arrest warrants. Robbins was a private school teacher at the time, and officials said the accusations did not involve one of her students. For complete story, [click here](#).

Teacher jailed on stalking charges--September 25th, 2007--A teacher and reserve police officer has been jailed on charges of stalking a 15-year-old girl, one of his former students, while awaiting trial on charges that he raped her. Vernon Heizer, 50, of Nespelem, a teacher at Grand Coulee Dam Middle School, remained in jail Monday with bail set at \$100,000. He has been dismissed as a Grand Coulee reserve police officer and placed on leave from his school job, Okanogan County Sheriff Frank T. Rogers and school-district officials said. Heizer came under scrutiny after his estranged wife found a cellular telephone marked "broken" with other items in a box after he moved out of their home in June, according to documents filed by prosecutors. Sheriff's detectives determined that the phone had been used to exchange numerous calls and text messages with a girl who told authorities they had also exchanged nude photographs of each other, sheriff's Sgt. Michael Lee Worden wrote. Heizer said he formed a close relationship with the girl when she was in a sixth grade but denied her account that they had been having sex since October or November, when she was 14. Heizer was arrested and charged in July with two counts of third-degree child rape and one each of third-degree child molesting and communicating with a minor for immoral purposes. Heizer was released on bail. Several witnesses reported that Heizer began driving by the girl's home and school in mid-August and that he had been seen in a vehicle parked near her home, Rogers said. Heizer was arrested Sept. 14 on charges of stalking a witness in violation of a protection order. For complete story, [click here](#).

Federal Way woman pleads guilty in foster-child abuse--September 25th, 2007--A woman who burned her foster daughter's tongue with a heated fork, beat her feet with dumbbells and stuck a needle into the girl's eye several times pleaded guilty Monday to three counts of assault. Chornice Y. Kabbelliyaa, who also goes by the last name of Lewis, pleaded guilty in King County Superior Court to one count of first-degree assault and two counts of second-degree assault for her treatment of her foster daughter, who is also her cousin. Kabbelliyaa, 34, of Federal Way, had been the girl's licensed foster mother since the girl was 5 years old. The woman was arrested last year after Child Protective Services was called by a neighbor who reported seeing Kabbelliyaa punch the girl, hit her with an umbrella and lock her in an outside storage unit for hours. Physicians examining the girl found serious damage to the girl's right eye, scarring, bruising and a severely burned tongue. The girl, who was then 14, told police and CPS investigators that her foster mother had become angry on one occasion and plunged an insulin needle into the pupil of her right eye, holding it in her eye for several minutes and telling the girl not to move or she'd be blinded. A medical examination showed similar puncture wounds to the pupil of the girl's left eye. In addition, police and prosecutors said in charging papers, Kabbelliyaa beat the girl with crutches, an umbrella, canned goods and keys. Charging documents also state that Kabbelliyaa would turn on the stove's burner until it was red-hot before pressing the girl's palm onto the burner. Kabbelliyaa, who is scheduled to be sentenced on Nov. 16 at the Regional Justice Center in Kent, will face a standard sentencing range of 10 years to a little more than 14 years. Prosecutors said they will seek a top-end sentence. For complete story, [click here](#).

[CBS, you've got to be kidding me](#)--September 28th, 2007--WASHINGTON — When they write the cultural history of childhood in 21st-century America, I hope they leave room for a few unkind words about "Kid Nation." CBS' latest new reality show is about 40 kids from 8 to 15 years old who are dropped into a ghost town in New Mexico with only a production crew to call their own. The kids' task, we are told, is to "try to fix their forefathers' mistakes and build a new town that works." Their real job, of course, is to attract viewers who want to see what happens to the "first ever kid nation." Will kids left to their own devices create a democratic idyll or a savage anarchy? There is nothing particularly new about the conflicting images of children as innocents and children as beasts. It's as old as mythology. It lives on in the heart of every parent who's seen her child turn from a screaming sociopath at the supermarket checkout to a philosopher king at the beach: "Who painted the sky blue?" But the real founding fathers of "Kid Nation" leave little to chance or choice. It's the producers, not the so-called "pioneers," who determine the structure of the town called Bonanza. It's the adults who lay the cultural grid down the main street. And this makes "Kid Nation" an entry into the annals of childhood as it's now lived and argued about in America. You see, this is what the adults brought with them from Hollywood to Bonanza: competition, class and consumerism. In the very first episode, the children were directed to form four armies for color war. They were told that victory would determine their class status. And it did. In a scenario Karl Marx couldn't have made up, the winners of the war were dubbed "upper class," the runners-up were labeled "merchants," then "cooks," and finally "laborers." The little capitalists were allowed to use their very unequal paychecks for very unequal chores to pay for goodies at the town store. The producers did everything but deny the lower-income children their health coverage. Cutthroat competition, class divisions, unrelenting consumerism. Maybe it is reality programming after all. Aren't these the basic three C's of the culture in which we are all raising children? Parent bashing is the favorite indoor sport these days. It's behind the voyeurism that makes "Supernanny" popular and Britney Spears unpopular. It's why we cheered the judge assigning the sinking celebrity a parenting coach. Ordinary parents are held responsible for protecting their children from every imaginable danger. They are fed a high-anxiety diet of horror stories about lead paint in toys, Crocs on escalators and killer cribs. If you Google "danger" and "children," you get 21 million hits of everything from online predators to junk food. Yet, even the most watchful parents are not immune to criticism. The latest villains are the helicopter parents. See them hover over their children's lives! Watch them pull the invisible apron strings of a cellphone, book their children's playdates and write their college entrance essays while squashing their sense of imagination. Parents even have to protect kids from overprotection. The back story is that America has privatized child-raising. We regard children as the wholly owned subsidiary and responsibility of their families. Parents, in turn, can become so absorbed in worrying about the side rails on cribs that we lose focus on the cultural environment that encases all of us. And there is no bike helmet that can protect our children's brains from the three C's. Before it premiered, "Kid Nation" itself was charged with endangering the children by violating child-labor laws and even child-abuse laws. Indeed, the [consent form](#) that the parents signed is as creepy as the ones you don't read before you go into surgery. Even creepier was the scene when two homesick children cried and not one adult had the impulse to drop a camera and offer comfort. Nevertheless, the real trouble in Bonanza is not that the cast of mini-survivors was exposed to "serious bodily injury, illness or death." It's that the children urged to build a better town (read "world") than their forefathers were manipulated into the copycat media culture. The reward is a gold star literally worth its weight in gold: \$20,000. The only hero so far is 8-year-old Jimmy, the New Hampshire boy who had the good sense to go home. As for the rest? The children of Bonanza didn't make the rules. They inherited them. It's not a kid nation. It's our nation. (Webmaster Note: Sometimes it pays to write a letter to the editor. [Tell CBS "Shame on You"](#). Also see: <http://www.cbskidnation.blogspot.com/>) For complete story, [click here](#).

[TYC investigates how prison's 'deplorable conditions' escaped detection](#)--October 2nd, 2007--The Texas Youth Commission is investigating why juvenile inmates endured squalor and deprivation at a privately run West Texas prison that was repeatedly praised by TYC's own quality-assurance monitors. The agency began busling the 197 male inmates from the Coke County Juvenile Justice Center before dawn Tuesday. Officials also canceled an \$8-million annual contract with operators of the state's largest private juvenile prison, citing "deplorable conditions." For complete story, [click here](#).

[Missouri boot camp part of national investigation](#)--October 3rd, 2007--A Missouri boot camp where a student died nearly three years ago is part of a federal investigation into the nation's facilities for troubled teens. Three former employees of Thayer Learning Center in Kidder, Mo., told The Kansas City Star this week that government investigators told them Thayer was a key focus of that investigation. Greg Spies, a Kansas City attorney for Thayer, said Thayer officials have "fully cooperated" with investigators for the U.S. Government Accountability Office who recently visited the facility and interviewed students. The GAO, the investigative arm of Congress, is conducting the nationwide investigation into residential treatment programs for children at the behest of U.S. Rep. George Miller, a California Democrat. A hearing is scheduled for Oct. 10 in Washington, D.C., before the House Education and Labor Committee, of which Miller is the chairman. Ultimately, Miller's office hopes to convince Congress that boot camp-type facilities should be more stringently regulated. Thayer — which is exempt from state oversight under Missouri law — houses more than 100 troubled teens about 50 miles north of Kansas City. It has been the subject of numerous child abuse allegations, most of which came to light after the November 2004 death of student Roberto Reyes. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.kansascity.com Date: October 3, 2007)

[Ammonia was 'tipping point' in teen's boot camp death, doctor says](#)--October 4th, 2007--PANAMA CITY, Fla. — A Florida teen who collapsed during a confrontation with boot camp guards died of organ failure after they repeatedly used ammonia capsules to try to revive him, a doctor testified Thursday...Drill instructors Henry Dickens, Charles Enfinger, Patrick Garrett, Raymond Hauck, Charles Helms Jr., Henry McFadden Jr., Joseph Walsh and nurse Kristin Schmidt each face up to 30 years in prison if convicted of aggravated manslaughter of a person under 18. A 25-minute surveillance video of the altercation, which the jury viewed Thursday, shows the guards covering the teen's mouth and waving ammonia capsules in his face on three separate occasions, once for as long as five minutes, while Anderson appears to pass in and out of consciousness. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Congressional Hearing: Tough Love or Teen Torment: Will the Industry Finally Be Regulated?](#)--October 8th, 2007--Congress is finally looking into the "troubled teen" industry and the deaths, human rights abuses and other problems that have occurred in teen "boot camps" "wilderness programs" and other "tough love" residential settings. In many states, these institutions are less regulated than dog kennels and nail salons. On Wednesday, Rep. George Miller (D-CA), Chair of the House Education and Labor Committee, will hold a full committee [investigative hearing](#) and present results from a Government Accountability Office report that he commissioned. The investigation promises to be revealing-- and may be highly unfavorable to industry claims that it can regulate itself. My book, [Help at Any Cost: How the Troubled-Teen Industry Cons Parents and Hurts Kids](#) (Riverhead, 2006), was the first to expose systematic problems in the industry and the complete lack of regulatory oversight on programs that are essentially private jails for kids. The book helped spur Miller's push for legislation. As it stands now, there is more federal regulation protecting mule deer than there is preserving the rights of children in these institutions. Anyone can open one-- there are no qualifications required, nor criminal background checks. Some owners have even made deals with prosecutors and regulators to stay away from their facilities, due to accusations of sexual and other kinds of child abuse. But they were not made to leave the industry! And no legal authority is required to inspect these facilities or see to it that kids are well-treated in them. Teens placed in these settings do not have any right to appeal their confinement: they may be held without contact with the outside world until they turn 18. Moreover, in the programs, they are often subject to "therapies" that many consider torturous: food deprivation, sleep deprivation, total isolation, punitive restraint and constant emotional and even sexual humiliation. When such tactics are used on suspected terrorists, there is a human rights outcry-- but these programs have done everything short of waterboarding kids with impunity for decades. (Webmaster Note: Waterboarding has been done at various teen programs in Mississippi and Georgia, perhaps others as well, if waterboarding is the practice of drowning/reviving/drowning, it's done at teen programs in the U.S.) For complete story, [click here](#).

[Tough-Love Teen Camps A "Nightmare"](#)--October 10th, 2007--For years, people have complained about abuses at so-called boot camps and other wilderness programs where frustrated parents send their troubled teens to get straightened out. Today, [USA Today](#) gets a sneak peak at the findings from the first federal inquiry into the programs, and the results reveal a lot of tough love -- minus the love. The Government Accountability Office cataloged 1,619 incidents of abuse in 33 states in 2005, according to a study to be released later today. It also looked at a sample of 10 deaths since 1990 and found untrained staff, inadequate food or reckless operations were factors. In half of those cases, the teens died of dehydration or heat exhaustion. "This nightmare has remained an open secret for years," said Rep. George Miller, D-Calif, who has designed a bill to encourage states to enact regulations. "Congress must act, and it must act swiftly." Investigators counted thousands of cases of abuse, using Web sites and news reports. Five of the 10 programs where teens died are still operating. The GAO didn't release names, but USA Today pieced together a few of the cases from news reports. For complete story, [click here](#).

Congress Probes Teen Boot Camps--October 10th, 2007--WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal investigator and parents whose children died at youth boot camps urged other families Wednesday to avoid enrolling teens in such programs until there is more oversight of them. "Buyer beware," said Greg Kutz, who led a congressional investigation into the camps. "You really don't know what you're getting." The Government Accountability Office, the investigative arm of Congress, found thousands of allegations of abuse, some of which involved death, at boot camps, also referred to as residential treatment programs, since the early 1990s. Kutz, who led the investigation, said the GAO closely examined 10 closed cases where a teenager died while enrolled in one of these programs. "Ineffective program management played a key role in most of these deaths," Kutz testified before the House Education and Labor Committee. He said the staff at the facilities was often poorly trained, and kids weren't properly fed and were exposed to dangerous conditions. He said teenagers' cries for medical assistance or help were ignored. Kutz said in only one of the 10 cases studied closely was anyone found criminally liable and sentenced to serve prison time. Residential treatment programs are slickly marketed to parents who are at a loss as to how to help an emotionally troubled teen, Kutz said. In the cases he studied, "The parents were pretty much told what they wanted to hear," Kutz said. Bob Bacon, of Phoenix, Ariz., whose son Aaron died while enrolled in a wilderness program in Utah, said he was fooled by the owners of that facility into believing his son would be well cared for. "We were conned by their fraudulent claims and will go to our graves regretting our gullibility," he said. Bacon said his son was forced to hike eight to 10 miles a day with inadequate nutrition and was not given protective gear to withstand freezing temperatures. When Aaron complained of severe stomach pains and asked for a doctor, his pleas were ignored even though he had dramatically lost weight and suffered from other serious symptoms, his father testified. Aaron died of an acute infection related to a perforated ulcer. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: <http://ap.google.com> Date: October 10, 2007)

Troubled US teens suffer abuse, neglect at 'boot camps'--October 11th, 2007--WASHINGTON (AFP) — Troubled American teens have been abused and neglected at the high-discipline, "tough love" programs which are supposed to help them, and have sometimes paid with their lives, according to a report by the US Congress. The report presented to a committee of US lawmakers Wednesday spoke of "thousands of allegations of abuse, some of which involved death, at residential treatment programs across the country and in American-owned and operated facilities abroad between 1990 and 2007. "Today we will hear stories of children denied access to bathrooms and forced to defecate on themselves; children forced to eat dirt or their own vomit; children paired with so-called buddies whose job was to abuse them," Democratic lawmaker George Miller said at the presentation of the report on residential treatment centers, which are designed to help troubled youths. The report, drawn up by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), was released as a Florida court began hearing the case of the beating death -- caught on video tape -- of 14-year-old Martin Lee Anderson at a program for young offenders. "During 2005 alone, 33 states reported 1,619 staff members involved in incidents of abuse in residential programs," it said. For complete story, [click here](#).

Teen 'boot camps' get congressional scrutiny--October 10th, 2007--WASHINGTON | The death of 15-year-old Roberto Reyes at a "boot camp" for troubled teenagers in rural Missouri three years ago drew the attention of Congress on Wednesday. Thousands of teenagers have possibly been abused and many have died as a result at similar residential disciplinary treatment programs, a federal investigation has found. The report by the Government Accountability Office addressed problems at several disciplinary programs across the country. Concerns included withholding food, drink and medical care, as well as reckless practices by untrained staff. Its findings, that more than 1,600 employees at treatment centers in 33 states had been linked to incidents of abuse in 2005 alone, were the subject of a House hearing Wednesday. The GAO echoed some of the findings of a 2005 Kansas City Star investigation, which uncovered several alleged instances of abuse at the Thayer Learning Center in Kidder, Mo., north of Kansas City. The owners have denied any wrongdoing. The focus of the hearing was also on parents, forever haunted by choices they'd give anything to take back. "His mother and I will never escape our decision to send our gifted 16-year-old son to his death," testified Bob Bacon of Arizona, whose son, Aaron, died at a Utah wilderness therapy camp. "We were conned by their fraudulent claims and will go to our graves regretting our gullibility." The GAO said that during three weeks in 1994 when Aaron was constantly forced to hike, he complained of severe abdominal pain, lost 20 percent of his body weight and lost control of his bodily functions. He received no medical care. It also found little oversight. Some states license the centers. Others, such as Missouri, don't. "These allegations range from neglect to torture, a word that I don't use lightly," said Democratic Rep. George Miller of California, chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.kansascity.com Date: October 10, 2007)

Sexual misconduct plagues US schools--October 21st 2007--An Associated Press investigation found more than 2,500 cases over five years in which educators were punished for actions from bizarre to sadistic. There are 3 million public school teachers nationwide, most devoted to their work. Yet the number of abusive educators — nearly three for every school day — speaks to a much larger problem in a system that is stacked against victims. Most of the abuse never gets reported. Those cases reported often end with no action. Cases investigated sometimes can't be proven, and many abusers have several victims... The findings draw obvious comparisons to sex abuse scandals in other institutions, among them the Roman Catholic Church. A review by America's Catholic bishops found that about 4,400 of 110,000 priests were accused of molesting minors from 1950 through 2002... For complete story, [click here](#).

Deputy indicted, accused of battery at teen academy--October 26th, 2007--A Palm Beach County grand jury has indicted a sheriff's deputy on charges of official misconduct and battery in an incident with a teen at a Belle Glade military-style academy. Deputy Jason Rosen, 36, was booked and released from the Palm Beach County Jail on Thursday evening, after the grand jury handed down the indictment, which has not yet been unsealed. Besides official misconduct, which is a third-degree felony, and misdemeanor battery, he also is charged with falsifying an official document. Rosen has been on paid administrative leave since March 4, when he got into the altercation with the teen at the Eagle Academy. The sheriff's office internal affairs department is also investigating the incident but has not issued its report. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.palmbeachpost.com Date: October 26, 2007)

It's a crime what courts do to kids just being kids--October 27th, 2007--You want your jaw to drop into your lap, your eyes to well up? You should take a peek at my e-mail inbox or listen to the voice mail that arrived on Friday. There was Sheldon Page, who hadn't slept the night before and picked up the paper the moment they threw it on his doorstep. He read in this space on Friday of the elementary school boy now facing criminal charges for allegedly slapping a female classmate on the buttocks. He called. His 14-year-old grandson was due in court Friday afternoon for sentencing. His anguish had kept him awake. A 13-year-old girl had told her mother the boy touched her bottom during a game of tag in May. The boy ultimately pleaded guilty to sexual assault and was placed in a juvenile facility Tuesday. "It is the most outrageous thing I've ever heard of," Sheldon Page, 51, said. "He is a kid, a teenager playing a kid's game, and now they've made him a criminal." There was the lawyer who wrote to tell of his client, a fourth-grader charged with sexual assault for putting his hand in the pants of a female fourth-grader. The police picked him up at school. "Common sense has left the building," he writes. There was Catherine - who, like almost all who called or wrote, asked that I not use a last name. "Tell that boy's parents to leave the country because it will be hell on earth from now on," she said. Her grandson was 11 years old when an 11-year-old girl told her parents they were on the playground swing together and she could feel his genitals. "He was convicted of sexual harassment, and life has been hell ever since," Catherine said. Now 13 years old, he has registered as a sex offender, sees a probation officer once a month and must undergo lie-detector tests. He cannot go more than four blocks from home without his parents, she said. At school, he is not allowed to touch anyone and must use a private restroom. "Tell those parents I feel sorry for their son and them," she said. And then there was Mel. His story is typical of the more than a dozen I've heard since Friday's column appeared. Mel is 63. He has a 12-year-old boy. It was late in the last school year when a shoving match broke out at the boy's school. About eight kids were involved. One kid suffered a cracked lip and a few bruises. The cops came for only Mel's kid and one other. Assault and intent to commit injury were the charges. Mel hired an attorney, took his boy out of the school after he served a one-day suspension and got him a tutor to help him finish the school year. He also put the boy in counseling. "With that many witnesses, there was no way we could win. Our lawyer told us," Mel said, "that the best thing we could do is take a deal or spend \$20,000- plus for a trial." So his boy took the deal, which wasn't much of one. Forty-five days in jail, deferred, the judge ordered, plus two years of supervised probation, 75 hours community service, anger-management classes, court costs, \$600 restitution, a two-year restraining order and a written apology to the victim. "It was a schoolyard fight, and not much of one at that," Mel said in an interview. "You just don't know what such a little thing can lead to until you get tangled up in it." (Webmaster Note: Stop the war on youth!!!) For complete story, [click here](#).

DENNIS TOWNSHIP, N.J.: 2nd-grader is suspended for making picture of gun--October 21st, 2007--A second-grader's drawing of a stick figure shooting a gun earned him a one-day school suspension. Kyle Walker, 7, was suspended last week for violating Dennis Township Primary School's zero-tolerance policy on guns, the boy's mother, Shirley McDevitt, told The Press of Atlantic City. Kyle gave the picture to another child on the school bus, and that child's parents

complained about it to school officials, McDevitt said. Her son told her the drawing was of a water gun, she said. (Webmaster Note: Stop the war on children!!) (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.siltdaily.com Date: October 21, 2007)

Parents take caution--November 5th, 2007--When an unruly child is too much to handle, parents become desperate for a solution. Some will even resort to enrolling their children into residential treatment programs or wilderness therapy camps. The controversial "tough love" strategies to turn troubled teens around is further being looked at under a microscope with a newly released study by the Government Accountability Office that says the programs place children in potentially life-threatening conditions. Some opponents to these rehabilitation programs call them an industry for "teen torture," while parents with children who have been straightened out profess them to be miracles. The GAO, however, found that majority of programs and camps to do more harm than good. In its study, revealed in October at Congressional hearings, thousands of allegations of abuse and neglect over nearly two decades were gathered with primary focus on the deaths of 10 teenagers - five of which occurred in Utah. (Webmaster Note: The article further inaccurately proclaims that UT effectively regulates and licenses programs for teens. The State of Utah covers up abuses and other violations at teen programs in their state. Do not send your child to Utah.. Keep them at home! Take responsibility for your own family!) (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.thespectrum.com Date: November 5, 2007)

Are we too quick to medicate children?--November 5th, 2007--KATIE'S middle child "has always had a lot going on in her head," says her mother. And much of it has been a mystery to Katie, who has coped with her daughter's escalating tantrums, combative behavior, bouts of fearfulness and just-plain-oddy since the 11-year-old was a toddler. Katie, left, worries whether medication is the right solution for her temperamental 11-year-old daughter. "No one wants to feel that their child is a guinea pig," she says. A month ago, Katie, a 38-year-old L.A.-area mother of three, brought the child to a psychiatrist. The child's behavior and performance in school were exemplary, but an ill-tempered outburst had gotten the preteen kicked out of a Girl Scout troop she had joined at age 5. The girl was confused and heartbroken over her ejection. The daughter came away from the appointment with a diagnosis of bipolar disorder. Katie, who asked that her full name be withheld to protect her daughter's privacy, came away with a list of 10 powerful psychiatric medicines and a momentous decision to make. Some combination of these mood-stabilizing, anticonvulsive and antipsychotic drugs, Katie was told, would probably control her daughter's problematic behaviors, that a psychiatrist termed, "symptoms of a disease." Now it's Katie who has the racing thoughts and the alternating bouts of fear, anxiety, relief and anger. As she ponders whether her daughter's strange behavior really amounts to mental illness -- and whether medication is the answer -- she says, "I feel like I'm flying blind." And she's not reassured by the suspicion that the psychiatric profession is as confused about diagnosing and treating mental illness in children as she is. All these psychiatric labels and pills may keep many kids on track and even save lives, Katie says. But both seem to be dispensed with little certainty as to what they mean and how they work -- and even less debate over their long-term consequences for children. In 2005, the latest year for which statistics are available, at least 2.2 million American children over the age of 4 were being treated for serious difficulties with emotion, concentration, behavior or ability to get along with others. It's a figure mental-health professionals say has exploded in the last decade and a half, along with sales of a wide range of psychiatric medications for use by children. A welter of studies has shown that kids are being diagnosed at younger ages, with a wider range of disorders and with more severe disorders than ever before. And in growing numbers, they are being medicated with drugs whose safety, effectiveness and long-range effects on children have not been demonstrated by extensive research. A study published in September found that the diagnosis among children of bipolar disorder, a mental illness long thought not to exist in kids, grew 40-fold over the last decade. The prescribing to kids of antipsychotic drugs typically used to treat the symptoms of bipolar illness have soared as well, despite continuing concerns over side effects such as weight gain, metabolic changes that can lead to diabetes, and tremors. Psychiatrists admit they haven't drawn clear lines between problem behaviors and mental illness, especially in kids, and they are debating future fixes. But until those fixes are made, parents -- with their kids' futures on the line -- are left with little to guide them when a child is tagged with a psychiatric label. Protection from what? Katie's maternal instincts tell her she must protect her child. But from what, she asks -- a disease that threatens health, happiness and future? A bogus label applied to an admittedly challenging kid? Or drugs with potentially harmful and little-studied side effects? And protect her exactly how -- by resisting or by medicating? "I don't want to face her as an adult and say I didn't do everything I could to make her well. I feel like I'm answering to her future self," Katie says. "But so much of this is a crapshoot. No one wants to feel that their child is a guinea pig." Mental-health professionals have long warned that the stigma of mental illness and the cost of its treatment have left millions of Americans with psychiatric disorders to suffer untreated. But as childhood diagnoses of mental illness have surged, some in the profession charge the field of child psychiatry with the opposite problem. A scourge of over-diagnosis, says a growing body of critics, has come to child psychiatry. The trend, say these critics, threatens to turn kids like Katie's daughter -- a preteen whose behavior is certainly odd but whose school life remains on track -- into potentially lifelong patients. And, they add, it has changed the way Americans think about children. Critics warn that as psychiatric diagnosis and medication of children becomes more widespread, teachers, well-meaning neighbors and relatives, and parents themselves are becoming less willing to accept youthful misfits for who they are and to help them adapt without prescribing drugs or attaching labels. (Webmaster Note: See the [HEAL Parenting Guide](#)) For complete story, [click here](#).

The U.S. Psycho-Pharmaceutical-Industrial Complex--Z Magazine--November, 2007--In Eugene Jarecki's documentary film Why We Fight, about the U.S. military-industrial complex, U.S. foreign policy critic Chalmers Johnson states: "I guarantee you when war becomes that profitable, you are going to see more of it." Similarly, as mental illness has become extremely profitable, we are seeing more of it. On September 4, 2007, the New York Times reported, "The number of American children and adolescents treated for bipolar disorder increased 40-fold from 1994 to 2003. . . . Drug makers and company-sponsored psychiatrists have been encouraging doctors to look for the disorder" ("Bipolar Illness Soars as a Diagnosis for the Young"). Not too long ago, a child who was irritable, moody, and distractible and who at times sounded grandiose or acted without regard for consequences was considered a "handful." In the U.S. by the 1980s, that child was labeled with a "behavioral disorder" and today that child is being diagnosed as "bipolar" and "psychotic"--and prescribed expensive antipsychotic drugs. Bloomberg News, also on September 4, 2007, reported, "The expanded use of bipolar as a pediatric diagnosis has made children the fastest-growing part of the \$11.5 billion U.S. market for antipsychotic drugs." Psychopathologizing young people is not the only reason for the dramatic rise in sales of such antipsychotics as Eli Lilly's Zyprexa and Johnson & Johnson's Risperdal (each, in recent years, grossing annually from \$3 to \$4 billion). Much of Big Pharma's antipsychotic boon is attributable to generous U.S. government agencies, especially Medicaid. The Medicaid gravy train has been fueled by Big Pharma corruption so over-the-top that it has been the subject of recent media exposures. The Associated Press, on August 21, 2007, reported, "A groundbreaking Minnesota law is shining a rare light into the big money that drug companies spend on members of state advisory panels who help select which drugs are used in Medicaid programs for the poor and disabled." Those advisory panels--dominated by physicians-- have great influence over the \$28 billion spent by Medicaid on drugs, but only Minnesota, Vermont, and Maine require drug companies to report monies paid to physicians. The AP article focused on John E. Simon, a psychiatrist on the Minnesota advisory panel since 2004, who received \$489,000 from Eli Lilly between 1998 and 2006. The top drugs paid for by Minnesota Medicaid, according to the AP article, have been antipsychotic drugs, especially Eli Lilly's Zyprexa. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: <http://zmagsite.zmag.org> (Z Magazine) Date: November, 2007)

Child held without mom at Texas detention center--DALLAS — An 8-year-old girl was separated from her pregnant mother and left behind for four days at a detention center set up to hold immigrant families together while they await outcomes to their cases. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials say they had to transfer the Honduran woman because she twice resisted attempts to deport her and was potentially disruptive. ICE spokesman Carl Rusnok said guards and ICE staff watched the child after her mother was removed from the T. Don Hutto Family Residential Facility. But others are critical of the agency's handling of the case, saying it put the girl at risk and is another example of why the facility should be closed. "Here, it's the government itself that has the custody of this child and then leaves her without proper supervision," said Denise Gilman, who oversees the Immigration Clinic at the University of Texas School of Law, which provides legal services to Hutto detainees. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.chron.com Date: November, 2007)

Suit says TYC breaks pepper-spray rules--November 19th, 2007--AUSTIN — Texas Youth Commission staffers continue to use pepper spray against inmates for offenses no more serious than speaking out of turn or refusing to follow rules, two Texas advocacy groups argued in court Monday. Attorneys for Texas Applesseed and Advocacy Inc. have accused the agency of violating its own guidelines by allowing staff members to use pepper spray on inmates in "passive-resistance situations" when they pose no serious threat to anyone. The attorneys say the use of pepper spray inside TYC units has skyrocketed this year —

1,221 incidents to date, compared with 196 incidents in all of 2006. In early October, a 17-year-old male youth on suicide watch at the Evins Regional Juvenile Center in Edinburg was apparently sprayed for refusing orders to keep his hands out of the tray slot in his cell door. Other youths have apparently been sprayed for refusing to get out of bed; talking during lunch or refusing to follow the dress code, the suit contends. "Pepper spray is the high-tech equivalent of old-fashioned corporal punishment," Steve Martin, a longtime expert on corrections who has been hired by the advocacy groups, said outside the Travis County courtroom. He said it was ludicrous for the agency to suggest that pepper spray did not cause injuries. "It causes intense burning and pain and panic," he said. The advocacy groups are suing TYC, accusing it of failing to follow an agreement reached by the two sides in September that was supposed to limit the instances in which pepper spray could be used. After three hours of testimony, state District Judge Gisela Triana urged both sides to attempt to reach an agreement by Wednesday on specific instances in which the use of pepper spray would be appropriate. TYC's critics claim the agency is seeking authority to broaden, not limit, the use of pepper spray at its units. Proposed use-of-force guidelines would allow pepper spray to be authorized by a unit's administrator "on a case-by-case basis" not just to protect against loss of life or the threat of serious bodily harm. "It hugely expands it," said Deborah Fowler, legal director for Applesseed No one at TYC or the Texas Attorney General's office would comment on the proposed rule changes. But earlier, attorneys for TYC argued that pepper spray is often apt to cause fewer injuries to staff and offenders than manual restraint. "Juvenile correctional officers had a history of laying hands on these kids to try to control them and as a result, some of the staff and kids were injured," said Terry Thompson, of the Attorney General's office. Pepper spray was listed in the agency's manual as a last-resort means of controlling out-of-control youth. But the acting executive director, Dimitria Pope, tried to change that policy in early August by ordering staff to use pepper spray before resorting to physical restraint. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.chron.com Date: November 19, 2007)

[Report gives state's Youth Court system scathing review](#)--November 28th, 2007--Mississippi's Youth Court system compromises public safety and violates the constitutional rights of children because of overwhelming caseloads and inadequate resources, according to a report. The two-year study by the Mississippi Youth Justice Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center and the National Juvenile Defender Center also outlined other problems plaguing the system, including: Untimely appointment of attorneys to represent youths. Inadequate representation of youths. An overflow of referrals from schools. Youth courts are overrun with referrals from local schools where children are routinely arrested for minor, school-related offenses that drain resources, clog dockets and fill detention-center beds, according to the study. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.clarionledger.com Date: November 28, 2007)

[Juvenile inmates' suit alleges abuse by guard](#)--December 6th, 2007--DALLAS — Seven inmates who were held at the Coke County Juvenile Justice Center have sued the private firm that operated the lockup, claiming they were abused by a guard who was a registered sex offender. The inmates allege they were mentally, physically and sexually abused in 2006 and early 2007 by David Andrew Lewis, 24, who worked the night shift until he was fired in March. The federal civil rights lawsuit, which was filed Friday in San Antonio, names GEO Group Inc. The Florida-based company ran the facility in Bronte, 30 miles northeast of San Angelo, until the state removed all inmates and canceled GEO's contract in October citing unsanitary and unsafe conditions. Lewis was not named as a defendant. GEO spokesman Pablo Paez said the company had no comment about the lawsuit. Lewis couldn't be reached. The Texas Youth Commission also declined to comment. GEO fired Lewis when it learned about his sex offender status as a result of an investigation stemming from the overhaul of the TYC, which has been racked by claims of sexual abuse and mismanagement. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.chron.com Date: December 6, 2007)

[Young girl arrested for bringing steak knife to school](#)--December 18th, 2007--A 10-year-old girl faces a felony weapons charge after she brought a kitchen knife to school to cut up her lunch. The Sunrise Elementary 5th grader was brown-bagging it. Her mom packed her a piece of steak for lunch, so she put a knife in the brown bag so she could cut the steak. Teachers saw her cutting the steak and immediately took the knife and called deputies. But a couple of teachers took the utensil and called the sheriff. When deputies arrived, they were unable to get the child's parents on the phone, so they arrested her and took her to the county's juvenile assessment center. Police say they didn't handcuff the child, but they did make her undergo a complete assessment. The girl's uncle says his niece is devastated over the arrest and has been crying her eyes out. School officials say it doesn't matter what the knife was being used for. They said they had no choice. The student now faces a felony charge for the possession of a weapon on school property and the principal suspended her for ten days. The sheriff's office has turned the case over to the State Attorney's Office. (Webmaster Note: Stop oppressing and demonizing children. Where's your common sense?) For complete story, [click here](#).

[German teen sent to cope in Siberia](#)--January 18th, 2008--German authorities exasperated at the antisocial behaviour of a 16-year-old boy have sent him to a remote Siberian village for an "intensive educational experience", it emerged yesterday. The unusual measure by youth welfare officers in the central state of Hesse raised fresh questions about how to deal with delinquents who have been blamed for a series of ugly crimes. The boy, who has not been identified, was dispatched east after behaving violently in school and at home and attacking his mother. He is being forced to fend for himself in boot camp-style conditions in the forlorn village of Sedelnikovo, several hours drive from the city of Omsk, in the western Siberian interior. He has had to cope by collecting and chopping firewood to make his own fires, digging his own toilet and pumping water supplies from a well. He will stay there for nine months, separated from family and friends, the internet and television, under a programme designed specifically for him. Under the supervision of a Russian-speaking German assistant, the boy is also attending school. Once he returns to Germany, he will be monitored for a further two years. "We deliberately sought a region that was particularly lacking in allure," said Stefan Becker, the head of the youth and social department in Giessen, calling it "the ultima ratio" in the attempt to re-educate the boy, for whom all other measures had failed. "[The youth] spends most of his time trying to cope with his day to day existence, living in conditions like we had 30 or 40 years ago," he added. "If he doesn't chop the wood, his room is cold. If he doesn't fetch water, he can't wash." The Hesse authorities have defended the move as an "educational adventure" and say an inspector who visited the boy believed the "treatment" was working. Hundreds of other youths have been sent on similar programmes to countries as diverse as Greece and Kyrgyzstan. The details have emerged in the midst of one of the most heated state election campaigns that Germany has known for years, in which youth crime has featured prominently. The Christian Democratic state president of Hesse, Roland Koch, has called for boot camps and "warning-shot" arrests to be applied to young criminals, and his election speeches have particularly focused on clamping down on immigrants, said to be responsible for half of all crimes committed by the under-21s. The chancellor, Angela Merkel, has backed Koch's campaign, saying that the discussion was long overdue. Koch's stance on crime and immigration has won national resonance and the Hesse vote on January 27 - as well as one in the state of Lower Saxony on the same day - is an early test for Merkel ahead of next year's federal election. But the decision to send the teenager to Siberia is a step too far for some, particularly as equally bleak, though not as cold, regions are to be found in Germany. One commentator called it "more akin to a reality TV show than a social welfare programme". Some have described it as a cost-cutting measure, which, at €150 a day (£111), is about a third of the price of a similar scheme in Germany. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Texas Youth Commission shake-up fails to eliminate punitive and inhumane measures against juveniles](#)-- January 20th, 2008--On the same day last November that the Chronicle published an editorial calling for speedy rebuilding of the scandal-scarred Texas Youth Commission, the agency ombudsman sent an alarming memo to TYC acting director Dimitria Pope. A year after revelations of sexual abuse of inmates by reform school guards and wardens led to ouster of the TYC board and management, it seems the agency is slipping back into its bad habits. In the memo, chief ombudsman Will Harrell alerted Pope to evidence that agency employees were putting more young people in solitary confinement in violation of TYC's policies and procedures. Under the TYC's Behavior Management Program and its "Stop the Violence" campaign, TYC supervisors have become increasingly reliant on sending teens with behavioral problems to isolation cells without required due process hearings or psychological evaluations. Even worse, according to Harrell, some of the inmates at a correctional facility in Mart, east of Waco, have been left in solitary for days and even weeks with scant access to therapy, sanitary conditions and outside exercise. The ombudsman cited a case in which a youth had been locked down for eight days. He was allowed on only two occasions to go to classes and was given outdoor recreation only once. "Conditions in security are inadequate and unsanitary," Harrell wrote. "One cell has no light or bed, yet a kid has been in the cell for over 24 hours." Records obtained by the Chronicle indicate that since August, the number of young people placed in isolation across the state rose from 52 to 82. As Harrell reminded Pope, the settlement of a 1983 lawsuit brought against the TYC bans the use of isolation as a mode of retaliation or as a first-resort punishment against youth offenders. With only a few exceptions, the agreement allows placement in solitary only as a last resort and for a period not to exceed 24 hours. It also calls for the student to be released from isolation as soon as he is under control and not posing a danger to himself or others. Harrell

recommended that a TYC team audit the transfers of youths to solitary and release those who do not meet the criteria or did not receive due process and psychological exams. Until that happens, a moratorium on isolation should go into effect. A thorough evaluation of agency use of solitary confinement should be accompanied by implementation of positive rather than punitive behavior mod programs. In the two months since Harrell sent his memo, nothing has been done to address the issues he raised. While Pope was unavailable for comment, newly appointed TYC conservator Richard Nedelkoff indicated he had not been told of Harrell's concerns and would analyze the situation and come up with recommendations in 35 to 40 days. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.chron.com Date: January 20, 2008)

Family worry over child's welfare--The inadequacy of juvenile detention and rehabilitation facilities in the Cayman Islands, which has resulted in the use of the Tranquillity Bay youth rehabilitation facility in Jamaica, has once again raised questions about the level of treatment given to Caymanian youth. Jan Scott of Cayman Brac has expressed concerns over possible violations of a relative's human rights after the juvenile was allegedly swiftly moved from the Frances Bodden Girls Home in Grand Cayman to Tranquillity Bay without the family's approval. Ms Scott said the minor was not properly assessed before being dispatched to Jamaica for rehabilitation. She feels the decision and the handling of the matter was unjust and may worsen the child's condition. Over the past week, Cayman Net News has been contacting the Department of Children and Family Services, CAYS Foundation and the Human Rights Committee for comments through phone calls and emails, but all remained tight-lipped on the matter. Numerous numbers dialled for Tranquillity Bay in Jamaica went unanswered for several days. Maureen Brooks, Frances Bodden Girls Home Manager, said that, as the matter relates to a juvenile, she would prefer that media inquiries be addressed to the CAYS Foundation. The CAYS Foundation, a government entity, oversees both the girls' and boys' homes in Grand Cayman. Following the death of one parent, the minor moved in with the other parent but that relationship soured, resulting in the child being sent to Frances Bodden Girls Home. According to Ms Scott, the relative is still mourning the death of her parent and is apparently "acting out" or "seeking attention" -- a cry for help, as she described it. The child's troubles began, Ms Scott alleges, when the juvenile was taken to court for an incident at school for which the court advised that she be sent to Tranquillity Bay. This decision, coupled with "other issues," drove her over the edge, Ms Scott believes. Ms Scott further alleged that the child was "pulled from her bed" at Frances Bodden and "locked up" by police before sending her to the Tranquillity Bay facility for rehabilitation. There are outstanding questions about the handling, treatment, possible violation of human rights and care of this child, Ms Scott said. She contacted the Civil Service who, she said, had "insufficient information on this serious matter". The situation has had an even more devastating effect because no family member was able to see the child before she was flown off the Island, she said. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.caymanetnews.com Date: January, 2008)

How Teenage Rebellion Has Become a Mental Illness--January 28th, 2008--For a generation now, disruptive young Americans who rebel against authority figures have been increasingly diagnosed with mental illnesses and medicated with psychiatric (psychotropic) drugs. Disruptive young people who are medicated with Ritalin, Adderall and other amphetamines routinely report that these drugs make them "care less" about their boredom, resentments and other negative emotions, thus making them more compliant and manageable. And so-called atypical antipsychotics such as Risperdal and Zyprexa -- powerful tranquilizing drugs -- are increasingly prescribed to disruptive young Americans, even though in most cases they are not displaying any psychotic symptoms. Many talk show hosts think I'm kidding when I mention oppositional defiant disorder (ODD). After I assure them that ODD is in fact an official mental illness -- an increasingly popular diagnosis for children and teenagers -- they often guess that ODD is simply a new term for juvenile delinquency. But that is not the case. Young people diagnosed with ODD, by definition, are doing nothing illegal (illegal behaviors are a symptom of another mental illness called conduct disorder). In 1980, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) created oppositional defiant disorder, defining it as "a pattern of negativistic, hostile and defiant behavior." The official symptoms of ODD include "often actively defies or refuses to comply with adult requests or rules" and "often argues with adults." While ODD-diagnosed young people are obnoxious with adults they don't respect, these kids can be a delight with adults they do respect; yet many of them are medicated with psychotropic drugs. An even more common reaction to oppressive authorities than overt defiance is some type of passive defiance. John Holt, the late school critic, described passive-aggressive strategies employed by prisoners in concentration camps and slaves on plantations, as well as some children in classrooms. Holt pointed out that subjects may attempt to appease their rulers while still satisfying some part of their own desire for dignity "by putting on a mask, by acting much more stupid and incompetent than they really are, by denying their rulers the full use of their intelligence and ability, by declaring their minds and spirits free of their enslaved bodies." Holt observed that by "going stupid" in a classroom, children frustrate authorities through withdrawing the most intelligent and creative parts of their minds from the scene, thus achieving some sense of potency. Going stupid -- or passive aggression -- is one of many nondisease explanations for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Studies show that virtually all ADHD-diagnosed children will pay attention to activities that they enjoy or that they have chosen. In other words, when ADHD-labeled kids are having a good time and in control, the "disease" goes away. There are other passive rebellions against authority that have been medicalized by mental health authorities. I have talked to many people who earlier in their lives had been diagnosed with substance abuse, depression and even schizophrenia but believe that their "symptoms" had in fact been a kind of resistance to the demands of an oppressive environment. Some of these people now call themselves psychiatric survivors. For complete story, [click here](#).

Reform school failure--February 12th, 2008--A year after the sexual and physical abuse of young inmates by Texas Youth Commission wardens was disclosed, little has improved and the agency's leadership continues to founder. Entrusted with the custody of thousands of Texas teenagers with behavioral problems, the agency remains a ship adrift in need of a strong captain rather than another deck chair shuffle. The forced resignation Monday of Acting Director Dimitria Pope by Conservator Richard Nedelkoff has key state legislators wondering what measures are necessary to get the TYC out of crisis. Last week Nedelkoff, a gubernatorial appointee and the third person to hold the position in the last 12 months, repeatedly told lawmakers at a hearing that he had not decided who would be named full-time director. He was then embarrassed when Pope testified that he had already ruled her out. Nedelkoff later demanded that Pope resign or be fired, and she stepped down. Pope was brought in from the adult prison program to manage TYC after the previous director and board of trustees resigned. She was criticized for expanding the use of pepper spray to subdue juvenile inmates, ignoring a report on excessive use of solitary confinement and approving the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of dollars for office furnishings. Nedelkoff's own decisions have come under fire. He receives a \$160,000 annual salary for his state position, but he also kept his CEO position at Eckerd Youth Alternatives, a Florida company that is in the juvenile corrections business. After becoming TYC conservator, he brought in several consultants with links to Eckerd. After being called on the issue last week, he resigned from the firm, a hollow gesture, as he will likely return to it after the temporary conservator position expires. State Sen. John Whitmire, D-Houston, the chair of the Senate Criminal Justice Committee, is an admirer of Pope's performance in the state prison system and said she was in an impossible position at TYC without the resources or administrative support to do the job. Whitmire said a top priority should be relocating isolated youth facilities to more urban settings, where most of the inmates come from and where medical resources and prospective employers are more readily available. Unfortunately, legislators where the institutions are located resist moving them and, by making the issue a hot potato, have delayed much-needed restructuring of the system. Whitmire said Nedelkoff's lack of candor in dealing with legislators last week has damaged his credibility. "To be honest, I'm not sure what we've got in this guy, and I'm going to obviously work with him, because the stakes are too high," Whitmire said. "This agency needs some stability, and he's going to have to prove to me he can provide it." It's shocking and unacceptable that after a year of attempted reform of the TYC by the governor and the Legislature, so little has been accomplished and so much remains to be done. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.chron.com Date: February 12, 2008)

SPLC Campaign Closes Mississippi Girl's Prison!--Seven months after the Southern Poverty Law Center sued Mississippi to stop the physical and sexual abuse of teenage girls confined at the notorious Columbia Training School, the state has decided [to close the facility](#). For complete story, [click here](#).

How growing woes doomed a Hollywood drug clinic--February 21st, 2008--There were the big things: the constant escapes, the fistfights and the sex abuse allegations, and the former financial officer accused of stealing \$2 million. And the little ones: the filthy floors, the missing toilet paper, and the mattresses that were old and wafer-thin. Eventually, the problems plaguing The Starting Place's residential drug treatment program in Hollywood simply became too much to ignore. For years, administrators at Florida's Department of Children & Families and a local advocacy group that routinely inspected the program for troubled teens, nudged and coaxed and cajoled. Managers of the program -- which had maintained a very good reputation since opening in 1969 -- promised to do better. Hundreds of pages of DCF records, obtained by The Miami Herald on Wednesday, show they seldom did. Last week, DCF shuttered the residential treatment program, 2057 Coolidge St., revoked its licenses and moved about 45 youths into alternative programs. The treatment center in Plantation also run by

The Starting Place, has not had such problems and remains in operation. The chairwoman of the program's board, Lynn Strauss, could not be reached for comment Wednesday. The actions come amid a host of recent troubles: Hollywood police, along with the Broward Sheriff's Office's child abuse investigations unit, are looking into allegations that some youths were sexually abused by staff, said Jack Moss, DCF's top administrator in Broward County. The investigations remain ongoing. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.miamiherald.com Date: February 21, 2008)

Teen accuses Evins staff of abuse--February 22nd, 2008--EDINBURG — More allegations of abuse have surfaced at the Evins Regional Juvenile Facility, less than a month after administrators there pledged to reform policies on restraining inmates. A former teenage resident claims a staff member at the troubled detention center threw him to the ground and violently attacked him after a raucous group therapy session in July 2007. The incident left 15-year-old Robert Romero Jr. with a dislocated hip, fractured pelvis and a ruptured artery in his thigh, according to a federal lawsuit filed this week against Evins and the Texas Youth Commission, the state agency that oversees the detention center. "It takes quite a lot to make a grown man cry," his father, Robert Romero Sr., said. "But after I saw my son, I broke down in tears." The accusations come within three weeks of a proposed settlement agreement between the U.S. Department of Justice and the Texas Youth Commission that would end a civil rights lawsuit filed on behalf of Evins inmates. The facility has come under intense scrutiny in the past two years after several inmates accused guards of using overly violent means to restrain them. Romero's attorney, Christopher J. Gale, sees his client's cases as proof that Evins' troubles are far from over. "There has been a lot of concern there about the use of force," he said. "We have to remember that these are just kids." For complete story, [click here](#).

Tarnished View of Wonder Drugs--February 17th, 2008--When they were first introduced in the early 1990s, new antipsychotic medications for severe mental illness were seen as wonder drugs that were safer and more effective than their predecessors. Sales soared as doctors tried them on new conditions, including dementia, aggression and other behavioral problems. Children and the elderly were among the biggest users. But now, several studies questioning some of the drugs' benefits have led many doctors to talk of using them for shorter periods and with tighter monitoring, because of side effects that include sedation, obesity and diabetes. "You can't just pop someone on it and see them in a year," said Jason Karlawish, a geriatric psychiatrist at the University of Pennsylvania. These drugs, known as atypical antipsychotics, offer a contentious case study of a common pattern in pharmaceuticals. New drugs are typically approved for narrow uses and get tried off-label on conditions that are difficult to treat. Companies' sales efforts stoke up overall use until the research catches up years later, dulling the early enthusiasm. While some patients are helped, lawsuits are also a common legacy. The atypicals were originally approved for severe mental illness - schizophrenia and bipolar disorder - which had limited markets. But under a determined marketing effort portraying them as safer and more effective than their predecessors, the atypicals came to be tried beyond their approved uses for nursing-home residents, prisoners, and children younger than 6 years old. Total U.S. sales for the class reached \$13 billion in 2007, doubling sales of 2002, according to IMS Health Inc., a pharmaceutical-information firm. Atypicals carry such names as Risperdal, made by Janssen Pharmaceutica, part of Johnson & Johnson; Zyprexa from Eli Lilly & Co.; Seroquel by AstraZeneca P.L.C.; Geodon by Pfizer Inc.; and Abilify by Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. All over the country, state officials are discovering that atypicals have become the largest drug class in Medicaid, the health program for the poor. And many state officials question whether that reflects overzealous marketing or real need. Several states, including Pennsylvania, are suing some drugmakers for allegedly promoting the drugs beyond approved uses and commissioning "ghost-written" articles to stoke use of the drugs. The drugmakers reject the suits' claims and are obtaining new approvals from the Food and Drug Administration to treat more conditions. In the last two years, Janssen's Risperdal got approval to treat schizophrenia in adolescents and the irritability of autism in ages 5 to 16. Atypicals remain a cornerstone of care for serious mental illness. Ellen Sholevar, director of child and adolescent psychiatry at the Temple University School of Medicine, said atypicals could help children even though they had not been well-studied. Antipsychotics are used when young children appear to be out of control and represent a danger to themselves or others, or have "very severe disorders where there is no other viable treatment option," she said. Naas Siddiqui, 25, of West Philadelphia, said that antipsychotics eased her manic symptoms and helped her graduate from Yale University in 2007. While Zyprexa made her lethargic and gain weight, she said, Abilify calmed her. She gets her blood tested every six months and sees a physician more frequently. "I don't want to stay on it permanently. But I think it's helped me significantly," she said. A different view of the drugs came from Nicola Huff of Pleasantville, N.J., whose son, John Aaron, took Risperdal for seven years to resolve his behavioral problems. But at age 14, he developed a well-known drug side effect: female-size breasts that had to be surgically removed. "He would ask me 'Am I a girl?'" And I would tell him 'no,'" Nicola Huff said. Tammy Wandling, whose son Austin has autism, said a psychiatrist put him on Risperdal at age 4. In less than nine months, Austin developed a baseball-size growth in his right breast. "I couldn't believe how big it was," said his mother, who lives near Charleston, W.Va. Research suggests Risperdal, like the older antipsychotics, can cause an increase in the hormone prolactin, which directs breasts to enlarge and make milk. Risperdal's label warns about the possibility. The experience helped drive both women to hire Steve Sheller and James J. Pepper, both Philadelphia lawyers. "They're being given an easy out with a pill. But the easy out may create a much more serious problem," Sheller said. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.philly.com Date: February 17, 2008)

TYC to close Sheffield Boot Camp--February 28th, 2008--Texas Youth Commission officials plan to close the Sheffield Boot Camp in remote West Texas, a facility that has been plagued for months by staff shortages and a dwindling count of incarcerated youths. Located in a remote part of West Texas, the camp that once housed 128 boys held just 17 today, officials said. Fifty-nine staff members were on duty Wednesday. The closure, confirmed this morning in a letter to legislative leaders, is the first for the troubled agency after months of rumors that Sheffield and other lockups were targeted. "It is apparent that the agency will continue to experience staffing difficulties that make the long-term viability of the Sheffield facility tenuous," Youth Commission Conservator Richard Nedelkoff said in a letter to the legislative leaders. "We are putting together a plan to transition all youth and employees at Sheffield to other TYC facilities by the end of March 2008. ... I do not believe there are any remaining options for this facility." At a time when several Youth Commission lockups still do not meet the 12:1 staffing ratio mandated by law, Sheffield had about 1:3. Oddly, the youth population was drastically cut in October because there was not enough staff to properly guard them. The agency is 528 correctional officers short of a budgeted staff of 2,776. In his letter, Nedelkoff said while a review continues of possibly closing other youth lockups, "I anticipate we will need to utilize the remaining facilities" through August 2009. Nedelkoff was not immediately available for comment. Legislative leaders had said they expected as many as three lockups might be closed in coming months because of a declining population of incarcerated teenagers and a continuing shortage of staff. In addition to Sheffield, the Victory Field boot camp in Vernon and the West Texas State School in remote Pyote have been listed as up for possible closure. The West Texas State School is where allegations that incarcerated teenage boys were being sexually assaulted by officials while top Youth Commission officials looked the other way, triggering a headline-grabbing scandal a year ago that resulted in the firing of top management and the agency being placed in conservatorship. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.statesman.com Date: February 28, 2008)

Police: Worker Assaulted Teen In Marietta Treatment Center--February 28th, 2008--MARIETTA, Ga. -- Police say a worker at an adolescent treatment center slipped into a patient's room in the middle of the night and sexually assaulted her. It happened at the Hartmann Center in Marietta. A teenaged girl complained Robert Lee Jones snuck into her room while she was sleeping and fondled her. Marietta Police arrested Jones and charged him with sexual assault. He is still in the Cobb County Jail tonight. The courts send troubled teens to the Hartmann Center for treatment for substance abuse problems. For complete story, [click here](#).

Youth pleads to get out of rehab--February 29th, 2008--A 16-year-old girl, who was forcibly sent to Tranquility Bay in Jamaica for rehabilitation, has made a "heart-wrenching" plea to her mother to remove her from the youth facility. A letter, which was given to Cayman Net News by the minor's mother, Latchmin "Charlene" Scott, is dated 27 January and was given to Mrs Scott by her daughter's former Social Worker, Carol Robinson, during the week beginning 17 February. "I really need you at this time; please I am begging you to get me out of here. Please it was bad enough in girls home but now it's worse," writes the minor. The issue was first reported in this publication earlier this month after the juvenile was allegedly swiftly moved from the Frances Bodden Girls Home in Grand Cayman to Tranquility Bay without the family's approval. The young person's aunt, Jan Scott of Cayman Brac, expressed concerns over possible violations of her niece's human rights and said the minor was not properly assessed before being dispatched to Jamaica for rehabilitation. Jan Scott also stated that she felt the decision and handling of the matter was unjust and may worsen her niece's condition. Latchmin Scott is very concerned with the way in which her daughter has been treated by the authorities. "She needed help but it could have happened in a different way," she said. The mother explained that her daughter, who went to the Frances Bodden Girls Home in September 2007 after being made a ward of the court, was not happy at that facility. According to

Latchmin Scott, her daughter's dissatisfaction was not helped by the Department of Children and Family Services' decision to prevent her from visiting or maintaining contact with her mother. Latchmin Scott said that she had always sought to maintain communication with her daughter, an issue that is now exacerbated by her removal to Tranquility Bay. She believes that Ms Robinson, who was the social worker in the case prior to the minor's removal to Tranquility Bay, misled her about the action that would be taken by the Department of Children and Family Services following a third suicide attempt by her daughter. Rather than sending the teenager to the Jamaican facility, "she (Ms Robinson) told me the judge was re-considering the decision to go to Tranquility Bay," and would withdraw the order pending further investigations, said Latchmin Scott. However, Latchmin Scott later found out that her daughter was sent to the facility in Jamaica the very day she and Ms Robinson had that conversation. In her letter, the minor describes how she feels about being at the rehabilitation centre. "I am so depressed and frustrated; this place is much worse than you think and heard." She continues, "Yesterday a supervisor came and told me that the court order was for two years but Mommy ... I know I won't last here two months or more!" Speaking of her future, the teenager states, "But my future has pure grey clouds and overcast skies from my point of view. Me coming here made my intentions of becoming a lawyer or something in life (go) down the drain." "Mom, you know me inside out and when I tell you that I'm not happy and comfortable you know what I mean, how I feel and what I'm capable of doing." While Latchmin Scott was pleased to hear from her daughter, she was equally upset by its content and felt that the system had failed her daughter. Ms Robinson was asked to comment on the case. She said it was no longer on her caseload and that queries should be directed to Deanna Lookoy, Director of Children and Family Services. Efforts to get comments from Mrs Lookoy by email and telephone before press deadline were unsuccessful. (See Follow-up [letter to editor by Maia Szalavitz](#).) (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: <http://caymannetnews.com> Date February 29, 2008)

Survey: 13,000 Claims of Abuse Reported in U.S. Juvenile Centers 2004 through 2007-- March 2nd, 2008--COLUMBIA, Miss. — The Columbia Training School — pleasant on the outside, austere on the inside — has been home to 37 of the most troubled young women in Mississippi. These are harsh and disturbing charges — and, in the end, they were among the reasons why state officials announced in February that they will close Columbia. But they aren't uncommon. Across the country, in state after state, child advocates have deplored the conditions under which young offenders are housed — conditions that include sexual and physical abuse and even deaths in restraints. The U.S. Justice Department has filed lawsuits against facilities in 11 states for supervision that is either abusive or harmfully lax and shoddy. Still, a lack of oversight and nationally accepted standards of tracking abuse make it difficult to know exactly how many youngsters have been assaulted or neglected. The Associated Press contacted each state agency that oversees juvenile correction centers and asked for information on the number of deaths as well as the number of allegations and confirmed cases of physical, sexual and emotional abuse by staff members since Jan. 1, 2004. According to the survey, more than 13,000 claims of abuse were identified in juvenile correction centers around the country from 2004 through 2007 — a remarkable total, given that the total population of detainees was about 46,000 at the time the states were surveyed in 2007. For complete story, [click here](#).

The Age of Consent: When Young Love Is a Sex Crime--March 7th, 2008--Share Twelve years ago, Frank Rodriguez pleaded guilty to sexually assaulting a child. Faced with two to 20 years in prison on the charge, he signed a plea bargain that gave him seven years probation. He was told he must never be near children. That meant he couldn't be any place where children gather, like playgrounds or parks, which made it tough to find work. Age of Consent: What Should It Be?"They literally just break you down to nothing," Rodriguez said. "They tell me I can't do this, I can't do this, you know. It gets real bad." Rodriguez completed his seven years' probation without another violation, but he will forever be on the Texas sex offender registry. And what was the nature of the sex crime he committed? Well, when he was 19, Frank had sex with his 15 year-old girlfriend, Nikki Prescott, at her suggestion. "It was my idea," she said. "I would say I pushed it more." Watch the story tonight on "20/20" at 10 p.m. ET and watch John Stossel's special "The Age of Consent" next Friday, March 14 at 10 p.m. ET Nikki, now 27, was a freshman in high school at the time. Frank, now 30, was a senior. She says the relationship was not at all unusual at their high school. "All my friends were having sex, all of them," Nikki said. "All my friends, you know, were dating older guys." Sexually Active Teens: Right or Wrong? 'I Was Not Raped' Nikki's mom, Melissa Wiederhald, knew her daughter was intimate with Rodriguez, and at one point even took Nikki to Planned Parenthood to get her birth control pills. She didn't like what the couple were doing, though, and she thought their relationship was getting too serious. One night, after an especially bad fight with Nikki, in a fit of anger, Nikki's mom made a fateful decision. "I said, 'This is it,'" Wiederhald recalled. "I said, 'We're going to the police station.' I said, 'I've had it.'" Wiederhald went to the police station because she knew that it was illegal for Rodriguez and her daughter to be having sex. The age of consent in Texas is 17, and Nikki wasn't quite 16. Wiederhald didn't think that Rodriguez was violating Nikki, but she felt she had no other way to make a point to her teenage daughter. For complete story, [click here](#).

Tranquility Bay is 'private jail', author says--Reports on the use of Tranquility Bay in Jamaica, as a rehabilitation facility for troubled youth in the Cayman Islands has come under fierce criticism from American journalist and author Maia Szalavitz. Speaking to Cayman Net News in a telephone interview on Monday, 10 March, she said: "No other government has ever sent a child there." Ms Szalavitz, who contacted Net News after reading a previous article with family members raising concerns about a young Caymanian at the facility, is author of the book "Help at Any Cost: How the Troubled Teen Industry Cons Parents and Hurts Kids" (Riverhead Books, 2006). She said that whilst researching for her book she "spoke to dozens of parents and teens who report horrifying abuses at Tranquility Bay." According to Ms Szalavitz, she spent three years "looking at troubled teen programmes" when researching her book, and estimates that about 20 per cent of that time was spent on Tranquility Bay. Her research took her to Jamaica in an attempt to get inside the facility, but she was refused entry. "It looks like a South American prison," Ms Szalavitz said of what she observed from the outside. She related seeing bars on windows which were blacked out, preventing anyone from looking in and keeping those inside from looking out. "Basically, it is an unregulated, private jail," she said. "They are complete amateurs; I don't understand why any government agency would send children there." (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: <http://caymannetnews.com> Date: March 10, 2008)

Judge orders California to enforce county juvenile hall standards--March 12th, 2008--A judge has ordered California authorities to set strict deadlines for bringing county juvenile halls up to state standards if they fail inspections. San Francisco Superior Court Judge Patrick Mahoney ruled the Corrections Standards Authority has been giving counties too much time to correct problems that include overcrowding and excessive use of force. The authority inspects juvenile halls every two years. The judge says counties must submit an improvement plan within two months. They then must make changes within three months or risk having their juvenile jails shut. Legal advocates sued the authority in 2006. They say as many as half the detention halls were allowed to operate despite failing to meet minimum state guidelines. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.sacbee.com Date: March 12, 2008)

"Baby ASBOs" for children as young as 10--March 18th, 2008--LONDON (Reuters) - Troubled teenagers and children as young as 10 would be hit with anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) under a government plan unveiled on Tuesday to fight youth crime. About 1,000 of the country's "most challenging" children will be forced to sign good behaviour contracts under the 218-million pound programme, Children's Secretary Ed Balls said. Under the expansion of the Family Intervention Projects, the troublemakers would be supported by "non-negotiable" workers. But failure to abide by the contract will lead to a criminal record, and a behaviour order dubbed a "baby ASBO". "The support is non-negotiable -- if young people don't take the help, or refuse to mend their ways they will face the consequences," Balls said in a statement. "For example (they will face) an Anti-Social Behaviour Order to stop bad behaviour and an Individual Support Order to compel them to co-operate with support. These are court orders with criminal records and sanctions for those who breach them." For complete story, [click here](#).

Sins against kids--March 20th, 2008--The General Assembly does not legislate based on facts, relying instead on perceptions, personal experiences and political pandering. And nowhere is that more apparent than in the way the state responds to juvenile crime. Despite the fact that only 5 percent of youth arrests owe to serious offenses, legislators have toughened the juvenile system over the years in response to the myth of the teenage "superpredator." At the same time that lawmakers don't believe 17-year-olds are mature enough to buy cigarettes or drive past midnight, they maintain that teens are old enough to be viewed as adults when they break the law. In Georgia, a teen as young as 13 can face life in prison for some offenses. Now, JUSTGeorgia — a coalition of Voices for Georgia's Children, the Georgia Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, and Emory's Barton Child Law & Policy Clinic — is offering up a new code. The comprehensive rewrite is based on four years of work by the State Bar of Georgia's Young Lawyers Division and interviews with hundreds of people across the state, including advocates, victims of juvenile crimes, foster children and law enforcement. Despite their varying perspectives, all those interviewed agreed that the Georgia statutes dealing with young people who violate the law or who are victims of abuse and neglect are not in the best interests of children. Since its introduction in

1971, the Georgia juvenile code has wandered far afield from its founding principle that when a young person errs, the law should rehabilitate, not punish. For complete story, [click here](#).

Jewish family sues Jamaican reform school for troubled teens--March 25th, 2008--A battle has erupted in the Orthodox Jewish community over a [Brooklyn](#) teenager sent by his prominent family to a behavior boot camp accused of terrifying abuse. [Isaac Hersh](#), 16, has been trapped since last summer at Tranquility Bay, a reform school on the island of [Jamaica](#) with a soothing name - and harsh discipline, according to the lawyer hired to try to get him out. "It's a modern-day concentration camp," said [Maryland](#) lawyer [Joshua Ambush](#). Isaac's estranged parents sent him to the boot camp last year after luring him back to Brooklyn from his new home in [Texas](#), court papers claim. Isaac's twin brother, Sol, is panicked he's next to go. "He's very worried about his brother. He's very worried about himself, too," said a friend of the family who asked to remain anonymous. Tranquility Bay offers the promise of turning bad boys into focused achievers, but the walled-off camp with barred windows has been called a nightmare. Children have been beaten, forced to eat their vomit and made to stand in painful contortions for hours, according to a separate suit filed in [Utah](#) by former students against private boot camps, including Tranquility Bay. The case has so riled up members of the normally insular Orthodox community that several are taking the rare step of publicizing Isaac's situation. For complete story, [click here](#).

Schools embrace fingerprint scanning--By Pauline Vu, [Stateline.org](#) Staff Writer-- The lunch lines in West Virginia's Wood County schools move much faster than they used to. After students fill their trays with food, they approach a small machine, push their thumbs against a touch pad — and with that small movement, they've paid for their meal. For half the state's school districts, as well as hundreds more across the country, the days of dealing with lost lunch cards or forgotten identification numbers are over. "A student cannot forget their finger," said Beverly Blough, the director of food service in Wood County School District, which in 2003 became the first district in West Virginia to use finger scanners. But the emergence of finger scanning has also sparked a backlash from parents and civil libertarians worried about identity theft and violation of children's privacy rights. In several cases when parents have objected, school districts have backed down, and some states have outlawed or limited the technology. A growing number of schools are using biometrics, or the science of identification based on physiological or behavioral features like facial or voice recognition, to have students pay for meals, log their attendance, board buses, check out books and visit the nurse's office. Administrators cite many benefits, chief among them efficiency. Fingerprints are scanned, but the prints themselves are not saved; instead, a finger's ridges and arcs are turned into "data points," which are converted into a numerical identifier assigned to each student. Pennsylvania-based identiMetrics, which offers biometric identification products, has sold fingerprint scanners to about 1,000 school districts in about half the states, mostly in the Northeast and South, said Anne Marie Dunphy, the company's chief financial officer. By the end of the fiscal year, she expects the business will triple or quadruple over the previous year. Dunphy said rural districts seem to be taking the lead on implementing the technology. "You would think that it would be the technology-rich, wealthy districts along the Northwest corridor, and it's the complete opposite. We have installations in very rural areas in Indiana, where the backyard's a cornfield and there's an Amish lady working the cash register," she said. But the technology's emergence has raised concerns for parents about whether their children's information is safe. "It just opens a huge database out there that's just easy for identity theft," said Joy Robinson-Van Gilder, an Illinois mother who rallied legislators last year to place limits on the technology in her state. "I think it's against their civil rights, without a doubt, and it is an invasion of privacy." Illinois is the only state that requires schools to get parental permission before scanning students' fingerprints. Iowa banned biometrics outright in schools, and Michigan doesn't allow fingerprinting because of a 2000 attorney general opinion that it would violate state law. Arizona could join this group. Last month, a Senate committee passed a bill to ban the use of biometrics in schools. Scanning opponents argue that districts don't have policies in place for what information to collect, how long to keep it, how to delete it when it's no longer needed and who should have access to the information. They also say that schools, unlike banks or major government agencies that also collect biometric data, don't have the financial resources to ensure that it is secure. "The benefits certainly do not justify the privacy violations that we're seeing," said Alessandra Meetze, executive director of the Arizona chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union. "I don't think collecting fingerprints from very little kids sends the right message... They're essentially treating (students) like criminals for the sake of efficiency." (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: [www.stateline.org](#) Date: March/April, 2008)

Doctor is sued in death of girl, 4 Her psychiatrist treated her with powerful drugs--April 4th, 2008--The parents of 4-year-old Rebecca Riley are awaiting trial on charges that they killed her in December 2006 with an overdose of psychiatric drugs. A medical malpractice suit filed yesterday asserts that a Tufts Medical Center psychiatrist who diagnosed the girl as bipolar when she was 28 months old and then treated her for two years with a regimen of powerful drugs is to blame for her death. "This child was subject to mostly telephone prescriptions and a slipshod diagnosis," said Boston lawyer Andrew C. Meyer Jr., who represents Rebecca Riley's estate and filed the suit against Dr. Kayoko Kifuji in Suffolk Superior Court. Six weeks before Rebecca Riley was found dead on Dec. 13, 2006, in a Hull house shared by her parents and other relatives, a nurse at her Weymouth preschool warned Kifuji that she suspected the child was overmedicated because she was often too tired to participate in school activities and appeared like a "floppy doll," according to Meyer. Kifuji did not reduce her medication after examining the child, he said. "They made her a 4-year-old zombie," said Meyer, whose Boston law firm Lubin & Meyer specializes in medical malpractice cases. "We don't believe that she did suffer from bipolar or that this was the appropriate medication." The suit was filed on behalf of a court-appointed guardian who is serving as administrator of Rebecca Riley's estate and is protecting the interests of the girl's 13-year-old brother and 7-year-old sister. It seeks unspecified damages for the wrongful death and pain and suffering endured by Rebecca, as well as the loss suffered by her brother and sister, who are in foster care and have been named the beneficiaries of her estate. Kifuji could not be reached for comment yesterday. Since the child's death, Kifuji remains on staff at Tufts Medical Center, but no longer treats patients. She has voluntarily agreed not to practice medicine, pending an investigation by the state Board of Registration in Medicine. Tufts Medical Center released a statement yesterday saying: "We have not received any official notification of a lawsuit. We remain in support of Dr. Kifuji and the care she provided." Kifuji diagnosed Rebecca Riley with bipolar disorder and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder and prescribed clonidine, a blood pressure medication that is sometimes used to calm aggressive children, Seroquel, an antipsychotic drug, and Depakote, an antiseizure drug, according to court records. The child died from an overdose of the prescription drugs, and, by itself, the amount of clonidine in her system was fatal, court records indicate. Clonidine and Depakote are approved by the FDA for adults only. A trial date has yet to be set for Michael and Carolyn Riley, who were initially charged with first-degree murder in intentionally overmedicating their daughter and knowing that it would be fatal. For complete story, [click here](#).

Authorities remove children from polygamists' West Texas compound--April 4th, 2008--ELDORADO, Texas — Child welfare officials Friday took custody of 18 girls who lived at a secretive West Texas religious retreat built by polygamist leader Warren Jeffs following an abuse complaint to state authorities. A total of 52 girls, ages 6 months to 17 years, were bused away on Friday to be interviewed, but only 18 were immediately taken into state custody, said Texas Child Protective Services spokeswoman Marleigh Meisner. No arrests had been made. Meisner said CPS was looking for foster homes for the girls, most of whom have rarely been outside the insular world of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. They were temporarily being housed at a local civic center, she said. "We're dealing with children that aren't accustomed to the outside world so we're trying to be very sensitive to their needs," said Meisner. Authorities had interviewed about half the girls since arriving at the remote compound with law enforcement on Thursday evening, she said. Interviews were expected to continue over the weekend. The investigation began with a call alleging physical abuse of a 16-year-old girl living there, Meisner said. On Friday afternoon, Department of Public Safety officials began executing a search warrant at the compound. The warrant is for records dealing with the birth of children to a 16-year-old and any records listing a marriage between Dale Barlow, 50, and the girl, according to the San Angelo Standard-Times, which cited court records released late Friday in Tom Green County. Prosecutors in Tom Green, a larger county north of Eldorado, were handling the case. An arrest warrant was issued, but the individual DPS is looking for had not been located by Friday evening, said spokeswoman Tela Mange. She said she could not reveal whose name was on the warrant. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: [www.chron.com](#) Date: April 4, 2008)

Sex abuse, violence alleged at teen jails across U.S.--April 4th, 2008--JACKSON, Mississippi (CNN) -- Girls as young as 13 say they were shackled for weeks at a time in Mississippi. Erica was 16 when she was forced to wear leg shackles at a Mississippi detention center, she said. A Texas teen was allegedly offered birthday cake in exchange for sex. A guard drove his knee into the neck of a frail suicidal Ohio boy after the youth was wrestled to the ground and held down by other guards who stripped him and covered his face with a smock, a state report said. More than two dozen girls at an Indiana lock-up describe "networking"

-- their term for sneaking into each other's cells to have sex, with no interference from guards. This is a glimpse into what America's juvenile jails look like, according to lawsuits, criminal cases and experts who have spent years delving into what they call a broken system. "It's a nationwide crisis that has been going on for years, one the public has never been told the extent of," said psychiatric social worker Jerome Miller, the co-founder of the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives, who has evaluated and helped reform juvenile jails for more than three decades. This summer, Mississippi plans to close Columbia Training School, a juvenile facility that houses mostly minor offenders. They are often runaways from abusive homes. Erica was 16 when she was sentenced to Columbia after running away, a probation violation of an earlier marijuana conviction. She admits she was a girl quick to sass her parents, full of anger about the death of a relative that happened around the same time Katrina wrecked her family's Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, home. Nervously touching a sparkly barrette in her red hair, she cries as she describes how guards forced her legs into tight metal shackles. She said she was cuffed and chained when she ate and used the bathroom -- and was even forced to play soccer that way against other girls. Guards called her "Chain Gang," she said. "I will always remember them things around my ankles, the way they cut into me," she said, pulling up her pant leg to show slash-mark scars on her ankles and heels. "They made you feel like you were nothing." [Watch teen explain suicide attempt was cry for help](#) » Represented by attorneys with the [Southern Poverty Law Center](#), Erica and nine other girls housed at Columbia are suing the state, claiming they endured a range of sexual and physical abuse, including shackling. Don Desper, a licensed therapist and former employee at Columbia who opposed the practice, told CNN it was used to prevent the teens from escaping. In a handwritten affidavit, a 15-year-old girl described a male guard molesting her. She wrote: "He came inside my cell half way half of his body and he started touching me and he tried (sic) to kiss me and then he left he came back with my snack in his hand and he opened my cell again and he started grabbing me around my waist and he tried (sic) to stick his hands in my pants and I started crying." When the lawsuit was filed in 2007, a U.S. Justice Department monitor was making periodic inspections at Columbia as part of a 2005 settlement with Mississippi in a previous case. The Justice investigation that led to that settlement found Columbia youths were hog-tied, forced to strip and eat their own vomit and were held in isolation in what was called the "Dark Room," a windowless room with a hole in the floor used as a toilet. [Read the Justice Department report that describes girls being shackled to poles](#) Hundreds of youths have allegedly suffered similar abuse at juvenile detention centers across the United States, according to experts interviewed by CNN and court records checked for this story. The [U.S. Justice Department](#) has sued nine states and two territories alleging abuse, inadequate mental and medical care and potentially dangerous methods like the use of restraints. The department doesn't have the power to shut down facilities -- states do -- but through litigation it can force a state to improve its detention centers and protect the civil rights of jailed youths. Another facility under Justice scrutiny is Oakley Training School near Jackson, Mississippi, which was sued by the department at the same time as Columbia. Gov. Haley Barbour recently announced Columbia's inmates would be transferred this summer to Oakley when Columbia is closed. But the Justice Department said Oakley has satisfied barely a fraction of requirements the department set for it years ago. According to a March 2008 Justice report, there is an "enormous amount of work" needed to make Oakley a safe and productive place to rehabilitate troubled teens. Barbour would not respond to questions for this report. The Mississippi Department of Human Services, which runs Columbia and Oakley, refused to answer most of a CNN public records request citing pending litigation and also declined to be interviewed. The U.S. Justice Department could not talk specifically about ongoing cases, but Lisa Krigsten, civil rights division principal deputy assistant attorney general, noted the department is going after double the number of juvenile jails for civil rights violations during the Bush administration than in any previous administration. "We take this seriously and are committed to protecting the vulnerable children who are in these places," she said. A CNN check of other juvenile facilities shows that, despite years of court wrangling, serious problems persist. In Ohio, a dozen employees at the Scioto Juvenile Correctional Facility have been indicted since 2003 on charges relating to physical and sexual abuse of youth, according to a May 2007 Justice report. Five were convicted of various charges, including sexual battery and assault; six cases were dismissed and a jury found one employee not guilty. In January, a state-hired consultant blamed a "culture of violence" in Ohio's juvenile jails for numerous abuses. The expert's report details examples of "egregious use of force" by guards and included a video he viewed of a 2007 incident in which a "frail" boy who was threatening to harm himself was restrained by guards. The boy was wrestled to the ground, cuffed and stripped, with one guard seen putting his full body weight on the boy's back while driving his knee into the boy's neck. A so-called "Suicide Smock" was placed "over his airways," the report said. "The youth actually screams that he can't breathe." For complete story, [click here](#).

[Nearly 200 taken from sect's West Texas ranch](#)--April 6th, 2008--ELDORADO -- After several anxious hours late Saturday, tensions appeared to be easing at the YFZ Ranch in West Texas as state troopers streamed past checkpoints and escorted another busload of girls from the secretive polygamist sect's compound. Around 11 p.m., police scanner traffic indicated that authorities had "cleared" the church's temple and were moving to the compound's annex. There was no indication that authorities' search for children on the ranch was coming to a close. Earlier in the evening, some of the sect's members refused to allow authorities to enter the church's massive white temple. Allison Palmer, assistant district attorney for the 51st District, which includes Schleicher and Coke counties and part of Tom Green County, said that authorities "were preparing for all possibilities" and that ambulances and other equipment were on standby. "This is a very sensitive area, and members of this church feel very strongly about nonmembers entering that area," Palmer said. "This is a very important to them. It is proving to be difficult to obtain their permission to enter that building." Palmer credited Schleicher County Sheriff David Doran with obtaining the cooperation of the sect to allow the search to continue. She wouldn't say whether investigators had searched all the other buildings. 183 removed Earlier Saturday, officials said they had removed 137 children and 46 women from the ranch. Investigators said they planned to keep searching until every child was accounted for at the YFZ (Year For Zion) Ranch. The second full day of searching at the property had investigators going building to building in the hunt for more children. State officials have blocked access to the ranch since Thursday in response to a report of physical abuse of a 16-year-old girl, law enforcement officials said Friday. Child Protective Services spokeswoman Marleigh Meisner said Saturday that authorities have removed 137 children from the ranch, which is an outpost of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, based in Colorado City, Ariz., and Hildale, Utah. Of the 137 children, about 40 were boys. Meisner said she didn't know whether investigators had found the 16-year-girl whose complaint of abuse reached CPS officials Monday. "I can't confirm that we have even found that girl," Meisner said. Eighteen of the girls have been legally removed from the ranch, and foster homes have been located for them, Meisner said. The other 119 children remain under the care of CPS caseworkers at Eldorado's First Baptist Church, the Eldorado Civic Center and a local elementary school. All the children have been interviewed, and some of the 46 women who had been removed from the ranch are mothers of the children being questioned, Meisner said at a news conference Saturday. "We need to know if they are safe, if they have been abused, neglected or are at high risk of abuse," Meisner said. She said CPS investigators' presence in Eldorado could continue indefinitely. Meisner said that she planned to be in Eldorado "for a while." (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: [www.star-telegram.com](#) Date: April 6, 2008)

[Kids in trouble for sexual harassment](#)--April 3rd, 2008--WASHINGTON, Apr 3, 2008 (UPI via COMTEX) -- A "zero-tolerance" approach to sexual harassment has led to increasing numbers of complaints in elementary schools and even in nursery schools. In one Texas case, a 4-year-old received an in-school suspension for pressing against an aide's breasts while he was hugging her, The Washington Post reports. A kindergarten student in Hagerstown, Md., was accused of harassment for allegedly pinching a little girl's rear end. Virginia reported that 255 students were suspended from elementary schools last year for sexually offensive conduct and in Maryland, there were 166 suspensions, including three from pre-schools and 16 from kindergarten, the Post said. Ted Feinberg, assistant director of the National Association of School Psychologists in Bethesda, Md., said that accusing 6-year-olds of sexual harassment "doesn't make sense to me." He said that he worked for 30 years in the schools without a real case of sexual harassment in elementary school. "Kids can be exploratory in behavior, they can mimic what they see on TV," he told the Post. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: [http://portal.tds.net](#) Date: April 3, 2008)

[Development, Testing, and Findings of a Pediatric-Focused Trigger Tool to Identify Medication-Related Harm in US Children's Hospitals](#)--April 1st, 2008--Glenn S. Takata, MDa,b, Wilbert Mason, MD, MPHc,d, Carol Taketomo, PharmDe, Tina Logsdon, MSf and Paul J. Sharek, MD, MPHg OBJECTIVES. The purposes of this study were to develop a pediatric-focused tool for adverse drug event detection and describe the incidence and characteristics of adverse drug events in children's hospitals identified by this tool. METHODS. A pediatric-specific trigger tool for adverse drug event detection was developed and tested. Eighty patients from each site were randomly selected for retrospective chart review. All adverse drug events identified using the trigger tool were evaluated for severity, preventability, ability to mitigate, ability to identify the event earlier, and presence of associated occurrence report. Each trigger and the entire tool were evaluated for positive predictive value. RESULTS. Review of 960 randomly selected charts from 12 children's hospitals revealed 2388 triggers (2.49 per patient) and 107 unique adverse drug events. Mean adverse drug event rates were 11.1 per 100 patients, 15.7 per 1000 patient-days, and 1.23 per 1000

medication doses. The positive predictive value of the trigger tool was 3.7%. Twenty-two percent of all adverse drug events were deemed preventable, 17.8% could have been identified earlier, and 16.8% could have been mitigated more effectively. Ninety-seven percent of the identified adverse drug events resulted in mild, temporary harm. Only 3.7% of adverse drug events were identified in existing hospital-based occurrence reports. The most common adverse drug events identified were pruritis and nausea, the most common medication classes causing adverse drug events were opioid analgesics and antibiotics, and the most common stages of the medication management process associated with preventable adverse drug events were monitoring and prescribing/ordering. CONCLUSIONS. Adverse drug event rates in hospitalized children are substantially higher than previously described. Most adverse drug events resulted in temporary harm, and 22% were classified as preventable. Only 3.7% were identified by using traditional voluntary reporting methods. Our pediatric-focused trigger tool is effective at identifying adverse drug events in inpatient pediatric populations. For complete story, [click here](#).

8-year-old suspended for sniffing marker--April 3rd, 2008--WESTMINSTER -- Adams School District 50 is defending its decision to punish a third grader for sniffing a Sharpie marker. Eight-year-old Eathan Harris was originally suspended from Harris Park Elementary School for three days. Principal Chris Benisch reduced the suspension to one day after complaints from Harris' parents. Harris used a black Sharpie marker to color a small area on the sleeve of his sweatshirt. A teacher sent him to the principal when she noticed him smelling the marker and his clothing. "It smelled good," Harris said. "They told me that's wrong." Eathan's father, John Harris, says the school overreacted for treating Eathan as if he was huffing, or inhaling, marker fumes. "I think it's outlandish," John Harris said. "It's ridiculous." Eathan shyly shook his head "no" when a reporter asked if he knew about "huffing." Benisch stands by his decision to suspend Harris, saying it sends a clear message about substance abuse. "This is really, really, seriously dangerous," Benisch said. In his letter suspending the child, Benisch wrote that smelling the marker fumes could cause the boy to "become intoxicated." A toxicologist with the Rocky Mountain Poison Control Center says that claim is nearly impossible. Dr. Eric Lavonas says non-toxic markers like Sharpies, while pungent-smelling, cannot be used to get high. "I don't know whether it would be possible for a real overachiever to figure out a way to get high off them," Lavonas said. "But in regular use, it's just not something that's going to happen." "If you went to Costco and bought 50 bags of Sharpies and did something to them, maybe there's a way to get creative and make it happen," Lavonas said. Adams County School District 50 leaders were unfazed by the poison control center's medical opinion. "Principals make hundreds of decisions everyday based on our best judgment. And in that time, smelling that marker, I felt like, 'Wow, that's a very serious marker,'" Benisch said. Despite the medical evidence, Benisch promised to draw an even clearer line on markers. "We've purged every permanent marker there is in this building," he said. Eathan Harris says he's happy to be back in school after his suspension, but he did confide he worried the school's disciplinary action might hurt his dream of one day becoming a professional football player. (Webmaster Note: For more commentary on this story, see: <http://onlinelunchpail.blogspot.com/2008/04/8-year-old-suspended-for-sniffing.html>) For complete story, [click here](#).

Parents of Killed Intruder: Wrong People, Wrong Time--April 9th, 2008--DURAND - A fourteen year old Durand boy is killed after a home invasion turned deadly Sunday. Today his family speaks out and Travis Castle's parents must have a lot of unanswered questions. At the top of that list is how could their child, their fourteen year old son, who does not have a criminal record could ever be mixed up in this deadly mess. Kimberly Britton & Clyde Castle Travis Castle's Parents A love for horses and a passion for riding, it's the legacy Travis leaves behind. "There wasn't nothing he couldn't do. He could do anything," says his father Clyde Castle. "He could drive a truck and trailer at fourteen years old and probably better than I can." In just two and half weeks, Travis would have turned fifteen, but his life was cut short Sunday. Ogle County Sheriff's police say Travis and two other boys broke into a home just outside Stillman Valley to steal guns. "One of them told him, 'Get out of the car, Travis. You're going in with us,'" Clyde remembers. "He didn't want to go in," adds the boy's mother, Kimberly Britton. But Travis did go in, and before he got out, the young teen was met by house guest in the hallway. Police say that man fatally shot Travis after the boy pointed a gun at him. "I talked to him at 9:30," Kimberly tells 13 News. "He was staying the night at his friends. He said, 'Mom, I'll be home in the morning. Love you and everything's going to be alright.' But the next morning Travis never showed up. "We looked and we looked and we couldn't find him," Kimberly says. His family admits Travis shouldn't have been involved, but they say it was peer pressure. The boy recently started attending a school for troubled teens. That's where his parents say he got mixed up with the wrong crowd. "The two things I told him growing up, 'I hate a thief and liar.' And Travis wasn't either one," says Clyde. And he has message for the other suspects. "The boys who influenced him, I hope you have to live with this the rest of your life, the rest of your life that you killed my son." Those boys still have not been caught. Detectives believe they may be in Winnebago County. (Webmaster Note: "Troubled teen" programs are not worth the trouble!) (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.wrex.com Date: April 9, 2008)

San Jose center for troubled teens closing abruptly--April 10th, 2008--The region's center for emotionally disturbed children is abruptly shutting its doors, following scathing reports of unsafe conditions and multiple violations of state law governing locked treatment facilities. Although owners of the Starlight Adolescent Center in San Jose said its closing was not connected to recent complaints, records show the facility was cited by state officials in recent months for 14 violations that placed children in "immediate risk" and 12 others that posed potential harm. State records show one youth had his arm broken in January while being restrained; a bulimic teenager lost 15 pounds at the facility, and staff complained to state investigators of inadequate training. In addition, in February, an outside agency charged the Starlight facility with "unlawful and irresponsible" behavior for its use of physical restraint and seclusion to subdue the teenage mentally ill patients, including 518 violations of state law. "Starlight must be sanctioned for its failure to protect vulnerable children," said the second critical audit of the facility in two years by the Mental Health Advocacy Project, which the county funds to monitor the rights of mentally ill patients. The decision to close the facility in June comes amid a growing concern among experts about the wisdom of keeping mentally ill youth in locked facilities on a long-term basis. The average stay at Starlight is one year. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.mercurynews.com Date: April 10, 2008)

Foster care home faces probe--April 19th, 2008--A Broward judge Friday ordered an investigation into a shelter for troubled foster children after court-appointed guardians for the teens complained the group home was unsanitary, beset by violence and failing to properly document incidents in which children ran away or were harmed. Attorneys for the Broward Guardian-ad-Litem Program, which provides volunteers to represent the best interests of children who were abused or neglected, told Circuit Judge David Krathen they had uncovered about 140 Lauderdale police reports, including incidents of children running away, using drugs or harming each other. "We are very, very concerned about the safety of all the children at the facility," said Howard Talenfeld, a Fort Lauderdale attorney representing the guardian program. "What we need is a complete and thorough investigation to see that each and every child is safe." At the center of the dispute is a Lauderdale shelter, called Impact Community Services, that houses about 12 teenagers under the supervision of ChildNet, a private foster care agency that is licensed and funded by the Department of Children & Families. Talenfeld said guardians had seen reports of children having sex with each other, including an incident involving a disabled teen who would not have been capable of consenting to sexual activity. Talenfeld said he also had seen reports of assault and battery, and more than 125 cases of children running away. At the guardian program's request, Krathen appointed an attorney with Legal Aid Service of Broward County, Walter Honaman, to investigate the shelter and report back to the court. "We must make sure none of these kids are in harm's way," the judge said. Melissa Zelniker-Presser, a Broward attorney, said she represents a 17-year-old boy with mental retardation who lived at the shelter until recently. According to a report, he "was forced to have sex" with another boy who already had shown signs of aggression. "I am concerned for the safety of . . . other children who live there," Zelniker-Presser said. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.miamiherald.com Date: April 19, 2008)

Teen 'Boot Camps' Again in Spotlight--April 23rd, 2008--Residential programs for troubled teens will be getting more scrutiny from Congress this week, where investigators will reveal the results of an undercover investigation. Some of the outfits, which purport to help troubled children, have generated hundreds of allegations of death and physical, sexual and emotional abuse, ABC News [reported](#) last October. "Kids being forced to eat their own vomit, to eat dirt, to not be allowed to go to the bathroom...all in the idea that somehow this is building character," is how Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., described what congressional investigators found when they probed some of the programs. Related [PHOTOS: Inside Tough Love Teen Camps](#) [Tough Love Teen Camps: Lots of Tough, Little Love WATCH: Boot Camp: Tough Love or Abuse?](#) At a hearing before Miller's House Education and Labor Committee Thursday, investigators are expected to reveal alarming new details showing how deceptive marketing and conflicts of interest could lead good parents to send their children to bad programs, Hill sources say. Miller is also expected to introduce legislation aimed at strengthening oversight of the programs. At a hearing last fall, investigators [told](#) Congress that "boot camp"-style programs tend to be loosely regulated and are sometimes found to have untrained staff using reckless or negligent operating practices. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Children Abused in Unregulated 'Boot Camps,' Critic Charges](#)--April 24th, 2008--"Your dog has more protection than your children," says Maia Szalavitz, a journalist who has investigated so-called "tough love" camps and residential programs supposedly aimed at helping troubled teens. [Congress](#) will hold a second round of hearings Thursday on problems highlighted by Szalavitz and others. Rep. George Miller (D-CA), chair of the House Education and Labor Committee, is chairing the probe of widespread abuse in the programs. There have been at least 10 deaths of children held in teen "wilderness programs," "boot camps," "emotional growth boarding schools," and other residential facilities. The first round of hearings last October prompted [bipartisan](#) outrage at industry abuses that committee members compared to "[human right](#) abuses in third world countries." Several victims portrayed in Szalavitz' book, "Help at Any Cost," are scheduled to testify at the hearing. She has called the "tough love" programs "an industry out of control and answerable to no one." "Most parents are unaware that in many states, dog kennels and nail salons are more highly regulated than the health and safety of children in so called 'tough love teen boot camp' institutions. Anyone, including ex-convicts, can open a program. No qualification or certification is required," Szalavitz said. Szalavitz is a fellow of the Statistical Assessment Service (STATS), a not-for-profit Washington, DC, group that highlights the use and abuse of science and statistics in the media. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Fed study says troubled teens abused in some residential treatment centers](#)--April 25th, 2008--WASHINGTON -- Troubled teens have been repeatedly abused, neglected and even subjected to clear cases of torture in residential treatment centers, such as the wilderness therapy programs that flourish in Utah, according to a two-pronged federal study that also uncovered misleading marketing practices used to sell these program to parents. A House committee received the findings of this General Accountability Office study on Thursday, hearing about one program where teens had bags placed over their heads and nooses tightened around their necks, similar to what U.S. soldiers did to prisoners in the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. In another case, a teen was forced to lay on a red ant hill and was not allowed to remove the ants from his face or body. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: <http://origin.slttrib.com> Date: April 25, 2008)

[Stop Child Abuse in Programs that Supposedly "Help"](#)--April 23rd, 2008--Rep. George Miller (D-CA) will introduce legislation tomorrow, aimed at reining in the billion dollar "troubled teen" industry, which, according to the New York Times, [detained](#) about 100,000 children and adolescents as of 2005-- a number which had quadrupled in 10 years. Right now, many states regulate dog kennels and nail salons more assiduously than they monitor these "tough love" programs, which are essentially [private prisons](#); the teens cannot leave or contact the outside world. And there is no federal regulation at all: in fact, the feds don't even know how many teens are incarcerated in these programs or how many programs exist. That question may begin to be answered tomorrow, in a new Government Accountability Office report. At the last hearing, a GAO [report](#) finding thousands of allegations of abuse and ten deaths at these "boot camps" "emotional growth" or "therapeutic" boarding schools, harsh "wilderness programs and "academies," was presented to the house Education and Labor Committee. After hearing accounts of teens "forced to eat vomit, lie in urine and feces, forced to use toothbrushes to clean toilets and then on their teeth," the ranking Republican on the committee said that he generally opposes increased federal regulation, but "there are some times when it has to happen." For complete story, [click here](#).

[GAO cites concerns over wilderness therapy programs](#)--April 25th, 2008--WASHINGTON (AP) - A new government report says some companies use deceptive marketing practices to convince parents to enroll their troubled teens into boot camp-style therapy programs where they can end up abused and neglected. The Government Accountability Office looked at eight cases of abuse and death at the camps, including at the Whitmore Academy in Utah in 2004. The agency's managing director told members of Congress on Thursday the review found ineffective management and untrained staff contributed to dangerous conditions at the camps. He told stories of teens being forced to lie on red-ant hills and being bitten by pit bulls. The chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee has introduced a bill to create federal oversight of wilderness therapy programs. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.localnews8.com Date: April 25, 2008)

[Cook saw dragging at boot camp](#)--April 26th, 2008--A witness testified on Friday that she saw two Christian boot camp officials abuse a 15-year-old girl last summer at a Banquete ranch, including dragging her behind a van. Charles Flowers, 47, and Stephanie Bassitt, 21, of Love Demonstrated Ministries boot camp, are on trial for aggravated assault. They are accused of using a rope to tie trainee Siobahn McClintock to a van on June 12 and then dragging her behind it. Barbara "Bobby" Greer said she was working as a cook on the ranch during a portion of the boot camp held on the property. After witnessing the dragging she wanted to call 911 but felt like she was under the control of the ranch owners. "Every time she would fall they would drag her through the gravel," Greer said. The day before, Greer said she saw a man pin Siobahn down with his boot on her neck while he sprayed water in her face. The Floresville teen, who now is 16, has said she was pinned to the ground several times by Bassitt and Flowers at the camp when she could no longer exercise. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Teen boot camps under scrutiny](#)--April 25th, 2008--Washington - Lawmakers are calling for federal regulation of so-called "boot camps" for kids. They are all across the country, but alleged abuses at the camps were described as "sickening." One case, caught on tape, got national attention. Martin Lee Anderson, 14, died after being roughed up by staff at a youth boot camp in Florida. Now congressional investigators say they have found thousands of other cases they say turned their stomachs. "The abuses included staff members forcing children to remain in so-called stress positions for hours at a time, to undergo extreme physical exertion without food, water, or rest; and to eat their own vomit," said Rep. George Miller (D-CA). Often modeled after military boot camps, the camps exist to straighten up troubled teens, but investigators said they were reminded of the abuses inmates suffered at the Abu Graib prison in Iraq. "A 16-year-old boy having trouble breathing and walking was tortured and humiliated for days. One staff member told the boy he deserved an Academy Award for faking it," said Gregory Kutz, Government Accountability Office. Kutz said the sales pitches often misled. Camp officials were recorded telling an investigator posing as a teen's father what not to tell his wife. "I want you to tell her it's a college prep boarding school," the official said. One who was abused himself as a 13-year-old said he is still scarred by it. "I have nightmares today of being back in that place and being told that I'm never gonna leave that things are gonna never change," said Jon Martin-Crawford of Hancock, New York. Investigators said they found more than 1,500 cases of reported child abuse at residential facilities including boot camps, more than 100 of those were in Indiana. Lawmakers are calling for federal standards for youth boot camps with periodic inspections. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Feds eye 'boot-camp therapy'](#)--April 25th, 2008--WASHINGTON — Boot camp therapy companies use deceptive practices in getting parents to enroll troubled teens in programs where they can end up abused and neglected, the Government Accountability Office has found. The findings come at the same time House Education and Labor Committee Chairman George Miller introduced the "Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act of 2008," designed to create federal oversight of wilderness therapy programs, also known as therapeutic boarding schools, boot camps and behavior modification facilities. At a committee hearing Thursday, Gregory Kutz, GAO's managing director of Forensic Audits and Special Investigations, said the most recent investigation looked at eight closed cases of abuse or death, including abuse at the Whitmore Academy in Utah in November 2004. GAO found that "ineffective management and operating practices, in addition to untrained staff, contributed to the death and abuse of youth enrolled in selected programs." Kutz told stories of teenagers being forced to lie face down on red-ant hills, being bitten by pit bulls, being forced to endure extreme physical endurance tests in 120-degree heat and other abuse. Kutz also said the GAO found "examples of deceptive marketing and questionable practices in certain industry programs and services" after calling 14 programs with fictitious parents looking for information for fictitious children. He played audio tapes of phone calls made to certain wilderness programs. One excerpt included a woman at a referral service telling the GAO caller to tell his wife that this was a "college prep boarding school," because she might "freak out" if she thought the caller wanted to send his daughter to a place "where there are drug addicts and people that are all screwed up." Another example had a referral agent recommend a particular program to GAO because "the bipolar, the depression, those kinds of things, they just go away after a while" when the participants follow a special whole-grain diet and exercise program. There were other examples of conflicts of interest, as one referral service kept directing participants to a Missouri boot camp that it owned. Other examples showed misleading information on health insurance reimbursement or encouraging tax fraud through charitable donations. Thursday's hearing was a follow-up to one the committee held in October at which GAO released a report outlining 10 cases where teenagers died in such programs, including five deaths in Utah. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Teen boot camp hearing targets Missouri agency](#)--April 24th, 2008--WASHINGTON | In a hearing designed to expose deceptive marketing practices in the residential treatment industry for troubled teens, a northwest Missouri referral agency was singled out Thursday on Capitol Hill. The hearing, held before a

House committee, included testimony of examples of cruelty and neglect used by officials at boot camps and residential treatment centers. It highlighted what Greg Kutz called "deceptive and other questionable" marketing tactics by some referral agencies. Kutz, who is leading an investigation into youth residential programs for the federal Government Accountability Office, specifically named Parent Help of Gallatin, Mo., as one of them. For example: Despite online descriptions that say Parent Help workers will "look at your special situation and help you select the best school for your teen," all three GAO investigators who called Parent Help with fictitious stories about their children were referred to Thayer Learning Center. Parent Help is owned by John Bundy, while Thayer is owned by his wife, Willa Bundy. "They didn't disclose that to us as parents," Kutz testified. Thayer Learning Center, where Roberto Reyes of California died at age 15 in November 2004 after his parents were referred to the school through Parent Help, is located about 50 miles northeast of Kansas City in Kidder. Parent Help is less than 15 miles from there. Officials at Thayer and attorneys for Thayer didn't return calls from The Star on Thursday. The GAO found that among the more questionable practices were false promises of tax incentives and insurance reimbursements. Monthly charges ranged from \$2,800 to \$13,000, Kutz said. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.kansascity.com Date: April 24, 2008)

Marketing of boot camps comes under congressional scrutiny--April 24th, 2008--CAPITOL HILL (AP) - Emotions ran high during a hearing in the House on youth boot camps. Lawmakers and witnesses compared the treatment of teens in the camps to the kind of torture faced by prisoners at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison. Greg Kutz has led an investigation into youth residential programs for the Government Accountability Office. He says the programs use deceptive marketing practices when trying to persuade parents of troubled youngsters to enter the programs. Kutz testified that investigators uncovered cases in which a pit bull was trained to bite students and where teens had bags placed over their heads and nooses slipped around their necks. A visibly angry Congressman George Miller says "it's hard to believe that people would do this to somebody else's child." He has introduced legislation to prevent such abuses and boost oversight of boot camps. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.krdc.com Date: April 24, 2008)

Breaking: 'They're just laying down, waiting to hear something. They're on high risk.' [Several Students Arrested At Locked-Down High School](#) 28 Apr 2008 (WA) Several students have been arrested at Mount Tahoma High School after officials put the campus under a "high risk" lockdown on Monday. Earlier, KIRO 7 reporter Kevin McCarty said students off campus heard from students in classrooms who were told the lockdown was a "high risk" one, requiring students to lie down on the floor behind closed doors until the school is 'clear.' Officials said a student who had been suspended was found on campus Monday with a loaded handgun. For complete story, [click here](#).

Hung Jury Declares Mistrial In Van Dragging Of 15-Year-Old Girl--May 3rd, 2008--Almost a year after 15-year-old Siobhan McClintock was allegedly dragged behind a van at a church bootcamp for troubled youth, her named abusers are set free due to hung jury despite witness testimony, medical treatment and photos of multiple injuries. On Friday, May 2, 2008, the Judge in the case of Charles Flowers, 47, and a bootcamp worker, Stephanie Bassitt, 21, [declared a mistrial](#), as the jury could not reach a decision as to where the young girl sustained her injuries. Last summer, Siobhan was entered into Love Demonstrated Ministries, International's 32-day Boot Camp for "at risk" youth. The program, founded in 1995: "...for teen boys through the Faith Outreach Center. The camp's aim is to "instill discipline, respect for authority, integrity, unity and morality," according to the camp's Web site. In 1997, he began to accept girls to the program. While at the camp, Siobhan was said to have fallen behind in morning drill exercises and when she did, she was tied to a van and dragged along. An [eye-witness account](#) of the incident was provided during court. Two days after the incident, the troubled teen returned home, much to the shock of her mother. The mom took pictures of the injuries to Siobhan's legs, shins, chin, stomach, back, hands and feet. Her mom also had her treated as well as removed her from the program. Flowers and the worker were indicted on felony assault charges less than two months later. Their [trial began at the end of April](#). Just a few days into the trial, the [Judge reduced the charge](#) of felony assault to a Class A misdemeanor, stating that a rope and van were in no way considered "Deadly Weapons". In a hung jury decision of 9-3, in favor of a "not guilty" verdict for Flowers and an 11-1 vote in favor of a "not guilty" verdict for Bassitt, the Judge declared a mistrial in the case. The main reason cited for their weighted decision towards not guilty was that their was no clear proof of where the evidence of the teen's injuries originated. Although due process is every American's right, where does eye-witness account, injuries consistent with dragging and medical treatment not provide evidence? The teen was obviously troubled and many such teens placed in these types of programs are pathological liars. Moreover, there are often so many situations involving the parents that are not known to the public and these parents have a history of allowing such behaviours to occur and then in desperation, place their "troubled" children in programs like this one. The children will do anything to escape and the parents will do anything to enable their children. The whole case is "hung" as this young girl has probably skirted her own problems, the alleged abusers got away with it and the court system failed. For complete story, [click here](#).

When Is "Tough Love" Torture?--May 4th, 2008--"Last time this country witnessed somebody with a bag over his head and a noose around his neck, the world was horrified and the nation was embarrassed," thundered Rep. George Miller, on hearing [testimony](#) this April regarding abusive treatment of troubled teens in unregulated residential programs. "To be told [by these witnesses] that this is considered a valid therapy by someone in the care of someone else's child...It's hard to believe." Miller—who chairs the House Education and Labor Committee—had called for the congressional hearings to introduce legislation to regulate the programs, which use such "tough love" methods in an attempt to discipline difficult adolescents. He'd also requested a Government Accountability Office (GAO) investigation. At the first round of hearings last October, the GAO had released its initial report, finding "thousands" of allegations of child abuse, medical neglect and "reckless and negligent operating practices," in "boot camps," "wilderness programs" and "academies," which currently hold tens of thousands of American youth. Two additional GAO reports were introduced at the April hearings—with investigators describing the treatment of some of the youth as "torture." One youth was beaten for weeks and denied medical attention after a suicide attempt left him with an exposed bone from a broken arm; others were taunted, then ignored as they lay dying; some were even hooded and had nooses placed around their necks. For complete story, [click here](#).

Lincoln Man Accused of Binding, Gagging Teen Boys--May 19th, 2008--LANCASTER (KPTM) - A Lancaster County man is under arrest for binding, gagging, blindfolding and hanging teenaged boys from the rafters of a detached garage. Police say 57-year-old Sanford Kaplan victimized the teens starting in 2000 at his home at 14647 Country Lane. After serving a search warrant, investigators seized items used to bind the boys, a home computer and a camera. Kaplan was booked on several counts of false imprisonment and 3rd degree sexual assault of a child and child abuse on Wednesday. For complete story, [click here](#).

'Individuals will be expected to report to the centre every day for an intensive training programme.' [Tories plan boot camps for jobless youths](#) --Automatic referrals if out of work for three months --Companies and voluntary groups to run centres 26 May 2008 A future Conservative government will bring in "boot camps" for unemployed young people aged between 18 and 21 who refuse to take a job, Chris Grayling, the party's welfare spokesman, will say tomorrow. Grayling plans to ask private sector companies and voluntary organisations to run the intensive training centres. Individuals will be expected to report to the centre every day for an intensive training programme. Grayling will say: "We plan to introduce much tougher rules for young people under the age of 21 claiming jobseeker's allowance. For this group, the welfare to work process will start much earlier. There will be employment 'boot camps' and community work programmes for those who don't find a job. Staying at home doing nothing will be a thing of the past." [Work camps - so corpora-terrorists get free slave labor?] For complete story, [click here](#).

Lawsuit threatened over teen foster care center--May 31st, 2008--Two days after a court appointed consultant blasted a Lauderhill youth shelter, citing "insurmountable safety concerns" for troubled teens, Florida's top child advocacy group threatened to sue private child welfare bosses if they do not improve care. In a lengthy, tartly worded letter sent Thursday to the top administrators of ChildNet, Broward County's privately run foster care agency, the head of Florida's Children First is demanding that the agency halt all admissions to the Quest Group Home and significantly improve its system of care for adolescent foster kids. "It is shocking to me," FCF executive director Andrea Moore wrote, "that the lead agency in Broward County charged with protecting the state's dependent children is not just willing to tolerate, but actually facilitate, the continued existence of a blatantly dangerous and substandard facility." (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.miamiherald.com Date: May 31, 2008)

Let kids talk and be kids--June 1st, 2008--A 12-year-old stands facing the wall, lunch tray jammed between his stomach and wall so that he can eat. It's not lunch at a juvenile detention center or boot camp, but lunch at Lee Middle School. According to the school, this punishment is the "consequence administered by teachers" for students in the silent lunch area who don't remain silent and are disruptive. Punishment? Or abuse? As parent of a Lee student, someone who's

regularly been a parent volunteer and an East Coweta High resource teacher, and as a long-time educator, I was shocked to learn students are regularly treated this way by educational professionals who should be able to manage behavior more appropriately. Silent lunch? You're kidding. What offense is so heinous a student has to be silent during one of the rare times in the school day when social interaction is possible? What crime does standing against a wall fit? Silent lunch? When did the noise of a lunchroom filled with happy kids interacting with one another become offensive? Having lunch with my kids was always the highlight of the week. Kids are spontaneous, animated, outgoing social beings. I loved to listen to them, talk with them. I learned the most interesting things. Was enthralled by the constantly changing tapestry of evolving personalities. Saw the world through eyes that hadn't become jaded. Students against the wall? This is middle school, not the Marine Corps. When did teachers forget children are children? Look up the latest teen suicide and drop-out rates. Middle schoolers are dealing with some of the most dramatic life-altering transitions they'll face in life. Lunch should be a time-out from the day's activities and pressures, a neutral zone where kids can socialize and be kids. Nick De Bonis Sharpburg For complete story, [click here](#).

When Is "Tough Love" Torture?--May 4th, 2008--"Last time this country witnessed somebody with a bag over his head and a noose around his neck, the world was horrified and the nation was embarrassed," thundered Rep. George Miller, on hearing [testimony](#) this April regarding abusive treatment of troubled teens in unregulated residential programs. "To be told [by these witnesses] that this is considered a valid therapy by someone in the care of someone else's child...It's hard to believe." Miller—who chairs the House Education and Labor Committee—had called for the congressional hearings to introduce legislation to regulate the programs, which use such "tough love" methods in an attempt to discipline difficult adolescents. He'd also requested a Government Accountability Office (GAO) investigation. At the first round of hearings last October, the GAO had released its initial report, finding "thousands" of allegations of child abuse, medical neglect and "reckless and negligent operating practices," in "boot camps," "wilderness programs" and "academies," which currently hold tens of thousands of American youth. Two additional GAO reports were introduced at the April hearings—with investigators describing the treatment of some of the youth as "torture." One youth was beaten for weeks and denied medical attention after a suicide attempt left him with an exposed bone from a broken arm; others were taunted, then ignored as they lay dying; some were even hooded and had nooses placed around their necks. Sitting in the audience—and well aware of how difficult it can be to get people to comprehend the extent and severity of the abuse taking place in these programs—was Phil Elberg, a New Jersey medical malpractice attorney. His cases against the industry helped bring the issue to congressional attention and his work, mentioned in two of the three GAO reports, helped guide investigators in understanding the issues and key players. Elberg has probably done more than anyone else to hold the billion-dollar teen treatment business accountable. If the legislation passes, he may soon have many more cases—and perhaps, finally, some competition from other lawyers for them. For complete story, [click here](#).

US Teen Students Having Less Sex And Doing Less Drugs--June 5th, 2008--US teens are engaging in fewer risky behaviors than in years past according to the results of a new federal survey conducted by the CDC. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.dogflu.ca Date: June 5, 2008)

Mat Anderson: Teens aren't as bad as most depictions--June 4th, 2008--As a teenager, I remember reading innumerable news stories about how crazy my peers and I were and how teens were a troubled group of sexually promiscuous, drug-addicted party animals that cared about nothing but themselves. I always found this to be a little off-putting because I knew that I wasn't crazy, sexually promiscuous or drug-addicted, and I was pretty sure that the majority of my peers weren't either. But I still wondered if I was an abnormal teen who was just out of the loop about what was cool. This bothered me, because like most teenagers, I desired to fit in and be normal. I wondered, "Am I expected to experiment with drugs and have sex? Am I uncool if I don't?" Now that I'm older, I've realized that it's probably unlikely that those behaviors are the norm for most teens. However, it's often the negative behaviors of the minority that make headlines and shape the way society views all teens. Experts say that the way teens are portrayed in the media is often far from what is true about their age group. They say false impressions are negatively affecting how parents parent and teachers teach, and how young people think about themselves. If young people grow up hearing the stereotype that it's normal for them to get drunk or high, have sex, get pregnant or vandalize property, then that may be what they'll end up doing. Experts say this is because during adolescence, teens are trying to find their identity, and a big part of that is fitting in and being part of the crowd. But according to the Centers for Disease Control, the majority of the crowd hasn't had an alcoholic beverage in the past 30 days, has never tried marijuana, and only 50 percent have had sex. This reality can be leveraged to promote healthy choices through "social norming." Social norming operates on the notion that if the general impression is that most kids don't drink alcohol, then those who do drink will drink less, and fewer will start drinking in the first place. Several colleges, high schools and middle schools have found this to be highly effective in limiting risky behaviors among young people, and parents can incorporate this same strategy into their parenting style. Here are some tips: * Keep the lines of communication open. It's important to have regular conversations with teens that provide them with accurate information about the issues that they face. Remind them that the norm for most teens isn't to go out partying and drinking. * Be mindful of the messages you're sending. During prom and graduation season, many parents say things like, "I know everyone else may be drinking but..." It's important for parents to be aware that the majority of teens won't be drinking and that parents may be subtly sending the message to teens that those behaviors are the norm. * Communicate values and morals. It's important for teens to know what the norm is for your family. If teens understand that they are expected to live up to certain shared morals and values regarding behaviors like sex and drinking, then that will affect how they act when outside of the home as well. * Be an example. The most important influence on teens is parents, so it's important to demonstrate appropriate behaviors. Your teen will often "do as you do," so it's vital that your actions mirror the behaviors you desire from your teen. Teens aren't crazy, they're merely trying to find their identity as they transition from childhood to adulthood. While we should be mindful that they will make some mistakes along the way, parents shouldn't sit by and accept a harmful and destructive lifestyle as the norm from anyone they love, especially their children and the future of our society. For complete story, [click here](#).

Guilty verdict in bus killing--June 10th, 2008--A Baltimore man with two previous murder convictions and almost two decades of documented psychiatric illnesses was found guilty but not criminally responsible yesterday in the killing of a fellow inmate aboard a prison bus - and state officials aren't sure what to do with him. Kevin G. Johns Jr., who had faced a possible death penalty, suffered from mental disorders that prevented him from being able to obey the law when he strangled another prisoner, a judge ruled. After a prosecutor said Johns, 25, might be too dangerous for the state's maximum-security psychiatric hospital, Harford Circuit Judge Emory A. Plitt Jr. gave attorneys for the state prison system and health department two weeks to sort out where he should be sent. The verdict came after a two-hour commentary from Plitt on what he called "a preventable tragedy." The judge placed some of the blame for the Feb. 2, 2005, murder of Philip E. Parker Jr. on a prison system that had "ample warnings" about Johns' deteriorating mental health and his propensity for violence. The judge questioned why prison doctors had stopped giving Johns medication and why correctional officers did not more closely guard him during the nighttime bus ride from Hagerstown to Supermax in Baltimore. After Parker's murder, three correctional officers on the bus were fired, and the prison system revamped its transportation policy, eliminating all nighttime bus trips. "Based on the undisputed evidence presented to me during the trial," Plitt said, "it seems to me that the death of Mr. Parker could have been avoided." The judge gave an exhaustive recitation of Johns' history of mental illness, which began at age 9, spanned 5,000 pages of evaluations and included a dozen diagnoses over the years, including fetal alcohol syndrome, lead poisoning, and schizo-affective disorder. In 2002, Johns killed an uncle in Baltimore whom he had accused of physically and sexually abusing him. And in January 2004, while serving his 35-year sentence at a prison in Hagerstown, Johns strangled his 16-year-old cellmate. As he was being sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole in that killing, Johns said that he would "do it again." A day later, he strangled Parker. Plitt punctuated many of his remarks with the phrase "another cloud in the gathering storm," borrowing from defense attorney Harry J. Trainor Jr.'s description of Parker's murder as "a perfect storm." The case was moved from Baltimore County and heard by a judge rather than a jury at the request of defense attorneys. The eight-day trial ended May 20, and Plitt, a former attorney for the prison system, said he had been poring over evidence and researching legal issues ever since. As Plitt reached the end of his comments and announced his finding that Johns was not criminally responsible, Parker's family, dressed all in black, stood and left the courtroom. Parker, 20, was serving a 3 1/2 year sentence for a robbery with a pellet gun. Years earlier, Parker and Johns had lived together in a residential treatment center for troubled teens. (Webmaster Note: Behavior modification programs/residential treatment centers/ programs contribute to the destruction of our society. So much so that not only the above case, but Columbine (both boys had been through an anger "management" program and were on prescription psychotropic medication), Virginia Tech (shooter was a survivor of a behavioral "health" residential "treatment" center), and DeKalb in IL (shooter was a survivor of a behavior modification program and on prescription psychotropic medication). Who's taking responsibility? Not the Frankenstein, cultish, behavior modification industry? Well, they should be held responsible, whether they wish to be or not. This has to stop!) For complete story, [click here](#).

[Ex-employees sue boot camp accused of abuse](#)--June 3rd, 2008--Five former employees of a northwest Missouri boot camp where a child died in 2004 have sued for alleged malicious prosecution. The workers had been sued by Thayer Learning Center in a case that eventually was dropped. In that lawsuit, Thayer alleged that the ex-employees made false statements and false allegations to law-enforcement officials and others about activities at the camp. In the lawsuit filed Monday, the former employees allege that Thayer sued them to keep them and others quiet, describing the lawsuit against them as an attempt "to keep the truth about their facility secret." The workers' lawsuit also accuses Thayer of suing them "to hide from the appropriate authorities and parents the fact that ... the usual methods used by (Thayer) did indeed and actually constitute child abuse." The case filed in Caldwell County Circuit Court names Thayer Learning Center and the facility's owner, Willa Bundy, as defendants. Bundy and an attorney for the center did not return phone calls Monday and Tuesday. Allegations of child abuse at Thayer — about 50 miles northeast of Kansas City in Kidder — came to light after Roberto Reyes, 15, died in November 2004, less than two weeks after enrolling. No charges were filed in connection with Roberto's death, but the FBI recently conducted a preliminary investigation and sent its findings to the U.S. Department of Justice. Officials there are reviewing the case. Thayer officials have said that allegations of abuse were "ludicrous and false." In its 2003 lawsuit, Thayer alleged that the workers made false statements to third parties about the center "physically abusing and harming its students" and accused them of violating written contracts by contacting parents, government agencies and law-enforcement officials to discuss specific students and school operations. Those contacts, Thayer alleged, forced the school to "have to continually ... deny these false allegations" and caused the loss of potential students. Thayer dropped its lawsuit last month. In their lawsuit, the ex-employees said contractual agreements could not be used to prevent individuals from reporting abuse. They accuse Thayer of "covering up the fact that they had an unqualified and unsupervised staff engaging in child abuse." Phil Elberg, a New Jersey attorney representing the plaintiffs, alleged by phone that Thayer's 2003 lawsuit "was clearly intended to scare people into shutting up." The plaintiffs did not specify a dollar amount but alleged that the center's "outrageous" behavior "showed an evil motive" and therefore entitles them to exemplary damages in addition to actual damages, attorneys' fees and "such other relief as the court deems just and proper." Elberg said the plaintiffs — Nanette Burge and Candessa Williams of Gallatin, Mo.; Linda Glenn and Janet Traylor of Hamilton, Mo., and Regina Burge of Jamesport, Mo. — would not comment. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.kansascity.com Date: June 3, 2008)

[Facing huge hurdles, The Starting Place starts over](#)--June 12th, 2008--Nancy Merolla began her new job on April 7, but her hiring wasn't officially announced until May 29. "I guess they wanted to see if I'd stick around," Merolla joked the other day. At least I think she was joking. Merolla has her hands full as the new CEO of the Starting Place, a teen drug abuse and mental health treatment center that hit bottom earlier this year. A Hollywood police investigation into possible sexual abuse by former staff against teen clients continues. (Webmaster Note: Kids should be given second chances, not sexual predators.) (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.sun-sentinel.com Date: June 12, 2008)

[ACLU sues Texas youth prison system](#)--June 12th, 2008--AUSTIN (AP) - The American Civil Liberties Union has filed a lawsuit against the Texas youth prison system over use of solitary confinement, strip searches and other practices at a lockup for girls in Brownwood. The lawsuit was filed Thursday in federal court in Austin on behalf of 5 girls held at Brownwood. The suit claims the Texas Youth Commission is violating inmates' constitutional rights and international standards on protecting children from abuse and cruel treatment. TYC spokesman Jim Hurley, who had not seen the lawsuit, said the agency is taking steps to improve how it deals with female inmates. He also noted the agency recently ended a long-term isolation program that had been used at a different facility. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.kdbc.com Date: June 12, 2008)

[Teen treatment center looks for area land](#)--GRANTS- The Grants City Council will hear a detailed proposal on Tuesday night from Frank Sipan on the possibility of opening a Boys Town in Grants. Boys Town, which also accepts girls, is a national organization that helps troubled teens. Sipan said Boys Town would help those young people throughout the area become stable and productive citizens. The organization has an 80 percent recovery rate. This is a self-contained community, and members have their own mayor, post office and other amenities. The next regular City Council meeting will be on June 24 at 6 p.m. at City Hall. For more information call the city clerk at 287-7927. For complete story, [click here](#). (Webmaster Note: Boys Town is confirmedly abusive. Please speak out against this and any other grants!)

[Boy suffocated during school punishment Coroner's Report](#)--June 20th, 2008--MONTREAL - After nine-year-old Gabriel Poirier was discovered lifeless in his classroom last April 17, his parents were told their autistic son had stopped breathing after hiding under a heavy therapeutic blanket. Now a coroner has revealed that Gabriel's teachers had tightly wrapped him in the buckwheat-stuffed blanket, leaving only the tips of his ears sticking out, as punishment when he became disruptive. They left him unsupervised in a corner for 20 minutes, returning when a timer sounded. Gabriel was unconscious and blue in the face. He was rushed to hospital, where he died the following night surrounded by his family. In a report published yesterday, Coroner Catherine Rudel-Tessier concluded the child suffocated. She said the teachers at the special-needs school in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Que., failed to follow guidelines for the blankets, which are used commonly to calm autistic children. "He was only 53 pounds, he was so small," Gilles Poirier, the boy's father said at a news conference yesterday. "How can they wrap him up like that in a 40-pound blanket? How can this treatment be tolerated?" Ms. Rudel-Tessier said proper use of the blanket called for a child to be rolled at most once and for his head to be left uncovered. The blanket was to be used as a relaxation therapy, not as a punishment, and teachers were supposed to keep an eye on children using the blankets. "A child rolled 'at least four times' in such a heavy blanket is under restraint," the coroner wrote. For complete story, [click here](#).

[ACLU sues Texas youth prison system claiming abuse](#)--June 11th, 2008--AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — The American Civil Liberties Union sued the Texas youth prison system on Thursday, claiming girl inmates have been traumatized by practices such as solitary confinement and strip searches. The lawsuit filed in Austin on behalf of five girls held at the Brownwood facility claims the Texas Youth Commission is violating inmates' constitutional rights and international standards on protecting children from abuse and cruel treatment. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Teen safe house to open in Kalaeloa](#)--June 24th, 2008--O'ahu's first state-sponsored Ke Kama Pono structured group home for troubled, nonviolent teens is expected to open in Kalaeloa sometime next year. (Webmaster Note: This is a "Federally Funded Program" and needs to be monitored closely as it may be the new "face" of re-education.) (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.honoluluadvertiser.com Date: June 24, 2008)

[Breaking News: House Passes Legislation to Stop Child Abuse in Teen Boot Camps and other Residential Programs](#)--June 25th, 2008--The House Wednesday overwhelmingly passed HR 6358 (formerly HR 5876) by a vote of 318-103, with provisions to ban degrading and humiliating treatment, set national standards, create a national hotline that must be accessible to teens in program to report maltreatment and \$15 million in funding for enforcement and regulation. (Webmaster Note: **NOT GOOD ENOUGH!!!!** Children are being tortured, brainwashed, and killed at these facilities. The entire industry needs to be shut down. No program should be in operation unless and until strict guidelines and competent, effective objective and impartial third-party oversight is in full force. Our children deserve better!) For complete story, [click here](#).

[Rescued man has change of heart about teens](#)--July 7th, 2008--HE broke down and wept when he learnt that two teens had risked their lives to save him from drowning. It was almost a week later, when The New Paper on Sunday visited him in hospital on Friday, that Mr Seow Swee Lin, 66, found out about how he was rescued. An interview with the amputee had appeared in The New Paper on 27 Jun, after he was found living at the void deck of a block on Yishun Avenue 5. He was supposed to have moved to a shelter the Chong Pang Zone 2 Residents' Committee had found for him, but he had refused. When we visited Mr Seow at the Singapore General Hospital where he had been warded since last Saturday night, he had no recollection of what had happened. 'I woke up and found myself in hospital. I don't remember falling into the water,' he said in Mandarin. All he remembered was that he had gone to the Merlion Park around 8pm. 'I was very troubled as I didn't want to stay in the shelter, and I wanted to sit somewhere to think about what to do and where to go,' he said. He said only the night before, he had been sleeping at a Toa Payoh void deck when four youths had tried to rob him. When told what the two boys had done to save his life, Mr Seow covered his face with his hands and wept. 'I feel that I learnt something today. Before this, I thought badly of teenagers because of those four who tried to rob me,' he said when he had recovered sufficiently to talk. 'Now that I know I was saved by two youths, I realise that I cannot think that all teenagers are punks because of a few black sheep.' He was very grateful to the teens who had saved his life. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: <http://newpaper.asia1.com.sg> Date: July 7, 2008)

[FTC Urges Caution When Considering 'Boot Camps'](#) --July 9th, 2008--When parents or guardians are considering finding a residential treatment program for a troubled teenager, the decision is often a difficult one. While residential treatment programs may appeal to families, some of whom are looking for a less-restrictive alternative to incarceration or hospitalization, no standard definition exists for these programs. Such programs are not regulated by the federal government, and many are not subject to state licensing or monitoring. In an effort to help parents and guardians with these decisions, the Federal Trade Commission has written a new publication with 15 questions to ask representatives of residential treatment programs. To learn more go to <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/products/pro27.shtm>. The Federal Trade Commission works for consumers to prevent fraudulent, deceptive, and unfair business practices and to provide information to help spot, stop, and avoid them. To file a complaint in English or Spanish, visit the FTC's online Complaint Assistant or call 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357). The FTC enters complaints into Consumer Sentinel, a secure, online database available to more than 1,500 civil and criminal law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and abroad. The FTC's Web site provides free information on a variety of consumer topics. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Beatings Claimed At High-End Juvie Camp: Staff at Rancho Valmora Accused of Abusing Students](#)-- May 11th, 2008--May 11, 2008 (Albuquerque Journal - McClatchy-Tribune Information Services via COMTEX) -- -- When his son started dabbling in drugs and alcohol, Corey Manning sent the 14-year-old to Rancho Valmora, hoping the \$6,000-a-month program would help straighten him out. Instead, the boy was beaten every night for his first two months in the Mora County residential treatment center, according to Manning. On April 24, a staffer there, Clarence Padilla, was arrested and charged with three counts of child abuse and six counts of contributing to the delinquency of a minor. He was released on bond from the San Miguel County Detention Center and has a preliminary hearing scheduled for May 28 in Mora County Magistrate Court. The statement of probable cause quoted Dale Parker, Rancho Valmora administrator, as claiming Padilla physically assaulted three students and "also influenced and enforced many more incidents of physical abuse." It names six victims. Parker informed the New Mexico State Police after residents of Padilla's nine-boy dorm complained of beatings. At times, Padilla allegedly organized some of the bigger residents to attack other boys during the night, often using a sock stuffed with a bar of soap to prevent bruises, according to parents and a treatment center official. Flora Gallegos, court-appointed attorney for Padilla, did not return a call from the Journal for comment. The Children, Youth and Families Department, which licenses Rancho Valmora, sent a team last week to investigate health and safety there, spokeswoman Romaine Serna said. Their report is not complete yet, she added. The more recent alleged incidents, which arrest records indicate occurred over a 10-month period, have left some parents plagued with anger, shock and guilt, asking how a place where they sent their children for help ended up hurting them. "The guilt that hits you is indescribable," said Manning, a resident of Santa Clara, Calif. "We entrusted our child to them to provide a safe environment," said George Dombrovski, a Fairfax, Calif., resident. "It's inexcusable to have physical abuse like this ..." For complete story, [click here](#).

[Memories of Casa by the Sea](#)--July 10th, 2008--I'm not sure if your organization publishes e-mails, but you have my permission to publish mine. Yes, my name is Ramey Smith. I read some of the articles on your web site and found a few about a place called Casa by the Sea in Ensenada, Mexico. I spent almost one year there, from January to November in 1999. On my first day at Casa, I was pulled off my bed, which was the top bunk, and fell to the concrete floor busting my face and nose. As I lay there bleeding, I thought these people are going to kill me. I was in fear for my life at Casa, so I played along with the program the best I could. I made it to level four in the Bold Family. That is how they identified us. They put us in a group, gave it a name, and called it a "family." Anyway, I finally got out of there when my mother's terminal cancer got so bad my father pulled me from Casa by the Sea. I spent the last 2 1/2 months of my mother's life at her bed side. In my opinion, WWASP are a bunch of criminals who manipulate parents. But they did teach me one valuable lesson which I can pass on to troubled youth. Watch out. Your parents can send you to a foreign prison over night and there is nothing you can do about it. You have two choices. You can resist and get beat up, or you can play along until you get out. I'm glad they finally closed down Casa by the Sea. That place was crazy. Sometimes I actually started to think I was going crazy. WWASP does have a wonderful program for brain washing or pain washing children to make them behave. But I'll tell you what. It doesn't last. I ran in to one of the upper level kids that graduated from the program. We were at a Taco Cabana at like 2:30 am and he and some other kids came stumbling in drunk. He didn't change. Not for long, at least. Like in Mexico, where Room Restriction (R&R) consisted of lying on your face, chin pressed on the hard tile floor, and your hands behind your back. They might as well have hog tied us because if you didn't hold that position on your own for 4 to 6 to 12 hours, they had plenty of un-educated idiots to make you wish you had. I heard so many times kids screaming for help, screaming to their parents, screaming for mommy or daddy, screaming out to God to help them. What could we do? If we tried to help, we would be in the same boat. We'd lose our few privileges, get demoted to Level One and spend 2 to 4 weeks in R&R with our chins on the floor. I wish we had been strong enough and organized enough to take that place over by force. I remember thinking about it all the time when I began my captivity there. We out-numbered the staff by at least 20 or 30 of us to 1 staff member. I would have enjoyed hog tying those bastards up and letting them enjoy some Room Restriction, and feed them rotten fish and other horrible things like they fed us. I won't even go into how bad the food was. Well, that's why they wouldn't let us talk without permission, or speak English. They knew if we had gotten organized, we would have overrun the place. I had dreams about it after I left that godforsaken crap hole. I would wake up in the middle of the night and run into the hallway of my house for formation. I learned a lot of Spanish while I was in Mexico because I had no choice. But I still can't stand it. I had a dream of going back there one day and liberating all the children whose parents are paying top dollar to have them victimized. For complete story, [click here](#).

[US school rebuked for ibuprofen strip search](#)--July 12th, 2008--A divided US appeals court has ruled an Arizona school violated the constitutional rights of a 13-year-old student by conducting a strip search for ibuprofen. Suspecting that a student had violated a policy against prescription or over-the-counter drugs without permission, public school officials in Safford, Arizona, ordered a search of Savana Redding. A school nurse had her remove her clothes, including her bra, and shake her underwear to see if Ms Redding was hiding anything. The 2003 search, prompted by a tip from another girl, did not find ibuprofen, which is found in common medications like Advil and Motrin to treat pain like cramps and headaches. Higher doses require a prescription. Previous court decisions ruled the school did not violate the US Constitution's Fourth Amendment rights against unreasonable searches and seizures because officials have a legitimate interest in protecting students from prescription drugs. The 6-5 ruling by a panel of the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals on Friday overturned an earlier decision, setting out its reasoning in an extensive 75-page ruling with many details on the complications of eighth grade life. "Directing a 13-year-old girl to remove her clothes, partially revealing her breasts and pelvic area, for allegedly possessing ibuprofen, an infraction that poses an imminent danger to no one, and which could be handled by keeping her in the principal's office until a parent arrived or simply sending her home, was excessively intrusive," Justice Kim McLane Wardlaw wrote for the majority. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Charges filed in teen's death at boot camp](#)--July 15th, 2008--A Montrose County grand jury Tuesday handed up a raft of charges against operators and staff of a youth-rehabilitation camp in connection with the death of a 15-year-old Utah boy who died in their care. Caleb Jensen died in May 2007 from an untreated staph infection at a court-ordered wilderness camp run by Alternative Youth Adventures in Montrose. The program was shuttered after his death and surrendered its state license. The grand jury filed various charges of negligent homicide, child abuse resulting in death and manslaughter against the staff and management, as well as Keith Hooker, the camp's medical director. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Teen Screen Lawsuit Advances: Federal Court Affirms Family's Right to Sue School for Subjecting Teen to Mental Health Test Without Parental Consent](#)--August 6th, 2008--SOUTH BEND, Ind. A federal court has given the green light to a civil rights lawsuit filed by Rutherford Institute attorneys in defense of a 15-year-old Indiana student who was subjected by school officials to a controversial mental health examination without the knowledge or consent of her parents. In ruling that the lawsuit filed on behalf of Chelsea Rhoades and her parents, Michael and Teresa Rhoades, may proceed to trial, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Indiana upheld the claims that the local school district deprived the Rhoades family of their federal constitutional rights to family integrity and privacy when it subjected Chelsea to the "TeenScreen" examination. A copy of the lawsuit is available here: http://www.rutherford.org/PDF/Filed_Complaint.pdf. For complete story, [click here](#).

[State Senator Wants Juvenile Prison Shut Down](#)--August 7th, 2008--SPRINGDALE - If Sen. Sue Madison had her way, the Arkansas Juvenile Assessment and Treatment Center in Alexander would be closed and bulldozed. She called the juvenile prison in southwest Pulaski County a "grim" place while discussing child welfare issues during a meeting of the Arkansas Kids Count Coalition on Thursday. It's a place where the state is "warehousing juveniles because someone is mad at them, either the juvenile judge or school officials," Madison said. The state's challenge is finding the money to replace the treatment

programs with community-based programs that are more effective, she said. Reform of Arkansas' juvenile justice system is one of a laundry list of issues the Coalition supports to improve the welfare of children across the state, said Paul Kelly, a senior policy analyst with Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families. The juvenile justice system relies too heavily on confined incarceration of children who may have family or mental health issues rather than criminal behavior. The Kids Count Coalition recommends greater attention on preventive measures, placing children in smaller therapeutic environments and expanded community services to better serve children rather than shipping them off to secure confinement, away from their schools or families. For complete story, [click here](#).

Federal agency: Shoreline schools excluded children with disabilities--August 7th, 2008--The Shoreline School District discriminated against students with disabilities, a federal civil-rights investigation has found. The 15-month investigation centered on the district's February 2007 decision to exclude from its classrooms children newly placed at the Fircrest School, a state residential facility in Shoreline for people with disabilities. As a result of that decision, the investigation found, 11 Fircrest youths didn't go to school at all, some for as long as three months. Others received an inadequate education. The records of 23 youths at Fircrest were reviewed by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR). All but one had attended public school before going to Fircrest. "I think what the investigation confirms is that public schools are for every child," said Stacy Gillett, who filed the complaint as a board member of the Arc of Washington, an advocacy organization for people with disabilities. Shoreline officials didn't return repeated calls seeking comment. While it did not admit wrongdoing, the district entered into a settlement agreement with OCR that requires it to revise its policies and practices. Kids with disabilities will not be excluded from public school and will have opportunities to participate with other children. An independent team of professionals, along with OCR, will oversee Shoreline's progress. For complete story, [click here](#).

Police Say Cult Starved Toddler--August 12th, 2008--A toddler whose remains were found inside a suitcase in Philadelphia this spring was starved to death by members of a religious cult, including his mother, in part because he refused to say "amen" after meals, police said. Ria Ramkissoon, 21, the mother of Javon Thompson, was charged Sunday with first-degree murder in the boy's death, and Baltimore police said Monday that three other members of a group called 1 Mind Ministries have also been charged with first-degree murder. Members did not seek medical care for Javon when he stopped breathing, and the boy died in his mother's arms, according to court documents that described police interviews with a confidential informant and two children. He would have been about 19 months old when police say adults stopped feeding him in December 2006. For complete story, [click here](#).

Sentencing Children to Die in Prison--August 18th, 2008--Ian Manuel was 13-years-old when he participated in a robbery attempt in Florida, leaving the victim with a nonfatal gunshot injury. Ian turned himself in to police, and his attorney told him he would receive a 15-year sentence if he pled guilty. Instead, he was sentenced to life in prison without parole. Ian's is one of several stories told in the Equal Justice Initiative's (EJI) new report, *Cruel and Unusual: Sentencing 13- and 14-Year-Old Children to Die in Prison* (pdf). The Equal Justice Initiative of Alabama is a private, nonprofit organization that provides legal representation to indigent defendants and prisoners. The EJI study found 73 cases in the United States where 13- and 14- year-olds have been sentenced to life without parole--in other words, sentenced to die in prison. EJI argues that giving this harsh sentence to young teenagers violates the U.S. Constitution's Eighth Amendment prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment and is also counter to international conventions. The United States is almost alone in the world in imposing life sentences without parole for crimes committed by children at such a young age. EJI notes that giving such sentences to juveniles has been condemned in a number of international agreements, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This appalling pattern of injustice has prompted a nationwide litigation campaign to challenge these harsh penalties and have the children considered for parole-eligible sentences as soon as possible. For complete story, [click here](#).

Children as Big Pharma Guinea Pigs: 98 Percent of Drug Trials on Children Have no Safety Checks-- August 18th, 2008--(NaturalNews) Fewer than 2 percent of drug trials conducted on children have independent safety advisory boards, a review published in the journal *Acta Paediatrica* has found. Researchers from Nottingham University reviewed reports on 739 international drug trials that had been published between 1996 and 2002. They found that although 74 percent of studies described their safety monitoring procedures, less than 2 percent included an independent safety review committee. Such committees are composed of independent health experts who can review the study data as it comes out and warn if the drug appears to be placing study participants at risk. "It is invaluable to have an independent monitor who can swiftly question any adverse drug reactions or differences in illness and death rates between groups taking part in the clinical trials," said lead researcher Helen Sammons. "Parents also need to be made aware of the risks of adverse drug reactions when a child takes any medicine so that they can make informed decisions that balance those risks against the possible benefits the drug may provide their child." The Nottingham University review also suggests that independent committees lead to more rigorous safety standards. Of the 13 studies with independent review committees, six were halted early due to highly toxic drug effects. None of the studies without independent committees were stopped early. Although the researchers looked only at studies conducted on children, they said the statistics for adult trials are probably similar. For complete story, [click here](#).

Miss. man accused in Medicaid scam--August 1st, 2008--COLUMBUS, Miss. (AP) - The founder of an organization dedicated to helping troubled teens stay out of jail is himself behind bars, facing felony charges stemming from an alleged Medicaid scam. Aaron Ray Pulsifer of Columbus is former executive director of the Youth Challenge Program. He was being held Thursday at the Lowndes County Adult Detention Center. Prosecutors accuse the 31-year-old Pulsifer of using the organization to aid in a nearly 3-year scheme in which he illegally received more than \$1.1 million. Court documents say Pulsifer stole the identity of a woman, then made false reports to the state Division of Medicaid claiming she had provided diagnostic and counseling services for dozens of program Youth Challenge participants. For complete story, [click here](#).

New Report Calls to End Beating of Children in Public Schools--Read the report, A Violent Education: Corporal Punishment of Children in U.S. Public Schools. A shocking report illuminates the state of disturbing forms of discipline in U.S. schools. Released last week by the ACLU and Human Rights Watch, the report finds that more than 200,000 public school students in the U.S. were punished by beatings during the 2006-2007 school year. Further, minorities and students with mental and physical disabilities are punished at disproportionately higher rates in the 13 states that corporally punished more than 1,000 students per year -- despite no evidence that these students commit disciplinary infraction at such disproportionate rates. The report, *A Violent Education: Corporal Punishment of Children in U.S. Public Schools*, found that children ranging in age from 3 to 19 years old in Texas and Mississippi are routinely physically punished for minor infractions such as chewing gum, talking back to a teacher, or violating the dress code, as well as for more serious transgressions such as fighting. Corporal punishment, legal in 21 states, typically takes the form of "paddling," during which an administrator or teacher hits a child repeatedly on the buttocks with a long wooden board. The report shows that, as a result of paddling, many children are left injured, degraded, and disengaged from school. "Every public school needs effective methods of discipline, but beating kids teaches violence and it doesn't stop bad behavior," said Alice Farmer, Aryeh Neier Fellow at Human Rights Watch and the ACLU, and author of the report. "Corporal punishment discourages learning, fails to deter future misbehavior and at times even provokes it." The ACLU and Human Rights Watch call upon the U.S. government to prohibit corporal punishment in all public schools and urge state governments, school boards, superintendents, and administrators to eliminate physical punishment in their schools. [>>> Learn more, and read the report.](#) For complete story, [click here](#).

Audit: Hempstead nonprofit used money for beer--Sept. 5th, 2008--A [Hempstead](#) agency that housed troubled teens allegedly used public money to buy beer and violent video games, and to pay \$47,865 in bonuses to its workers in violation of its contract with the county, according to a [Nassau County](#) audit released yesterday. It also billed other counties for the use of beds that Nassau County had already paid for, in what amounted to \$834,000 in overcharges, Nassau County Comptroller Howard Weitzman said in the audit. The audit sketched out a broad pattern of wasteful and inappropriate spending by the Leadership Training Institute that Weitzman said was the worst case of fiscal abuse he had ever seen by a nonprofit agency. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: [www.newsday.com](#) Date: September 5, 2008)

Former federal prosecutor on trial for allegedly molesting six teens--Sept. 5th, 2008--Clayton — Onetime federal prosecutor Eric Tolen lured under-age boys by offering small jobs at his home and then traded gifts such as dirt bikes, liquor or cigarettes for sexual favors, a St. Louis County jury was told Thursday. Prosecutor Kathi Alizadeh said the six victims — ages 11 to 15 at the time — had to perform sex acts on Tolen, or allow him to perform acts on them, to get what they wanted. Tolen, 47, is charged with 38 counts of criminal conduct. He steadfastly has denied any wrongdoing. He is a former assistant U.S. attorney

who more recently had a general law practice in Overland. His past clients included a mayor of Overland and St. Charles city councilmen. He lived in Town and Country, where officials allege that many of the crimes occurred. For complete story, [click here](#).

Utah doctor indicted in therapy camp death--Sept. 6th, 2008--A prominent Utah County physician stands accused of negligent homicide in connection with the death of a Salt Lake City teen in a southwest Colorado wilderness therapy program. But Keith R. Hooker, who has worked in the emergency department at Utah Valley Regional Medical Center since 1970, says he is innocent. And the indictment, which also accuses him of child abuse, contains no allegations about what he is alleged to have done or failed to do. Caleb Jensen, 15, died May 2, 2007, from a staphylococcus infection, which Colorado prosecutors contend went untreated despite glaring symptoms. The boy spent the last week of his life lying in his own urine and feces, in a remote field camp operated by Alternative Youth Adventures in Montrose County, Colo., court documents allege. Jensen had been sent to the camp by Utah juvenile justice officials. Colorado authorities shut AYA down two months after Jensen's death. Hooker, who served as the program's medical adviser, was indicted in July and related documents were unsealed Aug. 25. He was arraigned in a Montrose, Colo., court last week and pleaded not guilty. His next hearing is scheduled for Oct. 6. Reached at his Mapleton residence Friday, Hooker declined comment. His Provo lawyer, Mike Esplin, said he has not seen testimony given before the grand jury, but he believes there is insufficient evidence to support the charges. "Doctor Hooker never examined Caleb. His role is an adviser to the program. We think it's an overshot," Esplin said. "He didn't give [AYA] any advice concerning this incident. We are in the dark. [Investigators] never talked to him." Montrose County District Attorney Myrl Serra did not return phone calls. Also charged are camp emergency medical technician Ben Askins, who faces a more serious charge of manslaughter; program director Jim Omer and the businesses, Alternative Youth Adventures of Colorado and its corporate parent, Community Education Centers Inc. The New Jersey-based company provides treatment to 6,000 juvenile and adult offenders a year, in seven states. A corporate spokesman said the company was in the process of closing AYA at the time of Jensen's death, but declined to comment further. No charges were filed against field counselors who tended to Jensen and later spoke to investigators. Jensen was admitted to AYA's 60-day program on March 28, 2007. He had undergone an initial medical exam in Utah, but the exam did not reveal any illness, court documents said. His symptoms began April 23 when "it was noted that Caleb had a small blister located on his right ankle," the indictment said. The teen wrote in his journal the next day that he was "burning up, vomiting and having trouble hiking." Suspecting Jensen of "faking" his illness, camp staff separated him from the group until he died eight days later, the charges allege. Staff ordered him to wear diapers and put him on suicide watch, but allegedly did nothing to treat the fatal infection. For complete story, [click here](#).

Youth worker charged with dealing crack--September 9th, 2008--Federal agents have arrested an employee of the Knox County schools and a home for troubled teens on charges of dealing crack cocaine, but their methods are drawing criticism from the agency that runs the group home. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency arrested Fred Bennett outside Cooper House, a group home for teen boys in the Fourth and Gill neighborhood. Bennett is under a federal indictment with two other men for distributing and possessing with intent to distribute crack. For complete story, [click here](#).

Area native's book details broken system--September 14th, 2008-- Brownsville native Ron Howard pursued a degree in psychology and started working in residential treatment to help troubled teens; what he found was a system even more troubled than the children it was meant to help. Howard has documented some of the problems he has observed in a novel, "Children on Layaway, It's All About the Money \$\$\$," a fictional account of life in a residential treatment facility based on real stories. Howard noted the recent passage of a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives designed to prevent abuse in residential treatment facilities as an indication that the problem is systemic, not limited to a single facility. "The picture is pretty grim, in my opinion," Howard said. "The majority of the time these kids spend with staff is with people who have a high school diploma. They are paying these people to be security guards." Howard said 70 percent of the children placed in residential treatment enter the system with mental health problems the staff is unqualified to handle. Howard said he would like to see a requirement for the youth counselors to have at least a bachelor's degree in psychology or sociology or a related field. "If you talk to any child who has been in a residential treatment program, I'd bet they'd say they've been subject to emotional or physical abuse," Howard said. "The kids may report the child abuse, but it's easier to sweep the case under the rug than it is to replace the staff because this is a high-turnover field. Something simply has to be done about it because these companies are literally making millions." Howard writes about children being beaten or having fingers and wrists broken by staff members supposedly restraining the children in dangerous situations in his fictional account. "Even my editor said these stories couldn't be 100 percent true. I'm sure there are even worse stories," Howard said. The nonfiction accounts of abuse can be found in the testimony attached to H.R. 6358, which in June was referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. Testimony from the director for Education, Workforce, and Income Security Issues paints a bleak picture in which physical and sexual abuse occur without management intervention. "Abuse, neglect and civil rights violations documented in all types of residential facilities -government and private, licensed and unlicensed - show that the current federal-state oversight structure is inadequate to protect youth from maltreatment," GAO Director Kay E. Brown wrote in her concluding remarks. A former resident of a residential treatment facility in New York describes restraints using blankets and duct tape, as well as other abuses. "While I had been fortunate enough to miss out on most of the horrors personally, I unfortunately gave many tours to prospective parents, always omitting the details of restraints, punishments and lack of any sort of communication or safeguards against the abuses that took place," Jon Martin-Crawford testified. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.heraldstandard.com Date: September 14, 2008)

Risks Found for Youths in New Antipsychotics--Sept. 15th, 2008--A new government study published Monday has found that the medicines most often prescribed for schizophrenia in children and adolescents are no more effective than older, less expensive drugs and are more likely to cause some harmful side effects. The standards for treating the disorder should be changed to include some older medications that have fallen out of use, the study's authors said. The results, being published online by The American Journal of Psychiatry, are likely to alter treatment for an estimated one million children and teenagers with schizophrenia and to intensify a broader controversy in child psychiatry over the newer medications, experts said. Prescription rates for the newer drugs, called atypical antipsychotics, have increased more than fivefold for children over the past decades and a half, and doctors now use them to settle outbursts and aggression in children with a wide variety of diagnoses, despite serious side effects. For complete story, [click here](#).

Two camp employees arrested--Sept. 12th, 2008--CHARLOTTE COUNTY, Fla. - Two camp employees were arrested after one of them is accused of sitting on a teen for hours. Police arrested Director Arthur Dagg for child neglect and Counselor Carl Hochstetler for child cruelty. A police report says Hochstetler sat on a 15-year-old boy for three hours to discipline him. The alleged crime happened at the Gator's Wilderness Boy's Camp in Punta Gorda in August. It's a camp for troubled boys. Police say the boy's arm was swollen and he started throwing up and that he wasn't taken to the hospital for days. The two men are out of jail. They're due back in court in October. For complete story, [click here](#).

Mother Claims Son Was Abused At S. Fla. School--Sept. 12th, 2008--FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. -- A South Florida mother is outraged, saying her son was abused at an elite school in Fort Lauderdale at the hands of his drill sergeant. Marilyn Johnson-Smith said she is haunted by her decision to send her son, Donald Hutchinson, to a school she thought was a private institution, a place where he would learn and be safe from altercations with other students. "I was looking for a school with a small setting to help him," Hutchinson said. "But it's not a private school. It's an abuse school with boot camp." Johnson-Smith said her son, a fifth-grader, was abused at the hands of a drill sergeant at Fort Lauderdale's Elite Leadership Academy. "My son told me they forced him to the ground -- he forced him to the ground -- which gave him this scar on his face," Johnson-Smith said. Hutchinson said the drill sergeant assaulted him after an altercation over a canteen, tossing him to the ground and digging his knee into the child's back. Is this a case of abuse or simply standard procedure? Elite's executive director, Veronica Ruiz-Ashwal, said the school makes no pretense of its purpose, billing itself as a "behavior modification" program for students who have had problems in other schools. "Whenever a drill instructor takes a child down, it's simply because the child is a safety threat to themselves or to someone else," Ruiz-Ashwal said. It is not just the physical aspects of the academy that Johnson-Smith said she wants investigated. She said she did not know that the academy took a tough-love approach with students. She is angry that her son did not wear a uniform but instead a green jumpsuit issued upon arrival. Ruiz-Ashwal said all students wear the jumpsuit for the first two weeks of the program. Johnson-Smith has hired an attorney. Her lawyer said his client had no idea that Elite was designed for troubled students and is demanding that the school and the drill sergeant be investigated. For complete story, [click here](#).

Five teens have (reportedly) died in programs since 1990--Sept. 12th, 2008--Since 1990, five teens have died while in the care of Utah-based wilderness therapy programs. Michelle Sutton, 15, of California, died May 9, 1990, from altitude sickness, dehydration and heat exhaustion while hiking with Summit Quest of St. George. No charges were filed. Her parents sued the program, physicians and a psychologist. Summit Quest settled in 1992 for its remaining

insurance policy funds -- \$345,000 -- and a judge dismissed claims against the others. Kristen Chase, 16, of Florida, died June 27, 1990, of heatstroke on a hike in Kane County with the Challenger Foundation program of Escalante. Owner Stephen Cartisano was charged with negligent homicide and child abuse related to other students in the program. A jury acquitted him, but state officials banned him from working with child-treatment programs in Utah. Chase's parents sued Challenger and Cartisano, settling in 1994 for \$260,000 in insurance funds. Aaron Bacon, 16, of Arizona, died March 31, 1994, of peritonitis and a perforated ulcer, while on a wilderness trek in Garfield County with North Star Expeditions of Escalante. Staff members were charged with felony neglect and abuse of a disabled child. A jury convicted supervising counselor Craig Fisher, who was sentenced to a year in jail. Others pleaded guilty to reduced charges. The program closed before a licensing hearing was held. Katie Lank, 16, of Virginia, died Jan. 13, 2002, after she was injured while hiking with Redrock Ranch Academy of St. George. She fell about 70 feet into a crevasse and died in a hospital three weeks later. No charges were filed. Her parents sued the program and two staff members and settled for a confidential amount. The program closed. Ian August, 14, of Texas, died July 13, 2002, of the hyperthermia (heat illness) while hiking with Skyline Journey of Nephi. Program supervisor Mark Wardle and a counselor were charged with child abuse homicide. The charges against the counselor were dropped after she testified for prosecutors and a judge found there was not enough evidence against Wardle to take the case to trial. Later, an administrative law judge found evidence of licensing violations. The program was closed in 2003. Wardle and his father have since opened another wilderness camp: Distant Drums Beginnings in Nephi. (Webmaster Note: More children have been killed in programs since 1990 than listed here. This is an incomplete account of death at behavior modification programs in the US.) (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.sltrib.com Date: September 12, 2008)

Parents Warned: Don't Use Ritalin--Sept. 24th, 2008--The drug should not be prescribed to children under five and used for older children only when they have severe ADHD or as a last resort, the guidance says. Instead, parents should be taught psychological techniques for changing the behaviour of unruly youngsters diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. The guidelines were issued by the National Institute for health and Clinical Excellence (Nice) and the National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health. The directive says parent training and education programmes should be offered as a first-line treatment for ADHD, both for pre-school and school-age children. The programmes show parents how to create a structured home environment, encourage attentiveness and concentration, and better manage misbehaviour. Research has shown they can be highly effective, helping children do better at school and lead more normal lives. Teachers should also be involved in the management of school age children, says the guidance. For complete story, [click here](#).

Visions for Youth program probed--September 29th, 2008-- Springfield, Ohio — Authorities are investigating a Clark County program for troubled teens after a video showing what appears to be abuse by a staff member was leaked to the media last month. The boot-camp-style program called Visions for Youth operates four facilities in the county and at one time served as many as ten counties, housing teens ages 13 to 18. Following allegations of abuse and the release of the video, most counties have pulled their kids from the program. In the video, reportedly footage taken by a hidden security surveillance camera at the Inside-Out Community Center on August 2, a Visions for Youth staff member is seen body-slaming a 16-year-old boy in a hallway and then holding him down. William Stout, a pastor with the Community Christian Church, one of three churches that meet in the building, said the counselor -- later identified as Dante Smith -- had found the teen sleeping during a Saturday night church service. The teen is seen in the hallway holding his neck because Smith woke him up by striking him in the throat, Stout said. "We have hidden cameras in there for security purposes, and I guess their staff didn't realize they were on camera," Stout said. "The kid didn't do anything." As of Sept. 11, the Clark County Children services, along with law enforcement and the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services, has been investigating the program, which faces possible the revocation of its license and criminal prosecution of its employees. (Webmaster Note: Let's film all such programs 24/7 with independent third-party oversight!) For complete story, [click here](#).

Parents use abandonment law to shed teens--October 2nd, 2008-- OMAHA — The abandonments began on Sept. 1, when a mother left her 14-year-old son in a police station here. By Sept. 23, two more boys and one girl, ages 11 to 14, had been abandoned in hospitals in Omaha and Lincoln. Then a 15-year-old boy and an 11-year-old girl were left. The biggest shock to public officials came last week, when a single father walked into an Omaha hospital and surrendered nine of his 10 children, ages 1 to 17, saying that his wife had died and he could no longer cope with the burden of raising them. In total last month, 15 older children in Nebraska were dropped off by a beleaguered parent or custodial aunt or grandmother who said the children were unmanageable. Officials have called the abandonments a misuse of a new law that was mainly intended to prevent so-called Dumpster babies — the abandonment of newborns by young, terrified mothers — but instead has been used to hand off out-of-control teenagers or, in the case of the father of 10, to escape financial and personal despair. The spate of abandonments has prompted an outcry about parental irresponsibility and pledges to change the state law. But it has also cast a spotlight on the hidden extent of family turmoil around the country and what many experts say is a shortage of respite care, counseling and especially psychiatric services to help parents in dire need. Some who work with troubled children add that economic conditions, like stagnant low-end wages and the epidemic of foreclosures, may make the situation worse, adding layers of worry and conflict. For complete story, [click here](#).

Putnam mental-health company sues to stay open, keep licenses--October 3rd, 2008-- CARMEL - A private, for-profit mental health company in jeopardy of losing its state operating licenses for alleged violations of patients' rights and state mental-health laws has filed a lawsuit in state Supreme Court to reverse the revocation ruling. SLS Residential Inc., which treats teens and young adults with psychological and behavioral problems, filed the action in Putnam County last week, asking the court to intervene in the state's decision, which would shut its residential treatment facilities in Southeast.SLS argues that the state Office of Mental Health acted arbitrarily when it revoked SLS' operating permits in late August. The revocations came after OMH fined SLS \$110,000 in November 2006 involving 11 specific violations of health laws. Dr. Joseph Santoro, co-owner and chief operating officer of SLS, said in a statement that the company had to appeal. "We cannot allow OMH to disregard the interests of hundreds of satisfied patients and those to come," he said. "We are compelled by principle to challenge this arbitrary and capricious bureaucratic failure to understand our time-tested and effective treatment methodologies." Among the allegations were that SLS used illegal restraints on patients long after being told not to, that it administered sedatives to patients when they refused to take their medications and that it failed to report troubling incidents to the state, including patients behaving suicidal and complaining of abuse by staff. In the statement, SLS accused state officials of not helping the company correct the alleged violations. "Rather than working with SLS in a transparent manner to resolve any question or regulation infraction, OMH has been harassing the facility - and now threatening to put them out of business," the statement reads. "It is vindictive and contrary to the best interest of the community." SLS said the state acted on "unfounded conclusions" and "flawed and arbitrary procedures." OMH spokeswoman Jill Daniels said the agency has worked repeatedly with SLS in an effort to correct the violations. "It is well documented that the Office of Mental Health worked with SLS for more than two years to help bring its programs into compliance with regulations before deciding to revoke its operating licenses," Daniels said. "The revocation decision was motivated by the need to ensure that the people being served by SLS received safe and appropriate care and treatment." Daniels said that OMH is reviewing the SLS lawsuit and that it has "every confidence that OMH will prevail." The litigation to keep its operating licenses is the latest effort by SLS to fight the state's negative findings. After being fined for the alleged violations in November 2006, SLS hired one of the nation's largest law firms, Proskauer Rose, to represent it at a hearing that began in July 2007 and lasted more than 20 days through September 2007. Most such hearings conclude in a week or less. When state OMH Commissioner Michael F. Hogan in July of this year adopted the hearing officer's decision to uphold the fines, SLS appealed in Putnam County Court. That case is pending the outcome of the most recent court action. SLS has yet to pay any fines or cease operating. Among the reasons OMH cited for revoking SLS' licenses is that it continues to use physical restraints on patients and that SLS officials either misled or lied to state officials. The state said that Santoro and Dr. Shawn Pritchard, SLS' clinical director, testified falsely in several instances at the administrative hearing. Santoro testified that an SLS patient, Evan Marshall, was not receiving services from SLS in August 2006 while on a weekend pass to his mother's Long Island home. During that visit, Marshall killed one of his mother's neighbors and drove around with the woman's severed head. Marshall, 32, is serving 29 years to life. Documents showed that Marshall was under SLS' care at the time of the murder. In a recent interview, Santoro said the state never provided a clear definition of an illegal restraint, and that neither patients' insurance companies nor their families would tolerate the actions of which SLS stands accused. He likened his company's fight against the OMH to the biblical battle of David and Goliath. SLS is also a defendant in a multimillion-dollar federal class-action lawsuit brought on behalf of several former patients who claim they were mistreated. Last week, a federal judge in that case fined SLS \$35,000 for trying to scare former patients away from participating in the lawsuit. Glen Feinberg, a Pleasantville lawyer who went to court to win the right to protest outside SLS sites over the poor treatment he felt his son got there in 2001 and 2002, defended OMH. He said that the SLS appeal is based on three premises: that the OMH has a vendetta against it, that SLS does not have to follow rules that similar companies do, and that the evidence was not sufficient to revoke the licenses. "The first

two arguments are absurd," Feinberg said. "As for the third, there are hundreds of pages of testimony, much of it from SLS employees and documents, that support the finding of truth. SLS has no credibility at all." (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.lohud.com Date: October 3, 2008)

Proposed eastern Idaho haven for troubled teens loses grant--October 4th, 2008--IDAHO FALLS, Idaho (AP) - The Idaho Department of Commerce has pulled a \$500,000 grant that would have helped pay for the construction of a group home for troubled teens after losing confidence in the project. Ammon city officials were awarded the federal community development block grant in 2006, and intended to pass the money on to Family Care Center to use in the construction of the proposed \$7.5 million Pearl House. The Department of Commerce was holding the money in trust until construction began. But construction on the project has been delayed for years because Family Care Center hasn't been able to sell \$5 million in bonds. Commerce department spokeswoman Bibiana Nertney says the department decided it would not be in the state's interest to be a financing partner in the project. Family Care Center Board Chairman Ron Carlson says the loss of the grant means the group will have to try to make up the \$500,000 in bonds. (Webmaster Note: Good, projects like these should be canceled, not funded.) For complete story, [click here](#).

Teenage boys violently attack youth facility members--October 6th, 2008--(10/06/2008) By Jeniffer Berry - Two teenagers were behind bars as of Monday night accused of attacking 3 people at a youth treatment facility in Kearney. Among the injured are 2 employees and a Kearney Police Officer. It was a violent attack. Authorities said 2 teenage boys took a ball from a pool table and put it in sock. It was a makeshift weapon used to beat 2 staff members. It happened just after 11:00 Sunday night at the Youth Rehabilitation Treatment Center in Kearney. It is a place for troubled boys - many with criminal backgrounds. The State Patrol said 2 of them, both 16 year olds, tried escaping. They lured a 72 year old staffer into a common area where authorities said they used the pool ball in the sock to beat him in the face. "Causing some fractured bones in the face and he called out for help," said State Patrol Lt. Dennis Leonard. Another staffer responded - a 64 year old man. He was also attacked. At some point, somebody managed to call police. When they arrived they too were ambushed. One police officer was punched in the head multiple times, before the boys were eventually arrested. "The degree of the injuries and the force that they used an object to inflict these injuries is technically a felony in itself," said Leonard. The teens were in the Buffalo County Jail Monday night facing charges of second degree assault, use of a weapon to commit a felony and attempted assault on a police officer. All are felonies. The officer punched in the head did not have to be taken to the hospital. The two staff members did. One has a fractured eye socket and the other needed stitches on his head. The State Patrol said it has responded to problems here before, but nothing like this. For complete story, [click here](#).

Detectives seek additional victims in sex-crimes case--October 8th, 2008-- Detectives are looking for additional victims of a former Marine accused of having sex with a 15-year-old in 2007 and of committing lewd acts on a 13-year-old in 2006. Authorities said Ross Jay Curtis, 23, met the older girl at the now-defunct JROTC program at Pioneer High in Whittier while the younger teen was in an at-risk boot camp program at a Hawaiian Gardens middle school, which they wouldn't name. Curtis also volunteered at camps attended by Bellflower students, according to Detective Rudy Acevedo of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Special Victims Bureau. "He would put himself in a position to be around kids and in that type of environment," Acevedo said. He said Curtis used his military background to befriend the people running the programs. He said Curtis would also talk to the students about the Marines and the benefits of a career in the military. A flier looking for additional victims was distributed in Sacramento and San Diego, where Curtis lived. "He may have volunteered in schools in San Diego," Acevedo said. Prosecutors charged Curtis with lewd acts upon a child, sending by electronic mail harmful matter with the intent of seducing a minor, sexual penetration by a foreign object and oral copulation of a minor. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.whittierdailynews.com Date: October 8, 2008)

Martin Lee Anniversary--October 10th, 2008--Sunday is the one year anniversary of the not guilty verdict in the boot camp death of 14 year-old Martin Lee Anderson. The teen was kicked and kneed by guards as a nurse watched during the first hour of his stay in the Panama City boot camp. The state later settled for 5 million dollars with his parents. Mother Gina Jones said her life hasn't been the same since the death, and nothing has changed her or her attorney's mind that that guards got away with murder. The NAACP asked for a federal investigation into whether the guards violated Martin's civil rights. There has been no inquiry or investigation. The family is hoping a new administration may reopen the case. (Webmaster Note: Martin Lee Anderson's death should be a large wake-up call to America that we need to begin protecting our children.) For complete story, [click here](#).

Youth treatment center to close--October 9th, 2008--A 43-bed youth treatment center in Marriottsville will be closing next month as the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services transitions more youths away from residential facilities to community-based treatment programs. The Thomas O'Farrell Youth Center is scheduled to close Nov. 30, said Tammy Brown, a spokeswoman for the Department of Juvenile Services. Of the close to 30 nonviolent youth offenders now at the center, 10 will be transferred to other residential facilities and the rest will be sent home to continue treatment in their communities, she said. "There's a big push for kids to be treated in the community and in their homes with their families," Brown said. Brown said department staff had been discussing the transition with North American Family Institute, the organization that runs the O'Farrell center, since May. NAFI, which runs several treatment programs throughout the Northeast, will also be transitioning to offer community-based treatment in Baltimore and Baltimore County. NAFI will be offering a new MultiSystemic Therapies Program starting in January, according to a press release by the Department of Juvenile Services. This approach works with youths in their homes and family environments to look at all factors that influence the youth's behavior, and addresses some of the systemic problems, Brown said. For example, if a youth referred to the department is living with parents with a drug abuse problem, that is something the therapy program would address to help both the youth and the entire family, she said. The closing of the O'Farrell center comes a year and a half after Bowling Brook Preparatory School in Middleburg closed in March of 2007, following the death of a student at the school. Nevada-based company Rite of Passage has submitted a proposal to the Governor's Office of Children to restart a youth treatment program at the school, Brown said, but so far the application has not been forwarded to the Department of Juvenile Services. The closing of the O'Farrell center has nothing to do with recent developments on the future of Bowling Brook, Brown said. (Webmaster Note: We are also pleased to announce that Excel Academy in Conroe, TX is closed/closing as of this month!) For complete story, [click here](#).

Despite state acquittals, federal charges possible in death of teen at Florida boot camp--October 13th, 2008-- PENSACOLA, Fla. (AP) _ A looming federal investigation and possible trial is making it difficult for seven juvenile Florida boot camp guards and a nurse acquitted last year of state charges in the death of a 14-year-old boy to move on with their lives, their attorneys said. The eight left a Panama City courthouse with their jubilant families one year ago on Oct. 12, 2007, after jurors found them not guilty in the beating death of Martin Lee Anderson. The death and verdict prompted protests and Florida's juvenile boot camps were abolished. The eight employees were fired from the Bay County Juvenile Boot Camp. "All of their lives have changed. They are no longer doing what was their first choice in life to do," said Hoot Crawford, attorney for former camp guard Henry Dickens, who is now a hotel security guard. Dickens had wanted to dedicate his life to reforming juvenile offenders but "now he is doing something very different," Crawford said. The federal inquiry remains open, said Karen Rhew, a Tallahassee-based assistant U.S. attorney. She declined to give other details or a timeframe for a decision on whether or not there will be a second trial. Attorneys for the eight said their clients did not want to talk publicly about the verdict because of the federal investigation. Anderson died Jan. 6, 2006, a day after being hit and kicked by the guards as the nurse watched. He had just been assigned to the camp. He was caught trespassing at a school, which violated his probation imposed after he was convicted of helping his cousins steal their grandmother's car. A video of the 30-minute altercation showed the seven men punching him and using knee strikes against him, pushing ammonia capsules into his nose and dragging his limp body around the yard. The video also showed the nurse doing nothing to help Anderson or stop the men. A coroner initially determined Anderson fatally hemorrhaged because he had an undiagnosed sickle cell trait, a condition which can cause red cells to change shape and not carry oxygen when the body is under extreme stress. A second autopsy, completed when then-Gov. [Jeb Bush](#) ordered an independent prosecutor take over the case, determined the guards killed Anderson by depriving him of oxygen when they pushed the ammonia tablets into his nose, covered his mouth and didn't give him time to recover his breath. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.amny.com Date: October 13, 2008)

School founder kills self instead of going to prison--January 17th, 2008 (Just received on October 15th 2008) The founder of a Christian school for troubled boys who had pleaded guilty to financial fraud and deception in its operation appears to have fatally shot himself days after he was supposed to report to prison. Robert Serge Gluhareff pleaded guilty in April to two counts of bank fraud, one count of tax fraud, and one count of mail fraud in connection with the Wellspring Academy outside South Boston, Va. The school had many students from Raleigh when it was open. A federal judge sentenced Gluhareff to 30 months, and Gluhareff was to begin the sentence Jan. 8, but he didn't appear. Person County Sheriff Dewey Jones said that on Friday, Gluhareff left his home in

South Boston and said he was going to meet a client. When he didn't return, family members started a search. On Sunday, Jones said, a Person County deputy came across Gluhareff's truck on the side of a rural road. Witnesses told deputies the truck had been there since at least 8 p.m. Friday. Deputies searched nearby woods and found Gluhareff's body and a .38-caliber handgun. Gluhareff started the Wellspring Academy in the 1980s, first recruiting students from the Triangle and later enrolling students from across the country. It began as a coeducational facility but was converted to a boys school. Parents whose sons had behavioral and other problems paid tuitions of more than \$40,000 per year for the residential program. Gluhareff promised a structured setting with academics, religion and individual counseling on a 510-acre farm. For complete story, [click here](#).

Michigan, Iowa teens left by families in Nebraska--October 14th, 2008-- Imagine being a teenager, taken by your family to another state and dropped off at a hospital -- so someone else would take responsibility for you. It's happened twice over the last week in Nebraska. In one case, a 13 year old Michigan boy got in a car with his mom, who drove over 700 miles to Omaha to leave him at a medical center in the middle of the night. In another case, a 14 year old Iowa girl was deposited by her grandparents at Omaha's Creighton University Medical Center. Both families were relinquishing responsibility for the teens under Nebraska's controversial safe haven law, the only in the U.S. that allows families to leave children of any age at a hospital. No one expected the outcome: most of the 19 kids dropped off at hospitals to date have been teens or pre-teens. Certainly, no one expected that distraught parents or grandparents from other states would come to Nebraska to hand over their kids -- the newest development. Much has been written about the problems that can lead families to relinquish children, whether in Nebraska or elsewhere. In particular, the lack of supports for families dealing with extremely troubled kids -- especially, insufficient mental health services -- can be devastating. Many readers of this blog have applauded Nebraska for offering an alternative for children who might otherwise be subjected to abuse from overwhelmed parents. If the only alternative is giving children up, it's better than seeing kids neglected or subject to violence, you've said. But think of the children, especially teenagers who face the reality of abandonment. "You could imagine being a child and your parent asks you to go to a hospital and they just drive away, what feelings that would create for the children," said Gene Klein, executive director of Project Harmony in Omaha, quoted by [KPTM 42 News](#). State officials are concerned that the spirit of Nebraska's safe haven law is being violated. "I certainly recognize and can commiserate and empathize with families across our state and across the country who are obviously struggling with parenting issues, but this is not the appropriate way of dealing with them," said Todd Landry, head of Nebraska's Department of Health and Human Services, quoted in a report by [BBC News](#). (Webmaster Note: Todd Landry is right. Abandoning your child to institutionalization is not appropriate.) For complete story, [click here](#).

Federal officials looking into San Jose's EHC LifeBuilders--October 16th, 2008--A routine inquiry begun a year ago at a youth shelter run by Santa Clara County's most prominent homeless-services agency has now progressed into an investigation of possible fraud. Concerns first arose in October 2007, when a federal official monitoring millions of dollars in government spending on shelters for runaway youths paid a visit to EHC LifeBuilders in downtown San Jose. Alarmed that children and teens fleeing the streets were being cared for in an unlicensed facility, she alerted the state's community care division, and the shelter known as Our House was forced to shut its doors the next day. Now the agency is receiving more unexpected federal scrutiny -- this time, from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Inspector General, which is responsible for digging out fraud, waste and abuse of public funds. The new investigation comes as EHC has abandoned long-held plans to reopen the 14-year-old shelter; the group announced last week that it is shifting its youth shelter program to serve young adults, for whom licensing is not required. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: [www.mercurynews.com](#) Date: October 16, 2008)

Center's Troubled Teens 'Assaulted With Needles,' Officials Say--October 18th, 2008--Teens being treated for drug abuse and mental illness at Stonington Institute have been involuntarily injected with medication to restrain them in what the state attorney general and child advocate Friday called another example of poor supervision by the Department of Children and Families. At least five boys aged about 16 received such involuntary injections, while aides held them immobile, at the DCF-licensed private residential facility in [North Stonington](#) during a two-month period this past spring, state Child Advocate Jeanne Milstein said Friday after she and Attorney General [Richard Blumenthal](#) sent a letter filled with criticism to DCF. Milstein said the youths were considered "out of control" at the time that they were injected. If DCF had been properly overseeing what goes on at Stonington, "the practice of involuntary intramuscular medication would have been discovered sooner and fewer children assaulted with needles," Milstein and Blumenthal wrote to DCF Commissioner Susan Hamilton. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: [www.courant.com](#) Date: October 18, 2008)

Certain antipsychotics are leaving legions of children and elderly in chemical straightjackets for treatment of conditions they didn't even have.--October 19th, 2008-- Some state legislators are mad as hell and not going to take it anymore. They've seen state outlays for controversial antipsychotics like Zyprexa grow as much as twelvefold since 2000, with a corresponding growth in side effects like weight gain, blood sugar changes and cholesterol problems. In March, Alaska won a \$15 million settlement from Eli Lilly in a suit to recoup medical costs generated by Medicaid patients who developed diabetes while taking Zyprexa. Last year Bristol-Myers Squibb settled a federal suit for \$515 million charging that it illegally hawked the antipsychotic Abilify to children and the elderly, bilking taxpayers. Now Idaho, Washington, Montana, Connecticut, California, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Utah, West Virginia, Arkansas and Texas are taking pharma to court over its antipsychotic prescrib-athon that has left the poor and mentally ill in even worse health and legions of children and elderly in chemical straightjackets for treatment of conditions they didn't even have. The atypical antipsychotics Zyprexa, Risperdal, Seroquel, Abilify and Geodon can be thought of as the credit swaps of the pharmaceutical world. New with no track record, risky, barely understood and capable of making a lot of money before their long-term effects are apparent, atypical antipsychotics, like credit swaps, could only be sold with friends in high regulatory places and the help of the U.S. taxpayer. Though atypical antipsychotics were developed to treat schizophrenia and later approved for bipolar disorder (Risperdal is also approved for autism-related irritability in children), pharma lost no time in marketing them for non-FDA-approved uses like ADHD and conduct disorders, dementia, sleep disorders, depression and simple mood swings, netting \$8,000 a year per person, usually from state coffers. When the second-generation atypical antipsychotics debuted in the 1990s, they seemed to lack the "typical" side effects of first-generation antipsychotics like Thorazine and Haldol, such as the movement disorder tardive dyskinesia. But soon further "clinical testing," known as selling it to the public while the patent is hot, revealed that atypicals cause the same side effects as first-generation antipsychotics and more: increased mortality in elderly patients, suicide risk, hyperglycemia, diabetes mellitus and the hematological disorders leukopenia, neutropenia and agranulocytosis. In fact, Seroquel and Abilify have not one black box warning but two. Nor do the atypical antipsychotics work better than predecessors. A National Institute of Mental Health study of 119 children ages 8 to 19 with psychotic symptoms published in September found Risperdal and Zyprexa were no more effective than the older antipsychotic Molar -- but caused such obesity that a safety panel ordered the children off the drugs. In just eight weeks, children on Risperdal gained 9 pounds while those on Zyprexa gained 13; children on Molar gained less than a pound. "Kids at school were making fun of me," study participant Brandon Constantineau, 18, of Wilmington, N.C., told the New York Times. Constantineau put on 35 pounds on Risperdal. Other studies -- like one on Risperdal in the Jan. 4, 2008, issue of *Lancet* and one on Zyprexa, Seroquel and Risperdal in Alzheimer's patients in the Oct. 12, 2006, issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine* -- find that atypicals work no better than a placebo. But it gets worse. A study of Seroquel in the Feb. 19, 2005, issue of the *British Medical Journal* found the drug ineffective in relieving agitation in Alzheimer's patients -- a non-FDA-approved use that JP Morgan analysts say constitutes 29 percent of all Seroquel sales (hello? regulators?) -- but "was associated with significantly greater cognitive decline" than a placebo. Oops. Whatever happened to first no harm? But it was Eli Lilly's own discovery of elevated stroke and death numbers in five of its Zyprexa clinical trials and subsequent letter to doctors in 2004 that led the FDA to impose a black-box warning of "increased mortality in elderly patients with dementia" on atypical antipsychotics in 2005 after reviewing 17 clinical studies with four different drugs. "The problem with these drugs are that we know that they are being used extensively off-label in nursing homes to sedate elderly patients with dementia and other types of disorders," testified FDA safety expert Dr. David "Vioxx" Graham last year at a congressional hearing. "But the fact is, is that it increases mortality perhaps by 100 percent. It doubles mortality. So I did a back-of-the-envelope calculation on this, and you have probably got 15,000 elderly people in nursing homes dying each year from the off-label use of antipsychotic medications. ... With every pill that gets dispensed in a nursing home, the drug company is laughing all the way to the bank." No kidding. A third of the nation's estimated 2.5 million nursing home patients have taken atypical antipsychotics, estimates the New York Times, and the overall atypical antipsychotic tab for Medicare and Medicaid -- including children -- in the United States is \$2 billion a year. In 12 states, the pharmaceutical industry has actually written the guidelines that specify atypicals for schizophrenia and discourage older drugs. And two dozen states have hired the Lilly-backed Comprehensive Neuroscience to show them how to, not a joke, lower their drug costs. That sounds like Wall Street too. For complete story, [click here](#).

Oppositional and Defiant or Critical Thinker?--September 12th, 2008--I'm working on a piece about undergraduate academic freedom that relates changes in campus culture to changes in the culture of schools. One area of particular interest is the medicalization of youth relations with authority. AlterNet's [Bruce Levine](#), a clinical psychologist, argues that "teenage rebellion has become a medical illness" with the 1980 introduction to the DSM IV of "Oppositional Defiant Disorder" (ODD): Many talk-show hosts think I'm kidding when I mention oppositional defiant disorder. After I assure them that ODD is in fact an official mental illness—an increasingly popular diagnosis for children and teenagers—they often guess that ODD is simply a new term for juvenile delinquency. But that is not the case. Young people diagnosed with ODD, by definition, are doing nothing illegal (illegal behaviors are a symptom of another mental illness called conduct disorder). In 1980, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) created oppositional defiant disorder, defining it as "a pattern of negativistic, hostile and defiant behavior." The official symptoms of ODD include "often actively defies or refuses to comply with adult requests or rules" and "often argues with adults." A diagnosis of ODD can result in medication with powerful tranquilizers like Risperdal and Zyprexa. Numerous experts have worried about overdiagnosis and overmedication of young people, and critical educators frequently worry that the problem is not lack of compliance by American youth but its precise opposite, an epidemic of compliance. [Norm Diamond](#), for instance, argues that many of the so-called defiant "symptoms" are in many cases "part of establishing independence and developing critical thinking. Equipping children to argue back is part of good parenting and good teaching." Nonetheless a massive therapeutic industry of behavior modification, including pharmaceutical companies, now targets parents, promising cures for "defiant children." One of the most pervasive ad campaigns draws on the rhetoric of homeland security to label youth defiance "The War at Home," urging a corrections mentality on the family: "The focus of treatment should be on compliance and coping skills, not on self-esteem or personality. ODD is not a self-esteem issue; it's a problem-solving issue." Responding to Big Pharma ads for ODD medications targeting parents in his Portland media market, Diamond created a parody description of what he argues is the real social malaise, "Compliance Acquiscent Disorder," which played locally in both radio and print versions. (An unexpected result of the parody was that outlets publishing them received calls from readers and listeners seeking treatment for their compliance disorder!) Noting that "ODD-diagnosed young people are obnoxious with adults they don't respect [but] can be a delight with adults they do respect," Levine suggests that in many cases the symptoms of ODD are rational resistance to authoritarian abuses and "rebellion against an oppressive environment," explanations rarely considered by educators or mental health professionals. Levine speculates that the willingness to medicate rebellion and nonconformity emerges in the social psychology of medical professionals, including a sense of shame for "their own excessive compliance": It is my experience that many mental-health professionals are unaware of how extremely obedient they are to authorities. Acceptance into medical school and graduate school and achieving a Ph.D. or M.D. means jumping through many meaningless hoops, all of which require much behavioral, attentional, and emotional compliance to authorities—even disrespected ones. When compliant M.D.'s and Ph.D.'s begin seeing noncompliant patients, many of these doctors become anxious, sometimes even ashamed of their own excessive compliance, and this anxiety and shame can be fuel for diseasing normal human reactions. Of course, Levine's observations would seem to hold for educators as well, many of whom welcome the diagnosis of ODD and other conduct-related disorders as "classroom management tools." (On the other hand, the vast majority of teachers discussing "defiant" students on fora like ProTeacher.com are exchanging non-medical tips, often involving massive extra-curricular, non-instructional effort and expense on their part, voluntarily taking on the role of therapist and parent as well as instructor.) "Finally, a cure for the class struggle," wryly observed one of the Alternet discussion threads in response to Levine's piece. "Is there a pill for megalomania and warmongering?" wondered another. For complete story, [click here](#).

Teacher ordered to stand trial over charges he abused teen--October 29th, 2008--Is she a troubled teen who fabricated a story about sexual encounters with a teacher, or the victim of a predator who coerced her into a sexual relationship? Both sides of that question were argued during a Tuesday preliminary hearing for a West High School teacher accused of sexually abusing a 16-year-old student. Jose Fanjul, 45, is charged in 3rd District Court with five counts of first-degree forcible sodomy and five counts of second-degree felony forcible sexual abuse in connection with allegedly having sex with the girl inside his classroom and at other locations. After listening to testimony, Judge Ann Boyden ordered Fanjul to stand trial on the abuse allegations, saying prosecutors presented sufficient evidence to advance the case. She set a Nov. 10 arraignment. (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: [www.sltrib.com](#) Date: October 29, 2008)

Be calm, be controlled -- and listen--November 2nd, 2008-- QWe have a 15-year-old son who has zero respect for us and is constantly getting into trouble. Is there any hope? AThere is always hope. But you can't address his behaviour until you improve your relationship with him. Keeping in mind you have to give respect to get it, go through the following steps in a calm and controlled manner: n Tell him you are sorry for making mistakes in the past but you want to improve. n Ask him for suggestions on how you can become a better parent. He'll probably give you a huge list of everything you've done wrong. That's OK; let him get it out of his system. n Repeat what he's told you -- but you don't have to agree. This is all about listening. Now it's time to validate and negotiate. You may say, "I agree that I nag you about cleaning up your room but if I promise to stop doing that, will you stop calling me foul names?" Work your way up to the bigger issues over time. Thank him for his help. This process takes patience and understanding but it's a great start. Focus on the positives Parenting troubled teens isn't about taking blame; it's about taking responsibility for the solution. Rather than focusing on your teen's bad behaviour, start focusing on the positives. Praise him or her for keeping a clean bedroom, putting dishes in the dishwasher or getting an A in math. OK, OK, your teen is doing none of those things. You may have to dig deep to find the positives, but they're there. Focusing on the positives opens the door to discussing and working on the negatives. For complete story, [click here](#).

Residential Children's Programs Target Of Legislation--November 4th, 2008--Oct. 17, a group of former students of a local boarding school for girls stood outside the Kosciuszko County Courthouse demonstrating against physical, emotional and mental abuse they allege they suffered. With them stood several members of a local task force formed to pursue a change in state law to require more accountability for residential programs for children. The local task force members are not the only ones looking for such a law change. Congress also is eyeing a bill aimed at preventing child abuse in residential programs, public or private, nationwide. The bill is called HR 6358. It passed the House of Representatives June 25 and is currently in the Senate. HR 6358 calls for more public accountability. If the bill is passed in its current form, the school that former students were demonstrating against, Hephzibah House, and similar organizations may fall under its jurisdiction. Hephzibah House is a "private Christian boarding school for teenage girls," according to the school's Web site. According to the bill, covered programs would include public or private organizations, which operate residential environments including boot camps, therapeutic boarding schools and behavior modification programs, which operate with a focus on serving children with emotional, behavioral or mental problems or disorders or problems with alcohol or substance abuse. The bill would not cover hospitals licensed by the state or foster family homes which are licensed and regulated by the state and in which children are placed by the state. The bill would prohibit disciplinary techniques or other practices that involve the withholding of essential food, water, clothing, shelter or medical care necessary to maintain physical health, mental health and general safety; physical and mechanical restraints and seclusion. The bill also would prohibit acts designed to humiliate, degrade or undermine a child's self-respect. Residential facilities covered by the bill would be required to provide "reasonable access for making and receiving phone calls with as much privacy as possible and shall have access to the appropriate state or local child abuse reporting hotline number and the national hotline number." The bill would establish penalties for facilities cited with violations, including fines. Enforcement measures would be established including unannounced inspections, licensing requirements and new databases. HR 6358 passed through the House with a vote of 318 ayes to 103 nays, with 13 present not voting. Of the nine Indiana Representatives who voted on the bill, six voted for it and three against it. Local Dist. 3 Representative Mark Souder voted against the bill. "I believe these things should be worked through at the state and local level," said Souder. "I voted for the Republican alternative both in committee and elsewhere that would increase state regulation." Souder said the alternative proposal did not include increased federal oversight. "Obviously, I believe there needs to be some additional controls, particularly for those who abuse kids, it's a terrible tragedy," he said. "We need also better enforcement. But, I do not favor the federal government taking over something I believe can be regulated at the state and local level." Souder said he could get behind increasing federal oversight if state regulations could not be stiffened or in cases dealing with multiple states, but he said increasing federal regulations is a last resort. "I don't think we're there yet," Souder said. Becky Moreno, victim's assistance advocate with the Warsaw Police Department, organized the local task force seeking change in Indiana law. Moreno said she supports HR 6358. "I think this bill is an excellent step toward preventing child abuse and bringing about some accountability that is otherwise lacking," Moreno said. "Child abuse is a national problem. Anything that could be done to prevent this problem everywhere would be the best-case scenario." The bill is currently under review in the

Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. For information on HR 6358, visit www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h110-6358 (Webmaster Note: See [HEAL's Position Statement](#) Calling for Revision of HR 6358) For complete story, [click here](#).

Troubled Teens: Advice About Teen Boot Camps--November 6th, 2008-- Hi Vanessa, My son has been acting out and I have read about parents sending their kids away to boot camps and wilderness adventure camps. Do you think this is a good idea? Are they safe? --Worried Mom, Austin, TX Hi Worried Mom, Parents often choose boot camps as an absolute last resort and are at the end of their rope by the time they need to contact a wilderness facility. If you have a troubled teen or your teen is acting out, try these solutions before thinking about camp: • Consistency and Routine: Often times, teens rebel because of hormones or undesired change. Therefore, the more habits, systems and routines you have in the house the more consistency the teen will have in his/her life and the more likely they will find comfort in 'normalcy.' • Family and Community Involvement: Family time and involving your teen or child in community activities with religious groups, community service or at YMCA's can help a teen find other outlets for anger or fear. • Break from bad friends: Certain teens have 'bad' behavior because of negative influence from friends. Try to encourage activities in the community rather than hanging out with negative enablers. Or take a family trip to get away from these kids. Often times, sending teens to grandparents, aunt's or uncle's houses can be a sufficient break away from influencers. • Empowerment, love and support: Some teens thrive off of any kind of attention, this means that punishments and arguments simply feed their need. So make sure to give them positive attention, tell them you have faith in them, that they are smart, and have a good future, show them you are there for them no matter what. Even if this does work immediately, as seen with my friend above, they will remember that you were there for them after this hard stage. If you reach the end of your rope: • Family camps are better than boot camps: There are many camps, especially church and temple camps that are for entire families. This is where all family members have activities together and separate and can be a good break and a time where you can bond away from the home, bad friends and trigger points. • Send them to a relative: As mentioned above, sending teens to a relative's house for the summer or for a school break can help keep them out of trouble when there is no school and give them a chance to connect in a different community. • Do your research: If you must, there are some good 'correction' camps out there. Steer away from 'tough love' camps and make sure there are therapists working at the facility. Get referrals and do plenty of research and surprise visits, remember what camps want to show you, they will, and what they do not want to show you, they won't. If you are having a hard time with your teen remember that the relationship comes in cycles and do not be afraid to get outside help with a therapist, counselor or at their schools. For complete story, [click here](#).

Teen compacted in Wis. garbage truck survives--November 5th, 2008-- MILWAUKEE — Police in Milwaukee say a teenage boy has survived after being accidentally dumped into the back of a recycling truck and compacted. Police say the 14-year-old ran away from a boot camp-style school for teens Monday and hid in a recycling bin filled with cardboard. The bin was picked up by a Waste Management truck and dumped into the vehicle's rear compactor. Waste Management spokeswoman Lynn Morgan says the truck continued on its collection route, compacting cardboard several times. The boy wasn't discovered until the truck dumped its load at a recycling processing center. He was semiconscious and was taken to a hospital, but police say his injuries aren't life-threatening. (Webmaster Note: This is a tragedy. Please don't subject children to programs that by their very nature cause a flight or fight response and put children at risk.) For complete story, [click here](#).

Dozen juveniles held at Guantanamo Bay --Pentagon revises upward number of children imprisoned at Guantanamo 16 Nov 2008 The number of juveniles held at Guantanamo Bay was revised upwards by US military officials. Twelve juvenile prisoners have been held at the US camp on Cuba, up from eight reported in May to a United Nations committee on child rights, the Pentagon said. For complete story, [click here](#).

Ex-school owners OK \$450,000 settlement--November 19th, 2008--The former operators of a Nephi school for troubled youths agreed to a \$450,000 settlement to eight former students who alleged they were abused and hazed while there. Mark and Cheryl Sudweeks, the former owners and operators of the now failed Whitmore Academy, came under fire in 2005 when several students accused them of various types of abuse that led to criminal charges being filed against Cheryl Sudweeks. A 4th District Court civil suit seeking damages in the case was settled Monday. "We are happy to get it behind us," said Susan Schacherer, a plaintiff whose granddaughter attended Whitmore. "Does it undo the damage that caused us to bring the lawsuit to begin with? No. The window of opportunity to help these kids was lost. The money can't replace that." The complaint filed in Juab County said that the Whitmore Academy, which was advertised as a facility for "teens looking to accelerate their education intellectually, emotionally and spiritually," was actually nothing of the sort. The complaint alleges that some students enrolled at the Whitmore Academy were physically bound with plastic handcuffs for several hours, others were forced to spend periods of time outside without any clothing on, and some were forced to sleep in a space referred to as the "shelf room." The shelf room was a small, enclosed area where students could neither sit up, fully stretch out, and was located 10 feet off the ground, according to the complaint. The Sudweeks were also accused of recruiting students and encouraging the students to use violence against other youths to enforce the rules. There were also accusations of "environmental abuse" due to problems with the sewage system. Students were asked to not flush used toilet paper down the toilet, and the complaint states that "soiled toilet paper was stored in open trash bags that were left in the bathrooms." There was also an apparent problem with mouse feces and rodents, among other accusations. Schacherer said that when she and her daughter visited the Whitmore Academy, they had no idea that these types of things were happening and that apparently they were duped. Schacherer's granddaughter now lives in Texas with her mother and still harbors animosity toward the people she believes mistreated her. "I don't think that she feels like the settlement was justified for what she went through," Schacherer said. "She realized this was the best we could do and that is the way it is. She still has bitter feelings." In September of 2006, Cheryl Sudweeks pleaded no contest to four class C misdemeanor counts of hazing and agreed to meet all court-ordered requirements and pay a fee. For complete story, [click here](#).

I-Team: Lawyers Question Medical Tests on Foster Kids--November 15th, 2008--This is a story about an eight-year-old boy in foster care. A boy we've never met. He exists for us only as a name on a letter questioning his mental health treatment. But his lawyer Janice Wolf wants us to remember Nathaniel is real. "Some of the things our kids have gone through, you and I could only imagine in our dreams, or nightmares." Nathaniel described vivid nightmares according to psychiatric records obtained by the I-Team. During his first of two hospitalizations at Montevista, Dr. Mark Collins ordered a procedure called a brain spect. It requires the injection of radioactive material to illuminate blood flow in the brain. [Read the legal complaint](#) In a report to the family court, Collins writes the scan confirms Nathaniel has "severe bipolar disorder." "I think my concern is that our foster kids are getting not just the best psychiatric care, but proper psychiatric care -- that they're not being mistreated, or experimented on, or used as investigational tools," said Wolf. The American Psychiatric Association does not accept the use of brain imaging for the clinical diagnosis of children, in part, according to its literature, because of children's sensitivity to radiation and to risk of radiation-induced cancer. [Read a statement from the county about the procedures](#) Dr. Collins likens the exposure to a common CT scan, "To not look at a child's brain who's had multiple treatments and is not getting better, it would be like if you had a heart attack and I'm saying, 'you know what, you've had a heart attack before. We know you have a bad heart. I'm not going to do an electrocardiogram on you.'" Collins argues the scans are a valuable tool to aid in the diagnosis of his sickest patients and insists not everybody gets a spec scan. A recent Medicaid review by the Nevada State Department of Health and Human Services identified 96 Montevista patients who underwent brain imaging. The majority, according to the state, were kids in the juvenile justice or child welfare systems. "I've been doing enough of them I see the utility in this. I see how important it is to take a look at these kid's brains. If I was not seeing the benefit, I would not continue to do it," said Dr. Collins. Wolf however questions the benefit and again points to Nathaniel. A court-ordered psychiatric evaluation of the eight-year-old challenged Collins' diagnosis and noted, "Spect scanning is not yet an accepted diagnostic method. Although it is interesting, it is not yet reliable." [Read a statement from Nevada Medicaid](#) "We are hoping that at least by raising the concern and raising the issue that others will look also, that people responsible for our kids will take a look at what it is and hopefully support us," said Wolf. And support kids like Nathaniel whose stories come to life from the pages of a foster care case file. Only a caseworker stands between a child and a controversial procedure. Collins insists he receives no payment related to the scans. He insists brain imaging will soon be accepted by the psychiatric community. There is certainly evidence he may be right but for now, it remains investigational. Medicaid does not cover investigational procedures, like brain specs. However these claims slipped through to the tune of more than \$33,000. The state has not yet decided whether to seek repayment and has issued a memo reiterating its policy. For complete story, [click here](#).

Someone else's sacrifice--November 19th, 2008--...America is heading ever deeper into a dire financial situation. With every passing week, more institutions seem to get dragged into the mess. A recent victim is the Hampton Roads Youth Center, a worthy organization focused on turning around the troubled lives of troubled youth and their families. In five years of service, the nonprofit agency served more than 75 families throughout Hampton Roads by providing

residential, educational and counseling services from its location on Kenyon Road. Less than a week ago, the organization announced via a letter on its Web site that it is closing its residential program. Members of its governing board wrote that the group had been a victim of factors ranging from changing regulations and licensing standards to a trend against using residential facilities to treat troubled teens... (Webmaster Note: At least the financial crisis is good for something! Shut them all down!) For complete story, [click here](#).

Medication Nation--November 20th, 2008--Video on how bad it is to drug your children. See: http://www.foxnews.com/video-search/m/21485444/medication_nation.htm?q=douglas+kennedy

Boot Camp Nurse Criticized - Gives Up State License--November 6th, 2008--Kristen Schmidt, the former Bay County Juvenile Boot Camp nurse at the center of the Martin Lee Anderson case, will no longer be able to practice in the state of Florida. She's voluntarily relinquished her nursing license to State Board of Nursing. The board filed the final order with the Florida Department of Health Tuesday afternoon. Schmidt was a central figure in the death of 14-year-old Martin Lee Anderson at the Bay County Juvenile Boot Camp on January 5th, 2006. Schmidt was the nurse on-duty that day, which was Anderson's first day at the facility. Anderson collapsed during a physical assessment run in the recreation yard. At first drill instructors believed Anderson was faking illness to get out of running. For 20-minutes they tried to get him back on his feet. But during the process, the drill instructors used some arm strikes and take-downs, as well as ammonia capsules to revive the teenager. You can see Schmidt hovering over Anderson and the drill instructors the entire time, but not doing much more than observing. Paramedics eventually took Anderson to a local hospital, then he was transferred to a Pensacola hospital where he died about 12-hours later. The cause of his death is still a controversy. Former Medical Examiner Dr. Charles Siebert ruled it accidental due to Sickle Cell Trait. A second autopsy found death by suffocation, due to the ammonia capsules held under Anderson's nose. Schmidt and 7-drill instructors were later acquitted at trial on aggravated manslaughter charges. The State Board of Nursing, in its investigation of Kristen Schmidt, cited Schmidt's conduct as unprofessional and negligent that day. * The board found Schmidt failed to adequately assess Anderson's condition. * She improperly distributed ammonia capsules to the drill instructors, without them having the proper knowledge about how to use the capsules. * She failed to provide the paramedics with the complete information about what had transpired on the exercise field. * Schmidt failed to perform any emergency treatment on Anderson at any time during the incident. * And she failed to accurately record the incident in her nursing notes. Schmidt agreed to voluntarily surrender her license, and never reapply in Florida in exchange for an end to the case against her. . And it is possible we could see more activity in the Anderson case, from the U-S Attorney's office. The Department of Justice is investigating whether or not the drill instructors and Schmidt violated Anderson's civil rights. Once Barack Obama takes office, the U-S Attorneys typically hand-in their resignation letters for the new president to accept or reject. If Obama selects a new U-S Attorney for this region, that person could push the Anderson case to the top of the priority list. For complete story, [click here](#).

Changing times close children's home--November 1st, 2008--GROSSE POINTE WOODS -- A Grosse Pointe Woods children's home that has provided treatment for troubled children for 172 years will be shuttered at the end of November, a result of the state's shifting priorities for residential treatment of children and the economy. The board of trustees of the Children's Home of Detroit voted Thursday to shutter the facility, which houses 5-to-17-year-olds in cottages on a 13-acre country-like campus. The home can house about 90 children; it has 28 children in residence, said Executive Director William Steele. The state is placing fewer children in residential treatment settings partly because of the settlement of a lawsuit brought by the New York City-based child advocacy group Children's Rights. The group sued Michigan over poor treatment of children in foster care that resulted in several deaths. "It's no different than the stories you're hearing about businesses that have to downsize or go out of business," Steele said. "The economy has certainly drained some of those resources we had available for operations." That, coupled with the low occupancy and the uncertainty about the direction of care for children, has combined to make it necessary for us to close." Under terms of the lawsuit settlement, which took effect Oct. 24, the state Department of Human Services agreed to place children in the least restrictive setting possible, said Jack Kresnak, president of the nonprofit advocacy group Michigan's Children. (Webmaster Note: Good. Hopefully this is a growing trend.) For complete story, [click here](#).

Pendleton Academies may face closure--November 19th, 2008--The Oregon Department of Human Services- Addictions and Mental Health Division (AMH) on Tuesday notified the Pendleton Academies' board of directors of their intention to revoke the treatment facility's certificate of approval to operate as a provider of psychiatric residential treatment services and psychiatric day treatment services for children. On Aug. 20, AMH placed conditions on Pendleton Academies' certificate of approval to operate. At that time, the board appointed Interim Executive Director Terry Edvalson, who has been working with Pendleton Academies' staff to meet the standards required by AMH. Since then, Pendleton Academies has continued to care for clients, but has not been permitted to admit new clients to the program. As recently as late October, AMH indicated they would lift the restrictions on Pendleton Academies and allow the admission of new clients, according to a statement released by the Pendleton Academies board Tuesday afternoon. Given Pendleton Academies' efforts and progress in meeting AMH requirements, said the news release, Edvalson and the board were surprised by AMH's most recent action, the statement said. The board plans to investigate its appeal rights and will be meeting again this Friday when more information is available, according to the statement. (Webmaster Note: Just shut it down.) (Unable to locate story at time of archiving. Source: www.eastoregonian.info Date: November 19, 2008)

Ex-Supervisor at Teen Rehab Center Allegedly Raped Patient--November 21st, 2008--JOPLIN, Mo. — A woman who briefly supervised teens at a southwest Missouri drug and alcohol treatment center is charged with statutory rape for allegedly having sex with a 16-year-old boy at the center. Police say they're investigating similar allegations concerning Jana Carter, 45, and three other teens who lived at the male-only dormitory at Scott Greening Dependency Center in Joplin. Two of the boys are 16 and the third is 14. No charges had been filed in those allegations as of Friday. A probable cause statement filed in Jasper County Circuit Court alleges that Carter had consensual sexual contact with the 16-year-old at least twice last month at the center. Their alleged encounters occurred while Carter, a residential supervisor at the time, was working her shift. Joplin police spokesman Cpl. Chuck Niess told The Associated Press on Friday that Carter is now in custody. Niess said she turned herself in Thursday in McDonald County, south of Jasper County, and was to be transferred to a jail in Jasper County. Larry Black, director of the Scott Greening Dependency Center, was out of the office Friday and could not be reached by the AP. But he told The Joplin Globe that Carter was hired about a month before the alleged incidents happened. According to court records, she had sexual contact with the 16-year-old from Oct. 10 to Oct. 19. For complete story, [click here](#).

Greenacres teen minister charged with having sex with girl, 16--November 24th, 2008--The president of a Greenacres Christian teen center had a sexual relationship for more than a year with a 16-year-old he was counseling, authorities say. A judge Sunday ordered Brent Gabriel Edwards, 33, held in lieu of \$100,000 bond, charged with unlawful sexual activity with a minor, a jail clerk said. Edwards posted the bond Sunday and will be on house arrest. He was booked early Saturday. According to its Web page, Edwards is president of Extreme Revolution Youth Ministries, which operates the Oasis Teen Center. His wife Christy is listed as vice president. The ministry, founded in 2005, is listed as a federally-approved "501(c)(3)" non-profit charity. The center lists among its missions "to provide a safe environment where teens can have fun." A call to the center at midday today went to a recording. The telephone listed for Edwards' home was disconnected. The Oasis operates at the Community Life Center, 3812 Jog Road. A clerk at Church of the Palms said it owns the center and rents it out to various organizations, including Oasis, but is not affiliated with it or Extreme Revolution. According to a Palm Beach County sheriff's report, Edwards had sex with the girl two to three times a week, before or after school or after youth group functions, from July 2007 until the end of August of this year. The girl and her family, who knew Edwards from various church and youth groups, had gone to Edwards and his wife for counseling for emotional issues because the girl had been cutting herself, the report said. The girl said that soon after the sessions got under way, her relationship with Edwards became physical. For complete story, [click here](#).

Teen's troubled life--December 3rd, 2008-- TRACY - "Nothing resembles normalcy or sanity" in the case of the 17-year-old boy who told authorities he was shackled and held captive in a Tracy home for a year, city spokesman Matt Robinson said. Police began searching Tuesday for a third suspect - possibly the boy's aunt - who lived in the home that was his alleged prison, Robinson announced at a morning news conference. The terrified teen was not attending school and had not been in contact with any other family members in more than a year, Robinson said. Yet the married couple - the wife a Girl Scout leader - and their four children also lived in the home. Neighbors reported what seemed to be a normal family and recalled purchasing Girl Scout cookies from the oldest daughter. And one neighbor said she frequently saw the teen outside the family home. But "nothing resembles normalcy or sanity in this case," Robinson said. A woman who might be the boy's aunt, Caren Ramirez, 43, took custody of the teen in early 2007 after he was removed from his parents' home, Robinson said.

Not long after she took custody, however, Ramirez was arrested on and still carries a felony warrant for child abuse charges. The boy was returned to the care of Child Protective Services, which put him in a Sacramento group home. "At some point after that, the teen and Ramirez reunited," Robinson said. "We're not sure when." Investigators said Tuesday that Ramirez may have been headed to the East Bay on BART. Ramirez is described as black, 5 feet tall with short brown hair and brown eyes. She often wears a bandanna on her head. When captured, Ramirez will face the same five charges as the couple who were arrested: torture, kidnapping, child endangerment, corporal injury to a child and false imprisonment, officials said. The case came to light Monday afternoon when the terrified and bloodied boy ran into a fitness center wearing nothing but boxer shorts and a heavy chain wrapped tightly around his ankle. Covered in soot and blood, he told gym staffers that he had been held captive in a home on Tracy's Tennis Lane for a year. He begged them to help him hide. "It wasn't something I thought was real," said Raelynn Lagadon, 24, a personal trainer at In-Shape Sport who gave the boy some food and water. "It was like something you'd see in a horror film or 'CSI.' Who would do that to somebody?" (Webmaster Note: Most, if not all, behavior modification programs would and likely have done this to many. Shut them down!) Police arrested the adults who lived in the nearby home - Michael Schumacher, 34, and Kelly Schumacher, 30, who also might have gone by the name of Kelly Layne Lau. The Schumachers are each being held in lieu of \$1.2million bail. A subsequent search of their home found further evidence implicating them, said Robinson, who would not describe what officers found. For complete story, [click here](#).

Worker faces rap in Manhattan Family Court building sex attacks--December 2nd, 2008-- A city worker who supervised troubled teens raped and sexually abused underage girls inside the [Manhattan Family Court](#) building, prosecutors said Tuesday. [Tony Simmons](#), 45, of the [Bronx](#), pleaded not guilty to the criminal charges Tuesday after four victims picked him out of a lineup. "It's outrageous," said [Manhattan](#) District Attorney [Robert Morgenthau](#). "Here somebody who was supposed to be protecting them - helping them - is sexually abusing them. It's as bad as it gets." City Investigation [Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn](#), whose office referred the case to Manhattan prosecutors, called the case a "shocking abuse of the public trust." Prosecutors said Simmons raped a 15-year-old in a courthouse elevator in September 2005 and sexually assaulted a 16-year-old girl two months later in a courthouse pantry. Simmons, who was being held on \$250,000 bail, was nabbed after authorities found out about an assault in July of a 15-year-old girl behind a locker in a waiting area. "Who the heck was supervising him?" Morgenthau wondered. Assistant Manhattan District Attorney Amir Vonsover said the three girls involved in Tuesday's criminal complaint are "just the tip of the iceberg." He said a fourth victim told detectives that Simmons sexually abused her in 2000, but he was not charged in that case because it happened more than five years ago. Hearn said Simmons, who has worked for the city Department of Juvenile Justice for 16 years, was suspended without pay from his \$37,391-a-year job for one month this summer before being put on desk duty away from children. Because prosecutors fear there could be more victims, they set up a hotline. Anyone with information relevant to the case should call (212) 335-9373. For complete story, [click here](#).

Lack of skills creates problems with teens--December 7th, 2008--It's much easier for kids to get into trouble today than it was when he was a child, said Dr. Henry Petree. "It is very difficult out there to be a kid, and it is very difficult out there to be the parent of a kid," Petree said. A lot of those kids in trouble have parents who don't have the basic skills needed to deal with the problems their children have, he said. Petree is one of two counselors trying to intervene with troubled teens coming through the Community Intervention Center at the Muskegee County/City Detention Facility. He's asked the parents to come in for free counseling sessions. "A lot of them don't have any parenting skills, they didn't inherit any," Petree said. "They're short on 'What do I do,' and they are so frustrated that it's unreal." What he sees has led Petree to write a yet unpublished book on parenting, "In Perspective." It is a series of columns giving parents advice. He is offering it to newspapers and churches to publish one article at a time. He said he compiled the articles after seeing parents asking, "What can I do? We're completely over our heads here." "Muskegee County has got some really good parents, and I've met some of those, but I've met an awful lot of them who just don't have the skills," he said. "Is it their fault? No. Nobody taught them. Their parents didn't have very good parenting skills." He said he sees two particular skills lacking: Communication and conflict resolution. "Oftentimes, they have difficulty communicating with not only teenagers, but with spouses and the community in general," Petree said. "Now we have a teenager and a parent yelling at each other — not a good way to communicate — and now that we've started this yelling, it just cycles," he said. Conflict resolution skills come in at a close second, Petree said. "If we can't communicate, we can't resolve the conflict once we get it," he said. "That's when we call the police, and the young person ends up in jail or in counseling with me. It's not something people plan to do, it's just something that happens." He would like to teach both skills to parents and teens, Petree said. "Having those skills goes a long way in having a home that's not so full of turmoil and chaos and screaming and cussing and everything that goes on there," he said. "Unfortunately, they don't teach us those skills in school. We might graduate at the top of our class and not know how to communicate and when we have conflict, not know how to resolve it. So folks get divorces over that, and kids go to jail." For complete story, [click here](#).

Human rights violations in our own backyard--December 10th, 2008--Dec. 10 marks the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As we call on our global leaders to renew our commitments to universal justice and dignity, Californians must examine how we treat our youth. For complete story, [click here](#).

Appeals court blasts juvenile judge--December 11th, 2008--An appeals court has ruled that a Miami-Dade juvenile judge improperly sent a youth to jail for missing his court dates. On Wednesday, the Third District Court of Appeal in Miami reversed Miami-Dade Circuit Judge Lester Langer for ordering "an uncooperative juvenile" into Miami's juvenile lockup without the authority to do so. This was the 12th case the court has reversed for the veteran judge, who has presided in juvenile court since 1999. The previous 11 cases all occurred within the last three years. Langer declined to discuss the appeals court ruling. Miami-Dade courts spokeswoman Eunice Sigler said Langer had read the opinion "and he will comply with it." For complete story, [click here](#).

Facility to end Conn. contract for troubled youth--December 11, 2008--NORTH STONINGTON, Conn. - A [North Stonington](#) facility is ending its contract to treat adolescents in state custody who have drug problems or mental illness. Stonington Institute cited a lack of demand for the inpatient programs, resulting from the state's increasing preference to send those youths to community-based programs. This week's decision comes two months after reports that employees forcibly injected medications into out-of-control teen boys last spring to restrain them. That news prompted criticism over whether the state Department of Children and Families adequately monitors facilities that care for adolescents in state custody. For complete story, [click here](#).

Judge Orders Nun to Serve Full Sentence--MILWAUKEE - A judge in Milwaukee County today ordered an elderly nun to serve out her jail sentence. Sister Norma Giannini has serve eight months of a year long sentence for a conviction on charges that she sexually assaulted boys while attending St. Patrick's School in Milwaukee during the 1960s. For complete story, [click here](#).

'White House Boys' win inquiry of reform school graves--December 10, 2008--MARIANNA, Florida (CNN) -- Four men, now in their 60s, met over the Internet, shared stories about the darkest days of their pasts and spurred an investigation into 32 graves at a reform school. Roger Kiser, Michael McCarthy, Bryant Middleton and Dick Colon talked about whippings and beatings and other boys who disappeared. They discussed the 32 crosses marking the graves of persons unknown on the grounds of the former Florida Industrial School for Boys. They called their group the White House Boys, taking the name from the single story concrete building where, they say, boys were beaten and tortured decades ago. For complete story, [click here](#).

Boys school probe stirs painful memories--December 15, 2008--MARIANNA, Florida (CNN) -- Leaning against his cane, Bryant Middleton shuffled toward the makeshift cemetery. Tears welled in his eyes as he leaned down to touch one of the crosses. "This shouldn't be," he said. "This shouldn't be." Thirty-one crosses made of tubular steel and painted white line up unevenly in the grass and weeds of what used to be the grounds of a reform school in Marianna, Florida. The anonymous crosses are rusting away but their secrets may soon be exposed. When boys disappeared from the school, administrators explained it away, said former student Roger Kiser. They'd say, "Well, he ran away and the swamp got him," Kiser recalled. Or, "The gators got him." Or, "Water moccasins got him." Kiser and other former students believe authorities will soon find the remains of children and teens sent to the Florida School for Boys half a century ago. (Webmaster Note: Many programs in existence today use the same excuses to cover up "disappearances" of children in their care.) For complete story, [click here](#).

Children forced into cell-like school seclusion rooms--December 17, 2008--MURRAYVILLE, Georgia (CNN) -- A few weeks before 13-year-old Jonathan King killed himself, he told his parents that his teachers had put him in "time-out." "We thought that meant go sit in the corner and be quiet for a few minutes," Tina King said, tears washing her face as she remembered the child she called "our baby ... a good kid." But time-out in the boy's north Georgia special education school was spent in something akin to a prison cell -- a concrete room latched from the outside, its tiny window obscured by a piece of paper. Called

a seclusion room, it's where in November 2004, Jonathan hanged himself with a cord a teacher gave him to hold up his pants. [Watch Jonathan's parents on their son's death »](#) An attorney representing the school has denied any wrongdoing. Seclusion rooms, sometimes called time-out rooms, are used across the nation, generally for special needs children. Critics say that along with the death of Jonathan, many mentally disabled and [autistic](#) children have been injured or traumatized. Few states have laws on using seclusion rooms, though 24 states have written guidelines, according to a 2007 study conducted by a [Clemson University](#) researcher. Texas, which was included in that study, has stopped using seclusion and restraint. [Georgia](#) has just begun to draft guidelines, four years after Jonathan's death. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Georgia 8th-grader's suicide spurs lawsuit](#)--August 15, 2008 (Received 12/19/08)--Jonathan King told teachers at his north Georgia alternate public school that he couldn't stand being locked within the four concrete walls of a small seclusion room. In 2004, just weeks after threatening suicide, the 13-year-old eighth-grader hanged himself in the room, using a cord a teacher provided him to hold up his pants, court records show. Now, four years later, as the Alpine Program in Gainesville starts its new school year, Jonathan's parents are suing the program and the agency that oversees it. Don and Tina King of Murrayville, just outside Gainesville, say the treatment their son received at the school was unconstitutional and the school failed to protect him from self-harm. A north Georgia judge is expected to decide soon whether the King's case should be dismissed or sent to a jury trial. For complete story, [click here](#).

[DSHS settles case of boy's death; lawyer asks how state lost track](#)--December 17, 2008--This is a story that's been told countless times on these pages. Sadly, it needs to be told again. It's about the death of a boy who spent most of his life in foster care. Robley Carr Jr., according to his lawyer, was a victim of the state Department of Social and Health Services' (DSHS) mistakes. He was a victim not once, but twice. In 2003, state and federal authorities paid \$5 million to settle claims that Robley and three siblings were horribly abused in foster care. Now, the state has agreed to pay an additional \$320,000 to settle a claim that it failed to protect Robley even after that. He died at age 15. "How did they lose track of him again?" asks Tim Tesh, the Seattle lawyer who filed both legal claims. "It's a hard question to answer." The state said only this: "All I can tell you is that DSHS regrets the unfortunate death of this young man," said agency spokesman Steve Williams. "We believe the \$320,000 award is a fair and just settlement." One might say that Robley began life well short of the starting gate. His parents were troubled. According to an official review of Robley's 2006 death, Child Protective Services (CPS) in Alaska investigated abuse and neglect complaints involving the family in the early 1990s. The children were removed from the home, but Robley's mother later fled with them to Washington state, after she "left a treatment program against medical advice," the review said. It didn't take long for CPS here to get involved. Robley had some 15 or 20 placements by the time he was 9, according to the recent legal claim. His two sisters and one brother had similar experiences, bouncing from home to home. Robley, whose parents are Native American, was recognized by the Nooksack and the Hoonah tribes. That put his case under jurisdiction of tribal authorities and DSHS — or, as his lawsuit alleged, neither. The children were repeatedly beaten in one foster home on the Nooksack reservation, according to the lawsuit Tesh filed. Even when the state heard the children were being abused, it didn't investigate, the suit said. The youngest almost died from a ruptured bowel and suffered a broken shoulder, Tesh said in a 2003 interview. The foster mother's teenage son beat him, sometimes jumping on the younger child's stomach. Then he beat the child again when he vomited blood or cried. Another sibling, Tesh said, was admitted to a psychiatric hospital. For complete story, [click here](#).

See the Trailer for "Aaron Bacon"--A new film to be released in 2009 is the dramatic telling of the true story of the death of Aaron Bacon at the hands of the teen torture industry. See the trailer at: http://jonfordham.com/aaron_bacon_teaser_f23_acv-235.html

[Father pleads guilty to rape charges](#)--December 18, 2008--SPOKANE — A man who raped his daughter and posted videos of the abuse online before fleeing the country pleaded guilty Wednesday in federal court and likely faces the rest of his life in prison. Kenneth John Freeman, 46 — described by law-enforcement officers as "one of the most heinous" pedophiles — pleaded guilty to production of child pornography and interstate transportation of a minor for the purpose of unlawful sexual activity. His agreement with federal prosecutors calls for a sentence of 50 years in prison, plus three years of probation, when Freeman is sentenced March 25. "A 50-year sentence is going to be a life sentence," said Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephanie Lister, who prosecuted the case. Freeman would serve some 42 years before he could be considered for parole. He also pleaded guilty to three Benton County charges of child rape during an appearance in Spokane County Superior Court, in exchange for an expected sentence of 20 years, to run concurrently with the federal time. He will be held in a federal prison. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Oregon slow to deal with troubled facilities for troubled kids](#)--December 20, 2008--SALEM -- Authorities knew of problems at two institutions that house Oregon's most troubled children: Kids getting the wrong medication; workers with criminal records; a teen with a broken collarbone after a fight with staff; and unsupervised mentally ill youths. But instead of closing the institutions, state licensing officials spent several months warning the Kirkland Institute near Burns and the Pendleton Academies in eastern Oregon. It was only after authorities feared that children were in danger that they cracked down and blocked new admissions. At Kirkland, for instance, another teen in state protective custody was taken to the emergency room after a run-in with staff. At Pendleton, a 17-year-old was charged with raping a 13-year-old girl. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Alldredge Academy Closing!](#)--December 16, 2008--Alldredge Academy is closing as of December 31, 2008! Another one down! Keep the pressure on! For complete story, [click here](#).

[Report Reveals Unwarranted Detention Of Massachusetts Youth](#)--December 18, 2008--BOSTON – Massachusetts police and probation officers are unnecessarily incarcerating youth who are arrested when juvenile court is typically closed, according to a report released today by the American Civil Liberties Union, the ACLU of Massachusetts and the Children's Law Center of Massachusetts. Many have been arrested for minor infractions and pose no obvious risk of flight or danger to the community. The report, "A Looming Crisis: The Secure Detention of Youth After Arrest and Before Arraignment in Facilities Administered by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security," reveals that youth securely detained after being arrested in the late afternoons, evenings or over a weekend are frequently denied access to bail and subjected to conditions that do not meet state regulations. "Far too many kids are being locked up and detained in substandard conditions for no good reason," said Robin Dahlberg, senior staff attorney with the ACLU Racial Justice Program and the primary author of the report. "Unnecessary detention has a dramatic and negative impact on our children by pushing them deeper into the criminal justice system." For complete story, [click here](#).

More Programs Closing--Abusive programs are losing funding and many juvenile courts are choosing to revert back to conventional juvenile detention. Whether it is due to lack of money or new regulations, this is good news. For more details, [click here](#).

[Troubled children centers closing](#)--December 27, 2008--Adrian Training Center will be shuttered Jan. 24 to help close a \$540 million shortfall in Michigan's budget -- but the plan also signals the end of an era in how troubled children are treated in the state. The institution was in operation for nearly 130 years and cost taxpayers \$7.8 million annually for the treatment of 31 wayward girls. But in Michigan and nationwide, experts are moving away from institutionalizing children -- a trend that affects not only juvenile delinquents but other children with severe emotional or behavioral problems placed in long-term residential treatment centers, where they often remain for years. Instead, the state is shifting resources to keep children at home or in foster homes, reflecting today's belief among child welfare experts that institutions are outmoded, expensive and ineffective. But some child advocates say severely ill children cared for in the community often aren't getting the services they need to be successful. And many in law enforcement complain delinquents can be a danger to their communities. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Removing boys from that Blount County program where abuse is alleged was the right move at the right time](#)--December 1, 2008--THE ISSUE: Removing boys from that Blount County program after allegations of abuse was the right move at the right time. Torture. Beatings. Severe abuse. These are serious accusations, to be sure. They are the kind we have made against our enemies during war. The kind of accusations made against us, where Abu Ghraib and Gitmo are concerned. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Teen's death in Parma is ruled homicide](#)-- January 6th, 2009--The death of a Barberton teenager at a Parma treatment facility last month has been ruled a homicide, the Cuyahoga County coroner said Monday. Faith Finley, 17, suffocated and choked to death on her own vomit while being restrained by staff members, the coroner determined. Finley died Dec. 13 at Parmadale Family Services, a Catholic Charities-run facility that treats youths with severe behavioral health and developmental problems. She was in the custody of Summit County Children Services at the time and had been placed there by the agency. "For this

kind of an outcome to occur is deeply, deeply concerning and frankly painful," Children Services Executive Director John Saros said after learning about the ruling. "This was a beautiful young woman who was sent there to receive treatment services. For complete story, [click here](#). [Click here for more info](#).

[Some Civil Rights Groups Mark Today as 3rd Anniversary in Teen Bootcamp Death](#)--January 6th, 2009-- Three years ago Monday marks the death of Martin Lee Anderson. The 14-year-old Bay County Teenager was admitted to Bay Medical Center, and then transferred to the ICU in Pensacola Hospital where he died. That death set off a chain of events that in no way has come to an end. Some civil rights groups will mark the third anniversary of Martin Lee Anderson's death Monday, in a graveside ceremony. The case is still a divisive issue in the community and the nation. If you remember-- the teen collapsed during a physical assessment in his first day at the old Bay County Juvenile Boot Camp. Drill instructors initially believe Anderson was faking an illness and used what some considered to be physical abuse to make him complete the work-out. In the first autopsy, then-medical examiner Dr. Charles Siebert found Anderson died as a result of sickle cell trait. A second autopsy found the drill instructors suffocated the teen. Two state entities settled with Anderson's family for a combined 7-million dollars. But when the 7-drill instructors and the camp nurse were acquitted of aggravated manslaughter during the criminal trial, Anderson supporters called for a u-s justice department investigation. More than a year later that investigation is still underway. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Ruling expands legal rights of truant students](#)--January 13th, 2009--Juveniles accused of chronically cutting class in public schools are entitled to a lawyer in their first court hearing, a unanimous three-judge panel of the Washington Court of Appeals has ruled. Reversing a King County Superior Court ruling and an earlier Court of Appeals finding on different issues, the panel found Monday that denying a juvenile the right to a lawyer from the outset violated constitutional requirements. In her opinion, Judge Anne Ellington wrote the decision was the first to consider due-process rights of juveniles in initial proceedings under the truancy law enacted in 1995. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Gay kids' health: Family role cited](#)--December 29th, 2008--SAN FRANCISCO — Young gay people whose parents or guardians responded negatively when they revealed their sexual orientation were more likely to attempt suicide, experience severe depression and use drugs than those whose families accepted the news, according to a new study. The way in which parents or guardians respond to a youth's sexual orientation profoundly influences the child's mental health as an adult, say researchers at San Francisco State University, whose findings appear in today's journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics. "Parents love their children and want the best for them," said lead researcher Caitlin Ryan, a social worker who directs the university's Family Acceptance Project. "Now that we have measured all these behaviors, we can see that some of them put youth at extremely high risk and others are wellness-promoting." Among other findings, the study showed that teens who experienced negative feedback were more than eight times as likely to have attempted suicide, nearly six times as vulnerable to severe depression and more than three times at risk of drug use. More significantly, Ryan said, ongoing work at San Francisco State suggests parents who take even baby steps to respond with equanimity instead of rejection can dramatically improve a gay youth's mental-health outlook. One of the most startling findings was that being forbidden to associate with gay peers was as damaging as being physically beaten or verbally abused by their parents in terms of negative feedback, Ryan said. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Eugene, Ore., high-school students' good intentions misunderstood](#)--December 20th, 2008--EUGENE, Ore. — All they wanted to do was change the world, one random act of kindness at a time. Instead, they were met with furrowed brows, questioned by Eugene police and ousted by Valley River Center security officers. "People can't accept the fact that there are other people who just want to be nice," says Sheldon High School senior Kelsey Hertel, who founded the school's new Random Acts of Kindness Club. "People don't trust each other. They think everyone's out to get them." Ironically, that's exactly why Hertel founded the club in the first place. "Our community isn't giving enough," she says. "So we thought by doing random acts of kindness, we could totally change someone's day or life. And they could pay it forward to someone else. And one person at a time, we could make the world better." For complete story, [click here](#).

Senator Chris Dodd Reports on Restraint and Seclusion , See Video:

[Report Reveals Severe Cases of Abuse and Neglect of Schoolchildren](#)--January 13th, 2009-- WASHINGTON, D.C. – Schoolchildren around the country have been subject to abusive – and in some cases fatal – uses of seclusion and restraint by school administrators, teachers and staff, according to a new report released today by the National Disability Rights Network. The report, the first national effort to examine these practices in both public and private schools identified hundreds of cases where the abusive and negligent use of seclusion and restraint injured or traumatized students, many of whom were disabled. In several cases, students died. In light of this report, U.S. Rep. George Miller, the chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, announced the committee will hold a hearing on these abuses. "These abuses are a shocking and disturbing betrayal of the trust that families and communities place in our schools. School administrators and teachers are tasked with providing not just productive and encouraging learning environments for students, but with keeping them safe. It is wholly unacceptable for children to be locked up in closets or for any staff member to use overwhelming – and in some cases deadly – force against their students. "This report raises serious questions about the treatment of schoolchildren, the qualifications and training of staff, and what actions have been taken to address these unconscionable practices. No child should be at risk or in danger while at school, no matter what the circumstances. Our committee will hold a hearing to look at how we can address and hopefully end these horrific acts." The report, "School is not supposed to hurt: An investigative report on abusive seclusion and restraint in schools," provides an unprecedented look at the tactics used to isolate or restrain students. In one case, a seven-year old girl was killed in a special day program when four adult staff pinned her small body face down. The student had been blowing bubbles in her milk and would not follow directions to sit still. In another example, a thirteen year old boy committed suicide in a locked concrete seclusion room, hanging himself with a cord provided by staff to hold up his pants, after pleading with his teachers that he could not withstand the isolation in the small room for hours at a time. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Teachers in Martinique sentenced for abusing teens](#)--January 22nd, 2009--A judge in Martinique has prohibited seven teachers from working with minors again after they were found guilty of physically abusing juvenile delinquents. The teachers also have received suspended sentences ranging from 14 to 24 months. Prosecutors had alleged that eight teachers made 16- and 17-year-old students kneel on rocks and hold cinder blocks in outstretched arms during work trips to Haiti and Brazil. The juveniles were part of a program funded by the Paris-based Groupe SOS that works with troubled teens, drug addicts and homeless

people. The nine victims will receive between \$2,000 to \$9,000 in damages, along with \$1,300 each for attorney fees. The teachers were sentenced late Wednesday. For complete story, [click here](#).

Trainer charged with abusing teen girls--January 23rd, 2009--A Colorado horse trainer has been charged with sexually abusing teenage girls, including one that he took to Alabama for marriage. Donald Lane Betts, 33, was arrested in December when he returned to Kiowa with his 16-year-old bride, the Rocky Mountain News reported. Investigators say he lied about her age in Alabama because minors must have parental permission to marry. Mark Wilson, an investigator with the Elbert County Sheriff's Office, said Betts may have victimized other teens. Wilson charged that Betts targeted troubled girls, including three runaways. We have a strong belief that there are other victims out there, Wilson said. We stand ready to get them the help that they need. Betts faces a long list of charges, including second-degree kidnapping, sexual assault on a child, harboring a minor and contributing to the delinquency of a minor. He is also charged with obstruction of a peace officer for locking himself in his house when police arrived to arrest him. For complete story, [click here](#).

Civil suit filed in camp death--January 23rd, 2009--SALT LAKE CITY — The mother of Utah teen Caleb Jensen filed suit Thursday against those she believes were responsible for his untimely death at 15. Caleb was attending an Alternative Youth Adventures outing for at-risk youth in rural Montrose County in 2007. He died of a staph infection May 2 of that year. The state acted quickly, suspending AYA's license for residential and therapeutic childcare. AYA later surrendered the license, which it had originally hoped to renew. In July 2007 came the indictments against AYA, its former parent company Community Education Centers of New Jersey; camp director James Omer; camp EMT Ben Askins and Utah physician Keith Hooker. The criminal complaints alleged the infection that claimed Jensen's life produced visible signs, which the defendants failed to act on. Charges included manslaughter and child abuse resulting in death, but by last December, only CEC remained as a criminal defendant. For complete story, [click here](#). For more info, [click here](#).

Troubled Miami-Dade reform school may be forced to close main campus--January 24th, 2009--A Miami-Dade reform school for troubled teens, once considered a national model, could be forced to shut its 16-year-old main campus. State administrators have yanked the school's contract, citing escapes, allegations of abuse and neglect, and other chronic problems. In a letter dated Jan. 7, the Department of Juvenile Justice's South Florida chief said Bay Point Schools in South Dade will lose state funding March 1, and that admissions to the 157-bed campus have been frozen. Youths already are being transferred to similar programs or being released. Budget problems triggered the decision -- the department has to cut \$5 million this year and will save \$2 million by closing Bay Point's Kennedy campus -- but the school has been beset by critical lapses, said agency Assistant Secretary Darryl Olson. "They have consistently failed to comply with DJJ standards," Olson said. "We haven't been getting the kind of return on investment we would like." Added DJJ spokesman Frank Penela: "In the budget times we're in, we can't afford to do that anymore." For complete story, [click here](#).

Dyller eyes potential lawsuits--January 28th, 2009--WILKES-BARRE — A local attorney who specializes in civil rights cases said he believes some of the juveniles who were incarcerated under juvenile Judge Mark Ciavarella's tenure have a strong basis to file a lawsuit seeking compensation for emotional and financial harm. I'm looking at this and see so many civil claims based on so many potential civil rights violations, it's shocking," said Barry Dyller of Wilkes-Barre. For complete story, [click here](#).

Connecticut Junior Republic to close campus for troubled teens--January 31, 2009--LITCHFIELD — Connecticut Junior Republic will end a 105-year tradition of sheltering and educating troubled teens here in April. On Friday, 107 teachers, counselors, and support staff were told they will not have a job when the campus, except for the administration building, shuts down April 2. The nonprofit organization, founded with a 1904 bequest from landowner Mary Buel but funded primarily by taxpayers, has suffered in recent years from changes in how the state treats juveniles in trouble. Over the past decade, CJR expanded and updated its campus, with a \$5 million education center in 1997 and a \$1.4 million family and student services center that opened in 2003. But in 2008, CJR's number of beds was cut from 84 to 60 in response to shrinking demand; only 38 teenage boys, most referred from the court system, live on campus today. "That does provide a sense of how quickly things have changed," said Director of Development Hedy L. Barton. Increasingly, the state refers troubled teens to community and home-based programs rather than residential facilities now reserved only for those teens who demonstrate the highest risk behavior. For complete story, [click here](#).

Three Rivers Montana to close--January 31st, 2009--Three Rivers Montana, a Belgrade-based wilderness program for troubled teens, plans to close Feb. 28, laying off its 37 employees, executive director Marylis Filipovich said Thursday. "Normally, January is a very big admissions month for us and we didn't get any admissions," she said. Three Rivers opened five years ago and has served more than 400 kids from across the nation. Teens experiencing difficulties at home or school could stay at the mental-health facility for a few weeks or months, earning high-school credits and receive treatment. The nonprofit depended on admission fees, often funded by health-insurance reimbursements, donations and fundraising. Discounts were offered for low-income families. "In this economy, many of our potential families cannot afford the cost of outdoor behavioral healthcare," Mark Parlett, director of programs and development for Three Rivers, wrote in an e-mail to the Chronicle. Families often took out loans to send their kids to Three Rivers and the tightened credit market has hurt enrollment, Filipovich said. "Our families tended to be middle-class, and with the economy like it is, they can't get loans," she said. For complete story, [click here](#).

Good News: Bad Economy Killing Abusive Teen Programs--January 30th, 2009-- There is a silver lining to this bleak economy: Abusive and ineffective "tough love" programs for teens are failing right and left. In just the last few weeks, the notorious Tranquility Bay program in Jamaica, [Spring Creek Lodge](#) in Montana, and [Pathway Family Center](#) in Detroit and Ohio have all been shuttered. Tranquility Bay was known for making kids kneel on concrete for days and using "restraint" so harsh that it broke bones. Both Tranquility Bay and Spring Creek Lodge were part of a network called the World Wide Association of Specialty Programs and Schools (WWASP or WWASPS)--and the group's philosophy involves constant use of emotional attacks and [humiliation](#) in a rigid, structured day in order to break teens' spirits. Spring Creek was notorious for a frigid, small isolation room called "the Hobbit"--sometimes teens were left there for months. From Pathway--which was descended from the infamously abusive [Straight Inc.](#)--I received two separate accounts of suicide attempts by girls which were not reported to their parents, and many stories of the usual attack therapy and humiliation. Unfortunately, neither WWASP nor Pathway is completely dead yet: WWASP still has centers operating in the US and abroad, and Pathway has sites in Indiana: Porter and Indianapolis. The media tends to present these closures as sad examples of needed [services being cut](#)--but in fact, teens are better off with no treatment than with treatment that often divides families and has characteristics known to produce post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Family support tends to be crucial to long term recovery--and PTSD doubles the odds that a drug problem will become a lasting addiction. Troubled teen programs were yet another sign of the bubble economy. Many were financed by mortgage and home equity loans because they cost thousands of dollars a month and because insurers, quite correctly, don't usually pay for programs that aren't proven to help. Since there are proven alternatives for teens with drug and other problems that do not carry the risks of "tough love," we should greet the closings of these centers with glee. For complete story, [click here](#).

Juvenile Cases May Get New Look Following Kickback Charges Against Former Judges--February 3rd, 2009-- The Pennsylvania Supreme Court appears ready to reconsider a request to review hundreds of Luzerne County juvenile court cases in the wake of [charges that two former judges accepted kickbacks from the owners of a private juvenile detention center](#). The court, on Jan. 8, denied a petition by the Philadelphia-based Juvenile Law Center to look at more than 250 cases in which juvenile offenders were allegedly adjudicated and sent to detention centers without lawyers. On Monday, the justices issued a one-line order vacating their previous denial of that petition, pending further action by the court. "We see this as a very positive sign that the court is going to take a fresh look at our application for relief," said Bob Schwartz, JLC's executive director. "Beyond that, it's hard to read into this. It's pretty clear that they want to go deeper. There's no reason to do this if they're not going to grant relief down the line or at least figure out a way to provide relief to the kids of Luzerne County." The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Pennsylvania announced Jan. 22 that former President Judge Mark A. Ciavarella and Senior Judge Michael T. Conahan had conditionally agreed to plead guilty to honest service wire fraud charges. For complete story, [click here](#).

Covenant House folding its operation here--February 5th, 2009--STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- Covenant House thrived from humble beginnings and later rose from the ashes of scandal, but it's no match for the putrid economy. The charity that specifically serves at-risk youth and had been scouting new quarters after it was priced out of its longtime home at 70 Bay St. in St. George, has elected to abandon the borough altogether amid a decrease in donations and worries about future revenue, a spokesman confirmed yesterday. For complete story, [click here](#).

[NICK GAGLIA STANDS UP FOR TROUBLED TEENS](#)--February 5th, 2009--Independent filmmaker Nick Gaglia is a man on a mission: using the power of cinema to expose those who prey on troubled young adults. His critically- acclaimed 2007 [feature film](#) debut, "Over the GW," was based on his own experiences as a drug-addicted teen who underwent physical and psychological abuse at a cult-like, tough love rehab center. His next film, currently in post-production, is the biopic "Aaron Bacon," which details the tragic 1994 death of a troubled 16-year-old who died as a result of blatant malpractice in a tough love drug rehab camp. Film Threat caught up with Gaglia at his New York office to talk about his cinematic crusade to expose the exploiters of troubled teenagers. For complete story, [click here](#).

[3 fired from Parmadale in teen's death](#)--February 7th, 2009--Tom Mullen, the president of the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Cleveland, says the three were fired Friday following the release of a state agency report that said the workers didn't follow the center's own policies on how to restrain unruly youngsters. Faith Finley, 17, of Barberton, died Dec. 13 at Parmadale Family Services in suburban Cleveland while being restrained in a face-down position. The Cuyahoga County coroner's office ruled Finley's death a homicide last month, saying she choked on vomit and suffocated. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Juvenile Justice System Failing Ohio's Children, Investigation Finds](#)--February 10th, 2009--COLUMBUS, OH -- The Ohio juvenile justice system is failing the state's children by permitting children to be routinely shackled, mandating that children accused of certain crimes be charged as adults and by not ensuring that all children accused of crimes get lawyers. The findings, detailed in a report card released today, are the result of an investigation by the American Civil Liberties Union, the ACLU of Ohio, the Children's Law Center, Inc. and the Office of the Ohio Public Defender. The investigation has also revealed that Ohio detains and incarcerates a greater percentage of its children than most other states in the nation and that a disproportionate number of those incarcerated are children of color. "Rushing to criminalize and unnecessarily incarcerate kids is just bad policy," said Robin Dahlberg, a senior staff attorney with the ACLU Racial Justice Program. "It has a scarring impact on our children and only serves to push them deeper into the criminal justice system and inhibit their ability to become healthy, productive adults." For complete story, [click here](#).

[SJC: Juvenile offenders cannot be held beyond 18](#)--February 10th, 2009--The state's highest court today struck down a law that allowed the state to keep juvenile offenders in custody for three years after they turned 18, if officials believed they would be "physically dangerous to the public." The Supreme Judicial Court ruled that the law, which was challenged by three juvenile offenders who had been ordered held until they were 21, "does not comport with substantive due process requirements and is constitutionally infirm." For complete story, [click here](#).

[Pa. judges accused of jailing kids for cash](#)--February 11th, 2009--WILKES-BARRE, Pa. -- For years, the juvenile court system in Wilkes-Barre operated like a conveyor belt: Youngsters were brought before judges without a lawyer, given hearings that lasted only a minute or two, and then sent off to juvenile prison for months for minor offenses. The explanation, prosecutors say, was corruption on the bench. In one of the most shocking cases of courtroom graft on record, two Pennsylvania judges have been charged with taking millions of dollars in kickbacks to send teenagers to two privately run youth detention centers. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Report: Abuse Found At Chicago Public Schools](#), [www.wbbm780.com](#), February 10, 2009--For complete story, [click here](#).

[House panel wants to crack down on wilderness camps](#)--February 11th, 2009--Washington » A House panel approved a bill Wednesday that would boost federal regulations on residential programs for troubled teens, including the wilderness therapy camps that have thrived in Utah's deserts. The bill is in reaction to a two-year federal audit that found thousands of cases of abuse in residential treatment programs nationwide since the early 1990s, along with misleading marketing practices and uneven state oversight. "It is past time to bring these programs to a level of basic safety," said Rep. Carolyn McCarthy, D-N.Y., one of the sponsors of the legislation. The House Education and Labor Committee approved the bill on a vote of 32 to 10. The proposal is almost identical to a bill pushed last year. That version passed the full House by a wide margin, but did not come up for a vote in the Senate. With a new Congress, the legislation had to be reintroduced. Rep. Rob Bishop, R-Utah, a member of the committee, opposed it last year and opposed it again Wednesday. For complete story, [click here](#). (The problems with HR 911 are the same as with HR 6358, [learn more](#).)

[Vision for Youth had multiple problems, managed teen felons](#)--February 15th, 2009--Springfield, Ohio — Vision for Youth, Inc. maintained four facilities in Springfield and at one time had teens from the foster care system and juvenile felons, ages 13 to 18, from as many as ten counties enrolled in its boot-camp-style program. Vision had a history of problems, according to state records, but by all accounts the home's child-care staff managed a difficult population — children that were hard to place anywhere else because of criminal records and emotional problems, said Brian Harter, a spokesman for Ohio's Department of Job and Family Services. "You look at these kids' backgrounds...(they) have a lot of issues, and they have situations that require special attention," Harter said. "It's not an easy situation for the staff to deal with on a day-to-day basis. But that's not to condone anything." Harter said that while state law allows staff at group homes to physically restrain minors, staff are prohibited from administering physical discipline. Punching a juvenile, for instance — which happened at a Vision facility — is grounds for revocation of the home's license. On at least three occasions, licensing specialists investigating complaints about Vision recommended its license be revoked, but the home was allowed to continue operating. For complete story, [click here](#).

[NYPD okays Velcro handcuffs for use on unruly children](#) 14 Feb 2009 Cops trying to restrain children will have a softer alternative than metal handcuffs under a new program the NYPD is testing in nearly two dozen schools. Starting next month, officers will use Velcro handcuffs instead of the tougher steel model to subdue disturbed or unruly children in 22 schools in northern Queens, according to a draft NYPD operations order obtained by the Daily News. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Kansas shuts down center for troubled teens](#)--February 20th, 2009--ESBON, Kan. | The state is shutting down a northern Kansas treatment center for troubled adolescents after inspectors found emergency exit doors locked on three occasions. The White Rock Academy in Esbon on Thursday was ordered closed after state officials twice told operators to remove the locks, which violate the state fire and safety code. The academy has until Monday to make other arrangements for its 24 residents. The state suspended the center's license, citing a need to protect youths at the facility from physical abuse or threats to their safety. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Pennsylvania rocked by 'jailing kids for cash' scandal](#)--February 23rd, 2009--CNN -- At a friend's sleepover more than a year ago, 14-year-old Phillip Swartley pocketed change from unlocked vehicles in the neighborhood to buy chips and soft drinks. The cops caught him. There was no need for an attorney, said Phillip's mother, Amy Swartley, who thought at most, the judge would slap her son with a fine or community service. But she was shocked to find her eighth-grader handcuffed and shackled in the courtroom and sentenced to a youth detention center. Then, he was shipped to a boarding school for troubled teens for nine months. "Yes, my son made a mistake, but I didn't think he was going to be taken away from me," said Swartley, a 41-year-old single mother raising two boys in Wilkes-Barre, [Pennsylvania](#). CNN does not usually identify minors accused of crimes. But Swartley and others agreed to be named to bring public attention to the issue. As scandals from Wall Street to Washington roil the public trust, the justice system in Luzerne County, in the heart of Pennsylvania's struggling coal country, has also fallen prey to corruption. The county has been rocked by a kickback scandal involving two elected judges who essentially jailed kids for cash. Many of the children had appeared before judges without a lawyer. The nonprofit Juvenile Law Center in Philadelphia said Phillip is one of at least 5,000 children over the past five years who appeared before former Luzerne County President Judge Mark Ciavarella. Ciavarella pleaded guilty earlier this month to federal criminal charges of fraud and other tax charges, according to the U.S. attorney's office. Former Luzerne County Senior Judge Michael Conahan also pleaded guilty to the same charges. The two secretly received more than \$2.6 million, prosecutors said. For complete story, [click here](#).

['Boot camp' closed](#)--February 22nd, 2009--TREASURE BEACH, St Elizabeth - Tranquility Bay, the controversial offshore reform school for rebellious children, mostly from the United States, closed its doors last month as a result of a fallout in business. The last 'inmate' reportedly left the island on January 5. For complete story, [click here](#).

[U.S. House passes wilderness camp restrictions](#)--February 24th, 2009--Washington » The U.S. House signed off on legislation Monday that seeks to end abuse in programs for troubled teens, such as the wilderness camps operating throughout Utah. The bill passed on a vote of 295 to 102. Utah Democratic Rep. Jim Matheson voted for the bill. Republican Reps. Rob Bishop and Jason Chaffetz voted against it. Proponents of the legislation say it will help keep kids safe as they participate in boot-camp style activities. The bill prohibits any punishment that denies food, water, clothing, shelter or medical care. It would limit forcible

restraints and allow the children access to a telephone. The legislation also would set up a Web site allowing parents to see which programs have faced substantiated abuse claims. The bill follows a government audit that found more than 1,000 cases of abuse in such programs since the early 1990s, including cases where a child has died in Utah. For complete story, [click here](#).

Crime of punishment?--March 1st, 2009-- At age 14, the Wilkes-Barre youth had been declared a juvenile delinquent and sent away for treatment, first to a wilderness-style juvenile detention camp and later to a reformatory school. His crime? He and a friend entered several open cars in Ashley and stole some change, a pre-paid cell phone and a portable music player, he and his mother, Amy, said. Suddenly the once carefree, basketball-playing teen found himself locked up for 10 months. Each day he struggled to control the rage that was building inside as he worked to earn his release. What he could not control, he and his mother said, is the sense of helplessness and anger that still haunts him today as he tries to comprehend why he was put away for a misdemeanor crime that, if committed by an adult, likely would have resulted in probation and a fine. It's a question thousands of other juveniles and their parents asked during the 12 years now-disgraced Judge Mark A. Ciavarella Jr. presided over Luzerne County's juvenile court. People such as Kimberly Bryk of Exeter Township and her daughter, Jamie, who spent more than a year lodged in juvenile detention facilities for a fist fight with another girl, and Sandy Fonzo of Wilkes-Barre and her son, Ed, who bounced in and out of several detention facilities after he violated probation on an initial charge of possession of drug paraphernalia. Today those parents and their children think they may have an answer: Ciavarella and Judge Michael Conahan pleaded guilty on Feb. 12 to accepting more than \$2.6 million in kickbacks in exchange for rulings that favored the PA Child Care and Western PA Child Care juvenile detention centers formerly co-owned by Butler Township attorney Robert Powell. For complete story, [click here](#).

What We Lost When We Lost Rocky -- Paper First Exposed Teen Torture--March 3rd, 2009--When people talk in the abstract about what we lose when we lose newspapers, it's often hard to drum up much concern. Yeah, people are losing their jobs--that's what happened to the buggy makers when the car took over. Yeah, news is important--but hey, we've got the web now. And the MSM blew it on Iraq, so who needs them anyway? We've got twitter. Just last week, Denver lost the Rocky Mountain News and before its website disappears, I wanted to share an example of just how much newspapers matter. This series--**Desperate Measures**--was the first to comprehensively take on the multi-million teen abuse empire variously known as WWASP, WWASPS and Teen Help. Please take the time to read it--once you start, it's hard to turn away. (And sadly, though WWASP has lost a [few rounds](#) lately, it's still operating). Expensive to conduct, extensive, well-written and well-reported, this journalism helped inspire a generation of activists, as well as my book, *Help at Any Cost: How the Troubled-Teen Industry Cons Parents and Hurts Kids*, which is the first book length investigation of the billion dollar business. In the series, Pulitzer-prize winner Lou Kilzer and photographer Dennis Schroeder make abundantly clear that the programs affiliated with WWASP are harsh, abusive and wildly popular--and they get a top WWASP official to admit that their staff is untrained and its methods completely untested: "These people are basically a bunch of untrained people who work for this organization," Ken Kay told the Denver Rocky Mountain News in an interview before he rejoined Teen Help as a vice president. "So they don't have credentials of any kind. ... "We could be leading these kids to long-term problems that we don't have a clue about because we're not going about it in the proper way. ... "How in the hell can you call yourself a behavior modification program -- and that's one of the ways it's marketed -- when nobody has the expertise to determine: Is this good, is this bad?" Kilzer shows that WWASP's contract with parents allows the programs to "use handcuffs, mechanical restraints, electrical disabler, Mace or pepper spray in order to restrain the student." Parents could not sue the program for "liability or damages resulting from restraint procedures." for complete story, [click here](#).

Youth boot camps proven to fail--March 3rd, 2009--Clinical psychologists have joined the chorus of disapproval of the Government's planned 'boot camps', saying punishment as a deterrent does not work. The Government is planning to widen the powers of the Youth Court with a range of new sentencing options including sending the worst repeat offenders to military-style camps run by the army. Principal Youth Court Judge Andrew Becroft has already put the boot in to boot camps for young offenders. He said last week that sentencing youthful offenders to boot camp was "arguably the least successful sentence in the Western world". For complete story, [click here](#).

Luzerne County Courthouse Corruption Probe Expands--March 2nd, 2009--WILKES-BARRE, LUZERNE COUNTY- The federal probe into corruption at the Luzerne County courthouse is widening. The I-Team has learned that federal investigators are expanding their investigation. Sources close to the case tell the I-Team that "target letters" have been sent to several lawyers in Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties. Those letters reportedly say they will be questioned about information they may have about corruption within the Luzerne County legal system. The I-Team has also learned that at least one district justice from Luzerne County has been questioned by federal agents. All of this comes in the aftermath of the arrest of four high ranking Luzerne County officials. Suspended Judges Mark Ciavarella and Michael Conahan pled guilty to taking millions in kickbacks in connection with a juvenile detention center in Pittston Township. Also busted was former Court Administrator William Sharkey, Sr. He admits to stealing \$70,000 in seized gambling money. And Sandy Brulo, a Probation Supervisor, is accused of tampering with public records. The U.S. Attorney's Office will not comment on our information. For complete story, [click here](#).

70 Youths Sue Former Judges in Detention Kickback Case--February 27th, 2009--More than 70 juveniles and their families filed a class-action lawsuit Thursday against two former judges who pleaded guilty this month in a scheme that involved their taking kickbacks to put young offenders in privately run detention centers. For complete story, [click here](#).

Troubled teen beaten down by system--March 9th, 2009-- Most people are scared to die. It can't be any worse than living a life like mine. Being dead I think would just suit me fine ... People say there's nothing wrong with me. Honestly, I think they need to f--- off because they don't know what goes on in my head. When I used to try to hang myself I was just messing around trying to make them care and pay attention. Now it's different ... I went to court yesterday and I thought he was going to send me to adult! Time is running out. My chances are getting fewer and fewer. F---, I give up! I'm done trying. -- Excerpt from Ashley Smith's journal, Sept. 4, 2006 A month later, the 18-year-old was indeed transferred to an adult closed security facility. That's prison, in plain language, despite her youth status. She would be repeatedly Tasered (seven times in 26 days), pepper sprayed, locked down in solitary for 23 hours a day, forcibly medicated and placed in the hideous WRAP restraint: bound head to toe, unable to budge, hockey helmet jammed over her head lest she topple over or try to bite. New Brunswick's Ombudsman and Child and Youth Advocate would later write: "I challenge anyone with a sane mind to live in conditions similar to the ones described ... for half the time Ashley had to endure ..." And: "Surely, there is a better way." If so, not in time to save Ashley Smith, who committed suicide -- whether she actually meant to die or not -- before the review of custodial conditions in N.B., and her own specific case, was completed. On Oct. 18, 2007 -- having been transferred 17 times in the previous 11 1/2 months between three federal penitentiaries, two treatment facilities, two external hospitals and one provincial correctional facility -- the teenager tied a ligature around her neck while on suicide watch at Grand Valley Institution for Women, near Kitchener. Correctional staff, who had been watching, did not intervene for nearly 30 minutes -- and "this failure cost Ms. Smith her life," as stated in a report released last week, "A Preventable Death," by the Correctional Investigator of Canada. In the days after the report was publicized, attention and misgivings were focused on systemic problems, the lack of mental health services for youth -- Ashley was never sent for a formal psychological evaluation while in federal custody -- and poor co-ordination among correctional authorities. But a closer reading of the file, the reviews of her early custodial years in N.B., suggest strongly that, while Ashley was an angry young girl from the age of 12, it was the rigid and punitive correctional system that made her nuts -- despairing, endlessly confrontational and ultimately self-destructive, even as she clearly called out for help with acts of self-harm. In page after page of analysis, she is described as defiant, combative, unyielding to rules, refusing to conform; an obstinate and powerful personality, the proverbial square peg being forced to fit into a round hole, a juvenile iconoclast who fought tooth and nail in hanging on to a personality others deemed "oppositional" and "narcissistic" and "disrespectful." Ashley would probably have been better off if all those who did intervene, who sought to alter her behaviour, so often in cruel ways, had just left the girl alone, said: Go. Fend for yourself. You've heard of "black while driving" or "Muslim while flying" -- externally imposed perceptions that pre-emptively stigmatize, even criminalize, behaviour. Ashley was incorrigible while incarcerated. For complete story, [click here](#).

Group Home Operates Without License--March 10th, 2009--LaVERGNE, Tenn. -- A group home for foster children in LaVergne is known around town as a hot spot for trouble, and the home has been operating for almost a year without a business license...Police said 43 percent of the trouble calls from LaVergne High School was associated with kids at the Rock of Refuge. "We did have some pretty rough kids over at LaVergne High," said Usinger. The LaVergne Records Department said the home's business license expired in June 2008. Usinger denies the home is trying to expand, but issues with the business branching

out have been raised. "A lot of questions have been raised," said Boyd. In the large neighborhood, it's hard to tell which houses the Rock of Refuge call home, but neighbors have complained since almost the start of the business... For complete story, [click here](#).

[Academy at Ivy Ridge to close this weekend](#)--March 12th, 2009-- The troubled Academy at Ivy Ridge is reportedly closing its doors for good this weekend. The Ogdensburg private academy, which was geared toward troubled teens will close this weekend and transfer the remaining students to a facility in South Carolina, according to the Daily Courier-Observer this morning. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Darrington closes doors](#)--March 2nd, 2009--Darrington Academy, a private school for troubled teens in Blue Ridge, closed its doors Friday, a move that owner and headmaster Richard Darrington says is due to the current state of the economy. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Hawthorne Cedar Knolls teen accused of sexually abusing another boy on campus](#)--March 16th, 2009-- HAWTHORNE - A 17-year-old boy at Hawthorne Cedar Knolls was accused of sexually abusing a 15-year-boy in his residence Saturday night, three days after five teens there were accused of assaulting a fellow resident, police said. Efrain Castillo, who lives at the residential treatment center for troubled youngsters, was charged with sexual misconduct, unlawful imprisonment and endangering the welfare of a child, misdemeanors, Mount Pleasant Police Chief Louis Alagno said. He is being held on \$10,000 bail at the Westchester County jail in Valhalla. The victim was treated at the Westchester Medical Center. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Michigan 15-year-old dies after police Taser him](#)--March 22nd, 2009-- BAY CITY, Mich. -- Police in Michigan say a 15-year-old boy has died after being Tasered by officers who were trying to break up a fight. Police didn't release his name and say state police are investigating. A Bay City police news release says officers answered a report of an early morning fight on Sunday. The statement says two males were arguing in an apartment, and one of them "attempted to fight the officers." Police say officers Tasered him, and his reaction led them to immediately call for emergency medical help. He was pronounced dead at Bay Regional Medical Center. Deputy Chief Thomas Pletzke tells WNEM-TV police placed one officer on administrative leave. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Clean Slates for Youths Sentenced Fraudulently](#)--March 26th, 2009--The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania on Thursday ordered the slate cleaned for hundreds of youths who had been sentenced by a corrupt judge. For complete story, [click here](#).

[2 Teens Arrested, County Juvenile Program Under Investigation](#)--March 27th, 2009--PENN HILLS, Pa. -- The arrest of two teens charged with harassment prompts an investigation at the Allegheny County juvenile probation division. Two 17-year-old boys were arrested and charged with harassment after allegedly showing up at a Penn Hills house and threatening another 17-year-old boy. The mother of the threatened boy said she believes that her son was threatened because he blew the whistle on alleged extortion going on in the Homewood Community Intervention Supervision Program. The boy and his mother were not being identified by police with an ongoing investigation into the program. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Discerning the difference between sadness and depression and then getting your teen help quickly is key](#)-- April 5th, 2009--Parents of teenagers get accustomed to riding the teeter-totter of their offsprings' emotional highs and lows, but sometimes the moodiness signals a deeper problem. Barbara Deiotte, a social worker at Munster's Wilbur Wright Middle School, has seen an uptick in teenage depression. "My personal thoughts are that today's lifestyle is more stressful -- everything is kind of fast," Deiotte said, referring to possible reasons for the increase. "Or maybe we're more aware (of depression)." With teens, "depression can be a very temporary response" to stress associated with hormones or conflict with parents, she said. "That will come and go. It's normal adolescent angst. Please read complete story, [click here](#).

[Do Lap Dances and Humiliation Treat ADHD -- and Should Public Schools Pay?](#)--April 17th, 2009--... Mount Bachelor is part of Aspen Education -- believed to be the largest chain of teen residential programs in the U.S. Aspen, as part of CRC Health, which is owned by [Bain Capital](#), was seen by advocates as much more sedate and less given to wacky practices than clearly "out there" programs like those associated with the World Wide Association of Specialty Programs and Schools (WWASP or WWASPS). At one WWASP school, for example, teens were kept in outdoor dog cages. The stories of psychological abuse coming out of Mount Bachelor -- a few of which are included in my Time piece -- are every bit as bad as I have heard from teens and parents at chains of programs that have far worse reputations. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Suit claims abuse, filth at juvenile detention center](#)--April 20th, 2009-- CNN) -- Juveniles held in a Mississippi detention center are subject to "horrific physical and mental abuse" at an insect-ridden, filthy facility, alleges a federal lawsuit filed Monday. The suit, filed by the Mississippi Youth Justice Project and Mississippi Protection and Advocacy Inc., accuses staff at the privately-managed Harrison County Juvenile Detention Center of "punitive shacking, staff-on-youth assaults, 23-hour-a-day lock-down in filthy jail cells, unsanitary conditions resulting in widespread contraction of scabies and staph infections, dangerous overcrowding that forces many youth to sleep on the concrete floor, and inadequate mental health care." The facility is operated by Mississippi Security Police, a private security corporation based in Pascagoula, Mississippi. The company is paid \$1.6 million yearly by Harrison County to manage the juvenile center, according to the lawsuit, which names the county as a defendant. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Broward child's suicide raises questions about medication](#)--April 21st, 2009-- Weeks before his death, Gabriel Myers, the 7-year-old Broward boy who hanged himself in the shower of his foster home, had been prescribed a powerful mind-altering drug linked by federal regulators to an increased risk of suicide in children. In all, Gabriel had been prescribed four psychiatric drugs, two or three of which he was taking at the time of his death, said Jack Moss, Broward chief of the state Department of Children & Families. Moss said he is not sure which medications the boy was taking because Margate police took the foster home's medication log as part of an investigation into Gabriel's death last week. Three of the psychotropic drugs carry U.S. Food and Drug Administration "black box" label warnings for children's safety, the strongest advisory the federal agency issues. Three of the medications are not approved for use with young children, though they are widely prescribed to youngsters "off label" -- meaning doctors can prescribe the drug even if not formally approved for that use. In 2005 -- reacting to a series of stories in The Miami Herald that as many as one in four foster children were prescribed potentially dangerous mind-altering drugs -- state lawmakers approved a law aimed at curbing their use. Children's advocates now question whether the law is being ignored. For complete story, [click here](#).

[America's Tough Love Habit](#)--May, 2009--We are, famously, blasé about our acts of torture overseas. But why? The laser-like focus on [fixing the economy](#), wanting to avoid more political divisiveness, the diminishment of watchdog journalism—are all part of the explanation. But there's another overlooked reason as well. Americans tend to valorize tough love—at times, even tough love that verges on torture—in [prisons](#), mental hospitals, drug rehabs, and teen [boot camps](#). We aren't squeamish about the psychological aspects of torture. We might even admire them. Thousands of troubled children, for instance, now attend tough "wilderness programs" "emotional growth boarding schools" and other "tough love" camps where they face conditions like total isolation, sleep deprivation, food deprivation, and daily emotional attacks. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Gardasil Linked to Nerve Disorder](#) --Cervical Cancer Vaccine May Raise Risk of Guillain-Barre Syndrome 30 Apr 2009 Girls and women who receive the Gardasil [Gardakill] vaccine to prevent cervical cancer may be at increased risk of a rare but serious disorder of the nervous system [Guillain-Barre syndrome (GBS)] in the first few weeks after getting their shots, researchers report. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Government wants the military to run state schools](#) -- Right then, fall into line you 'orrible little pupils! 08 May 2009 The Armed Forces will be drafted in to run state schools under plans to drive up discipline and respect in classrooms. Ministers are in talks with defence chiefs about taking over a handful of schools and turning them into military academies. Alongside daily lessons, pupils would be expected to take part in activities such as drills, uniformed parades, weapons handling and adventure training. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Group Home Employee Accused Of Molesting Teens](#)--May 8th, 2009--A Sacramento man who helped troubled teens at a group home is under arrest and accused of molesting girls while on the job. In a place where people are watching your every move, Sacramento County authorities say Jeffrey Caldwell was able to make major inappropriate moves this past February while working at the Sacramento County Assessment Center. For complete story, [click here](#).

[State investigating ab slapping of teen boys](#)--May 12th, 2009--A controversial video appears to show a juvenile justice official in Seminole County striking adolescent detainees in their abdomens. But although physical contact between officials and detainees is mostly prohibited, the state Department of Juvenile Justice says the boys may have volunteered for the military-style treatment at the Seminole County Juvenile Detention Center. "There has been speculation that

it was used for training purposes," said Frank Penela, a spokesman for the department, who has not yet seen the video. Nonetheless, the department, which has been stung in recent years by the death of one detainee at a boot-camp-style facility and as well as the discovery of a graveyard containing unidentified graves near another, is investigating the incident. For complete story, [click here](#).

Feds end 11-year oversight of Ga. juvenile facilities--May 18th, 2009--Georgia's juvenile justice system has been released from federal oversight, 11 years after the U.S. Justice Department investigated reports of overcrowding and abuse at the state's youth detention facilities, the governor said Monday. For complete story, [click here](#).

Thousands beaten, raped in Irish reform schools--May 20th, 2009--DUBLIN -- A fiercely debated, long-delayed investigation into Ireland's Roman Catholic-run institutions says priests and nuns terrorized thousands of boys and girls in workhouse-style schools for decades — and government inspectors failed to stop the chronic beatings, rapes and humiliation. Nine years in the making, Wednesday's 2,600-page report sides almost completely with the horrific reports of abuse from former students sent to more than 250 church-run, mostly residential institutions. But victims' leaders said it didn't go far enough — particularly because none of their abusers were identified by name. The report concluded that church officials always shielded their orders' pedophiles from arrest to protect their own reputations and, according to documents uncovered in the Vatican, knew that many pedophiles were serial attackers. The investigators said overwhelming, consistent testimony from still-traumatized men and women, now in their 50s to 80s, had demonstrated beyond a doubt that the entire system treated children more like prison inmates and slaves than people with legal rights and human potential. For complete story, [click here](#). (Webmaster note: Switch out Irish for American and you will understand America's teen "help" industry.)

Teacher's aide in Maryland Heights convicted in sex case--May 21st, 2009--A teacher's aide at a school for troubled teens in Maryland Heights was convicted late Wednesday of having sexual contact with two students. Bruce Germany, 55, was convicted on 14 felony counts of sexual contact with a student by a teacher between September 2006 and April 2007. The charges involve two 15-year-old girls who attended Lakeside Center for Troubled Youth at 13044 Marine Drive. For complete story, [click here](#).

Congressional Hearing on Death/Abuse in Schools and Programs Using Physical Restraint--May 19th, 2009-- [Click here](#) for the online video from C-Span.

Brianna Turnbull Pleads No Contest--June 1st, 2009--A North Platte woman pled no contest to charges she helped a teenage boy escape from state custody and hide for three months. Two felonies were reduced to misdemeanors against Brianna Turnbull. The 23-year-old pled no contest to charges of attempted violation of custody order; attempted juvenile escape, and contributing to the delinquency of a child. Turnbull is the daughter of a Lincoln County Judge. The case is behind handled by a special prosecutor Charles Brewster of...Turnbull worked at the Salvation Army's Quinn Wilcox house in North Platte when she met Kaden Clark-Guthrie of Trenton. For complete story, [click here](#). For an update on this story, [click here](#).

Juvenile safety feared--June 2nd, 2009--Seven juveniles have attempted suicide at Hinds County's youth detention center since January, according to a report obtained by The Clarion-Ledger. For complete story, [click here](#).

Police recruits to be trained at Tranquility Bay--June 4th, 2009--The Tranquility Bay facility at Treasure Beach which was previously used as an offshore reform school for rebellious children, mostly from the United States, will now be used to train police recruits for at least the next two years. At a meeting Tuesday with Treasure Beach residents and in subsequent response to journalists' questions, Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge of administration, Jevone Bent said training "operations" would begin "somewhere in the middle of the month". The complex sited on two and a half acres of beach front land, referred to by locals as Old Whard, was controversially used for 12 years by the United States group, World Wide Association of Speciality Programmes and Schools (WWASP) as a 'boot camp' for teenagers. It was closed in January. The Jamaica Constabulary Force's two-year lease on the privately-owned facility begun on June 1. For complete story, [click here](#).

'Orwellian language' in schools turns pupils into 'customers', finds damning report 09 Jun 2009 Schools using the 'Orwellian language of performance management' are undermining teenagers' education by turning them into 'customers' rather than students, a landmark report says today. Teachers who are forced to use phrases such as 'performance indicator' and 'curriculum delivery' lack enthusiasm for the job, the six-year investigation found. For complete story, [click here](#).

Former teen counselor gets jail time--June 9th, 2009--A former counselor for troubled teens who was accused of having sex with one of her students has accepted a plea negotiation with prosecutors after turning down a similar deal last year. Cathleen Crowley, 30, of Rye was sent to the Cheshire County jail in Westmoreland for a month as part of the deal that was finalized last week. Crowley withdrew her first guilty plea connected to the student's accusations during a hearing last November in Cheshire County Superior Court. The plea Crowley and her attorney, Gary S. Lenehan of Manchester, first negotiated with prosecutors would have kept her out of jail. Judge Brian T. Tucker was expected to hand down suspended, one-year jail sentences on misdemeanor charges of sexual assault and giving alcohol to a minor. But after hearing the case against Crowley — she was accused of giving the student alcohol and engaging in sex acts with him in her van and a hotel in Keene in 2007 — Tucker said he would reject the deal she made with prosecutors and hand down a six-month jail sentence....The state Division for Children, Youth and Families has substantiated an abuse finding tied to the student's allegations against Crowley, Assistant Cheshire County Attorney John S. Webb said. The finding appears on Crowley's permanent state record and should [but, probably won't] prevent her from working again as a youth counselor or in a similar position, he said. For complete story, [click here](#).

Special Report from VERACARE: How the Pharmaceutical (DRUG) Industry and US Government Promote Chemical Assault of American Children!--June 12th, 2009--This has been a grim week for anyone who cares about the precautionary principle guiding civilized medicine and the welfare of children. If anything, the Obama administration seems to be pushing the radical pharmacological envelope even further than the Bush administration---at the very least, nothing has changed for the better in the government-assisted determined push to control / engineer America's children. On Wednesday, an FDA advisory committee gave the FDA a green light to expand the marketing license of three toxic antipsychotic drugs--Seroquel, Geodon, and Zyprexa--for use in children. Such approval gives manufacturers a shield from liability--for illegally promoting the drugs for off-label use. And such approval ensures increased use of these drugs. Manufacturers and mental health providers will profit while children's physical and mental health will be sacrificed. These drugs pose severely disabling, potentially lethal hazards--including diabetes, metabolic syndrome, cardiovascular disease. The body of evidence showing these drugs to be harmful is irrefutable: it is documented in FDA's postmarketing database, and in secret internal company documents uncovered during litigation. Did the FDA provide the advisory panel members with the evidence? And if not, why not? See, Evelyn Pringle's report, "[FDA Throws Lifeline to Antipsychotic Pushers](#)"

<http://www.counterpunch.org/pringle06122009.html> An article in TIME magazine

http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1903873_1903871_1_903857,00.html gives credence to a not yet released report commissioned under the Bush Administration by a panel convened by the National Academies of Science. The report, "Preventing Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Disorders Among Young People: Progress and Possibilities" (2009) re-iterates the earlier national mental health policy directive under President Bush: The President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health (2002)--which promoted universal mental screening and the expanded use of patented psychoactive drugs (those listed in industry-initiated, TMAP algorithm prescription guides). See the [report brief](#) to policymakers issued, March 2009: http://www.bocvf.org/prevention_policymakers_brief.pdf The NAS report also recommends aggressive screening and pharmacologic intervention with toxic psychoactive drugs for children. The provocative, unsubstantiated premise is that mental illness can be detected through genetic screening--a la eugenics rationale--and that they can be prevented. "Hundreds of studies that have appeared in just the past decade collectively suggest that the brain isn't so different from, say, the arm: it doesn't simply break on its own. In fact, many mental illnesses - even those like schizophrenia that have demonstrable genetic origins - can be stopped or at least contained before they start." "This isn't wishful thinking but hard science." If the consequences of psychiatry's delusions weren't so serious, that statement is laughable. As every real medical scientist knows, psychiatry lacks even the rudimentary objective, scientifically verifiable tools of science, much less, "hard science." The TIME reporter is impressed with NAS report weight in pagination: "a 500-page report, nearly two years in the making, on how to prevent mental, emotional and behavioral disorders." "The [NAS] report concludes that pre-empting such disorders requires two kinds of interventions: first, because genes play so important a role in mental illness, we need to ensure that close relatives (particularly children) of those with mental disorders have access to rigorous screening programs. Second, we must offer treatment to people who have already shown symptoms of illness (say, a tendency

to brood and see the world without optimism) but don't meet the diagnostic criteria for a full-scale mental illness (in this case, depression)....." According to TIME, the authors of the NAS report recognize but rationalize the reality that mental screens will mislabel healthy individuals as mentally ill: "Early-detection programs will identify as candidates for mental illness some people who are merely persnickety or shy or eccentric." Indeed, a responsible reason NOT to screen is the high false-positive rate of mental screens. For example, the false-positive rate of TeenScreen, the mental health dragnet of school children, is as high as 84%. TIME reports that the invalid screening tools did not deter the NAS authors from recommending mental screening—even acknowledging that those mislabeled may be prescribed toxic antidepressants and/or antipsychotics: "Some prevention programs even prescribe psychiatric medications, including antipsychotics and antidepressants, to people who aren't technically psychotic or depressed....But those who contributed to the National Academies report say preventing the suffering of people with mental illness is worth the risk of some false positives, partly because of the enormous cost of treating mental illness after it's struck." The NAS report is available online in its unedited version—it has not yet been released. http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12480

ADHD Drugs Linked to Sudden Death--June 15th, 2009--On that morning, the 54-year-old mother of two living in McAllen, Texas, was preparing to take her eldest son to school. She had an early appointment, so her husband, Rick Hohmann, would be dropping off younger son, 14-year-old Matthew, at his school that day. About a month earlier, Matthew had been diagnosed with [attention deficit hyperactivity disorder](#), or ADHD. And like an estimated [2.5 million other children](#) in the United States, he was taking [medication](#) for the condition. It was Ann Hohmann who gave Matthew his [Adderall XR](#) pill that morning with a glass of water. But it was her husband who later found him after he had collapsed on the bathroom floor. "To me, he seemed fine," she recalled. "My husband had seen him walking around, brushing his teeth. Then he walked in and found him flat down on the floor in the bathroom. "When he turned him over, his lips were blue," Hohmann said. She said that her husband called her first, and then he called 911. He performed CPR until the ambulance arrived. But it was too late. "They worked on him for a while, but he was dead," she said. For complete story, [click here](#).

Are Troubled Teens Tortured?--June 23rd, 2009--Yesterday, we brought you the story of [Matthew Meyer](#), a troubled teen who died at a wilderness camp. Today, we bring you the story of Nick Gaglia. Gina Kaysen Fernandes: Imagine a world where your child is locked away for years, spending days at a time in a windowless room. Communication is shut off and you have no way of knowing about their treatment, which may include being physically restrained for hours on end. This horrifying scenario isn't prison -- it's a voluntary program aimed at treating [troubled teenagers](#). It's a place where Nick Gaglia spent two and a half years, because "my life was spinning out of control." The residential [treatment program](#) known as "Kids of North Jersey" in Secaucus, New Jersey, "seemed like a great fit," says Nick, who was abusing drugs and alcohol at the age of 13. Nick's [parents](#) saw advertisements for the program on television and soon enrolled their son. They hoped professionals would get Nick clean and sober so he could put his life back on track. But instead of giving Nick the coping skills he'd need in the outside world, he became a prisoner subjected to verbal abuse, psychological torment, and physical restraint. "I would call it torture and abuse," says Nick, who shared his harrowing ordeal with momlogie. For complete story, [click here](#).

Can Wilderness Camps Kill Your Kid?--June 22nd, 2009--It's an industry that preys on desperation. If your teenager has emotional issues, abuses drugs, or is promiscuous, help is just a phone call away. Wilderness intervention programs promise to "fix" bad behavior by teaching your child life skills and building self-esteem. These facilities offer a beacon of hope for [parents](#) like Crystal Manganaro, who sent her son, Matthew, to a wilderness camp outside of Houston. But what Crystal didn't realize was that the camp she entrusted with her son's life would so carelessly take it away. For complete story, [click here](#).

Supreme Court Says Child's Rights Violated by Strip Search--But if the student had been suspected of having illegal drugs that could have posed a far greater danger to herself and other students, the strip search might have been justified, the majority said. 26 Jun 2009 In a ruling of interest to educators, parents and students across the country, the Supreme Court ruled, 8 to 1, on Thursday that the strip search of a 13-year-old Arizona girl by school officials who were looking for prescription-strength drugs violated her constitutional rights. The officials in Safford, Ariz., would have been justified in 2003 had they limited their search to the backpack and outer clothing of Savana Redding, who was in the eighth grade at the time, the court ruled. For complete story, [click here](#).

Miss. juvenile detention case near end--June 26th, 2009--A preliminary agreement has been reached in a federal lawsuit that claims youth were abused at a south Mississippi juvenile detention center and forced to live in squalid conditions. For complete story, [click here](#).

One teen runaway found, two missing--July 9th, 2009--Update on three runaways who escaped abusive wilderness program...A national organization is pleading for information about a 15-year-old girl missing from McDowell for more than a year. In separate cases, sheriff's deputies have located one of two teenage runaways for whom they've been searching. The other one hasn't been spotted. As part of its ongoing search, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children is again asking for the public's help in locating Diana Hernandez Yanez, 15, of Yancey Street in Marion. She was 14 when she left her home on July 21, 2008. Neighbors told police that they saw her get into a red pickup truck that morning. Friends say the truck, a red 2000 Chevrolet S-10 low-rider pickup, belonged to 19-year-old Andres Velasquez Tinoco of Coxes Creek Road, whom Diana reportedly met just a couple of weeks prior to her disappearance. For complete story, [click here](#).

LDS seminary principal in court, hands over evidence--July 13th, 2009--PROVO — Officers came to court Monday morning prepared to re-arrest a former LDS seminary principal accused of sexual misconduct with a 16-year-old student. Michael J. Pratt, 37, the former principal at Lone Peak High School's LDS seminary program, was arrested Thursday on numerous allegations, but was bailed out on \$20,000 cash-only bail at 3:37 a.m. Saturday. "Look," an emotional Pratt told the media upon exiting the courtroom. "I am hopeful that the truth will be fully presented at the appropriate time." Officers from the Utah County Special Victims Task Force came to 4th District Court Monday for Pratt's review of bail hearing to express concern that Pratt may have been tampering with evidence on his laptop computer. Prosecutor Guy Probert told Judge Steven Hansen that there were some "evidentiary questions" relating to the laptop, which had been sent out of the area with Pratt's family after the allegations surfaced. It is believed that the computer belongs to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but Probert could not officially confirm that. "The laptop is being returned by mail. A copy of the hard drive is being produced today," Probert said. For complete story, [click here](#). For story update, [click here](#). (Webmaster note: Don't send your kid to Utah!)

Detroit Public Schools moves closer to bankruptcy and privatization By Walter Gilberti 16 July 2009 Detroit teachers and schools employees are in danger of having their jobs, wages and benefits sacrificed in the interest of an anti-public schools agenda driven by Emergency Financial Manager Robert Bobb and the Obama administration. In a two-pronged attack on the continued existence of public schools in Detroit, Bobb has hired four private professional education management firms to oversee instruction at 17 Detroit high schools, while, at the same time, ratcheting up his earlier threat to institute bankruptcy proceedings. For complete story, [click here](#).

The APA's Nuremberg Defense By Scott Horton 20 Jul 2009 ...[T]he disclosures surrounding the waterboarding of Abu Zubaida give further proof that beginning in 2002, healthcare professionals, specifically psychologists, played an essential role at every stage in the development and application of torture techniques. The failure of professional organizations, and specifically the American Psychological Association, to acknowledge this and take appropriate countermeasures is disturbing...Professional oversight bodies have engaged in consistent evasion, and now the APA is focused on the relaxation of its ethics standards to provide defenses for psychologists who joined in the Bush Administration's torture program. For complete story, [click here](#). (Webmaster Note: Behavior Modification Programs for Teens Are [Experiments In Torture](#).)

Court: Keep cleared juveniles' files--July 23rd, 2009--ALLENTOWN - The Pennsylvania Supreme Court yesterday ordered the preservation of court records of juveniles who are suing a corrupt Luzerne County Court judge. Previously, when it overturned the convictions of youths who appeared in former Judge Mark Ciavarella's courtroom, the court said the records should be destroyed, prompting complaints from attorneys for the juveniles. The attorneys said loss of the records could imperil the youths' ability to recover damages from the judge and others implicated in the corruption scandal. For complete story, [click here](#). (For an update on this story, [click here](#), [here](#) or [here](#).)

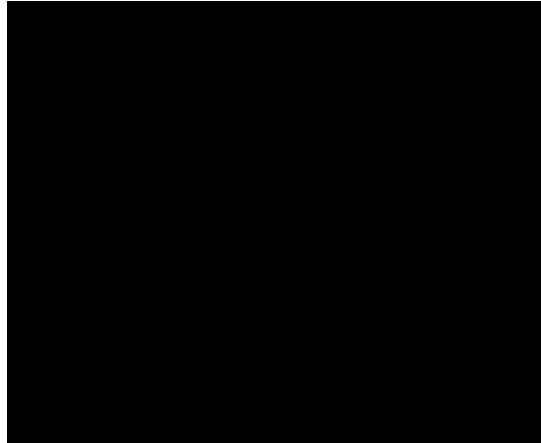
Report alleges multiple problems at Hinds juvenile facility--July 24th, 2009--Unreported suicide attempts, poor staff relations and failure to provide timely mental health evaluations continue at Hinds County's Henley- Young Juvenile Detention Center, according to a state inspection report. The state Juvenile Facilities Monitoring Unit inspected the detention center on June 23 and gave its report to the county July 22. Juvenile Facilities Monitoring Unit Director Donald Beard and Henley- Young's detention director Darren Farr did not return calls. The report, obtained by The Clarion-Ledger, makes 14

recommendations. It's unclear what could happen to the center if it doesn't follow them, but county officials say they plan to. "A crucial step in recognizing problems associated with a juvenile's behavior is a mental health evaluation," the report states. The inspection came after Hinds supervisors learned that seven juveniles have attempted suicide at the center since January. In one case, a girl was found with several socks tied around her neck. In another, a boy repeatedly hit his head on the door of his cell. Detention center staff never reported the cases to the county or state, which must be done immediately, according to the most recent report. For complete story, [click here](#). (Webmaster note: This is what happens at a "regulated" and state-run facility that has safeguards in place to prevent violations and harm to youth. Now, take away the "regulation" and government oversight and what kind of abuses and violations do you think are probable? The unimaginable happens to youth every day in behavior modification programs throughout the United States. Keep your children at home.)

ADHD Drugs Linked to Sudden Death in Kids--Received July 25th, 2009 (Article: June 15th, 2009)--MONDAY, June 15 (HealthDay News) -- Stimulant medications commonly prescribed to treat attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are associated with an increased risk of sudden death, but those deaths are still rare, new research finds. For complete story, [click here](#).

Deadly Restraint & Seclusion--SILENT VICTIMS--July 21st, 2009

[Click here for complete article from www.ktnv.com.](#)



Chinese Youth Beaten to Death at "net addiction" "boot camp"--August 4th, 2009-- China's anti-internet addiction industry has claimed another victim, after supervisors at a rehabilitation camp allegedly beat a 16 year old inmate to death. Deng Senshan had been sent to Guangxi Qihuang Survival Training Camp to "cure" him of his internet addiction, the AFP reports. His parents were paying \$1000 for the treatment. However, the youth ended up in solitary confinement shortly after arriving at the establishment, and was subsequently beaten to death by supervisors for "running too slowly", according to the news agency. For complete story, [click here](#).

Teen sent to PEC home--August 10th, 2009--The grandmother of a teenaged boy being housed at a youth residential treatment facility in Prince Edward County, wants to know why he can't be treated closer to home. The 14-year-old Cole Harbour boy, who was the subject of a recent Supreme Court of Nova Scotia case regarding his care, suffers from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and related behavioural problems. He was recently enrolled at the Bayfield Treatment Centre in Consecon by the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services. His grandmother -- who cannot be named in order to protect the boy's identity -- told The Intelligencer she wanted the boy to get help, but did not expect him to be moved out of the province. "All we did was ask for help, not for him to be shipped away," she said. She said she and her husband asked Community Services for help with the boy, whom she admits suffers from considerable behavioural issues, last year. As reported by the Halifax Chronicle-Herald, Community Services originally made arrangements for the boy's treatment at a facility in Utah after the Nova Scotia Supreme Court ruled it was permissible to send him there for treatment unavailable in his home province. However, after arrangements at both Cinnamon Hills Youth Crisis Centre and Provo Canyon School fell through, the boy was moved to Bayfield - a decision Patrick Eagan, the family's lawyer, says shows a definite motive. "It's just somewhere to shove this kid," he said. For complete story, [click here](#).

DNA database has 300 children added a day 11 Aug 2009 More than 300 children a day are being put on to the DNA database fuelling fresh fears over the growth of the "Big Brother" state. Almost 1.1 million youngsters aged between ten and 17 have had their profiles recorded by the police since 2000, with a large proportion aged under 15, the Daily Telegraph can disclose. And around one in six are likely to have never been convicted of any crime. For complete story, [click here](#).

One third of all children in jails are 'wrongly imprisoned' 13 Aug 2009 More than a third of children sent to prison last year were wrongly jailed, a report into child custody rates says. The study by Barnardo's found that the Government had breached its own guidance on child custody by allowing so many 12-, 13- and 14-year-olds to be imprisoned for a non-serious offences. For complete story, [click here](#).

Woman sues state over sexual assault--August 18th, 2009--A 19-year-old who was sexually assaulted by a guard at a state juvenile-detention center last year has filed a lawsuit claiming the state failed to properly supervise the guard or protect her from his advances. In a lawsuit filed in King County Superior Court last month, the young woman's attorneys claim the state failed to properly train and supervise the on-call temporary guard at Echo Glen Children's Center or to fully investigate previous complaints about him. The guard, 39-year-old Robert H. Fox, pleaded guilty in February to first-degree custodial sexual misconduct in connection with the assault, according to court documents. He now is serving an eight-month sentence in the King County Jail. For complete story, [click here](#).

NEA Attacks Administration's Education Reform Plan 21 Aug 2009 The nation's largest teachers union sharply attacked President Obama's most significant school improvement initiative on Friday evening, saying that it puts too much emphasis on a "narrow agenda" centered on charter schools and echoes the Bush administration's "top-down approach" to reform. The National Education Association's criticism of Obama's \$4.35 billion ["Race to the Top" initiative](#) came nearly a month after the president unveiled the [competitive grant program](#)... For complete story, [click here](#). (No charter schools. Improve Public Education!!!)

Payout over teen's boot camp tragedy--August 24th, 2009--The parents of a teenager beaten to death by staff at a boot camp in Hubei Province this month have been awarded 350,000 yuan (US\$51,000) in compensation. The money, which will be paid by a local education bureau, comes less than three weeks after Yao Jian, 14, died on an outward-bound training program intended to boost his confidence. "The money will not ease the agony of losing our son," his father Yao Jun, 37, told China Daily yesterday. "We can only hope this tragedy will ring alarm for parents and the government to avoid such incidents." For complete story, [click here](#). (Webmaster Note: Really? China is better at swift action than the US? What's up with that?! [Strengthen and Pass HR 911](#) already.)

NY detention system faulted in juveniles' injuries--August 24th, 2009--ALBANY, N.Y. — Workers at four youth detention centers in New York caused dozens of serious injuries, including broken bones and teeth, when they routinely used force as a primary way to restrain juveniles and not just as a last resort, according to federal investigators. The Justice Department's Civil Rights Division also reported that youths in the state system failed to get needed counseling and mental health treatment, though most have psychological problems. The findings released Monday were the result of a nearly two-year probe. Gladys

Carrión, commissioner of the state Office of Children and Family Services, said they have begun overhauling the troubled system she took over 18 months ago, including a new restraint policy and hiring more mental health workers. "Much more still needs to be done," she said. Investigators said conditions they found last year at the Lansing and Louis Gossett Jr. residential centers outside Ithaca and the Tryon residential centers for boys and girls in Johnstown violated the teens' constitutional rights as well as department policy. For complete story, [click here](#).

'All God's Children': Exposing the abuses of children of missionaries--August 25th, 2009--Marilyn Shellrude Christman of Seattle was only 7 years old when she was sent to a boarding school for children of missionaries in Guinea, West Africa, in 1961. For eight years, in the remote, isolated school, she says, she was emotionally and spiritually abused. At times, she was also physically and sexually abused — in some cases by a man who served as a dorm parent there, she said. It wasn't until decades later that she realized she hadn't been the only abused child at Mamou Alliance Academy, a now-closed boarding school run by the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA), an evangelical Protestant denomination. For complete story, [click here](#).

Zoning board votes against home for troubled teens--August 26th, 2009-- Jeff Deerr does not want a group home for troubled teens in his neighborhood. "I am definitely opposed to the idea," he said. "I go to work and I come home after working an eight-hour day and I have a peaceful neighborhood. I don't believe that doing something like this is right." Deerr was among more than 25 residents from the Vinton Heights subdivision who sat in an Area Board of Zoning Appeals meeting Wednesday night for nearly four hours to speak out against proposed home. The group home, proposed by Seeds of Hope Community Ministries, was slated to operate out of a residence at 2012 Valdez Drive in Lafayette if approved. But the Board of Zoning Appeals voted 6-1 against the proposal, which led to a sea of cheers from residents in attendance. For complete story, [click here](#).

Caging Children--August 28th, 2009--Children under the age of 18 can't vote, serve as jurors, or join Blockbuster, but in the U.S. — the only developed nation with such a policy — they can be tried in adult courts and imprisoned in facilities designed for adults. A groundbreaking study from the University of Texas' LBJ School of Public Affairs could kick-start a national discussion about the foolishness of that policy. The report, "From Time Out to Hard Time: Young Children in the Adult Criminal Justice System," was compiled by Michele Deitch, an adjunct professor at the LBJ School, and her students. Its roots were tragic: Deitch and her group worked with the UT Law School Supreme Court Clinic on the case of Christopher Pittman, who, at age 12, was charged with killing his grandparents. He received a 30-year sentence — the mandatory minimum in South Carolina. After the Supreme Court rejected his appeal, Deitch explained, "we were sitting on a ton of research that we had done, so we thought it was vital to get it out there." For complete story, [click here](#).

Gay reparative therapy isn't advisable, says APA--August 31, 2009--The American Psychological Association has finally confirmed what MySpace Zach and his supporters knew back in 2005 — gay reparative therapies don't work. In an update to a 1997 resolution "Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation," the APA now advises that mental health professionals should avoid telling clients that they can change their sexual orientation through therapy or other treatments. "Contrary to claims of sexual orientation change advocates and practitioners, there is insufficient evidence to support the use of psychological interventions to change sexual orientation," said Judith M. Glassgold, PsyD, chair of the task force which examined the efficacy of so-called reparative therapy. APA appointed the six-member Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation in 2007 to review and update APA's 1997 resolution, "Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation," and to generate a report. APA was concerned about ongoing efforts to promote the notion that sexual orientation can be changed through psychotherapy or approaches that mischaracterize homosexuality as a mental disorder. The task force examined the peer-reviewed journal articles in English from 1960 to 2007, which included 83 studies. Most of the studies were conducted before 1978, and only a few had been conducted in the last 10 years. The group also reviewed the recent literature on the psychology of sexual orientation. "Unfortunately, much of the research in the area of sexual orientation change contains serious design flaws," Glassgold said. "Few studies could be considered methodologically sound and none systematically evaluated potential harms." Looking back at Zach Stark was for many the face of the vulnerable, oppressed gay teen. Stark, then 16 and living in Bartlett, Tenn., chronicled his coming-out story in his MySpace blog. He detailed his parents' unfavorable reaction and wrote, "Today, my mother, father and I had a very long 'talk' in my room, where they let me know I am to apply for a fundamentalist Christian program for gays." It would take place at Refuge, a youth program of Love in Action International, a Memphis group that runs a religion-based program intended to change the sexual orientation of gay men and women. As mandated by Refuge, Stark's blog posts stopped the day he entered the facility, but debate and outrage over such programs did not. A [New York Times](#) story published July 17, 2005, shortly after Stark entered Refuge, brought the matter to the forefront of the mainstream media with the headline "Gay Teenager Stirs a Storm." In that story, former teacher and GLSEN Executive Director Kevin Jennings told the New York Times, "All reputable health and education professional organizations have clearly and unequivocally denounced this 'treatment' as quackery." Closer to home, young people from the area organized a protest outside the Love In Action facility soon after the Stark was admitted to the program. As days passed, the group's numbers swelled as the teens were joined by a wide range of people from the community forming what they called the Queer Action Coalition (QAC), concerned about Stark's mental health after reading his ominous blog posts. "It's like boot camp," Stark wrote before entering the facility. "If I do come out straight, I'll be so mentally unstable and depressed it won't matter." For complete story, [click here](#).

3 charged in Ohio in teen's restraint death--September 2nd, 2009--COLUMBUS, Ohio — Three former employees of a Cleveland residential center for troubled teenagers were indicted Wednesday in the death of a 17-year-old girl who choked on vomit and suffocated after she was restrained face down, a control technique the governor has since banned. Cynthia King, 32, of Warrensville Heights, Lazarita Menendez, 28, of Bedford Heights and Ebony Ray, 33, of Broadview Heights were indicted in Cuyahoga County on involuntary manslaughter and child-endangering charges in the death of Faith Finley at the Parmadale Family Services center in Parma. For complete story, [click here](#).

Real life horrors revealed in Boot Camp--September 5th, 2009--The most disturbing aspect of Christian Duguay's Boot Camp is the fact that places such as that depicted actually exist. Places that promise rehabilitation for troubled youths that are nothing more than entities of torture that do more damage than good. For complete story, [click here](#).

I'm OK, but you're not--September 16th, 2009--So you have a troubled or problem teen. Let me guess, they come home from school and virtually lock themselves away in their bedroom. If they do come and join the family, they are plugged into their MP3 player or PSP. You actually have to demand putting the electronics away when at the dinner table; that is if they even join you for dinner. It's a pretty common problem; I'd venture to say across Western society. Let's think back — when I was a teen, I'd plug into the cassette player with earphones on (I'm old enough that CD's were not around). Once I was driving, I'd not even come home — I'd go driving. I was usually busy enough after school with work and theatre that there were some weeks I'd barely see my parents. Was I a problem or troubled child? My parents probably thought so, but guess who I thought had the problem? It's not any different today. Oh, the script may have changed some, the technology and access to information has drastically changed, but how we communicate (or lack of communication) remains the same. I'm curious though, have you ever asked your teen why they stay away from the family so much? Some of this is natural child development for certain, but choosing to stay home to study instead of joining the family for a 'night out bowling' is something else. Yes, our teen can be defiant; sometimes it's what they do best. But every now and then, we must remember to turn that magnifying glass away from them and onto ourselves. What are we doing to drive wedges into that gap? If we don't know then we need to ask. So many teens feel they cannot talk to their parents, when in reality that is what everyone, both teens and parents, really want! For complete story, [click here](#).

Don't forget detainees at home--September 21st, 2009--Torture is wrong. Our nation believes this, and we are concerned about torture tactics used on detainees, as we should be. Shouldn't we also be concerned about abusive tactics used on our own population, particularly our children? The Aug. 25 Ithaca Journal article headlined, "Staff severely injured youths," describes a U.S. Justice Department report that found staff at two juvenile-detention facilities in Tompkins County used excessive force in controlling some of their residents. Some might argue that the staff behavior is not torture, but if the results are injuries and even death, what name should we give it? We put them in detention centers in the hopes that they will reform themselves and become positive, productive citizens. How can they learn to behave in a peaceful manner when they are treated with violence? Get-tough, boot-camp programs purport to help troubled teens, but they don't work. A review of the scientific evidence by the National Institutes of Health found that programs using fear and tough treatment are ineffective and may make teen criminal behavior even worse. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Former Boys Ranch resident sues Sedgwick County](#)--September 23rd, 2009--A former Boys Ranch resident has sued Sedgwick County, alleging it failed to protect him from being raped while he lived at the home for troubled teens in late 2004. The plaintiff — who is 19 now and was 14 at the time he says he was raped — filed a lawsuit in June in state district court that has been moved to federal court in Wichita. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Community meeting tonight on youth home in Craney Island Farms](#)--September 24th, 2009-- Residents in a Hanover County neighborhood are concerned about a home for troubled teens in their subdivision. A community meeting is scheduled for tonight to address issues raised by those who live near Healthy Solutions, a foster home for four at-risk males ages 12 to 17 that opened this summer on Cudlipp Avenue in the Craney Island Farms community off U.S. 301. The meeting will start at 7 p.m. at Cool Spring Baptist Church. Craney Island Farms resident David Liggan, who lives off Cudlipp Avenue, said he's concerned about a business operating in a residential area. "We were never notified . . . or asked our opinion about the facility going into our area," Liggan said, referring to the home that provides 24-hour adult supervision and counseling services to teens who have behavioral issues. Peggy Nicholls, who lives on Cudlipp Avenue, said the county should have alerted homeowners if a business was going in on their street. "I feel like the wool was pulled over our eyes," she said. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Troubled teens playing it for laughs in comedy class](#)--September 26th, 2009--NATIONAL CITY — Drugs, violence, teen pregnancy and incarceration — not exactly the stuff of punch lines and laugh tracks. Unless it's the teens telling the jokes. And the material is coming from their own experiences. San Diego County high school students who struggle to cope with these issues are confronting them head-on in an unlikely stand-up-comedy class that also serves as therapy of sorts. Paid for with \$6,500 in federal stimulus money, this new course was designed for students who are interested in the entertainment industry. But it has also helped teenagers face their demons and relate to classmates at the county Office of Education community school in National City. For complete story, [click here](#).

["Out of the Mouths of Babes: False Confessions and the Wrongful Convictions of Youth"](#)--Also see: <http://progressillinois.com/node/7229>

[Teen tamers need to get real](#)--October 4th, 2009-- TELEVISION programs claiming to tame toddlers and troubled teens may do more harm than good, parenting experts have warned. The families of Australian teenagers who appeared in World's Strictest Parents on Channel Seven — in which the teens were sent overseas for a week to learn discipline from strict parents — said the program helped turn their lives around. But the methods used have been questioned since the final episode, aired last week, revealed how the teens have fared since going home. Serial runaway Jono Denny, 16, was sent to South Africa to live with Portia Bethe and her family. After returning to his home at Ballina on the North Coast he re-enrolled in high school and behaved himself for six weeks. Then he was arrested after a night of heavy drinking. He was released after being cautioned. Psychologist Michael Carr-Gregg said World's Strictest Parents, Brat Camp and Supernanny offered unrealistic solutions to behavioural problems. "I would prefer to see programs which are more instructive," he said. "Obviously, no one is going to send their teenager off to a different country for a week to teach them a few life lessons. It's just not practical or realistic." Mr Carr-Gregg said his research showed 80 per cent of parents lack confidence in their ability to raise their children. World's Strictest Parents drew more than 1 million viewers a week. He said most child psychologists would not recommend the strict discipline promoted on the show. "What I would like to see from these shows is a focus on authoritative parenting rather than authoritarian parenting," he said. "The problem is that authoritative parenting — which teaches parents about creating boundaries, negotiating skills and so on — does not make very exciting television. "Authoritarian parenting, with a focus on strict discipline and punishment, is more likely to create fireworks." A parenting guide author and chairwoman of Early Childhood Australia's publications committee, Pam Linke, said the programs provided a simplistic view of managing behavioural problems. "The families being filmed would have to be influenced by the fact that there is a camera on them." "It's not a realistic approach to solving behavioural problems with children. There is no instruction about how these parenting models would work in real life." For complete story, [click here](#). (Webmaster Note: Abusive programs have regularly been featured and promoted by US television programs. Including the deadly SageWalk, an Aspen Education Group program that recently voluntarily relinquished their license to Oregon authorities after another death at the program, was used as a setting for "Brat Camp" on ABC. Dr. Phil McGraw has repeatedly placed children in Aspen Education Group programs as well as Provo Canyon School. Other talk show icons have placed children in the notoriously abusive and internationally criminalized WWASPS programs. Turn off your TV and think for yourself, please.)

[Teenage girl left brain-damaged after receiving cervical cancer jab](#) 05 Oct 2009 A teenage girl has been left brain-damaged after suffering epileptic seizures just days after being given the controversial cervical cancer jab. Stacey Jones, 18, suffered her first seizure in March when she was 17, days after she had the Cervarix injection. In the following weeks she had several more fits, causing such severe brain injury that she had to be admitted to a rehabilitation unit, where she is relearning simple tasks. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Six-year-old Suspended for Bringing Cub Scout Tool to School](#)--October 13th, 2009-- Our authorities may not be able to track down Osama bin laden, but never fear, they're keeping us safe from budding little terrorists such as first grader Zachary Christie. Caught red-handed, the Newark, Delaware, six-year-old was suspended from his school and may face 45 days in reform school for violating the Christina School District's "zero tolerance" policy on weapons. His offense? Bringing a camping utensil set to school. The "weapon" in question is a "hobo tool" the first grader had received after recently joining the Cub Scouts; it contains a fork, spoon, and knife. Zachary was so excited about his new acquisition — as any normal boy would be — that he brought it to school to use during lunch period. School officials then suspended him, saying they have no choice because the district's code of conduct prohibits the possession of knives "regardless of the possessor's intent." Unfortunately, little Zachary's story is a common one today, with well-meaning students being subjected to disproportionate punishment across the nation in the name of zero tolerance. Writing about Zachary's case in the New York Times, Ian Urbina [provides](#) one of these other examples, that of a third-grade girl who "was expelled for a year because her grandmother had sent a birthday cake to school, along with a knife to cut it. The teacher called the principal — but not before using the knife to cut and serve the cake." For complete story, [click here](#).

[Roswell teacher charged in teen contact](#)--October 14th, 2009--[Roswell, NM Youth ChalleNGe Academy] ROSWELL, N.M. (KRQE/KBIM) - A Roswell teacher accused of making sexual advances to a teen he was mentoring is out of jail but not back at work. James Ogas, 38, faced a judge for the first time Wednesday charged with two counts of criminal sexual contact of a minor. The charges are 3rd-degree felonies. Investigators say the alleged contact happened inside the automotive shop at Eastern New Mexico University- Roswell where Ogas is a part-time automotive-technician teacher. According to court documents, twice last month Ogas inappropriately touched the 17-year-old who was part of a program for troubled teens sponsored by the New Mexico National Guard. Investigators said along with the touching, Ogas frequently wrote the teen letters, which were described as sexually suggestive. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Troubled teens buckle under weight of jibes](#)--October 20th, 2009--Teenagers who are told they are too thin or too fat by their parents - even if the comments are well- intentioned - suffer headaches, feel stress or get depressed more than those who are not, a study has found. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Teen's parents settle abuse case](#)--October 26th, 2009--GONZALES — The parents of a Prairieville teenager who allege he suffered abuse and related temporary kidney failure at a Louisiana National Guard Youth Challenge facility last year have reached a \$95,000 out-of-court settlement with the state of Louisiana, the teen's attorney said. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Troubled teens on powerful drugs](#)--October 28th, 2009--Has your teen's best friend just transformed from [Taylor Swift](#) to [Rosie O'Donnell](#) overnight? She might just have ADHD. A study published today in the [Journal of the American Medical Association](#) says second-generation anti-psychotics like Risperdal, Abilify, Zyprexa and Seroquel are being given to teens with common conditions like ADHD, leading to obesity in just 11 weeks. The side-effects common to these drugs may be worse in kids and teens than adults, the study concludes. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Group sues Idaho county over teen treatment center](#)--BOISE, Idaho (AP) - A company that pushed to build a residential treatment center for troubled teens in rural western Idaho is suing Boise County in federal court, saying commissioners violated the Fair Housing Act when they scuttled the center's proposal amid staunch local opposition. Development firm Oaas-Laney sought approval in 2007 to build Alamar Ranch, a 72-bed facility that would have treated teens with behavioral problems or addictions. But neighbors fought to keep the ranch from being built, citing traffic, fire and safety concerns and even holding a fundraising event featuring a local folk singer, according to the lawsuit. Boise County eventually approved the project, but under conditions that Alamar Ranch

officials said were arbitrary, discriminatory and made the project financially impossible. Boise County maintains the decision was based on legitimate government interests. For complete story, [click here](#).

Superjail for youth raises troubling questions--November 9th, 2009--Troubled teens promised cutting-edge treatment at Ontario's new \$93 million superjail for youth have instead been deprived of food, denied programming and subjected to questionable body cavity searches, according to a review by a senior provincial official. Irwin Elman, Ontario's advocate for children and youth, is investigating cases of excessive force used by some staff at Roy McMurtry Youth Centre in Brampton, which holds 102 male and female youths, 90 of whom are still awaiting trial. Police are looking into at least one of these incidents, he said. What's more, despite the centre's much-publicized commitment to "state-of-the-art" programming – a proven tool in preventing young people from becoming repeat offenders – it simply doesn't exist, he said. For complete story, [click here](#).

DEATH ROW SERIAL MOLESTER CONNECTED TO CEDU--November 12th, 2009--California Department of Justice (DOJ) investigators are researching the possibility that serial child molester and child murderer, James Lee Crummel, 65 of San Quentin State Prison, had years of free, unsupervised access to the students at the now defunct CEDU School in Running Springs. The CEDU schools in Running Springs were founded by Mel Wasserman in 1967 and promoted itself as an emotional growth-boarding school for troubled youths. Monthly costs to board a student reportedly ran as high as \$3,500 dollar a month. The school closed its doors in 2005 amidst allegations of financial improprieties, allegations of sexual and physical abuse of the students, by other students and staff members and citations issued by the State of California for various violations. At a non-compliance conference, CEDU officials reportedly admitted that the rights of students under their care were systematically violated. For complete story, [click here](#).

American Youth in the 21st Century: Pathologized, Criminalized and Disposable--November 16th, 2009-- Punishment and fear have replaced compassion and social responsibility as the most important modalities mediating the relationship of youth to the larger social order. Youth within the last two decades have come to be seen as a source of trouble rather than as a resource for investing in the future, and in the case of poor black and Hispanic youth are increasingly treated as either a disposable population, cannon fodder for barbaric wars abroad, or the source of most of society's problems. Hence, young people now constitute a crisis that has less to do with improving the future than with denying it. As Larry Grossberg points out, "It has become common to think of kids as a threat to the existing social order and for kids to be blamed for the problems they experience. We slide from kids in trouble, kids have problems, and kids are threatened, to kids as trouble, kids as problems, and kids as threatening." This was exemplified when the columnist Bob Herbert reported in the New York Times that "parts of New York City are like a police state for young men, women, and children who happen to be black or Hispanic. They are routinely stopped, searched, harassed, intimidated, humiliated and, in many cases, arrested for no good reason." No longer "viewed as a privileged sign and embodiment of the future," youth are now increasingly demonized by the popular media and derided by politicians looking for quick-fix solutions to crime and other social ills. While youth have always had to bear the misplaced fear and distrust of adults, how youth are represented, talked about, and treated has changed dramatically in the last two decades. For complete story, [click here](#).

Court upholds ruling against home for troubled teens--November 21st, 2009--YOUNGSTOWN — The 7th District Court of Appeals has upheld a township zoning appeals board ruling that a group home for emotionally and behaviorally troubled teenage boys doesn't belong in a single-family residential neighborhood. A three-judge panel of the appeals court unanimously ruled Friday in support of the Ellsworth Township board's decision that the Redemption House group home, 11780 W. Western Reserve Road, does not constitute a single-family housekeeping unit as defined in the township zoning code. In making its ruling, the appeals court backed an August 2008 ruling by Judge Timothy E. Franken of Mahoning County Common Pleas Court that affirmed the December 2006 ruling of the Ellsworth Township board. "This is not the proper location for them to do this type of activity," said Atty. Scott Cochran, who represented neighbors opposed to the group home's location. "There was nothing to indicate to us that this was, in any way, a family environment," he added. For complete story, [click here](#).

Lawsuits raise more questions about troubled youth program in Hastings--November 25th, 2009--Lawsuits against Hastings Youth Academy, a 165-bed facility for troubled teens in St. Johns County, accuse staff members of repeatedly using excessive force and conspiring to cover it up. G4S Youth Services, which contracts with the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice to run the boys program, is accused in one of the suits of negligence on behalf of a teen whose shoulder was shattered by an employee in February 2008. That suit, filed this month, claims G4S and the department ignored past problems and didn't properly protect Anthony Vessels, 16. The boy's attorney said surveillance video shows the employee throwing the youth to the ground, then sitting on him as he writhed in pain. Vessels, now 18, lives in Orlando and is pursuing his GED, his attorney said, but continues to suffer physically and psychologically from the injury. For complete story, [click here](#).

Truancy Officer Preyed on Girls--November 27th, 2009--A Hamilton truancy officer convicted of sexually abusing four female students used a school pilot scheme to identify and groom troubled teens, a court has been told. Mark Pene, 54, was sentenced yesterday in the Hamilton District Court to six years and three months' jail after pleading guilty to indecent assault, having sexual connection with a girl under 16, doing an indecent act with a girl under 16 and doing an indecent act on a girl under 12. The charges related to offending against four girls, aged 11 to 17, between 2005 and 2008. At the time, Pene was employed as a truancy officer in Hamilton, working with troubled teenagers and their families. Pene gained access to two of his victims by inviting them to take part in a school pilot scheme. The programme included such benefits as free lunches, payment of school fees and money for clothing. Pene yesterday sat impassively in the dock as details of his offending were revealed, moving only to shield his face from a Waikato Times photographer. For complete story, [click here](#).

Kin sue Harvard over son's suicide--December 4th, 2009--Harvard sophomore John Edwards was studying to become a doctor and training for the Boston Marathon in June 2007 when he sought help at the university's Health Services because he could not study for as many hours as some of his friends. A nurse practitioner prescribed a drug to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, a condition the overachieving Edwards had never been diagnosed with. Later, she prescribed two powerful antidepressants, Prozac and Wellbutrin, when he began complaining of anxiety, depression, and other side effects. Meanwhile, he was taking a fourth drug for acne, Accutane, that has been linked to suicidal thoughts. "The Wellbutrin is having the effect that we were seeking . . . but unfortunately I feel like it has canceled out the anxiety-reducing effects of the fluoxetine [Prozac], as recently I've been pretty nervous," Edwards wrote in a Nov. 27, 2007, e-mail to the nurse practitioner, Marianne Cannon. "Let me know if I should schedule to come in and meet with you soon, or if I should change the med plan." Cannon replied that she was concerned and told Edwards to schedule an appointment with her. Two days later, Edwards, 19, of Wellesley committed suicide in a bathroom at Harvard Medical School by suffocating himself with a plastic bag. His father, John B. Edwards II of Wellesley, filed a suit Wednesday in Middlesex Superior Court alleging gross negligence by Cannon; Dr. Georgia Ede, who was the doctor who supervised her; and Harvard College, for causing his son's wrongful death. For complete story, [click here](#).

14-Year-Old Accuses Officer Of Assault--December 9th, 2009--MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -- A school resource officer in Rutherford County who helps keep at-risk youth on the right track is accused of assaulting one of the troubled teens. For complete story, [click here](#). For more on this story, [click here](#).

Governor Pat Quinn Refusing to Shine Light on Juvenile Prisons--December 10th, 2009--Illinois Governor Pat Quinn is not allowing WBEZ to examine the state's juvenile prisons. For four months WBEZ has been trying to negotiate some access to the prisons. Last week, Quinn's staff told us there would be none. We said we would report that denial. Later that day, we were offered a single tour of one of the better facilities, an offer WBEZ accepted, but an offer which would not allow the public meaningful insight into the hundred million dollar department that has care of some of the most troubled and troubling kids in Illinois. Bob Reed is the governor's spokesman. He says they're working on their own review of the facilities. For complete story, [click here](#).

Saving Troubled Teens: A Greedy Industry?--December 10th, 2009--..."If you're going to do it right, it's going to be costly," said Behar. The biggest expense for these programs is staffing well-trained, qualified people who can make good decisions in an emergency situation. In Behar's 32 years of experience overseeing state-run facilities, she knows it's very difficult to turn a profit. Yet many of these private facilities are making money, hand over fist. "In order to make a profit, they have to cut in some way, and since manpower is the biggest expense, that's where the cuts come," Behar said. The companies are saving money by hiring younger, less experienced people and are providing less expert supervision. Critics argue this cost-cutting measure puts the children at risk. Dana Blum believes the staff's negligence is to blame for her son's death. "They killed my child when they didn't attend to him. I feel like he was murdered." The Salt Lake City District Attorney took Aspen to court. But ruling there was no "intent" to kill Brendan, a Utah judge dropped the criminal charges filed

against the two employees. The state put Youth Care on probation, requiring it to retool its employee training. The facility never faced any fines, and remained open for business. Devastated and distraught, Dana began looking online into Aspen's public financial statements. She learned that the Cupertino-based company is actually owned by a health care corporate giant, CRC Health. And Bain Capital, a multibillion dollar private equity firm, owns CRC. Dana has filed a civil suit against the financial goliath, which could settle out of court. Critics believe this is why so few stories of abuse, neglect, and death at these facilities are made public. Aspen has enough money in its war chest to make these allegations go away. "If you look at their daily profit numbers compared to what they charge, it's obscene," Dana said. "It made me very angry that they couldn't provide better emergency services for my son."... For complete story, [click here](#).

Poor Children Likelier to Get Antipsychotics--December 12th, 2009--New federally financed drug research reveals a stark disparity: children covered by [Medicaid](#) are given powerful antipsychotic medicines at a rate four times higher than children whose parents have private insurance. And the Medicaid children are more likely to receive the drugs for less severe conditions than their middle-class counterparts, the data shows. For complete story, [click here](#).

ACLU says youth tortured at state prison--December 17th, 2009--A 17-year-old boy suffering from mental illnesses was so traumatized by his deplorable treatment in the Montana State Prison that he twice attempted to kill himself by biting through the skin on his wrist to puncture a vein, a lawsuit filed Wednesday by the American Civil Liberties Union of Montana alleges. The lawsuit filed in Lewis and Clark County District Court claims that the boy, "Robert Doe," has been treated illegally and inhumanely and has been detained for about 10 months in solitary confinement. Doe was Tasered as part of a "behavior modification plan," pepper-sprayed and stripped naked in view of other inmates, the complaint states. For complete story, [click here](#).

Md. official would like to 'blow up' girls' detention center--December 28th, 2009--LAUREL — As you approach Thomas J.S. Waxter Children's Center, a sign cautions that you are under camera surveillance. Notices warn against bringing in contraband - glass bottles, cigarettes, weapons. A metal detector sits in the front hall. You pass through a locked metal door to reach the residential wings. Down the hallway, the staff supervision room is separated from the children by a thick metal cage. On a Wednesday in September, a girl stands shackled in the hall, the cuffs around her hands and ankles connected by a metal chain. This is Waxter, the only long-term, secure treatment facility for female juvenile offenders run by the state. "Nothing's worse than Waxter, dead serious, nothing's worse," said Britney McCoy, 19, who has been in and out of Waxter and other facilities since she was 12. She was most recently in Waxter in 2008. McCoy is not Waxter's only critic. The Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit of the attorney general's office has noted a litany of problems at Waxter, including: allegations by girls that they are physically abused by staff members; mingling of girls convicted of serious crimes with girls held for minor offenses; inadequate physical facilities; and overcrowding and understaffing, which lead to violence. "No one should have to live there. No one should have to work there," said Claudia Wright, who monitors the facility for the Juvenile Justice Monitoring Unit. For complete story, [click here](#).

Treatment of Youths in New York Prisons Spurs Suit--December 30th, 2009--Youths detained in some of New York's juvenile prisons have suffered bruises, cuts and a host of other injuries from aggressive physical restraining practices that violate their legal and constitutional rights, according to a federal lawsuit filed on Wednesday. The class-action suit, filed in federal court in Manhattan on behalf of roughly 500 youths in 10 of the prisons, also accuses the Office of Children and Family Services, the state agency that runs the facilities, of failing to provide adequate mental health services. The legal claim follows two withering reports from the United States Department of Justice and a state task force that portrayed the state's juvenile justice system as so riddled with problems that it needed a complete overhaul. The suit seeks an injunction that would sharply limit the use of force by youth counselors and require the state to provide the youths with more treatment for mental health problems, which affect a vast majority of those in custody. For complete story, [click here](#).

Former Whittell dean indicted in Georgia--December 6th, 2009 (Rec'd January 2nd, 2010)--A grand jury in Georgia has indicted a former Whittell High School administrator on felony charges of aggravated battery, invasion of privacy, and four counts of first degree cruelty to children. Richard Darrington, 37, was hired as Whittell's dean of students at the beginning of the school year, but lost the position when the Nevada Department of Education revoked his substitute teaching license after learning of outstanding battery charges facing him in Georgia. The charges stem from Darrington's time in the southern state, where he operated a private school for teens called Darrington Academy for five years. The bill of indictment, which lists 23 grand jurors of the Superior Court of Fannin County, alleges that Darrington "did maliciously cause bodily harm" to one of his students "by seriously disfiguring his tooth," resulting in the aggravated battery charge. The invasion of privacy charge alleges that Darrington placed a recording device in a girls' room and observed and recorded their activities without consent. The four counts of cruelty to children allege that Darrington forced students to stand outside in freezing weather with no shirts, shoes or socks on two separate occasions, that he slammed a girl's head into a wall, and that he stood on a boy's ankles while in a "tripod" position and also slammed his head into a wall. In addition to Darrington, three other teachers at the school were included in the indictment; one for invasion of privacy and six counts of cruelty to children, and the other two for two counts each of cruelty to children. (For complete story, [click here](#).)

NY Accused of Abusing Troubled Teens--January 6th, 2010--(CN) - The New York State Office of Children and Family Services subjected 500 troubled youths in state detention to violent physical restraint, and routinely denied them legally required mental health care services, nine children and their parents claim in a federal class action. Among other wanton acts, state employees regularly employ a dangerous form of control known as prone restraint - having two adults hold the youth face-down on the floor while his hands are held or cuffed behind him. Prone restraint exposes the victim to risk of cardiac and respiratory arrest, back, arm and neck injuries, abrasions, strained muscles and head injuries, according to the complaint. Such treatment led to the 2006 death of a Bronx teen at the Tryon Boys' Residential Center in Johnston, and serious mental and physical injuries to scores of others, the complaint states. The families claim that OCFS Commissioner Gladys Carrión allowed the behavior to continue despite red flags raised by the U.S. Justice Department and a blue-ribbon panel appointed by Gov. David Patterson. The nine named plaintiffs, all of whom are identified by only their initials, said their treatment violated the 14th Amendment, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. For complete story, [click here](#).

Schools face accreditation issues--January 5th, 2010--...Smith said the school is applying for accreditation from another body, the Pacific Northwest Association of Independent Schools. And if that body accredits the school, it will satisfy the state's accreditation requirement. Several other private schools also face advised or warned status. Utah Helicopter Inc., a postsecondary school in Spanish Fork, is being recommended for advised status; Cross Creek Academy, a private residential school in La Verkin for troubled teens, for advised status; Top Flight Academy, also a private residential school in Mt. Pleasant, for warned status; private school Dorius Academy in Layton for warned status. Attempts to reach Utah Helicopter, Dorius and Top Flight Academy this week for comment were unsuccessful. Karr Farnsworth, administrator at Cross Creek, said he was unaware of the school's recommended advised status and said he doesn't know how it got that status. For complete story, [click here](#). For more information on Utah, [click here](#).

U.S. says sex abuse high at 13 juvenile centers--January 7th, 2010--WASHINGTON (AP) — A government study issued Thursday finds 13 juvenile detention facilities around the country have high rates of sex abuse and victimization, where nearly 1 out of every 3 inmates reported some type of victimization. A Justice Department study has found that nationwide, about 12% of youths held in state-run, privately-run, or local facilities reported some type of sexual victimization — but those rates varied widely from place to place. For complete story, [click here](#).

Four Years Later: Martin Lee Anderson Boot Camp Death--January 6th, 2010--By now, the story of Martin Lee Anderson's death has been well-documented. During his first day at the Bay County Juvenile Boot Camp, Anderson collapsed during a fitness run. Boot camp drill instructors thought he was faking to get out of the exercise, so they pushed Anderson to complete the run. The camp's cameras recorded an agonizing twenty-minute confrontation, which thrust the case into the worldwide spotlight. Once the guards realized Anderson was truly in distress, they called for help. But, it was too late. The teen died early the next morning, January 6, 2006, in a Pensacola hospital. The Medical Examiner's initial autopsy found Anderson died as a result of complications from sickle cell trait. Those results, and the results of a second autopsy conducted several months later, became the central evidence in the criminal trial of seven of the drill instructors and the camp nurse. A year and a half after Anderson's death, they were all acquitted of aggravated manslaughter charges. Since the trial, Anderson family supporters, including the local NAACP chapter, have continued to push for federal civil rights violation charges against the defendants. Bay County NAACP president Rev. Rufus Wood said, "I want it to be clear that this is not as much about black and white as it is about right and wrong. This is about right and wrong, and it's about wrong. What happened to Martin was wrong." For complete story, [click here](#). For more on this story, [click here](#).

Landmark Federal Class-Action Lawsuit Charges Los Angeles County With Failure To Educate Youth In Probation Camps--January 12th, 2010-- LOS ANGELES – An alliance of legal groups including the American Civil Liberties Union and the ACLU of Southern California today filed a ground-breaking

class-action lawsuit against the Los Angeles County Probation Department and top county education officials for their total failure to provide youth in the county's largest juvenile probation facility with basic and appropriate education. The failure has resulted in children not being adequately prepared to re-enter society and the workforce. For complete story, [click here](#).

[School For Troubled Teens Faces Closure](#)--January 18th, 2010--Clarksville's Genesis Learning Center May Close Due To Funding Shortage... For complete story, [click here](#).

[Trial Under Way For Childcare Workers In Teen's Death](#)--January 25th, 2010--PARMA, Ohio -- The trial for three former childcare workers accused of causing the death of a teenager is getting under way Monday. The three women worked at Parmadale, a local treatment center for troubled teens in Parma. Prosecutors said they caused the death of 17-year-old Faith Finley, who suffocated while being restrained on the floor at the facility. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Troubled Teen Hospital Closing](#)--January 26th, 2010--Tuesday, Newschannel 9 confirmed that Cumberland Hall is shutting its doors at the end of this month. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Home for troubled teens slated to close](#)--February 2nd, 2010--BENNINGTON -- A local long-term residential educational facility for at-risk youth, 204 Depot Street, will be closing this week and leaving 10 people without jobs, according to William Bryan, president of the Board of Directors of SEALL Inc. "The decision was made to cease making referrals. Statewide (the Department of Children and Families,) told us, they have to cut between 12 and 18 beds. We were only filling roughly 10 of those beds so that their other programs will have to feel our pain as well," Bryan said. 204 Depot Street, which will close on Feb. 6, serves older adolescent boys, between the ages of 15 and 17, through a residential educational program that lasts at least a year. It is run by SEALL Inc., a local nonprofit organization with a board of eight people. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Lake investigates sex abuse allegations at children's ranch](#)--February 4th, 2010--Lake County officials are investigating a complaint that a juvenile living at the Green Isle Children's Ranch abused another as many as five other kids living at the facility, the [Lake County Sheriff's Office](#) said. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Foster father charged--Man allegedly offered money to teens in exchange for sex](#)--February 5th, 2010--Sex charges have been laid against a former Foster Family of the Year award winner who has cared for up to 55 children over the past two decades. In June 2009, police received information that Garry Prokopishin, a director for the Calgary and District Foster Parents Association, was allegedly offering troubled teens in his care money for sexual acts. This has prompted an immediate review by Alberta Children and Youth Services. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Sex Abuse Allegations At Home For Troubled Teens](#)--February 6th, 2010--CLERMONT -- A children's home for at-risk teens released a [statement](#) Friday to News 13 about allegations that a boy sexually abused five others. The alleged victims came forward back in November and told Executive Director Steve Zepp at Green Isle Children's Ranch. In a statement, the children's ranch said, "The resident accused in the incident was removed from the program at Green Isle Ranch during the summer for reasons not associated with the allegations, and the executive director was replaced in mid-December." For complete story, [click here](#).

[Downriver minister charged in child sex case](#)--February 9th, 2010--River Rouge --A minister who police say has a reputation for reaching out to troubled teens was charged Monday with six counts of third-degree criminal sexual conduct for allegedly having sex with an under-aged boy. The Rev. Russell Schaller, 35, of River Rouge, senior pastor at Greater St. Johns Missionary Baptist Church on Detroit's east side, was arraigned in 26th District Court and ordered held in the Wayne County Jail in lieu of \$100,000 bond. For complete story, [click here](#).

[For Detained Youths, No Mental Health Overseer](#)--February 10th, 2010--Edwina G. Richardson-Mendelson has been the administrative judge of the New York City Family Courts for nine months, in charge of the judges responsible for the detention of dozens of young people charged with crimes, the vast majority of whom suffer from some form of mental illness. But it was not until last September that she was informed of what struck her as a startling fact: The State of New York does not have a single full-time staff psychiatrist charged with overseeing treatment of the 800 or so young people who are detained in state facilities at any given time. "There wasn't one human being on-site overseeing all the mental health needs of the population," Judge Richardson-Mendelson said in an interview. "When we place these children in these facilities, we expect their needs to be met, especially their mental health needs." Yet all 17 psychiatrists at the detention facilities in the state's deeply troubled juvenile justice system work on contract and part time. Weeks often pass between their visits with each troubled youth, and officials say their turnover rate is extremely high. For complete story, [click here](#).

[6-Year-Old Student Handcuffed, Committed by School--A little girl was sent to an adult mental institution for being unruly](#)--February 11th, 2010--The same school district that allowed an autistic boy to be [voted out of kindergarten class](#) for being a bit unruly has a far worse penalty for 6-year-old little girls. Handcuffs and straight jackets. A Parkway Elementary School student was cuffed and sent to an adult mental institution earlier this month after she through a temper tantrum in the middle of class, reports [TCPalm.com](#). The little girl was handcuffed by a Sheriff's Office deputy "for her safety and the safety of others," a police report said. The incident report said the girl was hitting school officials and screaming, although it's unclear what brought on the tantrum. The handcuffs worked because the little girl calmed down after an hour in the tight silver bracelets, but her troubles were just beginning. A few days later, the girl had another fit, allegedly hitting the school's principal in the stomach. The principal, who was eight months pregnant, called the same deputy, who then tossed the little girl in the back of his patrol car and transported her to the local adult mental institution. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Editorial: Where's the justice?](#)--February 15th, 2010--Another day, another \$10 million legal settlement for high-powered plaintiffs' attorney Thomas R. Kline. Kline has won a number of eight-figure awards for clients injured or killed due to negligence or incompetence by businesses, government agencies, and nonprofit health-care providers. The latest settlement ends a lawsuit brought on behalf of Omega Leach, a 17-year-old boy who died while in the care of the city's Department of Human Services. The settlement provides Leach's family with a financial reward, but no justice. The Inquirer broke the story. Leach was one of dozens of troubled teens DHS sent to a private mental health facility in Tennessee owned by Universal Health Services Inc., a hospital chain based in King of Prussia. A family court judge sent Leach there after he violated probation by missing a court hearing and testing positive for marijuana. At the facility, Leach got into a scuffle with a worker. A surveillance camera showed the worker strangling Leach. Witnesses said the boy was slammed to the ground and banged into a wall. Leach died the next day. Tennessee authorities ruled his death a homicide. Yet, no criminal charges have been filed. Instead, DHS stopped sending kids there. The facility changed names, and the worker left. An attorney for Universal Health Services says "no one admits fault." A fat check has been written in place of the dead boy. Accountability still awaits. For complete story, [click here](#). (Universal Health Services also owns notoriously abusive [Provo Canyon School](#) and many [CEDU-cult programs](#).)

[Teen raises funds to support prison visits](#)--February 18th, 2010-- St. Joseph High School senior Ciara Main and her classmates sell bowls of rice at lunchtime as a fundraiser for the program "Get on the Bus." The program unites inmates at the California Mens Colony and their families on Father's Day. //Len Wood/Staff Each year, thousands of children visit parents incarcerated in the California penal system. Ciara Main, a senior at St. Joseph High School, can sympathize with them, and on Wednesday she helped organize a "Get on the Bus" fundraiser to make those visits a little more comfortable. Main and her fellow club members sold bowls of rice at the school -- in an Ash Wednesday "Rice Bowl Day of Fasting" -- to help raise money and awareness for their cause. The students are putting together "Stay In Touch Bags" for the children who participate in the program. The bags include note cards, pens and stamps, which allow them to write letters to their parents, along with a disposable camera and a photo frame. Each child also receives a teddy bear for the journey home. Children from Santa Rosa to San Diego participate in the program, which covers seven prisons throughout the state, including California Men's Colony outside San Luis Obispo. When she was very young, Main visited her father, who was in jail at the time. That experience inspired her to become president of the school's Get on the Bus Club, a small portion of a statewide effort to unite families. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Bridgeport 'inspirational speaker' charged with masterminding area robberies](#)--February 22nd, 2010-- A Bridgeport man who billed himself as an "inspiration speaker" to inner-city youths was arrested by Greenwich police Monday and charged as the mastermind behind string of robberies throughout the region. Gregory Jetter, 48, of 182 Wheeler Ave., Bridgeport, was taken into custody at a federal courthouse in New Haven where he was appearing on an unrelated

violation of probation charge. He was charged with first-degree robbery, first-degree conspiracy at robbery and first-degree larceny, police said. Jetter's arrest comes after several months of a multijurisdictional armed-robbery investigation into incidents in Fairfield and New Haven counties, police said. Greenwich police were the first to identify Jetter as being involved in the string of robberies, when they said he was the getaway driver in a July 2009 robbery of Estate Treasures in Riverside. During the incident, Lakeem Jetter, 19, and [Moses McCree](#), 20, were charged with stealing more than \$250,000 worth of jewelry at gunpoint. Although initial reports indicated that McCree was the mastermind to the robberies, Detective [Pasquale Iorfino](#) said further investigation revealed [Gregory Jetter](#), a convicted felon with an extensive arrest history, was the brain behind the operation. Jetter used "being an inspiration speaker for inner-city children to draw in troubled teens," said Iorfino. Iorfino said once teens and young men became part of his group, called the [McCree Foundation](#) Inc., he led them down a dangerous path. For complete story, [click here](#). For more on this story, [click here](#).

[Ohio youth prisons ordered to ensure inmates fed](#)--February 26th, 2010--COLUMBUS, Ohio — A federal judge has ordered Ohio youth detention facilities to alter a practice of withholding food from inmates who don't report for meals in the cafeteria. U.S. District Judge Algenon Marbley says in the order filed Friday in Columbus that a meal refusal policy used at the Circleville Juvenile Correctional Facility and others did not put a priority on inmates' health and safety. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Group homes for troubled teens closing after 18 years](#)--February 26th, 2010--St. Paul, Minn. — Hearthstone of Minnesota, a Twin Cities nonprofit that ran small group homes for deeply troubled teens, closed its doors Friday. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Disciplinary policy brings incarceration](#)--March 14th, 2010--One of the most alarming trends affecting our children today is what has become known as the "school to prison pipeline," a term used to describe an all too common reality for poor-performing students. First they are academically unsuccessful, then their misbehavior results in school disciplinary action, then their misbehavior puts them into the juvenile justice system, then they leave school prematurely and eventually end up as incarcerated adults. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Psychiatrist gets warning from FDA](#)--March 16th, 2010--A South Florida psychiatrist who was treating a 7-year-old foster child before the boy committed suicide last year has received a warning from federal drug regulators who say he failed "to protect the rights, safety and welfare" of children enrolled in clinical drug trials. In a strongly worded letter dated Feb. 4, regulators at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said Dr. Sohail Punjwani over-medicated children who were enrolled in clinical trials for undisclosed drugs. One girl, the letter said, slashed her wrists while hallucinating. Another, a 13-year-old, "experienced sedation and dizziness during the study," the letter said. The warning letter, a harsh and rare form of discipline by the agency, says Punjwani failed to "adhere to the applicable statutory requirements and FDA regulations governing the conduct of clinical investigations." For complete story, [click here](#).

[People power blocks controversial children's home](#)--March 17th, 2010--RELIEVED neighbours were today celebrating "people power" after plans to build a controversial children's home were dramatically thrown out. Delighted cheers raised the roof of Blackpool Town Hall as around 100 protesters, who battled against the home for troubled teens being built on Preston New Road, Marton, rejoiced at the sensational council U-turn. For complete story, [click here](#).

["Head Case: Can Psychiatry Be a Science?"](#)--March 1st, 2010--For complete story, [click here](#).

[Offenders referred to Pa. school](#)--March 21st, 2010--Deep in rural Pennsylvania, some 300 miles from Providence, The Glen Mills Schools appears to offer much to troubled teenaged boys. The school's glossy brochure depicts a lush, green campus with neat athletic fields, a football stadium and an Olympic-sized swimming pool. Vocational programs range from auto body repair and landscaping to dentistry and golf course management. Glen Mills has so impressed Chief Family Court Judge Jeremiah S. Jeremiah Jr. that he recently referred a dozen delinquent boys there. But state child welfare officials say no matter how good the school may be, troubled teens generally do better when they stay close to their families and communities. More than a decade ago, officials at the state Department of Children, Youth and Families concluded that juveniles with behavioral or emotional problems could be helped more cheaply, and with better results, closer to home. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Goodman woman pleads guilty in teen center sex-abuse case](#)--March 22nd, 2010--A former night supervisor at a residential center for troubled teens has pleaded guilty to one of five sex-abuse charges she was facing with respect to three boys in the program. Jana E. Carter, 46, of Goodman, changed her plea to guilty in Jasper County Circuit Court on a single count of second-degree statutory sodomy. She has been facing three counts of second-degree statutory sodomy and two counts of second-degree statutory rape concerning alleged acts with boys who were staying at the Scott Greening Dependency Center at 818 W. Fourth St. in Joplin, when she worked there in 2008. For complete story, [click here](#).

[We thought we were helping troubled teens](#)--March 26th, 2010--When I tell people that I am a lawyer working on juvenile delinquency cases, they usually commend me for choosing a socially useful career. But ever since the release of reports detailing the horrid treatment of teenagers at four New York juvenile detention facilities, I have been wary of talking about my job. For 20 years I have worked in New York Family Court, doing legal research for judges who hear juvenile delinquency cases. I take pride in helping judges conduct fair proceedings, which hopefully encourage youths to respect the justice system. When sentencing a teenager who has broken the law, one of the goals is to provide them with the services they need to change their behavior and better their prospects. This is difficult, as many of the teens have mental illnesses, and come from impoverished, broken homes, where they have been exposed to drugs and violence. Most juveniles convicted in Family Court receive services while living in their home communities, while others are sent away to detention centers for a year or more. Before a youth is sentenced, social workers and psychologists produce extensive reports aimed at formulating a service plan. Court hearings are held to determine the best course of action. I assumed that the people working in our juvenile facilities were as committed as we were in Family Court to giving detainees a chance at redemption. But recent federal and state investigations have revealed a far different story. Instead of the well-intentioned treatment I thought they were getting, juveniles in detention facilities repeatedly face physical abuse, which has resulted in concussions, broken bones and lost teeth. Staff members regularly handcuff detainees behind their backs, and force them to lie face down on the floor, for infractions such as sneaking an extra cookie or slamming a door. And teens suffering from bi-polar disorder, posttraumatic stress syndrome and drug addiction receive infrequent or no treatment. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Ala. commune head has new project despite past](#)--April 9th, 2010--EMELLE, Ala. — Pentecostal preacher Luke Edwards is the shepherd of a forlorn flock: For years his disciples have traveled the nation begging amid allegations of abuse and ruinous mismanagement. Five youngsters have died in fires at his west Alabama commune, the Holyland, where parents and youngsters are separated for weeks at a time. The state has described the education provided at the commune's church-based school as substandard; Edwards' one-time followers tell of beatings and sexual misconduct by male elders. Edwards, 84, has outlasted all the criticism and troubles, and an Associated Press review found he is involved in a new multimillion-dollar plan that could bring even more young people into his fold — a prospect that worries one-time followers now living on their own. Edwards preaches self-sufficiency, yet former members say his disciples bring in thousands of dollars daily panhandling outside stores in the name of abused children. Those under his care get free rent yet little of the money. If they leave, they depart virtually penniless. Now he is part of a project to build a residential school for troubled high-schoolers on hundreds of acres of cow pasture and forest in Sumter County just east of the Mississippi line. The goal is to bring prison-bound youth from churches and cities all over the nation to Edwards' corner of west Alabama. Edwards is among the founders of Greentown-USA, envisioned as a sprawling complex that is supposed to open in 2012. Plans include a private school with dormitories, a gym, an Olympic-size swimming pool, a recording studio, laboratories and a chapel for worship. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Feds: No civil right charges in teen's boot camp death](#)--April 16th, 2010--More than four years after the death of 14-year-old Florida boot camp inmate Martin Lee Anderson, the U.S. Department of Justice has announced no federal criminal civil rights charges will be filed against eight staff members. The announcement effectively closes the case. "After a careful and thorough review, a team of experienced federal prosecutors and FBI agents determined that the evidence was insufficient to pursue federal criminal civil rights charges. Accordingly, the investigation into this incident has been closed," the Justice Department said in a news release. In 2007, a Florida jury found seven guards and a nurse not guilty of manslaughter and related charges in Anderson's death. Anderson was African-American, and the guards were white and African-American. (Webmaster Note: This is outrageous. Martin Lee Anderson was beaten and kicked mercilessly and died as a result. That is HEAL's opinion. For more on this story, [click here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).)

[Florida to Punish Kids for Crimes They Haven't Committed Yet](#)--April 21, 2010--I knew it was easy to get locked up in Florida. Apparently, you can get punished in the state before committing a crime, too. An extremely troubling new partnership between the Florida Department of Corrections and IBM wants to use software to predict which juveniles will commit crimes in the future, so "the best course of treatment" can be chosen. Hey, why wait for juveniles to commit crimes, if we can start their "rehabilitation" now? The Florida DOC says that by using predictive analytics software, it can "analyze key predictors such as past offense history, home life environment, gang affiliation and peer associations to better understand and predict which youths have a higher likelihood to reoffend." What about talking to the kids to determine the best course of action? People are unpredictable and complex; they aren't data points. Juveniles should be taught that the world is open to them, and that they are the agents of their own destiny — not that they fit into the bottom half of a spreadsheet, and therefore need extra mandatory counseling or placement in a group home. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Investigators: Starved to Death in State Care](#)--April 30, 2010--(WXYZ) - For several months, the Action News Investigators dug deep into Michigan's tragically-flawed foster care system. During our investigation, we uncovered the heartbreaking story of a 10-year-old boy who starved to death while a facility banked cash to care for him. We began telling Johnny's story over the last two days here on WXYZ.com. In that time, the response has been overwhelming and your comments confirm that Michigan's children need a better foster care system. Johnny's mother, Elena Andron, dedicated her life to caring for her wheelchair-bound son. All she wanted was a little help. The state's answer was to put him in a foster care facility. One year later, Johnny starved to death. For complete story, [click here](#).

["The age of American children being medicated with prescription psychiatric drugs is getting younger and more widespread every year."](#)--May 3, 2010--The age of children being medicated with prescription psychiatric drugs is getting younger and more widespread every year. According to a 2010 study of data on more than a million children reported by American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry's journal, the use of powerful anti-psychotics with privately insured U.S. children, ages 2 through 5, doubled between 1999 and 2007. In the 2007 study, the most common diagnoses of anti-psychotic treated children were pervasive developmental disorder or mental retardation (28.2 percent), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (23.7 percent) and disruptive behavior disorder (12.9 percent). Fewer than half of drug-treated children received a mental health assessment, a psychotherapy visit, or a visit with a psychiatrist, during the year of anti-psychotic drug use. "Anti-psychotics, which are being widely and irresponsibly prescribed for American children -- mostly as chemical restraints -- are shown to be causing irreparable harm." Vera Hassner Sharav, president of the Alliance for Human Research Protection, warns. She further asserts that long-term use of these drugs can have hazardous effects on cardiovascular and metabolic systems. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Scathing Report Details Abuse At Juvenile Prison](#)--May 17th, 2010--INDIANAPOLIS -- Federal authorities are calling on Indiana to address abuses within its juvenile correction facilities after reports of young inmates sexually assaulted by guards and living in filth. A Jan. 29 letter and report from U.S. Assistant Attorney General Thomas Perez to Gov. Mitch Daniels details troubles within the former Indianapolis Juvenile Correctional Facility, including a mentally ill inmate left dirty and pulling out her hair and male guards having sex with and performing strip searches on young female inmates, 6News' Joanna Massee reported. "The sexualized environment at the facility appears rampant," the letter read. The letter follows a civil rights investigation launched by the U.S. Department of Justice in 2008 that documented inadequate abuse investigations, excessive use of force and isolation, inadequate mental health care and inadequate special education services. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Dallas jail instructor gets 10 years for molesting youths in custody](#)--May 27th, 2010--An instructor who taught juveniles at the Dallas County jail was sentenced this morning to 10 years in prison for molesting youths in his classes. The sentence was handed down by State District Judge Gracie Lewis shortly after a jury found Luis Enrique Santos guilty of two counts of sexual assault of a child. The judge sentenced de los Santos to 10 years on each count, with the sentences to run concurrently. De Los Santos, who testified in his own defense, claimed he was innocent and that his accusers were liars. When the guilty verdicts were read, he shook his head. Jurors returned to the court after finishing their deliberations so they could watch the judge sentence de los Santos. The jurors declined to comment afterward. During closing arguments Wednesday, prosecutor James Bagnall showed jurors a Kit Kat bar, a 20-ounce Coca-Cola and a McDonald's bag. He said the items were representative of the gifts de los Santos used to lure incarcerated boys into sex. The prosecutor said de los Santos developed "a sexual molester relationship" with the youths, who were 14 to 16. Calvin Johnson, de los Santos' attorney, said in his closing argument that the youths accusing his client were "not regular kids" and could not be trusted. The youths were in jail after being ordered to stand trial as adults for crimes including aggravated assault of a police officer and capital murder. Testifying in his own defense Wednesday, de los Santos said of his accusers, "They lied about everything." He was accused of performing oral sex on at least two boys in a jail bathroom near the classroom in 2008. Prosecutors said de los Santos, an instructor who worked for the Dallas Independent School District, wrote sexually explicit notes to students and promised them marijuana and pornographic photos. De los Santos testified that he used bad judgment in writing the notes. In bringing them candy and other foods from the outside world, he said, he was trying to reward the students. Two youths testified that de los Santos threatened to influence their criminal cases to make their punishments worse if they did not cooperate with his advances. For complete story, [click here](#).

[New Charges Pending For Boot Camp Dragging Case](#)--May 28th, 2010--CORPUS CHRISTI - Nueces County district attorney plans to re-file charges against two boot camp instructors accused of dragging a teen back in 2007. Charles Flowers and Stephanie Bassitt are accused of tying a 15-year old girl to the back of a van and dragging her down a road in Banquete. Officials say these are pictures the girl's injuries. Back in 2008 felony charges were dismissed after a mistrial was declared because the jury could not agree on verdict. Prosecutors say Flowers and Bassitt will be charged with misdemeanor assault. If convicted they face up to a year in the county jail and/or a \$4,000 fine. We're told teenager is expected to testify in the new trial. For complete story, [click here](#). For more on this story, [click here](#).

[Federal panel hears of sexual abuse TN juvenile detention facility](#)--June 4th, 2010--WASHINGTON — Tennessee officials who were "flabbergasted" at the level of sexual abuse reported at Woodland Hills Youth Development Center told a federal panel Friday the steps they've taken to reduce staff misconduct. But Steven Hornsby, deputy commissioner of the Department of Children's Services, also questioned the survey results that found one in four youths at Woodland reported sexual abuse by staffers, which ranked the facility among the worst in the country. Hornsby, a former trial lawyer and judge, said Woodland Hills routinely gets top grades from outside auditors. He questioned the lack of corroboration for children anonymously reporting abuse when counselors, teachers and guards hadn't reported anything. "I don't want to sound defensive," he told the Justice Department's Review Panel on Prison Rape, which held a hearing on the survey results. "There were no students -- zero reports -- of student sexual victimization during the time period that information was requested" during the survey. The January results of the National Survey of Youth in Custody surprised Hornsby because a national accreditation panel gave Woodland Hills a nearly perfect score -- penalizing only the ventilation system and the size of cells -- and state-level investigators found no widespread abuse. Another accreditation review is scheduled in August. "We were shocked," Hornsby said. "I think my word was just flabbergasted." For complete story, [click here](#).

[Federal Panel Questions Sex Abuse At Juvenile Prison](#)--June 4th, 2010--WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Indiana Department of Correction officials told a federal panel they are working to correct a pattern of sexual victimization of young inmates at a state juvenile correctional facility. Department of Correction Commissioner Edwin Buss and his staff testified Thursday before a three-member Department of Justice review panel on prison rape, 6News' Joanna Massee reported. It comes after a report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that 36 percent of inmates at the Pendleton Juvenile Correctional Facility reported being sexually abused, about three times higher than the national average. Pendleton Superintendent Linda Commons said she was aware of sexual abuse at the facility, but was shocked by the report. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Arrests Made in Child Abuse Allegations](#)--June 6th, 2010-- Four people are arrested on allegations of child abuse at a Bay County boarding school. 48-year-old Clayton Maynard, 40-year-old Robert Unger, and 20-year-old Russell Maynard were all arrested. They are all charged with one count of aggravated child abuse and five counts each, of child abuse. 22- year-old Marcus Kurbatoff was arrested and charged with resisting an officer during the course of arrest of Maynard and Unger. The men were responsible for running the Heritage Boys Academy. The academy is an all boys' boarding school in Bay County, right behind the asphalt plant, on Highway 231. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Juvenile dies in detention in East Tennessee](#)--July 2nd, 2010--CHATTANOOGA — Police are investigating after a juvenile died at a detention center in East Tennessee. Hamilton County Sheriff's Department spokeswoman Janice Atkinson said investigators are not yet saying what caused the juvenile's death at the

center in Chattanooga. She says the death was reported to her about 6:30 p.m. Thursday, but further information on the youth wasn't yet available. For complete story, [click here](#).

City, police grapple with problems at Benchmark--July 9th, 2010--WOODS CROSS —Woods Cross officials are worried that Benchmark Regional Hospital is struggling with ongoing violence, escapes and even a riot by patients, including sex offenders and troubled teens. But getting detailed information from the hospital itself is proving problematic. And that's frustrating city officials who say hospital administrators are stonewalling the release of information to the city. "We don't know what they are going to do," Woods Cross City Administrator Gary Uresk said. We're just looking at all our options. The city feels that it needs to take a pro-active stance. I think there are other issues there that need to be looked into," he recently told the Clipper. He said he and council members are also concerned that the hospital is hiding behind federal privacy laws to keep city officials from finding out. For complete story, [click here](#).

Family Says Nephew of Justice Clarence Thomas Was Beaten and Tased at West Jeff Hospital: July 10th, 2010

Rampant sexual abuse puts teens in danger at juvenile prisons--July 13th, 2010--Juvenile prisons are supposed to rehabilitate troubled teens, but thousands of Indiana's inmates, some as young as 13, have been placed at risk of rampant sexual violence and harassment -- often from the men and women paid to watch over them. Sex crimes inside juvenile prisons have long escaped public scrutiny in Indiana. Although incidents of rape and other sexual assault have broken into news headlines on occasion, the frequency with which state workers -- on the job and paid with tax dollars -- have had sex with young inmates was hidden behind a curtain of denial, unspoken acceptance and complacency. For complete story, [click here](#).

Federal Oversight for Troubled N.Y. Youth Prisons--July 14th, 2010--Four of New York's most dangerous and troubled youth prisons will be placed under federal oversight, strict new limits will be imposed on the use of physical force by guards, and dozens of psychiatrists, counselors and investigators will be hired under a sweeping agreement finalized on Wednesday between state and federal officials. The agreement will usher in the most significant expansion of mental health services in years for youths in custody, the vast majority of whom suffer from drug or alcohol problems, developmental disabilities or mental health problems. Currently, the state does not have a single full-time psychiatrist on staff to treat young offenders. Guards at the youth prisons, known as youth counselors, will be barred from physically restraining youths except when a person's physical safety is threatened or a youth is trying to escape from the institution. Guards will be allowed to use the most controversial method -- in which a youth is forced to the ground and held face-down -- for at most three minutes, with evaluation by a doctor to follow within four hours. The accord comes almost a year after the Justice Department threatened to take over New York's juvenile justice system unless the state took significant steps to rectify problems at the four prisons, where physical abuse was rampant and mental health counseling was scant or nonexistent. "It is New York's fundamental responsibility to protect juveniles in its custody from harm and to uphold their constitutional rights," Thomas E. Perez, assistant attorney general for the Justice Department's civil rights division, said in a statement. "We have worked cooperatively with New York officials to craft an agreement to ensure that the constitutional rights of juveniles at the four facilities are protected, and we commend New York and the New York State Office of Children and Families for their willingness to work aggressively to remedy these problems." Federal investigators found that staff members at the four institutions -- the Lansing Residential Center and the Louis Gossett Jr. Residential Center, in Lansing, and two residences, one for boys and one for girls, at Tryon Residential Center in Johnstown -- routinely used physical force to discipline the youths, resulting in broken bones, shattered teeth, concussions and dozens of other serious injuries in a period of less than two years. Gov. David A. Paterson said in a statement, "With this historic settlement agreement, New York takes another step towards achieving true transformation of our juvenile justice system." Mr. Paterson, who has been trying to address problems plaguing the juvenile system, introduced legislation in June to let judges sentence youths to juvenile prisons only if they had been found guilty of a violent crime or a sex crime or were deemed to be a serious threat to themselves or others. Juvenile prisons house those convicted of criminal acts, from truancy to murder, who are too young to serve in adult jails and prisons. The federal inquiry began in 2007 after a spate of episodes, including the 2006 death of a disturbed 15-year-old after two employees at the Tryon center pinned him down on the ground. For complete story, [click here](#).

Southern Poverty Law Center Files Suit After 6-year old Hand-Cuffed and Shackled for "Acting Up" in First Grade Class--July 16th, 2010--It's not right for a 6-year-old boy to be handcuffed and shackled to a chair by an armed security officer because he "acted up" in school. But that's exactly what happened at the Sarah T. Reed Elementary School in New Orleans. In keeping with our work to reform the abusive juvenile justice system in the Deep South, we've [filed a lawsuit](#) against the school district to stop the brutal and unconstitutional policy of chaining students who break minor school rules. Our client, J.W., is a typical first-grader. He's just four feet tall and weighs 60 pounds. He enjoys playing basketball, being read to by his parents, coloring and playing outside with friends. But his school treated him like an animal. Within one week, he was twice forcibly arrested, handcuffed and shackled to a chair for talking back to a teacher and later arguing with a classmate over a seat. The amount of force used on J.W. was simply ridiculous and, predictably, inflicted severe emotional distress. Shockingly, this level of punishment is official school policy. We're not just fighting for the rights of J.W., but for all the students at Reed Elementary. For complete story, [click here](#).

Ex-US judge pleads guilty to child prison scam--July 23rd, 2010--Conahan received bribes from a for-profit juvenile detention centre after closing a county-run facility. Former Pennsylvania judge Michael Conahan has pleaded guilty to a racketeering conspiracy charge for helping put juvenile defendants behind bars in exchange for bribes. He is accused along with former judge Mark Ciavarella of taking \$2.8m (£1.8m) from a profit-making detention centres. Mr Ciavarella denies wrongdoing. The two pleaded guilty last year but a federal judge tossed out part of the plea agreement for being too lenient. Conahan faces up to 20 years in jail. US District Judge Edwin Kosik rejected the 87-month jail term set out last year in Conahan's agreement. Under that deal, the former judge would have been able to back out if he was dissatisfied with his sentence. Judge Kosik has accepted Conahan's current plea agreement with prosecutors, which has no such get-out clause. Cash for kids Prosecutors in a federal court in Scranton, Pennsylvania, said Conahan had closed a county-owned juvenile detention centre in 2002, just before signing an agreement to use a for-profit centre. Prosecutors say Mr Ciavarella, a former juvenile court judge, then allegedly worked with Mr Conahan to ensure a constant flow of detainees. The two men were originally charged in early 2009 with accepting money from the builder and owner of a for-profit detention centre that housed county juveniles in exchange for giving children longer, harsher sentences. For complete story, [click here](#).

Youth mentor arrested on charge of raping girl--July 24th, 2010--MOBILE, Ala. -- A mentor in a program that works with Strickland Youth Center to help troubled teens was arrested Friday and charged with raping a young girl, prosecutors said. Sherman Fitzgerald Tate, 33, was being held in Mobile County Metro Jail on charges of second-degree rape and second-degree sodomy. For complete story, [click here](#).

N.S. teen abused at facility, say advocates--By MICHAEL MacDonald The Canadian Press Tue, Jul 20 - 4:52 AM An advocacy group is calling for an investigation into allegations that a Nova Scotia youth struggling with a conduct disorder was physically abused on the weekend by staff at a treatment facility in eastern Ontario. Roch Longuepee, founder of Restoring Dignity, a non-profit group that seeks justice for victims of institutional child abuse, said Monday that the 15-year-old should be removed from the Bayfield facility in Consecon until a specialized treatment program can be set up for him in Nova Scotia. Longuepee said the youth, who can't be named, told his aunt that two male staff members refused his request to go to the washroom on Sunday, then threw him to the floor, punched him in the ribs and kneed him in the throat. The aunt issued a statement saying he was left with a black eye, cuts to his head and scratches on his body. "We have to react and respond to this boy's cry for help," Longuepee told a news conference. "We are concerned that the situation is out of control . . . I am concerned that this boy is in danger." The accusations have not been proven. Sharlene Weitzman, chief operating officer for the privately run facility, declined comment citing privacy concerns. However, Longuepee released a copy of a Justice Department document that shows the province received a call from Bayfield on Sunday at 4:25 a.m., stating that the youth had been allegedly inciting others to attack staff before punching and kicking at some of them. The document, produced by the Provincial Emergency Duty Program, says the boy was "placed in a position of control." No other details were provided. Court documents show the boy has been receiving government help since he was four years old, having been in the care of foster homes, group homes and other programs for years. He has been in the care of Nova Scotia's Community Services Department since November 2008, when it was deemed he required intensive, long-term care because he was a risk to himself and the community. Longuepee said the boy is a sexual abuse victim who was abandoned by his parents before he was five. As well, he said the boy has "cognitive issues," but none of the diagnoses he has received are conclusive. Last summer, the Nova Scotia Supreme Court approved the department's plan to send him to the Bayfield facility near Trenton, Ont., because the province had exhausted its options. "It was evident that none of those services had achieved the goal of preventing the situation then faced by the minister and the

adolescent's grandparents," Nova Scotia Supreme Court Justice Beryl MacDonald wrote in a decision released in April. MacDonald said the adolescent was "totally out of control," would not obey instruction and "presented as a risk to himself and to his community." The judge also noted that the province had to send the boy outside the province because it does not have a secure, residential facility that can provide long-term, intensive treatment. At first, the court agreed to send the youth to a facility in Utah, but that fell through and Bayfield was recommended. Vicki Wood, the department's director of child welfare, also declined to comment on the allegations. "I have no knowledge that a child was punched in the ribs or kneed in the throat," she said. Wood said the department would investigate any allegations of abuse, noting that under an interprovincial protocol, the Ontario facility is expected to follow Nova Scotia rules pertaining to the use of physical restraint of youths who put themselves or others in danger. "They would never restrain a child for punitive reasons," she said. "It's to intervene in a situation of danger." Wood confirmed that the department and the boy's family can't agree on the treatment he should receive. "There's a forum for the family to bring forward their concerns — that would be the court, not a press conference," Wood said. "The judge is going to make a decision based on information presented to the court, not a third-party organization such as Mr. Longuepee's, which has no real knowledge of the case." Longuepee later took exception to Wood's comments, saying it's "false, absolutely false" that he has no knowledge of the case. "I have the entire collection of files from the courts," he said, adding he's also interviewed the boy. The boy's grandparents, who have been caring for him for most of his life, approached the advocacy group in March after they learned of the boy's complaints at Bayfield. Longuepee said his organization has received complaints of abuse from former residents of Bayfield and their families. He said the problem is that provinces like Ontario and Nova Scotia continue to cling to the belief that the best place for troubled teens is in an institution. "These institutions can't be the parents for these children," he said. His group is proposing a specialized foster care program that would cost the province about \$175,000 to set up in the first year. The plan has been submitted to the provincial government, but it has yet to respond, he said. (Complete Story Provided Above.)

Youth lock-ups blasted--Star investigation Hearings order release of children found not to have mental disorders--July 7th, 2010 Canada seems to be seeing the light. When will the US? We're waiting. For more on the story, [click here](#).

Snoop Dogg taking youth football league to Chicago--July 27th, 2010--[According to RivalsHigh](#), Calvin Broadus, a.k.a Snoop Dogg, will be bringing his youth football league to Chicago next year. Broadus started the league back in 2005 in Los Angeles, featuring kids from all over the area with criminal, weapons and drug charges. Not only has the league taught these kids the correct way of life, but has connected them with role models, and some, even their fathers. Broadus is planning on holding a clinic with about 200 kids in Chicago's Housing Authority next year. According to the article, Broadus, who founded the league with \$1 million of his own money, started it since there were no inner city football programs for the youngsters in Los Angeles. His league in the West Coast has helped troubled teens become great players, some even recruited by top colleges. One can only imagine what this league can do with the talent in Chicago. (Complete Article Shown--source examiner.com) Webmaster Note: We applaud Snoop Dogg for giving this opportunity to children.

Girl, 16, dies during restraint at an already-troubled hospital--August 1st, 2010--The charge nurse found Alexis Evette Richie alone in a small room at SSM DePaul Health Center, motionless and sprawled facedown on a bean bag chair. Minutes earlier, the 16-year-old foster child had tried to hit, scratch and bite staff members in the adolescent psychiatric ward. Two aides grabbed her arms and took her down a hall and into a small room called the "quiet room." They held her facedown in the chair while a nurse injected a sedative into her hip. Alexis continued to struggle and then went limp. The nurse and the two aides left without checking her pulse or making sure she was breathing. Charge nurse Iris Blanks checked on her minutes later and didn't think Alexis looked right. An aide helped Blanks roll the girl over. Alexis wasn't breathing. Her pulse was faint. It was 12 minutes after she stopped moving before anyone tried to revive Alexis. By then it was too late. "Why did they leave her like that?" Blanks wailed over the phone to her daughter that night, according to a police report. The "little girl," she said, "didn't have to die." The medical examiner agreed, concluding that Alexis had suffocated on the bean bag chair. Her death on Oct. 26 was ruled a homicide. For complete story, [click here](#).

TIME-OUT OR TORTURE? Sex offender put kids 'through hell' in time-out room, By Clio Francis, Sunday Star Times, August, 8, 2010 For complete story, [click here](#).

Criticism over delayed TYC sexual abuse trial--August 12th, 2010--The advocacy group Texas Civil Rights Project on Wednesday called for a former Texas Youth Commission official to be brought to trial quickly, almost six years after he was accused of molesting at least four teenage boys in what became a statewide abuse scandal. Scott Medlock, an Austin attorney who represents one of the four victims in separate pending civil litigation, said at a news conference that it is unbelievable and outrageous that former West Texas State School Principal John Paul Hernandez is still awaiting trial. "More than three years after the public learned about these disgusting assaults, Hernandez's victims are still waiting for justice," said Medlock, director of the organization's Prisoners' Rights Program. "Prosecuting these men shows that if you abuse kids in TYC, you will be held accountable. Further delay undermines creating a culture of accountability." In a statement, the victim — now 25 — said he wants to "stop what happened to me from being covered up." "I need to move on with my life, and I can't do that until the man who violated me faces justice," the victim said in the statement. "I'm still struggling and I need some closure." For complete story, [click here](#).

State orders Putnam mental-health company SLS to give up permits--August 12th, 2010--The state has ordered a private Putnam County-based mental-health provider that treats teens and young adults to surrender its operating certificates after the mental-health commissioner upheld charges that the for-profit facility violated patients' rights and ignored state regulations. For complete story, [click here](#).

Teen who collapsed at residential treatment facility dies--August 18th, 2010-- By TERRI LANGFORD Copyright 2010 Houston Chronicle Aug. 18, 2010, 10:49PM The state's foster care agency revealed Wednesday that a 17-year-old girl who collapsed about a month ago at a residential treatment facility has died. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services is investigating the death of Shanice Nibbs, who collapsed July 16 while on a nature walk at the Five Oaks Achievement Center in New Ulm, about 72 miles west of Houston. On Wednesday, agency spokesman Patrick Crimmins issued a news release notifying the media that the teen died Friday. Reporters for the Houston Chronicle and Texas Tribune first contacted DFPS officials two weeks ago about the girl's collapse. At the time, the girl was alive in the intensive care unit at Texas Children's Hospital, and the agency offered no other details, citing the investigation. An official with the governor's office confirmed that the agency notified it immediately of the incident and that it was aware that the agency had suspended all placements at the facility until an investigation was completed. An official with the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences, which conducted an autopsy, said the girl died of complications of hypothermia. It is not known how long the girl had been at the facility, how long she had been in foster care, or if she had a pre-existing health condition. Two months ago, the Chronicle and Tribune detailed how more than 250 confirmed incidents of abuse or neglect had occurred since 2008 at residential treatment facilities, where the state's most troubled foster care children are placed. terri.langford@chron.com (note: was actually hyperthermia and complete story above.) Also: <http://abclocal.go.com/ktrk/story?section=news/local&id=7617296&rss=rss-ktrk-article-7617296>

Teenager found dead at Rock Hill psychiatric center--Rec'd August 19th, 2010 (Article: June 12th, 2010)-- By Cleve R. Wootson Jr. cwootson@charlotteobserver.com Posted: Saturday, Jun. 12, 2010 A 17-year-old who complained of chest congestion was found dead at a residential psychiatric treatment facility in Rock Hill on Saturday morning. Rock Hill police identified the teen as Levi Snyder, of Lenoir. He was a resident at the New Hope Carolinas treatment center, which treats emotionally disturbed adolescents, near Piedmont Medical Center, said Detective Kathy Harveston. She said initial reports didn't point to foul play. "It looks like (the death is) going to be medical in nature," Harveston said. "There's no appearance of any foul play, of neglect, of improper treatment, anything like that." Harveston said Snyder had been to the hospital for chest congestion three or four days ago and was on antibiotics. Police haven't released a narrative of what happened in the hours before he died, but Harveston said he'd been complaining of chest congestion Friday night. It's unclear how employees at the facility responded to the complaints. No one answered the phone at the facility's listed number Saturday. The York County coroner is expected to conduct an autopsy this week. New Hope operates out of the former York General Hospital off Ebenezer Road, near Rock Hill's Fewell Park neighborhood. The center has faced heavy scrutiny from neighborhood and city leaders since it began operating in the mid-1990s. City officials and residents of the nearby Fewell Park neighborhood contend a facility that includes sex offenders among the patients doesn't belong in a residential neighborhood. The opposition culminated in 2002 when Rock Hill and York County officials sought to have New Hope moved. The facility is licensed by the S.C. Department of Social Services. Between 1995 and 2002, Rock Hill police responded to more than 200 calls at the New Hope address. More recent figures

were not available. New Hope officials contend many of the calls proved to be unfounded. Since 1997, there have been at least 39 reports of criminal sexual conduct, assault and battery, and missing persons at New Hope, police records show. Of those, however, 25 were dismissed for a lack of evidence. Rock Hill Herald writer Matt Garfield contributed. Cleve R. Wootson Jr.: 704-358-5046 Read more: http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2010/06/12/1496598/teenager-found-dead-at-rock-hill.html#ixzz0x2_eD4uti

Sports grill owner admits setting fire--Rec'd August 19th, 2010 (Article: Feb 13th, 2001)--[Randy Stewman now works in the kidnap-for-hire "teen transport/escort" service company, [US Transport Service, Inc.](#) located in St. George, UT] ST. GEORGE — The owner of the Gridiron Sports Grill has pleaded guilty to arson in the Jan. 15 fire at the Promenade Shopping Center, where his business was located. Randall David Stewman, 30, pleaded guilty to the second-degree felony Wednesday and faces a maximum sentence of one to 15 years in prison and an \$18,500 fine. Prosecutor Paul Dame said the fire was started on the roof of the Promenade. He said investigators found a hole had been cut in the roof of the Gridiron Sports Grill and a fuse was inserted through the hole and connected to gas-filled containers in surrounding businesses' air conditioning ducts. He said Stewman admitted setting up the fuse with intent to burn part of the shopping center, including his own business. For complete story, [click here](#).

Groups say abuse remains in Texas juvenile prisons--August 24th, 2010--AUSTIN, Texas — Four juvenile inmate advocacy groups have alleged that widespread abuse continues in the Texas juvenile prison system, almost four years after a sex abuse and cover-up scandal forced sweeping reforms. The groups submitted a formal complaint asking the U.S. Justice Department to investigate conditions in the Texas Youth Commission, the Austin American-Statesman reported in its online edition Tuesday. The complaint filed by Texas Appleseed, Advocacy Inc., the Center for Public Representation and the National Center for Youth Law accused the commission of failing to protect the 1,700 juvenile inmates in its system because of short staffing and the use of improper restraints and excessive force. A commission statement issued Tuesday said it has worked with two of the groups for three years to address the issues "and will work to fully investigate any allegations" in the complaint. According to the newspaper, the complaint also alleged that juveniles are not provided adequate medical and mental health care and educational programs. Also, it contends the number of youth-on-youth assaults in commission facilities in Beaumont and Corsicana remain high. Those centers had the second-highest rate of sexual assault among the nation's juvenile prisons last year, according to a federal report. For complete story, [click here](#).

Guards allegedly beat inmate in Sangamon Juvenile Center--August 26th, 2010--On July 6, 16-year-old Dalton McDermott of Springfield was allegedly beaten by two guards while an inmate at the Sangamon Juvenile Center, 2201 South Dirksen Parkway, according to his parents, Barb Howell of Springfield and Jeff McDermott of Champaign. The detention center holds young prisoners in custody while the county court system decides what to do with them. Dalton was incarcerated at the juvenile center while awaiting sentencing for a spray-painting incident, Howell says. Jeff McDermott says the beating apparently resulted from a misunderstanding about a commonly-used slang term in the Juvenile Center. Dalton apparently said he and his classmates in the detention center were going to "gun," or make fun of, a teacher, and he was given the equivalent of a time-out. He then "mouthed off" to the guards who were to escort him to his cell, McDermott says. "They grabbed him by the back of his neck while he was walking out of the classroom and slammed him into the wall," McDermott says. "He was handcuffed, and they kneeed him while he was on the ground. He had marks on both ankles and his throat." As a result of the beating, Dalton received a concussion, a fractured neck and internal bleeding, according to medical records and photographs provided by his parents. He is now in the state detention center in St. Charles, awaiting assignment to another state detention center. For complete story, [click here](#).

Child's Ordeal Shows Risks of Psychosis Drugs for Young--September 1st, 2010-- OPELOUSAS, La. — At 18 months, Kyle Warren started taking a daily antipsychotic drug on the orders of a pediatrician trying to quell the boy's severe temper tantrums. Thus began a troubled toddler's journey from one doctor to another, from one diagnosis to another, involving even more drugs. [Autism, bipolar disorder, hyperactivity, insomnia, oppositional defiant disorder](#). The boy's daily pill regimen multiplied: the antipsychotic Risperdal, the antidepressant [Prozac](#), two sleeping medicines and one for attention-deficit disorder. All by the time he was 3. He was sedated, [drooling](#) and overweight from [the side effects](#) of the antipsychotic medicine. Although his mother, Brandy Warren, had been at her "wit's end" when she resorted to the drug treatment, she began to worry about Kyle's altered personality. "All I had was a medicated little boy," Ms. Warren said. "I didn't have my son. It's like, you'd look into his eyes and you would just see just blankness." Today, 6-year-old Kyle is in his fourth week of first grade, scoring high marks on his first tests. He is rambunctious and much thinner. Weaned off the drugs through a program affiliated with [Tulane University](#) that is aimed at helping low-income families whose children have [mental health](#) problems, Kyle now laughs easily and teases his family. Ms. Warren and Kyle's new doctors point to his remarkable progress — and a more common diagnosis for children of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder — as proof that he should have never been prescribed such powerful drugs in the first place. For complete story, [click here](#). (Webmaster Note: Perhaps if people spent more time understanding child development and what is to be expected from new people learning about this very complicated world, there wouldn't be such issues.)

Former Juvenile Jail Guard Arrested--September 7th, 2010--(Source: ktbs.com) POSTED: 2:24 pm CDT September 7, 2010 A former employee at the Caddo Juvenile Detention Center in Shreveport faces charges he battered an inmate without justification. Dale Smith, 56, of the 1000 block of Dalzell Street, was issued a summons to appear in court to answer simple battery charges, Caddo sheriff's investigators said. Smith is accused of knocking a 17-year-old inmate to the ground and choking him following a verbal altercation between the two. The incident occurred in May, investigators said. Smith was fired from his job, deputies said. For complete story, [click here](#).

New Law to Prevent Abuse in Schools--December 11th, 2009 (Rec'd September 23rd, 2010)-- (Source: wrightslaw.com) On Wednesday, Congressman George Miller, Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee told families, "Something is very wrong when our children are at risk of abuse or worse at school." Mr. Miller knew about Cedric, a 14-year old student in a special education classroom in Texas. He lived with a foster family because of a history of neglect, including malnutrition. In 2002, his teacher tried to punish Cedric by withholding food, despite the abuse he had suffered as a young child. Cedric's teacher delayed his lunch for hours to discipline him for not doing his work. When he did not comply with her demands, the teacher put him in a face down restraint and sat on him in front of his classmates. Cedric said repeatedly that he could not breathe. He died minutes later on the classroom floor as his terrified classmates looked on. Sadly, Cedric's story is not an isolated case. For complete story, [click here](#).

Boarding school is a form of child abuse, says psychotherapist--June 10th, 2001 (Rec'd September 23rd, 2010)-- (Source: independent.co.uk) Children who are sent away by their parents to boarding school risk severe psychological damage, according to a leading psychotherapist. So bad is the problem that Nick Duffell, who has counselled former boarding school pupils, has now set up a support group. Children who are sent away by their parents to boarding school risk severe psychological damage, according to a leading psychotherapist. So bad is the problem that Nick Duffell, who has counselled former boarding school pupils, has now set up a support group. Boarding School Survivors (BSS) will run workshops for sufferers of "boarding school syndrome" whose symptoms include a hatred of the opposite sex, intimacy problems and obsession with work. This week, Mr Duffell will tell a health conference in London that boarders cope with the trauma of separation from their families in the same way as victims of child sexual abuse do, by burying their emotions so they are unable to form fulfilling relationships as [adults](#). Successive writers including George Orwell and Evelyn Waugh have portrayed boarding school life as being filled with freezing showers and cold porridge. But J K Rowling has helped to fuel a recent increase in inquiries from parents of prospective pupils through the cosy picture she presents in her Harry Potter books. For complete story, [click here](#).

State Finds Violations At Worthington Youth Home--September 24th, 2010--(Source: 10tv.com) WORTHINGTON, Ohio — A home for troubled youth that already faces criticism from its neighbors is now defending itself against a flunking state report card, 10TV News reported on Thursday. Inspectors with Ohio's Department of Job and Family Services found several violations at the United Methodist Children's Home. Among them were filthy living conditions in some of the High Street facility's six residential cottages, 10TV News reported. In the report, inspectors reported finding walls covered with graffiti, dirty and ripped carpets, moldy shower curtains and human feces on a floor, 10TV News reported. Interviews with the staff and children revealed an issue with how children are fed. Inspectors learned that some of them had to "wait until other children are done eating and wash the other child's bowl before they can eat." For complete story, [click here](#).

[Omaha Boys Town programs accused of mistreatment](#)--September 23rd, 2010-- (Source: khsstv.com) Two Nebraska Boys Town programs are accused of treating children and teens improperly. The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services has stopped sending troubled youth to two Omaha programs after a bad review. A Boys Town spokeswoman said no children have been mistreated at its Omaha facilities for troubled youth. But she said a recent review did uncover some issues that needed to be corrected. A Health and Human Services spokeswoman said referrals to both programs were suspended August 26th. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Death of Beloved Human Rights Activist--Deborah Ann Morgan](#)--(October 17th, 1985 to September 8th, 2010)-- Deborah Morgan's courage and passion for justice will be remembered by all who knew her. Morgan was a survivor of SLS Health and championed the fight for justice to stop the abuse. There is no adequate reason for why she is gone. The State of NY has officially pulled all three of SLS Health's licenses. The lawsuit is nearly complete. And, hope was and continues to be restored for the victims. [Deborah Morgan](#) will always be remembered as a hero to everyone at HEAL.

[Juvenile Detention Facility's Insurer Has No Duty to Defend 'Kids-for-Cash' Suits, Says Judge](#)-- September 29th, 2010 (Source: law.com) Gregory Zappala, the owner of the juvenile detention facility at the heart of the "kids-for-cash" judicial corruption scandal in Luzerne County, suffered a setback this week when a federal judge ruled that his insurer has no duty to defend him in a spate of civil suits. Prosecutors have never charged Zappala with any wrongdoing, but the civil suits allege that he was part of a RICO conspiracy and was aware that kickbacks were being paid by his former partner to judges in order to guarantee that a steady stream of youths would be sent to a juvenile detention facility owned by Zappala's company. Zappala, the owner of Mid-Atlantic Youth Services, has argued in court papers that he never knew that former MAYS co-owner Robert Powell paid kickbacks to former Judges Mark A. Ciavarella Jr. and Michael T. Conahan. As a result, Zappala argued that General Star Indemnity Co. should be ordered to continue funding his defense of the civil suits because it is too early to say whether the policy exclusions would apply. Zappala was also seeking a ruling that the \$1 million policy, in place for several years, should be deemed to provide up to \$3 million in coverage in the Luzerne cases. Now U.S. District Judge A. Richard Caputo has ruled in favor of the insurer, declaring that Zappala's claimed lack of knowledge and involvement is irrelevant because Powell's confession alone is enough to trigger the policy exclusion. For complete story, [click here](#).

[DA's office did not object to no-jail plea deal for rapist, transcript reveals](#)--September 29th, 2010-- (source: nydailynews.com) Prosecutors never objected to a no-jail plea deal for a city worker who sexually attacked three girls inside the [Manhattan Family Court](#) building, a transcript shows. The revelation came a day after [Manhattan District Attorney Cy Vance Jr.](#) blasted the judge's probation sentence for [Tony Simmons](#) as "outrageously lenient." Prosecutors had demanded jail time for Simmons, a veteran employee of the city [Juvenile Justice Department](#) who worked with troubled teens. For complete story, [click here](#). For more on this story, [click here](#).

[Chinese teen allegedly beaten to death at camp](#)--September 29th, 2010--(source: google.com/hostednews/afp) BEIJING — A Chinese teenager was allegedly beaten to death at a boot camp for troubled youths that his mother had lured him to attend by promising he was going to study IT, state media said Thursday. Chen Shi, 16, died two days after enrolling in Beiteng School in Changsha, capital of central China's Hunan province, having been beaten up when he refused to run during training, the Beijing Times reported. According to witnesses, an instructor -- helped by two others -- beat him with a plastic pipe, handcuffs and a wooden baton when he refused to run. The incident comes amid controversy over China's hundreds of boot camps that aim to discipline unruly youths or wean them off web addictions. His mother Tang Yulin decided to enrol Chen to toughen him up because he was "afraid of hardship, had weak willpower and not enough self-confidence" and had failed a school exam, it said. They both travelled to Changsha from their home province of Jiangsu, in the east, after Tang told Chen he was going to study IT to persuade him to go. The school's admissions director had advised her to lie, saying 90 percent of students who attended were given a false reason for attending and the remaining 10 percent were "kidnapped" by their parents or school instructors. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Teen Freed From Lock Up Amid Sex Abuse Claims](#)--October 9th, 2010 (source: miamiherald.com)--A teen was released from a state juvenile lockup in Pembroke Pines amid claims in a federal lawsuit that youths held there had endured "horrific" abuse. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Norfolk investigates worker for credit card use, absences](#)--October, 2010 (Source: hamptonroads.com) THE ALLEGATIONS Lynn Moore was the director of the Norfolk Interagency Consortium, which helps troubled teens. Sources say the city auditor has found more than \$10,000 in charges on a city credit card that Moore can't document or are "unsubstantiated." It is also alleged that Moore would not show up for work at the consortium's headquarters for days at a time but did not claim any vacation time for the last six years she worked. THE HISTORY This is the third instance of city credit card abuse in less than a year. Commissioner of Revenue Sharon McDonald and employee Barbara Lai also made improper charges. And a Norfolk Community Services Board employee is being investigated for being paid for 12 years but not showing up for work. (Complete story)

[Worthington Children's Home Ends Residential Treatment Program](#)--November 11th, 2010 (Source: nbc4i.com) WORTHINGTON, Ohio -- A very public battle over what to do about a home for troubled teens took another turn Monday. The new [CEO of the United Methodist Children's Home](#) in Worthington now says they'll no longer take in teens to stay at the facility. For more than 100 years, The [United Methodist Children's Home](#) has existed, and big changes came as the residential treatment program was cut Monday. "It has been a tough time. We were basically forced to make the decision," said [Bill Wilkins, CEO](#). [Dick Goetz](#) lives right behind the facility and said he didn't know the change was coming. "I'm surprised to hear it. (I) don't know where the revenue comes from," [Goetz](#) said. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Suit attacks conditions at Miss. juvenile lockup](#)--November 16th, 2010 (source: washingtonpost.com) JACKSON, Miss. -- A federal lawsuit claims guards at a Mississippi juvenile lockup have smuggled drugs to inmates, had sex with some of them and denied others medical treatment and basic educational services. The Southern Poverty Law Center, the American Civil Liberties Union and Rob McDuff, a Jackson attorney, filed the complaint Tuesday in U.S. District Court in Jackson on behalf of 13 plaintiffs against the Walnut Grove Youth Correctional Facility. The Justice Department also is investigating. "These young men live in barbaric conditions," said Sheila Bedi, the law center's deputy legal director. "I have done prisons conditions work for almost 10 years, this is the most violent, corrupt abusive prison I've come across." The complaint claims that guards allowed inmate fights that resulted in stab wounds and severe beatings, including one that left one youth with permanent brain damage. It also says inmates were stripped naked and held in isolation for weeks at a time and that sick inmates were denied proper health care. Sex acts between inmates and prison guards and nurses occurred in isolated, camera-free areas of the prison, including individual cells, medical unit examination rooms and restrooms, the lawsuit alleges. It also claimed handcuffed youth were kicked and punched by guards, while others secured in their cells were sprayed with chemical restraints. For complete story, [click here](#).

[North Texas Courts Send Troubled Teens Out of State](#)--November 23rd, 2010 (source: myfoxdfw.com) DALLAS - A computer lab, weight room, indoor pool, movie theatre, and video arcade...and your tax dollars help pick up the tab. So, how do you sign up your kids? Well, you can't sign up for this program because it's ordered by a judge for troubled teens. But it's not a local facility. It's not even in Texas. So, when governments are facing major money problems, does it make sense to send young offenders thousands of miles out of state? Howard Nick looks like a tough guy but chokes up easily when talking about his 14 year old grandson. In September, a Denton County Juvenile Court Judge sent Nathan to Glenn Mills residential treatment facility outside of Philadelphia. "I said the only way you can hurt me is to send him to Philadelphia," Nick says he told the probation officer. "We hadn't been separated in almost 15 years," Nick told FOX 4. Nathan's juvenile records are confidential by law but Nick admits his grandson had problems with truancy, broke in to a car, and had probation violations. Now, Nick feels like he has lost his grandson, whom he's raised since birth. Nick says he begged the county not to send the boy out of state. "She called me and said they accepted him. And I said, 'oh, hell. Why so far away?'" Nick told FOX 4. "I was so upset I couldn't talk to the probation officer." Nick and his grandson are not alone. Denton County started sending juvenile offenders out of state last year. So far, taxpayers have shelled-out \$84,327 for four juveniles. Most of that comes from the feds and grant money. Since 2005, Dallas County has sent 45 juveniles out of state to Pennsylvania, Arizona, and Arkansas at a cost of \$963,292.00. Of that cost, \$730,536.00 came directly from Dallas County taxpayers. Tarrant County has sent 15 juveniles to out of state facilities since 2006, costing taxpayers \$538,063.00. But Collin County has not sent a single juvenile offender out of state. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Investigator Exclusive: Youth worker charged with raping teen](#)--November 23rd, 2010 (source: wkyc.com) BROOKLYN -- An HIV-positive man who worked with troubled teens at a Cleveland residential treatment center is charged with raping a 17-year-old boy who was once a patient at the center, Cuyahoga County

Prosecutor spokesman Ryan Miday said. Brooklyn Police arrested Ronnie Sagere, 34, after the boy went last Wednesday morning to MetroHealth Medical Center and reported that he was sexually assaulted at Sagere's home on Westbrook Drive, Miday said. The boy was sleeping at the home after getting drunk on booze bought by Sagere when he woke up to find Sagere on top of him, raping him, according to Miday. Sagere remained in jail Tuesday after a judge set bail at \$100,000. He faces charges of rape, gross sexual imposition, kidnapping and felonious assault, according to court records. The felonious assault charge was filed because Sagere is HIV positive. Sagere worked at the Cleveland Christian Home, a residential center on Lorain Avenue, where wards of the state are treated for behavioral and mental health issues, said Cleveland Christian Home Chief Executive Officer David Lundeen. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Parents sue Nashville forensics company over jail death](#)--November 27th, 2010-- (Source: tennessean.com) Birth defect blamed; parents say son beaten BY BRIAN HAAS • THE TENNESSEAN • NOVEMBER 27, 2010 The parents of a Memphis teen who died after being restrained in a Rutherford County jail have filed a lawsuit against the Nashville forensics company that ruled his death natural. The suit seeks at least \$3 million in the death of Andron Reed, 18, from Forensic Medical, the company that was contracted to perform autopsies for the state of Tennessee. In it, Reed's parents accuse Forensic Medical of "deceitful and untrue statements and dishonorable professional conduct" in investigating Reed's death. In a separate federal lawsuit, the Reed family is suing the Rutherford County Sheriff's Office, saying his death was caused by "excessive and traumatic" restraints. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Republicans Sink Bill to Prevent Abuse in Teen Behavior Schools](#) --December 6th, 2010 -- (Source: huffingtonpost.com) As Congress fights this week over taxes, the deficit commission and finally ending "don't ask, don't tell" another issue involving the health and safety of tens of thousands of American teens has flown under the radar. Last year, with broad bipartisan support, the US House of Representatives passed HR 911, the [Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act](#), which would provide some minimum standards for the multimillion dollar teen behavior modification industry. The industry, which has largely escaped widespread public scrutiny, preys upon the fears of parents through deceptive marketing tactics and outright lies. Promising parents to straighten out their "troubled teens" (who usually aren't all that troubled) this industry locks away teens in abusive camps subjecting them to months or years of forced labor, humiliating degradation and unthinkable physical, psychological and sexual abuse. Tens of thousands of teens are suffering in these programs right now and dozens have been killed, but after weeks of promising negotiations in the Senate to move forward with some kind of protection for these youth, Senate Republicans abruptly closed negotiations and killed any hope this year of stopping this rampant child abuse. For complete story, [click here](#) (or read all links on the HEAL site relating to teen programs.)

[Poor jail conditions blamed for suicides](#)--December 11th, 2010 -- (Source: torontosun.com) WINNIPEG - Troubled teens are being put at greater risk of suicide in a jail that was never designed to hold them for long periods of time, says a Winnipeg lawyer. "The tendency is to treat them like adults, and they aren't adults," said Saul Simmonds. A 17-year-old girl was taken to hospital in critical condition Wednesday after attempting suicide at the Manitoba Youth Centre. Her medical status could not be confirmed Friday. This comes five months after a 15-year-old girl committed suicide at the centre. Simmonds says MYC wasn't designed to hold young offenders for years at a time -- something now commonplace -- and offers them little in the way of resources. "That kind of long-term holding does not allow a person to develop," he said. The increased presence of gangs at the youth centre makes it more difficult for some first-time offenders to cope, placing them at risk of suicide, Simmonds said. For complete story, [click here](#).

[School for troubled teens is under review after fight draws police: suspected ring leaders charged with felonies](#)--December 14th, 2010 -- (Source: lohud.com) SOMERS — State officials will investigate Lincoln Hall in the aftermath of a 30-student riot that broke out last week at the residential school for troubled boys. The state's Office of Children and Family Services, which licenses Lincoln Hall, on Monday said it is conducting a "thorough review" of the school's operations, including its student-to-staff ratio and discipline procedures, and will meet with administrators to discuss ways to prevent further violence. "We are aware of and concerned about recent incidents on campus," said OCFS spokeswoman Susan Steele. The announcement came as four Lincoln Hall residents, accused of instigating Friday's riot that injured several employees, were granted residence at another youth center during an appearance Monday in Town Court. David Excource, 17, Cleveland Fowler, 16, Sergio Naranjo, 16, and Shakiem Way, 17, were charged over the weekend with first-degree riot, a felony, and are being held in county jail on \$10,000 bail. They will be moved to a youth center in Mount Vernon if room is available, and are due back in court Jan. 10. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Mosque focus falls on former Dundee teen](#)--December 15th, 2010 (Source: newsregister.com) ...He asked Crawford to take a polygraph exam, then to permit a search. When he was met with refusal on both counts, he left a surveillance team in place while he left to obtain a search warrant. In the affidavit, Poole said that based on this investigation, he believes the crimes of first-degree arson, first-degree criminal mischief, second-degree burglary, second-degree intimidation, possession of a destructive device and unlawful manufacture of a destructive device were committed, and that supporting evidence of the crimes would be found either at the Crawford residence or on Crawford's person. During his teen years in Yamhill County, he compiled a record that led his mother to place him in the Dundee Ranch behavioral treatment program in Costa Rica. However, she had to fly down and retrieve him after authorities shut the academy down on allegations of rampant abuse. He contended he was beaten and tortured there, as did other troubled teens sent there for treatment. His story was chronicled by then-reporter Matt LaPlante in an extensive News-Register article in 2003... For complete story, [click here](#).

[Home-based therapy best for troubled teens, experts say](#)--December 17th, 2010 (Source: independentmail.com) Tough-love boarding schools have become a popular option for parents seeking to straighten out their unruly children. But critics say that these schools are not always the best or safest option. "There is absolutely no evidence that tough love works," said Maia Szalavitz, a journalist who scrutinized the troubled-teen industry in her 2006 book "Help at Any Cost." Data gathered by the United States Government Accountability Office in 2005 revealed 1,503 incidents in which students were mistreated by staff members at boarding schools and wilderness programs. In 2006, 28 states reported at least one death in residential facilities for troubled teens, according to GAO official Kay Brown's testimony at a 2008 congressional hearing. Less than a year after this hearing, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a measure intended to better protect teens at residential programs. However, the legislation never came up for a vote in the Senate. Szalavitz said parents should consider home-based treatment options before sending their children away to a boarding school. "The best treatments for teenagers involve the family," she said. "The idea that you can fix a relationship by exiling someone doesn't pass the common-sense test." For complete story, [click here](#).

[Hopevale: Home For Troubled Teens In Hamburg Closing](#)--December 19th, 2010 (Source: wgrz.com) HAMBURG, NY-- It was started 155 years ago by the Sisters of Charity as a home for wayward girls. Now [Hopevale](#), a Hamburg based agency which offers services to abused children and troubled teens, is shutting down after more than a century and a half of service. "We've got significant financial problems and we just couldn't go forward any more. We're out of money...I don't know how to put it to you clearer than that," said Jim Walter, a management consultant brought on to assist at Hopevale six months ago. Walter says a combination of factors have steered Hopevale toward financial ruin to the point where its directors have decided to cease operations and, regrettably, will have to lay off 190 full and part time staff. "Most of the income for this not for profit agency comes from the residential treatment center," explained Walter, who says changing trends in the methods deployed to assist troubled teens were a significant factor in Hopevale's financial plight. "In general, the use of residential treatment centers has dropped off -- they're trying to keep the child at home where they can and residential treatment is an expensive thing for counties to afford, so they look at alternatives a lot more closely than they used to," Walter told WGRZ-TV. Walter also noted some troubling incidents in the past year which caused Hopevale to temporarily cease accepting placements to its residential program, which also helped to contribute to dwindling enrollment to the point where there are only half as many kids as a year ago. "We shut down because there were concerns with regard to child safety and some concerns with regard to the effectiveness of the programs...when we did that, as we were working to improve out programs, we lost census," Walter said. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Abbeville school had role in rise and fall of enterprise for serving troubled teens](#)--December 19th, 2010 (Source: independentmail.com) DUE WEST — A boarding school reopening near Due West next year was previously part of a thriving network of facilities for troubled teens reaching from California to the Czech Republic. Parents were eager to send their out-of-control adolescents to tough-love boarding schools like Carolina Springs Academy in Abbeville County. The facility, which filled to capacity soon after opening, was among more than a dozen institutions affiliated with the Utah-based Worldwide Association of Specialty Programs and Schools. At one point, tuition payments topped \$90 million annually from students enrolled in behavior-modification programs designed by Worldwide's founder, Robert Lichfield. Worldwide's boarding school empire has crumbled in recent years. Under pressure from state

regulators, Carolina Springs closed in 2009. It intends to reopen next year as a coed Christian boarding school without any ties to Worldwide, which also is known as WWASPS. Worldwide President Ken Kay said WWASPS is "out of business." He blamed the recession and media coverage of abuse allegations, arrests, raids and two students' deaths for contributing to its demise. WASPS still exists on paper, he explained, so that its insurance company will keep paying the attorneys who are defending Worldwide in ongoing lawsuits. The highest profile case is a federal suit involving 353 parents and former students. The suit accuses WWASPS and its affiliates — including Carolina Springs — of assault, battery, false imprisonment, fraud and racketeering. Students at WWASPS boarding schools "were subjected to physical abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse," the suit alleges. "In many instances, the abuse could accurately be described as torture of children." For complete story, [click here](#).

Fire destroys former home for troubled youth--December 16th, 2010-- (Source: wlox.com) FORREST COUNTY, MS (WDAM) An early-morning fire gutted a three-story dormitory building in Forrest County once used to house troubled girls. The facility once known as Bethesda Home for Girls was recently leased by Ezekiel house ministries, which operates a transition house on Bouie Street. Organizers were planning on opening the old Bethesda location in January under a new name - Reclamation Ranch. For complete story, [click here](#).

DA Says Counselor Targeted "Damaged" Teens to Sexually Abuse--January 20th, 2011 (Source: dnainfo.com) MANHATTAN SUPREME COURT — A juvenile justice counselor on trial for rape preyed on a child prostitute and other troubled and "damaged" teens because he thought they would not report him, prosecutors charged in summations at his trial Thursday. The DA argued Tony Simmons, 47, was a friendly, outgoing counselor who was well liked by colleagues and detainees. His cover worked until a supervisor heard about one of his exploits, Assistant District Attorney Evan Krutoy said during closing arguments Friday. Prosecutors charged Simmons knew the kids and their problems well, having served as a counselor for 16 years. "He knew they were damaged," Krutoy said. "He's not a man with a gun and a mask and in an alley. [He has] a smile and a [Department of Juvenile Justice] ID card." But when the predator could, "he did it and he knew it was risky," said Krutoy. Read more: <http://www.dnainfo.com/20110120/downtown/da-says-counselor-targeted-damaged-teens-sexually-abuse#ixzz1BiOkJC66> For complete story, [click here](#).

Cleveland Job Corps program troubled, Plain Dealer investigation shows--January 31st, 2011 (Source: cleveland.com) [The Cleveland Job Corps Academy](#) opened in November 2007 with high expectations and a mission to educate, train, house and find jobs for troubled teens and young adults. Championed by the late Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones as a crucial community resource, the academy drew praise from then-U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao, who toured the \$35 million, 25-acre campus in Collinwood six months later and boasted it "will help so many young people find hope and opportunity." But a Plain Dealer investigation has found that the academy is in turmoil. The investigation, begun last spring and based on interviews with current and former Job Corps workers, public records and internal documents obtained by the paper, revealed: [Applied Technology Systems Inc.](#), the Cleveland-based company that is paid millions of tax dollars a year to run the federal program, has failed to pay bills, at times leaving students without properly maintained fire alarms, medical services, uniforms and other supplies. Unruly students have been accused of numerous crimes, including fighting with neighborhood gang members, assaulting other students, stealing, and possessing drugs and knives. The crimes and behavior problems have disrupted learning, promoted fear on campus led to low morale and staff turnover, according to former employees and documents. ATSI often tolerated bad behavior and passed poorly performing students to meet contract and financial goals, former employees charge. For complete story, [click here](#).

Md., Calif. Suspend 'Scared Straight' Programs--February 4th, 2011 (Source: abcnews.go.com) Maryland and California prison officials said Friday they have suspended youthful offender diversion programs featured on the television show "Beyond Scared Straight" after the U.S. Justice Department warned they could lose federal funding. The A&E series, which started Jan. 13, is produced by Arnold Shapiro, maker of the Emmy- and Oscar-winning 1979 television special, "Scared Straight." Like that show, it documents visits by troubled teenagers to prisons where intimidating inmates deliver in-your-face lectures about the harshness of life behind bars. A prison agency spokesman in South Carolina, the only other state featured on the A&E Network series, said the diversion program will be reviewed by the state's incoming corrections chief. The Justice Department said a study of nine such programs concluded they don't deter teenagers from offending. In fact, the youths were more likely to offend, according to Assistant Attorney General Laurie O. Robinson and Jeff Slowikowski, acting administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. "In light of this evidence, the U.S. Department of Justice discourages the funding of scared straight-type programs. States that operate such programs could have their federal funding reduced if shown not to have complied with the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act," the federal officials wrote in an op-ed piece published Monday in The (Baltimore) Sun. Slowikowski said his office recently expressed these concerns to officials in the three states. For complete story, [click here](#).

Mom suing after son dies in summer drowning--February 5th, 2011 (source: philly.com) CARNEZ BOONE would have been back home in Delaware County by now. But Boone, a 14-year-old Collingdale boy who had been sent to a residential treatment program in western Pennsylvania, disappeared in the murky water at Lakeside Park in Stoneboro last summer, drowning after having jumped off the high dive. Besides having to deal with Carnez's early death, his mother, Okita Allen, can't help but wonder what he was doing on the diving board in the first place. Carnez couldn't swim. According to a lawsuit Allen filed last week, school counselors pressured Carnez to jump off the high dive during a class trip with the YES Academy, a yearlong residential program for troubled teens. "My child is dead. There was no remorse, no compassion," said Allen, 38. For complete story, [click here](#).

Founder uncertain about future of boarding school in Abbeville County--February 5th, 2011 (Source: independentmail.com) Narvin Lichfield spent a night in the Abbeville County Detention Center last month, and now he is having second thoughts about reopening his boarding school for troubled teens. "I might just liquidate the property," Lichfield said in an interview last week. "I am tired. I am worn out." (Webmaster Note: Hey, great idea!!! HEAL supports Lichfield in closing the program for good.) For complete story, [click here](#).

Ex-Texas prison official on trial for pupil sex--February 6th, 2011 (Source: chron.com) By BETSY BLANEY Associated Press © 2011 The Associated Press Feb. 6, 2011, 10:56AM LUBBOCK, Texas — Six years have passed since a sex scandal involving jail administrators and teenage inmates were first investigated by Texas Rangers. In that time, the case has prompted the resignations or firings of several top state officials responsible for jailing Texas' juvenile criminals and sent a former West Texas jail administrator to prison. Now, after years of court motions and alleged inaction by a local district attorney, state prosecutors have one target left in their case: John Paul Hernandez. The 45-year-old former principal at the Texas Youth Commission's West Texas State School in Pyote is on trial this week on charges he sexually molested pupils in 2004 and 2005. For complete story, [click here](#). (Hernandez was ultimately acquitted. Source: http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/41711814/ns/us_news/)

Former Judge Is on Trial in 'Cash for Kids' Scheme--February 9th, 2011 (Source: nytimes.com) SCRANTON, Pa. — A former Pennsylvania judge went on trial in federal court on Tuesday, charged with racketeering, bribery and extortion in what prosecutors say was a \$2.8 million scheme to send juvenile delinquents to privately run prisons. The case against the judge, Mark A. Ciavarella Jr., who presided in Luzerne County, drew national attention for what legal experts say is a dangerous gap in the juvenile justice systems of many states — children appearing in court without lawyers. Mr. Ciavarella, now 60, sentenced thousands of young people, funneling them into two private detention centers prosecutors say were run by his friends who slipped him payments in a "cash for kids" scheme. Few of the young people had lawyers, a chronic problem that legal scholars say makes guilty pleas more likely, saddling them with criminal records. The state has since expunged more than 6,000 records of youths Mr. Ciavarella sentenced, some for crimes as small as stealing a jar of nutmeg. "It was a terrible lesson," said Laurence H. Tribe, a constitutional law professor at Harvard Law School who founded the Obama administration's Access to Justice Initiative. He added: "It highlighted the dangers for juveniles who don't know their rights, haven't talked to a lawyer and are urged by overburdened courts to take a plea. Once that happens, future opportunities for the child are essentially gone." In court here on Tuesday, Gordon Zubrod, an assistant United States attorney, portrayed Mr. Ciavarella's actions over seven years as a plot to enrich himself. William Ruzzo, a lawyer for Mr. Ciavarella, denied the charges. For complete story, [click here](#).

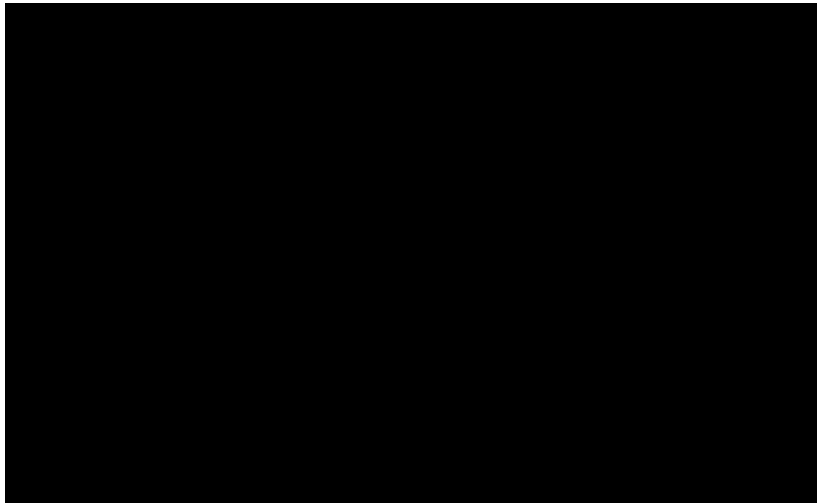
Greg Kutz: Uncovering child abuse and neglect at residential, public and private schools--September 27th, 2010 (Received by HEAL on February 15th, 2011, Source: washingtonpost.com) The Partnership for Public Service Monday, September 27, 2010; 5:04 PM In Arizona, a teen with asthma and complaining of chest pains was forced by counselors at a residential boot camp to do pushups and carry cinder blocks for not having completed an assignment. The youngster subsequently died, with an autopsy finding more than 70 physical injuries. In West Virginia, a four-year-old autistic girl with cerebral palsy was tied to a

chair, badly bruised and traumatized. In Utah, a 16-year-old boy in a wilderness therapy program collapsed and died after counselors ignored signs of physical distress for three weeks, including severe weight loss, severe abdominal pain and loss of bodily functions. These shocking and heartbreaking stories are among thousands of cases chronicled by Gregory Kutz, a Government Accountability Office (GAO) managing director, who led a nationwide investigation that documented widespread abuse, torture, neglect and death of troubled and disabled children in residential programs and in public and private schools across the United States. For complete story, [click here](#).

Former Pa. judge guilty of corruption--February 18th, 2011 (Source: upi.com) SCRANTON, Pa., Feb. 18 (UPI) -- A federal jury in Scranton, Pa., Friday found former Luzerne County Judge Mark Ciavarella guilty of racketeering, mail fraud and money laundering. Ciavarella faces a possible prison sentence and must repay \$997,600 to the government for his role in a kickback scheme in which he sent young offenders to a juvenile detention center run by a private company, WNEP-TV, Scranton, reported. Ciavarella was charged with 39 counts of racketeering, fraud, money laundering, extortion and filing false tax returns; he was found not guilty on 10 counts of receiving a bribe, eight counts of extortion and four counts of wire fraud, the station said. The jury deliberated for more than 11 hours in the trial that began Monday, hearing testimony from Internal Revenue Service agents, Luzerne County attorney Robert Powell, former Luzerne County Prothonotary Jill Moran and the defendant, who denied the extortion charges but admitted filing false income tax returns. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court in 2009 ordered that criminal records be cleared for juveniles sentenced by Ciavarella between 2003 and 2008. Ciavarella and another judge, Michael T. Conohan, agreed to plead guilty in 2009 to wire fraud and conspiracy, acknowledging they got about \$2.6 million from the owners of two detention centers. But U.S. District Judge Edwin Kosik rejected the plea agreement. For complete story, [click here](#).

Adam Lambert Tells Troubled Gay Teens To Love Themselves--February 19th, 2011 (Source: ontopmag.com)

Holder supports prevention for youths over courts--March 7th, 2011 (Source: washingtonpost.com) WASHINGTON -- Attorney General [Eric Holder](#) said Monday that some programs aimed at scaring troubled teens into better behavior are failing in their mission. Speaking to a legislative conference of county officials, the attorney general said the nation's system of juvenile justice must move away from prosecution and punishment and more toward prevention and intervention. Holder cited a scientific review that found that children ordered into nine so-called scared straight programs around the country are nearly 30 percent more likely to offend than youths who are not. "Scared straight" initiatives involve visits by troubled teenagers to prisons where intimidating inmates deliver in-your-face lectures about the harshness of life behind bars. The attorney general says many youths who are incarcerated for nonviolent offenses often emerge violent or at the very least, traumatized. For complete story, [click here](#).



(Webmaster Note: Thank you to President and First Lady Obama for speaking up for children and against abuse and bullying.)

Bullying is not a Rite of Passage--March 10th, 2011 (Source: washingtonpost.com) Valerie Jarrett had just run through what would happen at today's summit on bullying when I asked her a rather blunt question. With all that's going on -- fights over budget cuts, the encroaching debt ceiling, the economy, job creation, not to mention the wave of protests across the Middle East and the bloody intransigence of Moammar Gaddafi -- why is President Obama focused on this today? "What could be more important than our children?" Jarrett, senior adviser to the president, asked during an interview in her West Wing office Wednesday Thursday. "There is a perception that bullying is a rite of passage. And it's not....It's just not acceptable." For complete story, [click here](#).

SPLC Sues Mississippi County After 'Shocking' Video Shows Abuses at Juvenile Facility--March 8th, 2011 (splcenter.org) The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) and Disability Rights Mississippi (DRMS) today [filed a lawsuit](#) against Forrest County, Miss., to force the county to comply with federal law and provide the children held at the county's juvenile detention center with access to lawyers and civil rights advocates following reports of abusive conditions at the facility. Video footage from the Forrest County Juvenile Detention Center shows a youth hogtied and other abuses, including a youth slammed against a wall by a guard. The video was recently released despite the county's effort to prevent it from being aired. When advocates for the SPLC and DRMS sought access to the detention center in order to provide detained youth with federally mandated protection and advocacy services, county officials barred their access to the children. For complete story, [click here](#).

Friday, Mar. 18, 2011 Grand juries recommend youth jail be evaluated By ROBIN FITZGERALD - rfitzgerald@sunherald.com Grand juries for Harrison County's Gulfport and Biloxi divisions expressed concern over deteriorating conditions at the Juvenile Detention Center in final reports for their six-month terms. The report from the Gulfport panel gave a detailed list of recommendations, and concluded that while there have been improvements, "the deplorable physical conditions of the facility must be attended to immediately." The youth center is in Biloxi. The Gulfport panel took before-and-after pictures of improvements at the center, but recommended a strategic plan for building or relocating a modernized facility in Gulfport near the county's youth court. Until that happens, the report said, maintenance of the current facility should receive "utmost priority." The Biloxi panel's report recommended a third-party evaluation to make sure the youth center "is operated under acceptable guidelines and principals." Both panels also visited the county jail and children's shelter. The Gulfport panel recommended the jail booking and medical areas be renovated and expanded, and noted neither area is sufficient to handle the number of inmates housed at the jail. The Gulfport panel also addressed law enforcement concerns, and recommended cases be brought to the grand jury in a more timely manner. It also agreed with previous grand juries that all cases of sexual assaults against children be thoroughly investigated and evidence gathered as effectively as possible. The grand juries returned a combined total of 700 indictments and 130 no true bills. The Gulfport panel served under Circuit Judge Lisa Dodson, and was in session a total of 18 days. The Biloxi panel served under Circuit Judge Roger Clark. It was in session 12 days. Read more: <http://www.sunherald.com/2011/03/18/2955120/grand-juries-recommend-youth-jail.html#ixzz1H2YJymK7>

PANI Rescues 20 Young Americans Who Suffered Various Attacks--March 22nd, 2011 (Source: insidecostarica.com) The Patronato Nacional de la Infancia (PANI) - Costa Rica's child welfare agency - says it rescued on Monday a group of 20 American minors who allegedly received psychological and physical abuse by managers of a reformatory in Puntarenas. The academy "Teen Mentor" has been operating since 2010 in the Hotel Carra in Tarcoles de Garabito,

Puntarenas. The PANI took the action to intervene following complaints from three psychologists at the academy. Ten children were transferred directly to a PANI shelter, while the case is still in under investigation. Parents paid from us\$600 per month to keep their children between the ages of 13 and 18 in the program. PANI officials say all the youths found in the academy on Monday were all Americans. Jorge Urbina, manager of the PANI, told the media on Monday that the U.S. Embassy in San José was in the process of notifying all the parents to come get their children. The action by the PANI quickly reminds that of the "Dundee Ranch" academy back in 2004. Academy at Dundee Ranch was a behavior modification facility for United States teenagers west of Orotina. It was promoted as a residential school, offering a program of behavior modification, motivational "emotional growth seminars," a progressive academic curriculum, and a structured daily schedule, for teenagers struggling in their homes, schools, or communities. The facility was associated with World Wide Association of Specialty Programs and Schools (WWASP). For complete story, [click here](#).

Costa Rica government closes controversial 'tough love' youth camp--March 22nd, 2011 (Source: ticotimes.net) For the second time in the past nine years a behavior modification center run by the Utah-based World Wide Association of Specialty Programs (WWASP) was closed in Costa Rica for alleged psychological and physical mistreatment of residents. Last Friday, the Child Welfare Office (PANI) closed the center, known as Teen Mentor, which advertises therapeutic and psychological services to 21 U.S. teenagers aged 13 to 18. Parents had placed the troubled teens in the facility to address behavioral issues and problems with substance abuse. PANI closed the center after receiving complaints that the student residents were being subjected to physical and mental abuse from the supervisors of the program. Three PANI psychologists visited the facility to interview the students when they were alerted to the allegedly abusive conditions at the center, the daily La Nación reported. The organization's website, which has since been disabled, offered behavior modification services for a monthly fee. The residents had been staying at the Hotel Carara in the town of Tárcoles de Garabito, in Puntarenas, west of San José near the Pacific Ocean. "They rented the entire hotel for several months," said a hotel employee who asked that his name be withheld. "The boys were downstairs, the girls were upstairs. As far as abuse or things like that, we usually only saw the kids during pool time and don't really know what went on when they went to the beach or outside. When I came to work on Friday, PANI was here and by that night everyone was gone." Robert Walter Lichfield, the founder of the WWASP program, registered Teen Mentor as an official business in the national registry in August 2010. In the last 16 years, 15 behavioral facilities operated by WWASP have been closed due to similar allegations by child welfare organizations in the U.S. and other countries. For complete story, [click here](#). For more on this story, [click here](#).

Family Resources is under investigation--March 24th, 2011 (Source: whbf.com) A center for troubled youth in davenport is under investigation after an alleged sexual abuse incident. It apparently happened when the boys were in time out. Family Resources is being investigated by the Department of Human Services after two teens, a 17 and 13 year old, who have a history of sex offenses, allegedly engaged in a sex act. The young people housed at the Family Resources' 24 hour care facility come through the court system and have significant emotional and behavioral needs... And staff members said they didn't find out about the November incident until days afterwards. "When our client came to us and admitted to the situation we immediately followed up with emergency medical care for him," said Cheryl Goodwin, President & CEO, Family Resources. The facility is now operating under a temporary license until their corrective action plan has been reviewed by the state. "The next step is to have somebody visit the campus and make sure that they are doing what it is they said they would do," said Roger Munns, Iowa Department of Human Services. Unfortunately, staff members and state officials said this isn't the first something like this has happened at the facility... For complete story, [click here](#). For more on this story, [click here](#).

Wilderness, youth therapy programs closing--March 25th, 2011 (Source: sltrib.com) A wave of closures and consolidations in wilderness therapy and youth treatment programs in Utah will take nearly 200 jobs from Wayne County alone. Three programs for troubled young people, owned by Aspen Education Group, constitute the biggest employer in the county, which is home to the redrock landscape of Capitol Reef National Park, said Les Prall, of the Governor's Office of Economic Development. Without Aspen, he predicted unemployment in Wayne County will rise to nearly 22 percent. "That's the highest I've ever seen for an unemployment rate in a county," Prall said. "It's a very major thing, it's huge." The tightening national credit market was a big factor forcing the closures, said Aspen President Phil Herschman. Facing price tags of \$18,000 to \$60,000 for weeks or months in the intensive therapeutic programs, parents often turned to home equity or other loans, he said. Education loans for therapy "no longer exist," Herschman said. "The demand had just dried up dramatically." It's a trend that affects the entire multimillion-dollar industry in Utah. "We haven't had as many closures here, mainly because a lot of the programs are just barely hanging on to try and save themselves," said state licensing director Ken Stettler. CRC Health Group, Aspen's California-based parent company, will close two programs in Utah: An equine and behavioral therapy boarding school in Wayne County, and a substance abuse treatment facility for teens in St. George. Another Wayne County drug rehab program will move to Idaho. The state's longest-running wilderness therapy program, Aspen Achievement Academy, will move from Wayne County to Lehi and merge with another program, Outback Expeditions. A live-in treatment center for teens in Draper will merge with a similar facility in Syracuse. Read More at: <http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/home/51497664-76/programs-aspen-county-therapy.html.csp>

Aspen Education Group to Restructure Programs--March 24th, 2011 (Source: strugglingteens.com) "As part of this operational restructuring, Aspen has announced plans to discontinue operations at five locations and consolidate services for three other facilities. The programs to be closed include Bromley Brook School (Manchester Center, VT), New Leaf Academy of Oregon, NorthStar Center (Bend, OR), Aspen Ranch (Loa, UT) and SunHawk Adolescent Recovery Center (St. George, UT). Aspen Achievement Academy (Loa, UT) will consolidate with Aspen's Outback Therapeutic Expeditions in Lehi, Utah; Youth Care (Draper, UT) will be moving onto Aspen's Island View campus in Syracuse, UT, maintaining its established brand name; and Passages to Recovery (Loa, UT) will be relocating to Shoshone, ID, to add a young adult substance abuse treatment component to Aspen's already existing SUWS Adolescent & Youth program." (Webmaster Note: Provided to help add information to the article directly below. Click title link to go to complete article. HEAL will not be posting the complete article on our website as it is our well established and evidenced belief that strugglingteens.com is little more than an unethical referral and self-promoting website that does not exhibit due diligence in the "information" they provide on programs. Woodbury's continued association with CEDU-based programs and other fraudulent and abusive facilities remains a serious concern.)

Town Relies On Troubled Youth Prison For Profits--March 25th, 2011 (source: npr.org) First in a two-part series on private prisons Prisons are filled with stress and violence; without proper supervision they can revert to primitive places. That's what happened at Walnut Grove Youth Correctional Facility in Mississippi, an NPR news investigation has determined. As the nation's largest juvenile prison, Walnut Grove houses 1,200 boys and young men in a sprawling one-story complex ringed by security fences about an hour's drive east of Jackson. The State of Mississippi pays a private corrections company to run the prison. NPR's investigation found that allegations swirling around the prison raise the fundamental question of whether profits have distorted the mission of rehabilitating young inmates. An Environment Of Violence Walnut Grove "started out and it was formed to be something good for youth, but somewhere down the line it took a turn for the worse," said former inmate Clayborne Henderson, 27. He spent two years for kidnapping in "the Grove," as they call it, between his 19th and 21st birthdays. Now he's working at a car wash and taking community college courses in Jackson, trying to straighten out his life. The Walnut Grove Youth Correctional Facility houses 1,200 boys and young men east of Jackson, Miss. John Burnett/NPR The Walnut Grove Youth Correctional Facility houses 1,200 boys and young men east of Jackson, Miss. He and other former inmates describe an environment of violence inside the youth prison as so pervasive it became entertainment. "It'd be like setting up a fight deal like you would with two dogs," Henderson said. "I did witness twice while I was at Walnut Grove, they actually bet on it. It was payday for the guards." For complete story, [click here](#).

A RELIGIOUS SUB-CULTURE MANY AMERICANS HAVE NEVER HEARD OF, YET HAS THOUSANDS OF CHURCHES ACROSS THE COUNTRY ... CHURCHES THAT CRITICS CLAIM CAN FOSTER PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ABUSE--April 6th, 2011 (source: blogs.abcnnews.com) Elizabeth Vargas' Yearlong Investigation Into The Independent Fundamental Baptist Church, Aired On "20/20," Friday, April 8, 10-11 PM ET Try to imagine the pain and humiliation of a teenage girl, just 15 years old, who says she was forced to stand in front of a New Hampshire church congregation and confess her "sin" of being pregnant. She says not only was she forced to confess her pregnancy, but also to ask for their forgiveness -- with no mention of the man she says sexually abused her. After all, she says, the pastor told her it's better than being stoned to death as the bible describes. That is what Tina Anderson alleged happened to her at her ultra conservative Independent Fundamental Baptist, or IFB, Church. The IFB has thousands of congregations across the country, but many people have never heard of it. That was, until another woman, Jocelyn Zichterman, began a public campaign -- armed with nothing but a computer and memories of her own alleged abuse that she says church beliefs can foster. And survivors are now coming out of the woodwork, to say she's not alone.

Elizabeth Vargas' yearlong exclusive investigation into a religious sub-culture that critics claim can foster – even cover up – physical and sexual abuse airs on “20/20” on FRIDAY, APRIL 8 (10:00 – 11:00 p.m. ET) on the ABC Television Network. Critics say the church teaches a strict interpretation of the bible including the practice known as breaking the will of the child, with some advocating that it even be applied to infants as young as two weeks old. “I had a decision to make that either I was going to kind of curl up in the corner and be quiet or I was going to stand up for my family and tell the truth,” says Jocelyn Zichterman. For complete story, [click here](#).

Increasingly, Internet Activism Helps Shutter Abusive 'Troubled Teen' Boot Camps--April 5th, 2011 (source: healthland.time.com) For the last 40 years, teens with drug problems, learning disabilities and other behavioral issues have been sent to residential facilities to endure “tough love” techniques that are widely known to include methods of outright physical and psychological abuse. Whether labeled as boot camps, emotional-growth schools, behavior modification programs or wilderness programs, these organizations have operated without federal oversight, and state regulation of the schools ranges from lax to nonexistent. Now, however, individual critics of the programs are using the Internet to find each other and mobilize, and are bringing change. Consider the Elan School, in Poland, Maine, which has long been known for its extreme practices. On April 1, Elan shut its doors after four decades in operation, blaming negative publicity online for recent declines in enrollment. “The school has been the target of harsh and false attacks spread over the Internet with the avowed purpose of forcing the school to close,” Sharon Terry, Elan's executive director, [told](#) the Lewiston Maine Sun Journal. The paper reported: Despite several recent investigations conducted by the Maine Department of Education that Terry said have vindicated the school, “the school has, unfortunately, been unable to survive the damage.” Elan is just the most recent in a growing list of victories for opponents of tough residential programs for troubled teens. In the last three years, some 40 other private institutions like Elan have closed, and others have been condemned by state investigations, as activism online — mostly led by survivors of such programs and their parents — has increased. For complete story, [click here](#) (or review entire HEAL website and external links).

Agency serving troubled youth has troubles of its own--April 6th, 2011 (source: tcdailyplanet.net) By [Charles Hallman, Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder](#) April 06, 2011 Freeport West is a 41-year-old nonprofit human services agency that provides programs and services to at-risk youth and young families, with offices in Minneapolis and St. Paul. After several years of turmoil and the recent firings of its executive director and other staff, the agency may be currently facing its worst crisis in those 41 years of service to the community. A new interim Freeport executive director was selected last week to replace former executive director Ramona Wilson, who was hired almost four years ago. She “is moving on...to pursue other professional opportunities,” according to a March 16 press release. Wilson's departure was followed a day later by the unexpected firing of five staff members at the St. Paul office. One of them, Sherrie Ellis, said the interim executive director told her that she was let go due to lack of funding. Former St. Paul office manager Dora Darnes said that, when told she was fired, “I was in shock and devastated.” She was hired last June. “A lot of these kids come to depend on a lot of us and get a lot of different things from different staff people.” The series of events are puzzling, said Rev. Devin Miller of St. Paul last week, including closing the St. Paul office for two days after the firings. “You don't fire [the executive director] on Tuesday and then drop five staff on Thursday without due process,” he pointed out. Miller said that he met with Freeport Board Chair Fred Blocton once he learned of the firings and asked about “\$115,000 on the table” for the St. Paul office. “How can you tell me that there is no money when you approved a budget with [a three-percent increase], then all of a sudden you fire five people?” “We served over 700 kids” since the St. Paul office opened in 2008, Ellis noted. “It's all about the kids and what they need. I'm worried as to what is going to happen.” The minister and other community folk are strongly suggesting that what is happening to the Freeport's St. Paul office could be the result of a tug-of-war between Blocton and Wilson. When the MSR last week contacted Blocton for comment, he responded with a March 24 prepared statement: “Freeport's board of directors, management team and staff are committed to providing quality programming...providing uninterrupted, quality services to at-risk [youth] is our number one priority.” However, two individuals formerly connected with Freeport have pointed out that the nonprofit organization might have been mismanaged during Wilson's tenure. “Too many decisions were made without doing the proper homework,” including opening the St. Paul office, said a former board member who spoke to the MSR on condition of anonymity. According to a March 16 press release, Freeport has hired an interim financial management team and a local firm to assist with compliance and reporting and is conducting a search for a chief financial officer. Although we were originally promised that our interview requests would be met, a Freeport spokeswoman subsequently told the MSR that neither Blocton nor anyone else with the organization would answer any more questions, including confirming reports of recent audits by several funding sources that found financial discrepancies under Wilson's leadership. “When [Wilson] came in, the organization was very financially stable,” said a former Freeport staffer who was on board when Wilson arrived. The person, who spoke to the MSR on condition of anonymity, added that the former executive director's management style had contributed to a constant turnover of staff. “[Wilson] has a tremendous ego,” added the former staffer. “I was in a position that I couldn't agree with the things she was doing.” Although at the time several board members did not support Wilson's candidacy for the job because of her limited nonprofit experience, the former board member said they eventually did support her hiring. “But just two months into hiring her, I was very sorry that I did,” the person admitted, adding that there was a constant clash of egos between the former executive director and the board. “Ramona came in there with very corporate ideals and not nonprofit reality. Clearly because of Ramona and the direction she started taking Freeport, we knew we could not go in that direction because it would pull Freeport down.” Later nearly half of the Freeport board left, “and not one of us had planned to leave,” the individual pointed out. “She [Wilson] strategically got rid of the key people that we felt over the years was the glue to running Freeport.” For complete story, [click here](#).

Biblical Reform School Discipline: Tough Love or Abuse?--April 12th, 2011 (source: abcnews.go.com) “Because of that the trauma, she started spiraling in every way possible,” said her mother, Jeannie Marie, who did not want their last name made public. Priscilla, now 18, said she numbed the pain with drinking and rebellion, which terrified her mother. Desperate, Jeannie Marie turned to her church for help, learning about a Christian reform school that she says promised to “get right” her wayward daughter. But neither was prepared for the ordeal they say Priscilla experienced from November to January of this year at [New Beginnings Girls Academy](#), an Independent Fundamental Baptist boarding school in La Russell, Mo. The school, according to its [website](#), serves troubled teens so “through Jesus Christ, they can overcome their addictions, mend their broken relationships and get their lives on the right path.” Instead, Priscilla said she was told the rape was her fault and was subjected to harsh discipline -- ridiculed, restrained and deprived of proper nutrition and adequate clothing. As punishment for misbehaving she says she was forced to wear a red shirt and stand facing a wall, sometimes for 8 to 10 hours a day with only 15-minute breaks for food. “I was so achy it hurt,” said Priscilla. She said toilet paper and sanitary pads were rationed, despite Priscilla's urinary problems after the rape. She also said no one offered to get her medical care. “We thought maybe Priscilla would go there and hide out and pull herself together,” said Jeannie Marie. “We thought it was a safe place to go and we wouldn't have to worry...We trusted our church.” Priscilla left the school in January, but said the punitive approach left her with no self-worth and anxiety attacks so bad she cannot breathe. New Beginnings charges \$10,300 a year, according to its admission application. On a signed form, parents agree to “corporal discipline,” which is spelled out in their mission statement as up to 15 “swats” with a wooden paddle in each 24-hour period for misbehavior. For complete story, [click here](#). (Complete story references multiple IFB/Roloff-related programs.)

Sex abuse claim at Pines youth center investigated--April 22nd, 2011 (Source: hamptonroads.com) Virginia investigators have determined a Norfolk treatment center for troubled youth failed to properly report and document an allegation of sexual abuse by a North Carolina resident. The incident at The Pines Residential Treatment Center, a private facility that serves youth with mental, emotional and behavioral problems, was a “peer-to-peer” one, according to Meghan McGuire, spokeswoman for the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. The Pines has three treatment centers in Hampton Roads - one in Norfolk and two in Portsmouth, licensed for a total of 424 residents. North Carolina spokeswoman Renee McCoy said the state has suspended any new North Carolina admissions to the three Pines facilities, effective April 13, and is reviewing the cases of 113 North Carolina residents currently residing there because of concerns about patient care, treatment, staffing and training. The North Carolina families of some residents of The Pines have been contacted about possible moves. McGuire said in an email that the allegation was reported by a boy who stayed at the Norfolk facility, which is on Kempsville Road and is licensed for 82 youngsters. The allegation was reported to North Carolina officials after the youth's discharge on Jan. 31. The Virginia licensing officials were contacted last week by the North Carolina Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services, according to McGuire. Officials in that office told Virginia officials a complaint had been received from the boy's family earlier this month. McGuire said that North Carolina had not found any proof of abuse but determined there was enough credibility to the complaint to take action. Officials there noted the incident had not been reported by The Pines to state licensing officials in Virginia and North Carolina, which is a requirement of state-licensed facilities. McGuire said other treatment concerns were also noted in the complaint. For complete story, [click here](#).

[S.C. has no say in youth centers: Little-known facilities hold troubled teens](#)--April 26th, 2011 (source: postandcourier.com) SUMMERVILLE -- Many residents were stunned to learn last week that a local youth treatment center was housing violent teens from outside South Carolina. How could this happen, they wondered. The truth is: The state has almost no control of who is placed in these facilities or where they come from. In many cases, even the local police don't know who is in their backyard. South Carolina is home to 17 of these treatment centers that house nearly 800 kids and young adults struggling with mental illness, violent behavior and other problems. Many, like Palmetto Summerville Behavioral Health, are privately run facilities. Neighbors of the Palmetto Behavioral Health complex in Summerville have expressed concerns about security at the facility, which is surrounded by a 6-foot-tall wooden fence topped with 18 inches of lattice. State's involvement The state Department of Health and Environmental Control licenses these centers but has virtually no say in where they are located or who they accept as clients, agency spokesman Thom Berry said. DHEC inspectors typically visit these facilities just once every two years unless a complaint is lodged, Berry said. Even then, they are looking at things such as staffing ratios, the dispensing of medication and treatment plans. They don't control admissions or security measures. These facilities are not required to report escapes; only hospitalizations and deaths, he said. For complete story, [click here](#).

AA headmaster's resignation not tied to abuse investigation--April 27th, 2011 Dr. George Martin was not asked to resign his position as headmaster at Amelia Academy because he investigated allegations of abuse of children in the 1980s at a Louisiana girls' home by a teacher currently employed by the academy, according to Kelly Anderson, the president of the board of directors of the Amelia Educational Foundation. Dr. Martin was replaced April 11 as headmaster at the private school. No reason has been given for his re-placement but rumors abound he had been forced to resign because of his investigation into allegations against an Academy teacher who was once employed at the New Bethany Girls Home in Arcadia, La. Online postings accuse the teacher of, "beatings on the body and the feet, humiliation, silent treatments and other torture and abuse," according to Dwayne Walker, the secretary and media director for the Survivors of Institutional Abuse organization. Mr. Anderson denied any investigation Dr. Martin made into those allegations had anything to do with his replacement by former Academy Headmaster James "Jim" Grizzard. Mr. Anderson said the allegations against the teacher were investigated and the results of the investigation were the allegations were "deemed not to be an issue for us." The teacher has been, "an exemplary employee for about 13 years," he said. The abuse allegations surfaced about a year ago, he said, and admitted there were "initial concerns" by parents of Academy students. The Foundation did a second background check of the teacher about two months ago, he said. This check also found no history of abuse, Mr. Anderson said, noting the teacher's spouse, who also was employed by the New Bethany Home in the 1980s had also passed a rigorous federal employment background check. There were no issues with the teacher at the Academy and no students have been withdrawn because of the teacher's employment, he said. Dr. Martin was traveling and not available for comment. Source: <http://www.ameliamonitor.com/>

[Teen Challenge Training Center founder dies](#)--April 29th, 2011 (Source: readingeagle.com) The New York City preacher who founded the Teen Challenge Training Center in Rehrersburg in 1962, the first of hundreds of biblically based recovery centers for drug addicts outside Times Square, died in a car crash in Texas, authorities said Thursday. The Rev. David Wilkerson, 79, who began preaching to troubled teens in Times Square in 1958, died Wednesday afternoon when his car veered head-on into a tractor-trailer on Route 175 in East Texas, about 95 miles southeast of Dallas, Texas Department of Public Safety spokeswoman Tela Mange said. Source: <http://readingeagle.com/article.aspx?id=304355>

[Schram: Official silence on juvenile center abuse is deafening](#)--May 6th, 2011 (Source: komonews.com) They don't want you to know. I don't exactly know what they're trying to keep secret, but they're doing their best to keep the public from finding something out. Last week, KOMO 4 Problem Solver Tracy Vedder aired a report detailing serious issues at the Echo Glen Children's Center: A teenage girl raped by a staff member; multiple instances of sexual harassment among the people in charge of the juvenile offenders detained there; allowing a convicted sex offender unsupervised contact with pre-teen and teenage girls. Missing from Vedder's report was any sort of explanation from state officials. They have repeatedly denied Vedder's request for an interview. I believe that Don Mead, the superintendent of Echo Glen, along with John Clayton, who is the DSHS Secretary in charge of juvenile rehabilitation, along with DSHS Secretary Susan Dreyfus, are hoping that this issue fades from public attention. I don't think that should be allowed to happen. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Bloomberg Pushes for Control of Juvenile Justice System](#) (Source: Gotham Gazette, May 16th, 2011) Every year New York City sends of its most troubled teens hundreds of miles away. Far from family, they are confined in institutions that by many accounts are [brutal, ineffective -- and expensive](#). These institutions have been deemed so brutal and ineffective by the federal government that the Department of Justice threatened to take over the system if the state did not make drastic improvements to the quality of care. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Speaker Paul Wesselmann says kindness, empathy keys to dealing with troubled teens](#) (Source: postcrescent.com, May 17th, 2011) APPLETON — As he led an Appleton [Public Library](#) audience of about 125 teens, parents and educators in a workshop on connecting with youth in crisis, Paul Wesselmann almost never stopped smiling. Even while retelling stories punctuated by loneliness and despair, Wesselmann crackled with a lightness that resonated with his central message: hope. "Life is hard," he said. "And we get better." Sponsored by the city of Appleton, Lawrence [University](#) and the J. J. Keller Foundation, Wesselmann's presentation Monday was part of a broader community response to the half dozen youth suicides that have occurred in the Fox Valley since 2009. Even as Wesselmann conceded that "some of you came here tonight wondering, maybe hoping, that you could learn the secret of how to identify a kid that is in deep trouble and to go up them and say the right thing and save their life," he stressed that hope and help often arrive in "small deposits" of empathy and kindness. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Mandel: Inquest for troubled teen finally begins](#) (Source: torontosun.com, May 17th, 2011) TORONTO - Mentally troubled and hard to control, Ashley Smith was locked up for much of her teenage years, pepper sprayed, Tasered, bound from head to toe in a restraining cocoon and banished for the equivalent of two full years to solitary confinement. Her crimes? She threw a crab apple at a postal worker. She stole a CD. And while in custody, she refused to behave — so they just kept extending her prison term. Smith was just 19 when she finally tied a ligature around her neck while in segregation at the Grand Valley Institute for Women in Kitchener. In the past, she had done this as a desperate act for attention and it always worked — the guards would rush in to save her. She didn't know that when she again tied those cloths around her neck on Oct. 19, 2007, the rules had changed. Correctional officers had been ordered not to intervene. And so they didn't. They stood by as Smith choked to death. Did the traumatized New Brunswick teen finally end her tortured imprisonment by killing herself? Or was it simply a tragic accident in a desperate cry for some human contact? For complete story, [click here](#).

[Long overdue end to Dozier School for Boys' legacy of abuse](#) (Source: tampabay.com, May 27th, 2011) The news comes decades too late for generations of abused young men. But the state of Florida finally has stopped defending a culture of horrific abuse and will shut down a North Florida school for boys at the end of June after more than a century of looking the other way. The courage of former students who recounted the abuse they endured, renewed public scrutiny and a state financial crisis combined to force a decision that should have been made years ago. The Department of Juvenile Justice announced Thursday that the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys — recently renamed the innocuous North Florida Youth Development Center — will be shut down and its 63 detainees will be sent to other facilities. For complete story, [click here](#).

[Carney fires 29 in abuse incident](#) (Source: boston.com, May 28th, 2011) Carney Hospital fired the staff of its adolescent psychiatry unit Thursday, after an investigation into an employee's alleged sexual assault of a patient uncovered serious patient safety problems. Hospital president Bill Walczak said he hired former attorney general Scott Harshbarger and his law firm a month ago to investigate the assault allegation and conditions on the 14-bed locked unit for extremely troubled teens. When he read Harshbarger's report Thursday, Walczak said he decided to replace the nurses and other staff on the unit. The report described "serious concerns about patient safety and quality of care on the unit. It was not functioning properly. It was recommended by them to start over on the unit," Walczak said in an interview. "We will have top- notch employees replace those who left. My goal is to make it the best unit in the state." He would not provide details of the alleged assault or patient safety concerns, or comment on why the entire staff was dismissed, given that the allegation involved one employee and one patient. For complete story, [click here](#).

Ex-leader at Texas youth prison settles civil suit Associated Press - May 31, 2011 11:25 AM ET LUBBOCK, Texas (AP) - The attorney for a former West Texas youth prison inmate says his client has settled a civil lawsuit against a former prison school principal who was acquitted on sexual abuse charges.

Attorney Scott Medlock said Tuesday his 26-year-old client's settlement for \$2,000 doesn't include an admission of wrongdoing by former West Texas State School principal John Paul Hernandez. Medlock says the agreement includes a "vague" letter of apology from Hernandez. In February, Hernandez was found not guilty of sexually abusing five inmates at the prison school in Pyote in 2004 and 2005. Medlock's client was 1 of the five. A Texas Rangers report implicated Hernandez in a sex scandal that upended the Texas Youth Commission. Lawmakers eventually ordered an overhaul of the system. Copyright 2011 The Associated Press Source: <http://www.newschannel10.com/Global/story.asp?S=14754508>

Former student claims abuse in teen boot camps--June 2nd, 2011 (Source: sacbee.com) SALT LAKE CITY -- A man from Washington state has become the latest to sue a Utah-based organization for troubled children, claiming he was physically and emotionally tormented during its teen boot camp programs in Mexico. Attorneys for Carl Brown Austin, 24, of Spokane, filed the lawsuit Tuesday in U.S. District Court in Salt Lake City against World Wide Association of Specialty Programs and Schools. Austin spent nearly two years, starting at age 13, at the organization's Casa by the Sea and High Impact programs. He alleged he was a "virtual prisoner" in programs that meted out primitive punishment for hours on end. The lawsuit said Casa by the Sea in Ensenada, Mexico, was never licensed by any state regulatory authority as a "treatment center" and that High Impact in Baja, Mexico, was shut down by government edict in 2002 after complaints from parents. Austin claimed he was hogtied, given limited access to bathrooms and food and endured "The Big Green" - which meant having his head rubbed into an artificial turf until his face and mouth were bloody. It also claimed the organization and its officials conspired to conceal the abuse at its boarding schools. For complete story, [click here](#). For more on this story, [click here](#) and [here](#).

Why So Much Abuse is Allowed to Continue in Residential Care--June 7th, 2011 (Source: Time.com) by Maia Szalavitz The stories are beyond horrifying: an autistic boy crushed to death by a "restraint" gone awry; a disabled woman's diaper pulled aside as she is raped; an elderly woman left to lie on a urine-soaked box spring for six days after being beaten. In two of the nation's largest states, major media investigations this spring revealed hellish conditions in institutions for the disabled. The New York Times exposed ongoing violations, including physical and psychological abuse, in state-run homes for the developmentally disabled, while the Miami Herald uncovered similar tales of maltreatment and neglect in assisted-living homes for the elderly. Both investigations found that the operators of these institutions were able to inflict harm with impunity, repeatedly violating the rights of their residents — in some cases, killing them — while being paid millions of dollars by the government for their "care." Worse, when such abuses were exposed, the homes were not shuttered but simply advised not to do it again. Why is it that institutions are able to get away with the kind of torture and abuse for which parents or other caregivers would be incarcerated or otherwise prevented from ever perpetrating again? This is a question that has haunted me for a decade as I've investigated similar instances of abuse and neglect in programs for "troubled" teens. Several factors interlock all of these cases. If we want to stop the abuse, all of them need to be addressed. For complete story, [click here](#).

Local Boot Camp Leader Accused of Kidnapping Minor--June 7th, 2011 (Source: ktla.com) PASADENA, Calif. (KTLA) -- An instructor at a youth boot camp is accused of kidnapping, false imprisonment and extortion in the alleged abduction of a truant teenager. According to police, Kelvin "Sarge" McFarland handcuffed the teen, then took the boy to a family member's home demanding money before releasing him. McFarland is also accused of trying to persuade the family to enroll the 14-year-old in his boot camp, Family 1st Growth Camp. For complete story, [click here](#). For more on this story, [click here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

Despite Negative Perceptions, most young adults are doing pretty great--June 13th, 2011 (Source: Pittsburghlive.com) This is a really great article. Please read the entire article by clicking on the hyperlinked title above or visiting www.heal-online.org/goodteen061311.pdf.

Supreme Court backs Miranda warning when questioning juveniles The Supreme Court expands the rights of juveniles in a 5-4 decision that says police who remove a student from class for questioning must usually issue a warning of the right to remain silent. By David G. Savage, Washington Bureau June 16, 2011, 10:19 a.m. Reporting from Washington— The Supreme Court expanded the rights of juveniles Thursday, deciding by a 5-4 vote that police officers who remove a student from a class to question him about a crime usually must warn him of his right to remain silent. "It is beyond dispute that children will often feel bound to submit to police questioning when an adult in the same circumstance would feel free to leave," wrote Justice Sonia Sotomayor for the court. The decision does not set a strict rule for all cases involving young people, but instead says their age calls for giving them special protection. In a second criminal case, this one from San Diego, the court said judges may not impose longer prison terms on defendants in hopes of rehabilitating them. A third decision reopened the case of a Philadelphia area woman faced with a federal terrorism charge for having tried to poison a woman who had an affair with her husband. She argued she should have been charged with a domestic crime under state law. The juvenile decision reopens the case of a 13-year old student from Chapel Hill, N.C., who was taken from his seventh-grade class by a police officer and questioned about several burglaries in his neighborhood. The student, identified only as J.D.B., eventually confessed. He later contended his confession should not have been used because he was not warned of his rights. But he lost in a 4-3 decision by the North Carolina Supreme Court. The famous 1966 Miranda decision that required warnings to suspects about their rights applies only to persons who are in the custody of police and feel forced to answer questions. At issue in the case was whether a 13-year old at school would think he was required to speak to the police, or instead would understand he was "free to leave" and could walk away from the interview. Sotomayor said age is a crucial factor, and it suggests the student would feel he is in the control of the police. Officers and judges "simply need the common sense to know that a 7-year-old is not a 13-year old and neither is an adult," she wrote. "To hold, as the state requests, that a child's age is never relevant to whether a suspect has been taken into custody — and thus to ignore the very real differences between children and adults — would be to deny children the full scope of the procedural safeguards that Miranda guarantees to adults." The decision in J.D.B. vs. North Carolina sends the case back for the judges to consider again whether the student was in police control when he was questioned. Joining the majority were Justices Anthony M. Kennedy, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen G. Breyer and Elena Kagan. The four dissenters said the focus on the age of the individual will be confusing for police and judges. Last year, the court in an opinion by Kennedy barred states from sending juveniles to prison for life for crimes short of murder. The San Diego case involving rehabilitation resulted in an unanimous ruling. The justices agreed with a San Diego area woman who disputed a judge's decision to extend her prison term so she could participate in a drug rehabilitation program. Alexandra Tapia appealed her 51-month prison term, noting the federal sentencing law says that "imprisonment is not an appropriate means of promoting correction and rehabilitation." Citing that phrase, the Supreme Court ruled for her in Tapia vs. United States and told the judge to reconsider the length of her sentence. Carol Bond, the Philadelphia area chemist, won only the right to challenge her federal conviction on the grounds that it was unconstitutional to use a federal terrorism law to prosecute a domestic dispute. david.savage@latimes.com Copyright © 2011, Tribune Interactive Source: http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/sc-dc-0617-court-miranda-20110616.0.2890375.story?track=rss&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+latimes%2Fnews%2Fnationworld%2Fnation+%28L.A.+Times+-+National+News%29

Juvenile inmates often isolated nearly 24 hours straight californiawatch.org | Jun 13th 2011 Juvenile inmates at California correctional facilities have been held in isolation nearly 24 hours straight on hundreds of occasions this year, in violation of state regulations. An audit by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation in March found multiple facilities operated by the Division of Juvenile Justice kept youth prisoners deemed a threat in their cells for all but 40 minutes a day. Auditors found Ventura Youth Correctional Facility, about 50 miles northwest of Los Angeles, to be the worst offender. The juveniles placed on "temporary detention" or "temporary intervention plans" can be placed in solitary confinement for 21 hours a day. Youth facilities exceeded that limit 249 times from January through April, according to numbers provided to Nancy Campbell, who is appointed by the state courts to oversee the juvenile facilities. Campbell confirmed the findings [PDF] in a letter to the Prison Law Office last month. Campbell wrote: Documentation shows that the most frequent failure to meet out-of-room requirements has occurred at Ventura Youth Correctional Facility. In the 14 weeks documented, there were 173 out of 1,453 incidents during which youth on TD [temporary detention] or TIP [temporary intervention plans] spent more than 21 of 24 hours confined to his or her rooms. Other DJJ facilities struggle to meet mandated services requirements as well: OH Close Youth Correctional Facility (43 out of 588 incidents); Preston Youth Correctional Facility (15 of 245 incidents); Southern Youth Correctional Reception Center and Clinic (10 of 198 incidents); and NA Chaderjian Youth Correctional Facility (8 of 761 incidents). The Prison Law Office has responded to the violations with a new motion in the lawsuit Farrell v. Cate, which the state settled with an agreement to reform mental health care at youth facilities in 2004. The filing seeks to force the juvenile justice division to comply with the 21-hour isolation limit. "Those findings are consistent with what experts have been saying month after month, year after year, and the problem has not been solved," Sara

Norman, managing attorney at the Prison Law Office, told The Bay Citizen. "These are the problems that are hurting the youth the most, and we are out of patience." The problem, according to the audit, is much the same one faced by many California agencies. Juvenile justice has too few resources and too little staff. "Living unit staff consistently reported that priority is given to providing services to youth participating in the regular program," the report states. "Youth on TD are accommodated when time permits." California has just more than 1,000 juvenile inmates who have been convicted of serious crimes, called 707(b) offenses [PDF]. These crimes include murder, rape, drug sales, witness tampering and many others. Putting a youth in prolonged isolation -- a 23 and 1 program in juvenile justice division parlance -- can have a "profound" impact on his or her well-being, the state's Office of the Inspector General wrote in a 2000 report [PDF]. That document proves there have been problems with this practice for more than a decade. "Twenty-six of the 70 wards (36 percent) said they did not receive the required one hour out of their room in each 24-hour period," the inspector's office wrote then. "Some wards said that time out of the room was occasionally cancelled, especially on weekends." Source: <http://californiawatch.org/dailyreport/juvenile-inmates-often-isolated-nearly-24-hours-straight-10757>

Youth treatment program, shelter closes--June 18th, 2011 (Source: thetandd.com) An Orangeburg community-based treatment home and shelter for troubled boys and girls has closed its doors. Orangeburg Attention Homes Inc. discontinued its services because of a decline in clientele and budget cutbacks, OAH Chairman William Hamilton said. The program relied on a per diem, per child payment from the S.C. Department of Social Services and the S.C. Department of Juvenile Justice. But with the reduction in clientele, the money diminished. "If you don't have the students in your home, you don't get the per diem from the state," Hamilton said. "It kept declining and declining, and we kept losing ground on our financial stability." He said increasing competition was also a factor in the program's demise. "Our staff were trained for moderate management," Hamilton said, noting the clientele were generally children with some troubles but without any criminal background. "The placement homes now are the boot camp-style homes, and their staff is trained for high management. They deal with kids with more problems and some with more of a criminal background." For complete story, [click here](#).

N.J. to close 2 residential treatment facilities--January 4th, 2011 (Rec'd June 22nd, 2011--Source: nj.com) **TRENTON** -- The state will close two publicly-run residential treatment facilities that are home to 39 children with mental illness or who come from abusive families, state Children and Families Commissioner Allison Blake announced today. The residential centers, in Ewing and Vineland, will close July 1. They cost about \$15.2 million in state and federal money to operate, according to the state budget, but Blake said finances did not drive her decision and doubts the closures will net much savings. Blake said the decision was based on the ample evidence these children fare better at home or in home-like environments than in a large group. For complete story, [click here](#).

Trust staff accused of abusing troubled teens--June 22nd, 2011 (source: tvnz.co.nz) New Zealand Child, Youth and Family has removed children from a high profile programme for troubled youth following allegations staff physically abused teens. But Wellington's Te Rakau Trust says it was just doing what CYF taught it to do. The trust has helped troubled teenagers for more than 20 years. It gives the boys - many from gangs - a home and uses performing arts to turn them away from crime and violence. But ONE News can tonight reveal that trust staff have now been accused of using violence themselves. CYF said "the allegations involved a range of issues, including the use of inappropriate discipline and restraint practices resulting in physical abuse". CYF has removed all three teens from the trust's care and suspended \$800,000 in annual funding. For complete story, [click here](#).

Posted on Monday, 07.11.11 Death reported at juvenile detention center THE ASSOCIATED PRESS WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. -- Officials say a juvenile died while in custody at a West Palm Beach detention center. The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice reports that the inmate died Sunday morning. The department and West Palm Beach police are investigating the cause of death. A Department of Juvenile Justice spokeswoman says the name of a juvenile inmate cannot be released under state law. Information from: The Palm Beach Post, <http://www.pbpost.com> Read more: <http://www.miamiherald.com/2011/07/11/2309866/death-reported-at-juvenile-detention.html#ixzz1Rufcl61n> For more on this story, see: <http://www.miamiherald.com/2011/07/14/2316519/teens-death-in-west-palm-beach.html>

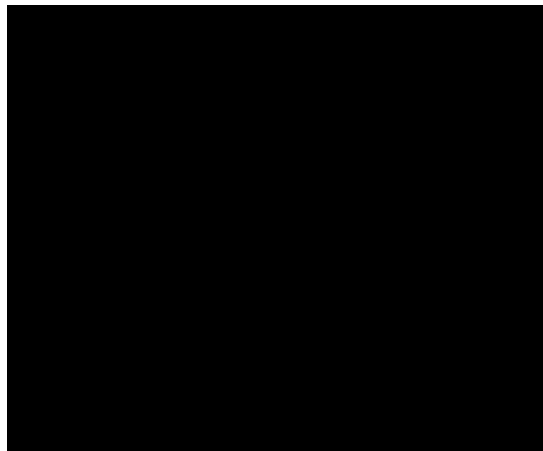
Florida's Anti-Faces of Death Law May Hide How 18-Year-Old Died in State Hands July 18th, 2011 (source: browardpalmbeach.com) Thanks to the Florida lawmakers' successful bid to legislate morality in the state's public records law, we may never know how 18-year-old Eric Perez died in the hands of state workers. Perez died about a week ago at a West Palm Beach juvenile detention facility, due to either breathing problems, an enlarged heart, maybe a stroke, or after becoming "ill and psychotic" -- at least those are the different stories officials have told Perez's mother, according to the [Miami Herald](#). His death was recorded on video, but since [HB 411](#) was signed into effect by the governor, the media -- and subsequently, the public -- may never get to see that video. The rationale for the law may make sense on the surface: Most people who've seen [Faces of Death](#) -- a 1980 film that's just a roughly 100-minute compilation of real and fake footage of deaths -- would think there's no legitimate reason to watch the death of another human being. To anyone who wants to hold people and government accountable, though, death videos have proved to be important. Source: http://blogs.browardpalmbeach.com/pulp/2011/07/florida_death_video_law_juvenile_eric_perez.php

Ex-judge Ciavarella to be sentenced Aug. 11 in kids-for-cash conspiracy BY DAVE JANOSKI (PROJECTS EDITOR)Published: July 22, 2011 SCRANTON - Mark A. Ciavarella Jr., whose hard-nosed zero-tolerance policy as a Luzerne County Juvenile Court judge fueled a kids-for-cash conspiracy that generated millions in kickbacks from a for-profit detention center, will be on the other side of the bench Aug. 11 when a federal judge sentences him on racketeering and other charges. Ciavarella, 61, could get 15 or more years in prison when he appears before U.S. District Judge Edwin M. Kosik, who scheduled sentencing in an order issued Thursday. While a prison sentence is virtually a foregone conclusion in Ciavarella's case, it is unclear when he will actually begin serving his time. Defendants like Ciavarella who are free on bail pending sentencing are typically given several weeks before they are required to report to a facility chosen by the U.S. Bureau of Prisons. And the former judge's attorneys will likely ask the court to allow him to remain free on bail while he pursues an appeal to the U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals. Some of the groundwork for that appeal was laid out in a letter written to Kosik by one of Ciavarella's attorneys Thursday. Ciavarella was found guilty of 12 counts in a 39-count indictment by a jury in U.S. District Court in February. His post-trial appeals were rejected by Kosik two months ago, clearing the way for a pre-sentence investigation conducted by federal probation officials to assist Kosik in calculating a sentence. Kosik must rule on several defense objections to the probation officials' report before imposing a sentence. Neither the report nor the objections have been made public. But a letter to Kosik filed Thursday by Ciavarella attorney William Ruzzo indicates the defense objects to a recommendation that the court, when fashioning its sentence, consider misconduct of which Ciavarella was, the defense maintains, acquitted. Under current federal law, a judge deciding on a sentence can consider misconduct by a defendant if it can be proven by a preponderance of the evidence, even though the defendant has not been convicted of a crime for that misconduct. Ruzzo's letter indicates the defense will argue on appeal that such misconduct should be proven beyond a reasonable doubt, a much stricter standard. "Mark Ciavarella was acquitted of many counts in a lengthy indictment. It would seem out of simple fairness that acquitted conduct means acquitted conduct," Ruzzo wrote. "Essentially, this is the change in the law that counsel would advocate on appeal." Efforts to reach Ruzzo were unsuccessful Thursday. In addition to a prison sentence, Ciavarella faces the possibility of hundreds of thousands of dollars in fines, but testimony at his trial indicated much of the money he received went to pay off heavy credit-card and other debts. Prosecutors have alleged he may have diverted some funds to others, including the proceeds from the sale of his Mountain Top home in 2008 before he was charged. In 2009, after Ciavarella entered a guilty plea that was later withdrawn, probation officials concluded he did not have the resources to pay a fine. Ciavarella, who was ordered to forfeit nearly \$1 million by the jury that convicted him, has worked odd jobs as a painter and flower deliveryman since his arrest. Prosecutors alleged Ciavarella and another judge, Michael T. Conahan, conspired to close a county-owned detention center and direct juveniles to a newly built for-profit center in Pittston Township. The builder and co-owner of the center paid the two judges \$2.8 million, according to a grand jury indictment. The state Supreme Court, which found Ciavarella wrongfully imprisoned juveniles on minor charges and failed to fully inform them of their right to counsel, vacated thousands of juvenile-court orders he issued in 2005-2008. Hundreds of former defendants in Ciavarella's court have filed civil-rights actions in U.S. District Court against the two former judges and other individuals and entities implicated in the kids-for-cash scandal. dianoski@citizensvoice.com Source: <http://standardspeaker.com/news/ex-judge-ciavarella-to-be-sentenced-aug-11-in-kids-for-cash-conspiracy-1.1178679#ixzz1SuJRngu7>

Calhoun County closes juvenile boot camp By [Dianna Wray](#) • Originally published August 1, 2011 at 5:45 p.m., updated August 1, 2011 at 11:20 p.m. OTHER CUTS The Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program is the only program that has been cut during the ongoing budget workshops. Judge Mike Pfeiffer said the rest of \$1.2 million being sliced from the budget is coming out of department ... [SHOW ALL »](#) OTHER CUTS The Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program is the only program that has been cut during the ongoing budget workshops. Judge Mike Pfeiffer said the rest of \$1.2 million

being sliced from the budget is coming out of department budget requests. County officials are still working on the final budget, which isn't expected to be completed for a few weeks, Pfeiffer said. PORT LAVACA - Calhoun County officials, hoping to make up a \$1.2 million budget shortfall, are closing its juvenile boot camp. In the wake of the recession, Calhoun County has had to cut about \$4 million from its budget in the past two years. This year, finding they once again needed to make significant budget reductions, County Judge Mike Pfeiffer and the county commissioners met with Calhoun school district Superintendent Billy Wiggins two weeks ago to discuss closing the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program. The court officially decided to close it last week, Wiggins said. The boot camp opened in January 1999 as a program for students with recurring discipline problem and those in the juvenile probation system, Pfeiffer said. During the years, the juvenile court system has handled more of these types of problems, Pfeiffer said. This isn't the first time the boot camp program has wound up on the chopping block; the camp was temporarily closed by the Juvenile Probation Board in the summer of 2009 because the county discussed cutting funding. The county continued funding that year, reopening the program in October. The county allotted \$128,000 for the boot camp last year, and only eight students were enrolled by the end of the school year, Pfeiffer said. The program wasn't being used enough to keep it open. "We support the school district and the teachers, but there's a point in time when it costs so much and you've got to look at how much it's really being used," Pfeiffer said. The boot camp is closed as of this week. Pfeiffer said the county will save \$128,000 by cutting the program. The county is required by mandate to fund many programs. Since county officials are not required to fund the boot camp, the program was cut, Pfeiffer said. With the boot camp closed, two drill sergeants will lose their jobs, Pfeiffer said. The teacher assigned to the boot camp will be moved to either Hope High School or FLEX, the two alternative programs in the district. Students who expected to return to boot camp in the fall will attend the FLEX campus, Wiggins said. The only problem for the school district will be what to do with the students who have done things that require mandatory expulsion by the state. These students used to be sent to boot camp, but they will now be expelled to the street. Wiggins said they are looking for a place to send these students, but they haven't found a solution yet. Wiggins said he is sorry to see the program go, but noted it is understandable, considering these economic times. The school district went through its own cuts recently. The district closed Point Comfort Elementary as part of its budget cuts. "It has been a good thing, but we certainly understand the difficult economic times that we're all in, and we'll do everything we can to absorb those kids back into the school district," Wiggins said. Source: http://www.victoriadvocate.com/news/2011/aug/01/dw_calhoun_bootcamp_close_080211_147530/?print

Pa. judge gets 28 years in 'kids for cash' case August 11, 2011 (AP) PaSCRANTON, Pa. (AP) — A longtime northeastern Pennsylvania judge was ordered to spend nearly three decades in prison for his role in a massive juvenile justice bribery scandal that prompted the state's high court to toss thousands of convictions. Former Luzerne County Judge Mark Ciavarella Jr. was sentenced Thursday to 28 years in federal prison for taking \$1 million in bribes from the builder of a pair of juvenile detention centers in a case that became known as "kids for cash." Ciavarella, 61, was motionless when the decision was announced and had no reaction. From behind him, where family members of some of the children he sentenced sat, someone cried out "Woo hoo!" In the wake of the scandal, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court tossed about 4,000 convictions issued by Ciavarella between 2003 and 2008, saying he violated the constitutional rights of the juveniles, including the right to legal counsel and the right to intelligently enter a plea. Ciavarella was tried and convicted of racketeering charges earlier this year. His attorneys had asked for a "reasonable" sentence in court papers, saying, in effect, that he's already been punished enough. "The media attention to this matter has exceeded coverage given to many and almost all capital murders, and despite protestation, he will forever be unjustly branded as the 'Kids for Cash' judge," their sentencing memo said. Al For, Ciavarella's lawyer, called the sentence harsher than expected. Ciavarella surrendered immediately but it was not immediately known where he would serve his sentence. Ciavarella, speaking before the sentence was handed down, apologized to the community and to those juveniles that appeared before him in his court. "I blame no one but myself for what happened," he said, and then denied he had ever incarcerated any juveniles in exchange for money. He also criticized U.S. Assistant Attorney Gordon Zubrod for referring to the case as "kids for cash," and said it sank his reputation. "He backdoored me, and I never saw it coming. Those three words made me the personification of evil," Ciavarella said. "They made me toxic and caused a public uproar the likes of which this community has never seen." Federal prosecutors accused Ciavarella and a second judge, Michael Conahan, of taking more than \$2 million in bribes from the builder of the PA Child Care and Western PA Child Care detention centers and extorting hundreds of thousands of dollars from the facilities' co-owner. Ciavarella, known for his harsh and autocratic courtroom demeanor, filled the beds of the private lockups with children as young as 10, many of them first-time offenders convicted of petty theft and other minor crimes. The judge remained defiant after his arrest, insisting the payments were legal and denying he incarcerated youths for money. The jury returned a mixed verdict following a February trial, convicting him of 12 counts, including racketeering and conspiracy, and acquitting him of 27 counts, including extortion. The guilty verdicts related to a payment of \$997,600 from the builder. Conahan pleaded guilty last year and awaits sentencing. Copyright 2011 The Associated Press Source: http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2011-08-11-pa-courthouse-kickbacks-sentence_n.htm?csp=34news&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+usatoday-NewsTopStories+%28News+-+Top+Stories%29



Posted on Sunday, 08.21.11 Activists address deaths of imprisoned Fla. teens THE ASSOCIATED PRESS PLANTATION, Fla. -- South Florida community leaders are gathering today to discuss the deaths of two children who died while imprisoned in Florida. Southern Poverty Law Center and Stop Abusing Our Kids will gather at a church in Plantation on Sunday and offer their support for Gov. Rick Scott's vow to reduce the number of children imprisoned. Seventeen-year-old Demetrius L. Jordan died at the Indian River County Correctional Institute earlier this month Foul play is not suspected, but an autopsy will determine the cause of death. Authorities say a grand jury is looking into the July 10th death of Eric Perez at a West Palm Beach juvenile detention center, hours after unsuccessfully seeking medical care. Source: <http://www.miamiherald.com/2011/08/21/2368516/activists-address-deaths-of-imprisoned.html#ixzz1VeJ5k2T4>

Barry County youth home director charged with sex crimes Published: Thursday, August 25, 2011, 8:43 AM Updated: Thursday, August 25, 2011, 10:29 AM By [Rosemary Parker | Kalamazoo Gazette](#) The Kalamazoo Gazette File photo Michael Terpening HASTINGS — The director of a private youth home was charged Wednesday with various sexual crimes involving several of the troubled teens lodged at the residential facility. Michael Terpening, 32, of Bellevue, was arraigned Wednesday in Barry County District Court on nine felony counts of criminal sexual conduct and aggravated indecent exposure on

multiple teen victims, according to a news release from Michigan State Police. He was the director of Earth Services Youth Home at 15485 Jenkins Road, in southeast Barry County's Assyria Township. Judge Michael Schippers set bond at \$250,000, according to the release. Terpening was not in jail Thursday morning, according to jail officials. A Michigan State Police spokesperson who declined to be identified said the case unfolded after an older teen at the residential facility for teens in trouble complained of being victimized and other alleged victims were discovered. The incidents took place over several months, he said, with all victims residents of the home. According to its website, Earth Services: "is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. The organization was originally founded in 1998 as Educated Animal Rescue, E.A.R. and then grew to become E.A.R.T.H., Educated Animal Rescue and Teen Haven. As of today, it has become Earth Services. Located in Lower Michigan, amongst the trees and rolling farmland of the rural Bellevue/Battle Creek area, our facility reaches out to our community and beyond, helping animals find their perfect place!" Source: http://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2011/08/barry_county_youth_home_direct.html

Teen program draws state auditor's ire By Christine McConville | Friday, August 26, 2011 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | [Local Coverage](#) A jaw-dropping audit of a privately run but public-funded program for troubled teens has State Auditor Suzanne M. Bump planning to scrutinize spending at every one of the 1,200 social service agencies that together receive \$2.3 billion a year in state funds. "We're looking at all the human service agencies," Bump told the Herald yesterday, hours after releasing a scathing report accusing the Northeast Center for Youth and Families Inc. in Easthampton of spending \$406,360 in Massachusetts monies on people from Connecticut. The report also claims the agency overbilled Massachusetts \$651,221 for its two foster care programs. "We want to ensure that other organizations aren't using state money to support their programs in other states," Bump said. A Northeast Center official said the agency disagrees with Bump's report. Article URL: <http://www.bostonherald.com/news/regional/view.bg?articleid=1361468>

Pharos-Tribune August 31, 2011 Horse deaths spark investigation Witnesses say animals were not properly fed by Daniel Human For the Pharos-Tribune BUNKER HILL — Miami County officials are investigating a therapeutic horse farm after a group found one horse dead and removed another that later died. The Miami County Animal Shelter has turned over details to the sheriff's department in an investigation of the horses' home, Full Quiver Farms Equine Mentoring Ministry in Bunker Hill, said Susan Kulla, head of the animal shelter. The farm has used horses to provide therapy to troubled teens. A group of horse enthusiasts began contacting county agencies after they found a dead horse, which had been partially eaten by pigs, and a second in near-death condition Sunday, said Nicole Emigh, one of the people who helped remove the horses from the farm. "It was in a stall with urine and manure, very hot ... no hay, nothing but a concrete floor, manure and that's it," she said. The horse, nicknamed Tuff, was unable to walk after about a day with its new owners, Emigh said. The Galveston Fire Department provided equipment to help lift the horse and veterinarians provided care, but Tuff died Monday, she said. Miami County Sheriff's Deputy Casey Bailey said he is working with the animal shelter on the investigation, but he offered no further details. Full Quiver Farms owner Leanna Sharp said the horses had been having ongoing health issues. "I did everything in my capacity to make them well, and it was not getting anywhere," she said. "So I called someone for help." Sharp said Tuesday she was unaware the second horse had died. Asked about the horse found dead Sunday, Sharp declined to comment and would not speak further about the matter. Emigh said she and the group she was with also searched for two horses that were supposed to be in the pasture, but no one could find the animals. She asked people who notice animals in poor condition to contact authorities. "I just want to express how important it is for people to report this to the humane society," she said. "If something's not done the first time, report it again." Source: <http://pharostribune.com/local/x2134993257/Horse-deaths-spark-investigation>

Troubled teens abused at Utah-based schools, lawsuit claims By Roxana Orellana The Salt Lake Tribune Published: September 2, 2011 10:40PM Updated: September 2, 2011 11:26PM After their case was dismissed last month in federal court, a group of about 500 parents and students have gone to state court with allegations of abuse by the operators of a Utah-based school for troubled teens. The lawsuit, filed Thursday in 3rd District Court, claims that from the mid-1990s to mid-2000s, students attending schools owned and operated by World Wide Association of Specialty Programs and Schools Inc., (WWASPS) — founded by La Verkin entrepreneur Robert Lichfield — were physically, emotionally and sexually abused at the facilities. WWASPS is accused of a lengthy list of abuses, including that students were beaten, chained, locked in dog cages, forced to eat vomit and made to lie in urine and feces as punishment. The complaint also alleges students were forced into sexual acts. "At all times relevant, defendants did not disclose to the parents the physical, emotional, mental, and/or sexual abuse to which their children were subjected at their facilities and conspired, even to this day, to prevent them from discovering such abuse," the lawsuit states. The lawsuit lists a total of 59 defendants, including Cross Creek Center for Boys LLC., Cross Creek Manor LLC., Teen Help LLC and Brightway Adolescent Hospital. The facilities mentioned in the lawsuit — a number of which are now closed — are located throughout the United States, as well as Mexico, Costa Rica and the Czech Republic. The defendants are also accused of defrauding parents of tuition and other monies paid. The lawsuit was first filed in U.S. District Court in 2006, but Judge Clark Waddoups dismissed it in August, citing a lack of jurisdiction in August. Windle Turley, a Dallas attorney representing the plaintiffs, said Waddoups dismissed the case on jurisdictional grounds because of the way the case was structured, not on the merits of the case. "We had hoped we could continue to move forward in the federal court. But we're just glad we were going to be able to move forward now," Turley said. Asked about criminal charges, Turley had details only in connection with a case filed in Costa Rica against school director Narvin Lichfield, who is Robert Lichfield's brother, for alleged sexual abuse. Turley said those charges were ultimately dismissed. The plaintiffs are seeking an unspecified amount of damages, including punitive damages, to be determined at trial. A racketeering claim was dropped from the lawsuit filed federal court but may be added to the state lawsuit, Turley said. Attorney Stewart Harman, who represented Lichfield and Ken Kay, WWASPS' president, in the federal lawsuit, said "the reasons for dismissal are clearly and adequately laid out and set forth in Judge Waddoups' decision." Kay has previously denied the lawsuit's allegations as "ludicrous." "We don't condone any type of child abuse and it's highly unlikely that any of the incidents ever happened," Kay said in 2007, noting that troubled teens often have a record of fabricating stories. rorellana@sltrib.com © 2011 The Salt Lake Tribune Source: <http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/news/52502999-78/lawsuit-abuse-court-students.html.csp>

Torture Alleged at Chain of Children's Homes By JONNY BONNER SALT LAKE CITY (CN) - Hundreds of parents claim a group of boarding schools tortured their children: locked them in dog cages, forced them to lie in feces and eat vomit, masturbated them and denied the troubled teens any religion "except for the Mormon faith." The Utah-based World Wide Association Of Specialty Programs and Schools and its owners - Robert Lichfield, Brent Facer and Ken Kay - went to great lengths to hide the "torture," which began in the mid-1990s and continued for a decade, the 357 plaintiffs claim in Salt Lake County Court. The plaintiffs say that 59 schools and owners tied to the company "jointly promoted, advertised, and marketed defendants' residential boarding schools as a place where children with problems could get an education while receiving instruction and direction in behavior modification for emotional growth and personal development." But they say the children were subjected to physical, emotional and sexual abuse at the schools including, Cross Creek Center for Boys, Brightway Adolescent Hospital and Red Rock Springs. They say the abuses inflicted upon some children for years "could be accurately described as torture." According to the complaint, students were locked in boxes, cages and basements at the schools, denied medical and dental care, and forced "to carry heavy bags of sand around their necks or logs throughout the day over many days." They were sexually abused, "which included forced sexual relations and acts of fondling and masturbation performed on them," according to the 119-page complaint. Students were "forced to eat their own vomit ... bound and tied by hands and/or feet ... chained and locked in dog cages ... forced to lie in, or wear, urine and feces ... forced to sleep on cold concrete floors, boxspring, or plywood," and put to forced labor, the complaint states. Children were "kicked, beaten, thrown and slammed to the ground ... forced to eat raw or rotten food ... poked and prodded with various objects while being strip searched ... denied any religious affiliation, except for the Mormon faith ... [and] threatened [with] severe punishment, including death, if they told anyone of their abuses and poor living conditions," according to the complaint. Their mail was confiscated, and personal visits and telephone calls were forbidden or discouraged, the parents say. "At all times relevant, defendants did not disclose to the parents the physical, emotional, mental, and/or sexual abuse to which their children were subjected at their facilities and conspired, even to this day, to prevent them from discovering such abuse," the complaint states. The defendant company still operates residential centers in Utah, South Carolina and Costa Rica, but has faced school shutdowns in Mexico, Jamaica and Samoa amid child abuse investigations, according to the complaint. It says that more than 2,100 students were enrolled in its schools in 2003. The plaintiffs filed a similar lawsuit in Federal Court in 2006, which U.S. District Court Judge Clark Waddoups dismissed in August for lack of jurisdiction. The parents seek punitive damages for fraud, gross negligence, false imprisonment, assault and battery, and breach of contract, and a protective order to prevent spoliation of evidence. They are represented by Windle Turley of Dallas, Texas and James McConkie II with Parker & McConkie of Salt Lake. Source: <http://www.courthousenews.com/2011/09/06/39546.htm>

Former Baptist Church Member Ernest Willis Sentenced to Prison for Rape of Teen Parishioner Tina Anderson Was Made to Apologize in Church for Pregnancy Resulting From Rape By SUZAN CLARKE and ALICE GOMSTYN Sept. 6, 2011 — A New Hampshire judge today sentenced former Baptist church member [Ernest Willis](#) to 15 to 30 years in prison for the forcible rape of a teenage girl from his church who got pregnant as a result. The case made national headlines because the victim, [Tina Anderson](#), said she was forced to confess her "sin" -- the pregnancy -- in front of the congregation at Trinity Baptist Church, an Independent Fundamental Baptist Church (IFB) in Concord, N.H. The church's then-pastor, Chuck Phelps, helped arrange for Anderson to move thousands of miles away from home to live with an IFB family and give her child up for adoption. Today, it was Willis' turn to apologize before he was sentenced. Victim 'Thrilled' By Sentence Ernest Willis, 52, of Gilford said he was "sorry and ashamed for this thoughtless act of sexual misconduct." But in his lengthy statement he did not admit he forcibly raped the girl. Listening by telephone from Arizona, Anderson, now 29, said she was "thrilled" with the sentence. "It's a huge amount of vindication for me," she told The Associated Press. "I was never really believed, no matter how many times I said it was not consensual. Now it's been proven in a court of law that he's guilty and he's been given a significant sentence." Willis was arrested in 2010. A jury convicted him in May of three counts of forcible rape and a count of felonious sexual assault. His lawyers say he will appeal those convictions. Before his trial in May, Willis pleaded guilty to one count of statutory rape. He maintained they had consensual sex on one occasion only, but acknowledged the girl was under the legal age of consent. Willis remained stoic as the judge sent him to prison for a minimum of 15 years. In an April interview with [ABC News' "20/20"](#), Anderson said that after she was sexually assaulted by Willis, she was forced to stand before her Baptist congregation and confess her "sin" -- that she had become pregnant. She said she wasn't allowed to tell the group that the pregnancy happened because she was raped by Willis, a man twice her age. "I still struggle, because I've been made to feel guilty for so long," she said. At the age of 14, Anderson was hired as a babysitter for the Willis family. She said the first assault occurred in the backseat of a car during a driving lesson. Anderson said Willis pulled her into the back of the car and raped her. According to Anderson, the second assault occurred at her home when Willis showed up unannounced. "He locked the door behind him and pushed me over to the couch. I had a dress on and he pulled it off. I pushed my hands against his shoulders and said 'No,' but he didn't stop," Anderson said. Anderson told "20/20" that she confided her pregnancy to Willis. His reaction, she said, was to offer to pay for an abortion. When she rejected his offer, he presented another option, she said. "He asked me if I wanted him to punch me in the stomach as hard as he could to try to cause a miscarriage," she said. "I told him, 'No, leave me alone.'" The teen babysat Willis's children and considered him a father figure, a prosecutor said. "Her trust and admiration were repaid with violence and rape," prosecutor Wayne Coull told Merrimack Superior Court Judge Larry Smukler. Coull said the most aggravating factor of all was Willis's offer to cause a miscarriage. "For the defendant to be so cruel and selfish as to recommend such actions upon a child is just outrageous," Coull added. Anderson gave birth to a baby girl in 1998. The child was given up for adoption. Anderson has since married and had three other children. Phelps, the pastor who arranged for Anderson to move and give up her baby for adoption, told "20/20" that Anderson voluntarily stood before the congregation in 1997, that he reported Willis to the Concord Police and complied with all legal requirements of him at the time. During the trial in May, Christine Leaf, Anderson's mother, testified that she did not support her daughter's allegations, saying, "I only support the truth, not a lie." The Associated Press contributed to this report. Copyright © 2011 ABC News Internet Ventures Source: <http://abcnews.go.com/US/hampshire-man-ernest-willis-sentenced-prison-rape-tina/story?id=14460469>

Accused molester denied more kid time Judge denied request made by Michael Terpening Updated: Tuesday, 06 Sep 2011, 6:11 PM EDT Published : Tuesday, 06 Sep 2011, 4:00 PM EDT By Ken Kolker HASTINGS, Mich. (WOOD) - A former youth home director accused of molesting four clients will get no more time with his own eight children, despite his attorney's suggestion that the alleged sex crime victims -- all troubled teens -- have reasons to make up the allegations. Michael Terpening, 32, had asked a judge to allow him to spend time with his children at the family's home. That request was denied on Tuesday. Now, he can see them only through the Department of Human Services. "We have allegations from 17-, 18- or 19-year-olds who have been through the system... who have a variety of motivations for what they're testifying to," Terpening's attorney, J. Thomas Schaeffer, told the judge Tuesday. The children's attorney, who says he's read police reports about the alleged sexual assaults, fought against more visitation time for the father. "I resent the accusations that these individuals, just because they're convicted felons... that their word is no good," attorney James M. Kinney said. "They can be victims, too." Terpening, who ran Earth Services and The House Next Door -- a Barry County program for troubled teens -- is charged with 11 counts of sexual assault involving four former clients, all males in their late teens. Police say more charges might be on the way involving a fifth alleged victim. None of the charges involve Terpening's own children. The children's attorney said he believes Terpening has built himself up as a man who can be trusted, to make it easier to find victims. "When I look at this what I see is a man who is grooming these children. This is a trick; this is their game. This is their way about being open and being sneaky and getting more access to your child." About 10 supporters sat behind Terpening and his wife, Amanda, in the courtroom. They included friends, a former youth home worker and a former youth home volunteer. The state has filed a neglect petition to terminate Michael Terpening's parental rights. The children are staying with his wife, their mother. A DHS prosecutor and two attorneys for the children argued against Terpening's request for more time with his children. They criticized supporters who have created an online petition and a YouTube video, showing some of the children, on the father's behalf. "We have Mr. Terpening orchestrating a public display of alleged innocence," Kinney said. "He's exploiting his children, as is his wife, by allowing their pictures to be put on YouTube videos and broadcast to the world." Source: http://www.woodtv.com/dpp/news/local/gun_lake_region/accused-molester-denied-more-kid-time

Terpening to face trial for 12 assaults Judge cleared court during prelim hearing Monday Updated: Monday, 12 Sep 2011, 6:48 PM EDT Published : Monday, 12 Sep 2011, 9:50 AM EDT By Ken Kolker HASTINGS, Mich. (WOOD) - When Michael Terpening walked in to a preliminary hearing on Monday, he was faced with 11 counts of sexual assault. Before he walked out, he was bound to stand trial for 12 assaults. News of the 12th assault came after the judge cleared the courtroom on Monday. Terpening, 32, was in court to face a preliminary hearing on charges involving males in their mid- to late teens while he was operating Earth Services and The House Next Door -- Barry County programs for troubled teens. He allegedly assaulted four of his young male clients. The courtroom behind Terpening, who is currently free on bond, was packed with supporters just before Monday's hearing who insist that the four alleged victims are lying. "Anybody would love to have Mike for a son. Absolutely love Mike," said Liz Smith, Terpening's great aunt. One supporter, who says she spoke to the suspect last night, says she braced herself for the allegations. "He said what they have charged is really ugly. He said it's going to be embarrassing," said Linda Timmons, a friend of Terpening. "The people who are persecuting him are people who are of poor character," she added. Barry County Prosecutor Tom Evans says he believes Terpening's supporters had another purpose -- intimidation. "The presence of the people here; It's certainly a case of might beats right, okay. We'll bring in our three out-of-town attorneys, we'll bring in all our buddies, and we'll just run right over these kids, and we'll run right over this little prosecutor's office," said Evans. "There may be turnip trucks here, but I didn't just fall off of one." Then, Judge Michael Schippers closed the courtroom to the public, agreeing with prosecutors and the defense that the testimony was too embarrassing for the victims. "This is insulting; this is downright insulting," said Smith of the public's ejection from the courtroom. The prosecutor told 24 Hour News 8 that police have placed one victim into protective custody. He was among those expected to testify on Monday. A former worker at Terpening's home, Jamie Moore-Bell, says she has had contact with that victim: "He fully admitted that these were lies, that this did not happen, and he wanted to make this right," said Moore-Bell. "The state police were saying that that's coercion; I coerced him into making these statements." The father of one of the victims, who says his son was assaulted by Terpening, spoke with 24 Hour News 8. The father of the victim was angry that the courtroom was closed. When asked by 24 Hour News 8 if he wanted to be present in the court to protect his son, he agreed enthusiastically: "You're damn straight. Nobody else could protect my son when they were up here," said the father. The father of the victim says he drove his 16-year-old son from Indiana to the courthouse on Monday at the prosecutor's request. "I don't know if he's in the courtroom right now or not. As far as I know, he's in there talking to the prosecutor. They're not going to talk to my son that way," he said. He says police recently approached him about Terpening. That's when his son said the man had touched him about four or five years ago. "Touched him in some wrongful places," he said. The father of the victim says his son was about 12 years old at the time. Supporters of Terpening insist that witnesses are lying. But prosecutors say some of the victims were at the home at different times. "Some of them have never met before," said Evans. The father of the victim says his son isn't making it up: "I want justice for the other children." Terpening is married and has eight children. None of the alleged victims are Terpening's children, but he was [ordered not to spend time alone with his children](#) last week. Source: http://www.woodtv.com/dpp/news/local/gun_lake_region/michael-terpening-hearing-september-12-2011

Boot Camp aims to scare children straight--The Toledo Journal--09/16/2011 Mr. Mahone said that although the camp has had many success stories and opened a chapter in Chicago, Ill., the local juvenile court system refuses to work with him and recognize his program. A couple of judges claim the program doesn't

work, he said. And when people call the courts looking for a scared straight program, the courts don't recommend his program. Source:

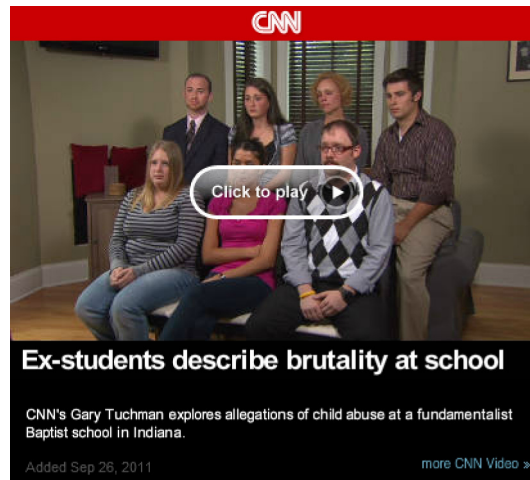
<http://www.thetoledojournal.com/news/Article/Article.asp?NewsID=110635&SID=20&ItemSource=L>

September 22, 2011 Single-Sex Education Is Assailed in Report By [TAMAR LEWIN](#) [Single-sex education](#) is ineffective, misguided and may actually increase gender stereotyping, a paper to be published Friday asserts. The report, "The Pseudoscience of Single Sex Schooling," to be published in *Science* magazine by eight social scientists who are founders of the nonprofit [American Council for CoEducational Schooling](#), is likely to ignite a new round of debate and legal wrangling about the effects of single-sex education. It asserts that "sex-segregated education is deeply misguided and often justified by weak, cherry-picked or misconstrued scientific claims rather than by valid scientific evidence." But the strongest argument against single-sex education, the article said, is that it reduces boys' and girls' opportunities to work together, and reinforces sex stereotypes. "Boys who spend more time with other boys become increasingly aggressive," the article said. "Similarly, girls who spend more time with other girls become more sex-typed." The authors are psychologists and neuroscientists from several universities who have researched and written on sex differences and sex roles. The *Science* article is not based on new research, but rather is a review of existing research and writing. The lead author, Diane F. Halpern, is a past president of the American Psychological Association who holds a [chair in psychology at Claremont McKenna College](#) in California. She is an expert witness in litigation in which the American Civil Liberties Union is challenging single-sex classes — which have been suspended — at a school in Vermilion Parish, La. Arguing that no scientific evidence supports the idea that single-sex schooling results in better academic outcomes, the article calls on the Education Department to rescind its 2006 regulations weakening the Title IX prohibition against sex discrimination in education. Under those rules, single-sex classes may be permitted as long as they are voluntary, students have a substantially equal coeducational option and the school reasonably believes separation will produce better academic outcomes. Russlynn H. Ali, the assistant secretary for civil rights at the Education Department, said it was reviewing the research. "There are case studies that have been done that show some benefit of single-sex, but like lots of other educational research, it's mixed," she said. "When you're talking about separating students, treating them differently, you want to do it in a way that's constitutional, and you want to make sure that there is adequate justification. We certainly want to safeguard against stereotyping." The article comes at a time when single-sex education is on the rise. There were only two single-sex public schools in the mid-1990s; today, there are more than 500 public schools in 40 states that offer some single-sex academic classes or, more rarely, are entirely single sex. Many of them began separating the sexes because of a belief that boys and girls should be taught differently that grew out of popular books, speeches and workshops by Michael Gurian, Leonard Sax and others. Dr. Sax, executive director of the [National Association of Single Sex Public Education](#), was singled out for criticism in the *Science* article, for his teachings that boys respond better to energetic, confrontational classrooms while girls need a gentler touch. "A loud, cold classroom where you toss balls around, like Dr. Sax thinks boys should have, might be great for some boys, and for some girls, but for some boys, it would be living hell," Dr. Halpern said in an interview. She said that while girls are better readers and get better grades, and boys are more likely to have reading disabilities, that does not mean that educators should use the group average to design different classrooms. "It's simply not true that boys and girls learn differently," she said. "Advocates for single-sex education don't like the parallel with racial segregation, but the parallels are there. We used to believe that the races learned differently, too." Dr. Sax criticized the article on many counts, and said it did not fairly reflect his current views. He vehemently rejected the comparison to racial segregation, and the use of the term "sex segregation." Legally, race is a suspect category, while sex is not. "We are not asserting that every child should be in a single-sex classroom, we are simply saying that there should be a choice," Dr. Sax said in an interview. The authors of the article, though, say that because there is no good scientific research backing such a choice, the government cannot lawfully offer single-sex education in public schools. The article cites a review commissioned by the Education Department, comparing single-sex and coed outcomes, concluding that, "as in previous reviews," the results are equivocal. The article also said that research in other countries, and data from the [Program for International Student Assessment](#), also found little overall difference between single-sex and coed academic outcomes. While some studies have found better outcomes from single-sex schools, the article said, the purported advantages disappear when outcomes are corrected for pre-existing differences. For example, Chicago's Urban Prep Charter Academy for Young Men, a school whose high college admissions rates were praised this year by Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, was subsequently criticized by the scholar Diane Ravitch as having test results that were actually lower than average on basic skills. "This is very much a live issue, and I think it's snowballing," said Galen Sherwin, a staff lawyer for the Women's Rights Project of the A.C.L.U., who is handling the Louisiana case. "I see news stories every single week about new proposals, usually based on the idea that boys and girls learn differently. Often it's people who have attended training programs by Sax or Gurian, saying these programs will cater to boys' and girls' specific learning styles." Much of the impetus for single-sex public schooling came from popular books like Mary Pipher's "Reviving Ophelia" and, especially, a 1992 report by the American Association of University Women, "How Schools Shortchange Girls." But by 1998, when the association issued another report, saying that single-sex schooling was not the solution to problems of gender equity, the pendulum had swung, with boys' difficulties in school receiving more attention, in part because of books like Dr. Sax's "Why Gender Matters" and Mr. Gurian's "The Wonder of Boys." Source:

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/23/education/23single.html?_r=1&emc=eta1

Ex-judge gets 17 1/2 years in Pa. kickbacks case September 23, 2011 12:31 PM (AP) SCRANTON, Pa. — A former judge who orchestrated a massive kickback scheme involving for-profit youth detention centers was sentenced Friday to 17 1/2 years in federal prison, closing a major chapter on a scandal that prosecutors said shook Pennsylvania's judicial system "to its very foundation." Appearing in a federal courtroom in Scranton, former Luzerne County President Judge Michael Conahan, 59, apologized to the incarcerated youths, the legal community and the public for his role in the notorious "kids for cash" case. "The system is not corrupt," said Conahan. "I was corrupt." Conahan, a once-powerful man who regularly met for breakfast with the reputed boss of a northeastern Pennsylvania Mafia family, offered a direct apology to the children who spent time in a pair of youth lockups from which he and another former judge derived millions of dollars. "My actions undermined your faith in the system and contributed to the difficulty in your lives," said Conahan, who pleaded guilty to racketeering conspiracy last year. "I am sorry you were victimized." Federal prosecutors said Conahan and former Luzerne County Judge Mark Ciavarella Jr. took more than \$2 million in bribes from the builder of the PA Child Care and Western PA Child Care detention centers and extorted hundreds of thousands of dollars from the facilities' co-owner. Ciavarella took the case to trial and was convicted of some of the charges. He was sentenced last month to 28 years in prison. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court overturned about 4,000 juvenile convictions after Ciavarella and Conahan were charged, saying that Ciavarella, who presided over juvenile court, routinely trampled on youths' constitutional rights in his eagerness to send them to the for-profit jails. Unlike Ciavarella, who denied jailing youths for money and defiantly attacked the government's case at his sentencing, Conahan accepted responsibility. Assistant U.S. Attorney William Houser acknowledged Friday. But he said Conahan's crimes required a stiff sentence. "Mr. Conahan abused his power to enrich himself and his friend, Mark Ciavarella," Houser said. "The justice system in Pennsylvania was shaken to its very foundation." Ciavarella and Conahan initially pleaded guilty in February 2009 to honest services fraud and tax evasion in a deal that would have required them to spend more than seven years in prison. But their plea deals were rejected later that year by U.S. District Judge Edwin M. Kosik, who ruled they had failed to accept responsibility for their actions. Conahan's attorney, Philip Gelso, told Kosik on Friday that his client was a changed man from two years ago. Conahan got counseling from a psychologist who helped him face his repressed "lifelong demons," many of them having to do with his father, a funeral director and former mayor of Hazleton, Pa., who dominated his son and made him feel insecure, incompetent and inadequate, Gelso said. Gelso recounted an episode in which a teenage Conahan was "beaten mercilessly" when he failed to tend to the funeral home's coal stove. "These factors excuse nothing, but they explain a great deal," Gelso said. Conahan, who had faced up to 20 years behind bars, had requested a prison term similar to the seven-plus years Kosik rejected two years ago. Gelso said outside the court that Conahan was "bitterly disappointed" by the 17 1/2-year sentence but that it would not be appealed. "There's a stark contrast between Mark Ciavarella and Mike Conahan. Mark Ciavarella fought this tooth and nail. Mark Ciavarella antagonized all of you, antagonized every child, every juvenile," Gelso told reporters. "But Mike Conahan didn't do that. Mike Conahan realized that people need to heal." In sentencing Conahan, Kosik spoke of the deep-rooted political culture that produced him, one in which corruption is tacitly accepted. The federal government's four-year investigation of public corruption in Luzerne and Lackawanna counties has snared more than 30 people, including state lawmakers, county officials, school board members and others. In a letter to Kosik, Conahan's sister recalled their father, dealing with a long-ago ethics investigation, couldn't understand why it was wrong to award a contract to a friend. Kosik said Conahan probably felt the same way about the juvenile-center kickbacks: "That everyone would benefit and no one would get hurt." Investigators disclosed earlier this year that they were led to the judges by reputed mob boss William D'Elia, who became a government informant after his 2006 arrest on charges of witness tampering and

conspiracy to launder drug money. He and Conahan regularly met for breakfast. Kosik recommended that Conahan be placed in a federal prison camp in Florida so he can be close to his family. Source: <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2011/09/23/ap/business/main20110762.shtml>



Polygamist communities sent teens to work long hours for low pay By Sheila Pratt, Postmedia News September 25, 2011 Winston Blackmore, 52, leaves court in this file photo. Photograph by: Brian Lawrence, PNG Merlin Archive EDMONTON — Truman Oler was 17 when he made the long drive to Sundre from his home in Bountiful, B.C., the base of Canada's controversial polygamous sect, Fundamentalist Latter Day Saints. Like dozens of other FLDS teenage boys, Oler left high school after Grade 9 and, at 15, he was working full time for a company owned by Bountiful's bishop, Winston Blackmore. Blackmore, who eventually had more than 20 wives, sent Oler to Alberta to work in his post and pole mill in Sundre, a small town southwest of Red Deer near the foothills. That was the late 1990s. The Sundre site, first owned by J.R. Blackmore and Sons and later by Oler Bros. Contracting, was still operating in Sundre until the spring of 2009. Documents obtained by The Journal show the FLDS company did business with dozens of Alberta companies by the time it folded. Court documents also raised questions about working conditions and pay in the FLDS company. Oler, like his fellow FLDS workers, believed if he obeyed the rules, paid his tithes and followed the bishop's teachings, he might be assigned a wife, a place to build a home, perhaps another wife. That was the promise. Oler was determined to be faithful. "I just never looked for a way out," he recalled in a recent interview with The Journal. At first, the crew worked day and night shifts making fence posts for a large local mill. Later, Blackmore and Sons got into logging on contract and workers cut timber and de-limbed trees. For a while, the young men drove the six hours back to Bountiful twice a month to attend church meetings and see family, recalled Truman, whose father had six wives and 47 children. Truman Oler was 13th of the 15 children by his mother, Memory Oler. While the plight of teenage brides has garnered much attention in the story of Bountiful, there is another dark side to the polygamous sect — the young men and women used as cheap labour for FLDS companies whose futures were totally dependent on a bishop's decisions. Dozens of these young people came to the Sundre area to work for Blackmore and Sons, and later Oler Bros., businesses that helped support the polygamous community back in British Columbia. The story of the young people in Alberta, as Oler's account reveals, is one of low pay, long hours and isolation. Occasionally, a young man would be kicked out for breaking the rules; some would leave on their own. Known as "lost boys," they were left to cope with no family support, no financial support and little education. Experts who gave evidence last winter in a B.C. court reference on the legality of polygamy noted that surplus young men are often sent away to work to reduce the competition for young wives desired by the older men — as well as provide cheap labour. A judgment is expected soon in the B.C. court reference that will determine the legality of polygamy under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. From the highway heading west of Sundre, the FLDS company site looked much like any other small industrial site in the busy rural county. A large rectangular Quonset building used as a repair shop, a few trucks, an old house, a double-wide trailer, all crowded onto the gravel yard. Oler says he earned \$60 every two weeks at first and that went up to \$100 every two weeks when he turned 18 — well below minimum wage. When he worked for Blackmore and Sons, sometimes he was issued a cheque which he was asked to sign and hand back to his boss. He says he never saw the cash. When Oler Brothers took over, his pay went up. Oler says he was provided with safety gear, hard hat and boots, when he made fence posts at the large nearby sawmill. He also noted safety checks at the mill. Oler also noticed young men from FLDS communities in Utah turned up at the site — rebellious teenagers sent on a "reform mission." A strict regimen of long hours, hard work, no pay and teachings from righteous older men was supposed to put them back on track, said Oler. In October 1997, another unusual new arrival — 14-year-old Teressa Wall, from Salt Lake City — turned up. When Utah FLDS leaders told her it was time for her to marry, she refused. She was banned from her family home and sent to Bountiful until she would repent. Shortly after, Bountiful's bishop, Winston Blackmore, sent Wall to work at the Sundre mill, Wall said in her video testimony to the B.C. court. Dressed in her long, pioneer-style dress, Wall often worked the night shift. While the others had warm clothes, she worked in winter in tennis shoes and an old coat and worked in the rain with no raincoat. Her job was throwing logs onto the "peeler" machine or taking the de-barked, cut logs off the other end of the machine and stacking them, she said. She was often told: "You could end all this if you would just get married," she noted. For nearly two years, she refused and continued working along with two of her brothers from Utah. Oler recalled seeing her at the mill, but they never spoke. One day, with no warning, Wall was taken back to Creston where the bishop, Winston Blackmore, again pressured her to get married. Dispirited by then, she agreed to do so. She was 17. Wall then returned to Sundre with her new husband, who worked at the mill while she took on the job of crew cook, according to her testimony. In the mid-2000s, Blackmore's operation was taken over by Oler Bros, which was owned by Truman Oler's elder brothers. They started logging. In 2006, the company had a crew of more than 40 workers, according to government documents. Oler said the wages went up to \$400 to \$500 a month and later \$800. In April 2009, Oler Bros. declared bankruptcy. That year, Bountiful was under growing pressure from the B.C. government. Truman Oler's brother, Jim, bishop at the time, was charged with polygamy — but the charges were later stayed. Bankruptcy records give a glimpse into just how far FLDS business connections had grown over the years in Alberta. When the company went under, it had debts of \$4.8 million and assets of \$2.9 million. Dozens of companies were listed as creditors, in Sundre, the Rocky Mountain House area and Edmonton and Calgary, and into Ontario and B.C. Documents show Oler Bros. borrowed more than \$2 million for vehicles, trucks, trailers, cars, including \$1.4 million for "eight pieces of equipment from John Deere" based in Burlington, Ont. The list of 15 secured creditors included ATB, (with a claim of \$90,000), Caterpillar Financial Services, (\$280,000 claim), Daimler Chrysler (\$900,000 for six trucks and trailers) a Red Deer company Haukendal Enterprise (claim of \$364,904 for office furniture) and Equirex Vehicle leasing (a claim of \$340,000 for three trucks). More than 100 companies are listed as unsecured creditors. The claimants include banks, tire companies, lumber companies, auto repair shops and United Farmers of Alberta (\$15,000 claim). In his early 20s, Truman Oler started to push for better wages after he learned what other forestry workers in the area were paid. Eventually, the wage was raised to \$15 an hour — still lower than the going rate in the industry. FLDS bosses justified the low pay, says Oler, by pointing out that they provided free room and board, and promised to buy vehicles for the workers — which didn't always happen. Jim Oler, of Oler Bros., could not be reached for comment. Winston Blackmore would say that low wages allowed everyone to have a job. In a 2006 documentary he said: "We compromised on wages — even I did. But why we compromised on wages is that everyone was employed." Truman Oler had no thought about taking his complaint to provincial labour authorities. But word of the substandard working conditions and undocumented American workers did finally leak out. Nancy Mereska lives near Two Hills east of Edmonton. She left the mainstream Mormon church in 1985 and went to university for a degree in psychology and women's studies. In 2003, she saw a television documentary on polygamy in Bountiful. Troubled by what she saw, she started a

small advocacy organization, Stop Polygamy Canada. In the spring of 2004, Mereska learned of working conditions at the FLDS operations around Sundre. From reports she received, it sounded little better than a slave labour camp, she said in an interview — young men working for little pay, with little training, on dangerous equipment in a dangerous industry — and no way out. To Mereska, that was unacceptable in Alberta where labour standards were in place to protect workers, especially young people, from unfair practices. So she wrote to then employment minister Clint Dunford, asking for an investigation. The letter she got back in September 2004 was a big disappointment, she says. The department declined to investigate because she provided no specific evidence of safety violations. The letter also noted Alberta labour law allows teens at age 15 to work in logging though it is deemed one of the more dangerous occupations. The letter also appeared to justify any wages below minimum wage as if the FLDS company was a family business. "Alberta's employment standards do not prohibit a father from paying his sons a stipend rather than a wage," noted the letter from civil servant Walter Baer, then director of compliance for workplace health and safety and employment standards. "I phoned Baer's office, got his voice mail and said: 'What if a man has 50 sons?' 'He did not return my call.'" "I was furious," said Mereska. "I knew the terrible conditions under which these kids were working and no one would do anything about it." In 2005, a year later, Oler Bros. Contracting turns up for the first time in provincial occupational health and safety records. The record shows Oler Bros. had implemented a government-audited safety program and it was in place in 2005-07. "This means someone must have visited the site," said Janice Schroeder, communications officer for Alberta Employment and Immigration. The records also show two reported injuries, one in 2006 and one in 2008, the year the work crew officially dropped to 22 people. Mereska's 2004 complaint about low wages was likely not pursued because it was not specific, said Schroeder. Under provincial labour standards, only family farms are exempt from minimum wage requirements. The exemption does not apply to sawmills, she added. In 2009, another concerned citizen raised a red flag. Sandy McIntosh, an Edmonton-based specialist in occupation health and safety, also raised questions about possible violations of labour standards in the FLDS company. The case of Teresa Wall, working there at 14, is particularly disturbing, he said. She worked with hazardous machinery in a long dress without proper weather protection, according to her testimony. Yet safety regulations require workers to wear hard-toed boots, a hard hat, gloves and overalls, he said. "Young people were there working for nothing, some were sent from U.S.," said McIntosh in an interview. "How did they get across the border?" "Why do we let one group break the rules so easily?" For the province to treat this business as if it was a family farm is inappropriate, he added. "It is an industrial operation." It's pretty clear the money made in Alberta went to support polygamous communities in the B.C. and U.S., McIntosh added. "Alberta was in the chain and we don't want to acknowledge it. It's happening in our society, we should have an open discussion about it." It's late August and a busy Tuesday night in the cosy restaurant in the old Sundre Hotel. The specials on offer, a steak sandwich or sweet and sour pork, are in big demand. The kitchen serves up a very tasty bowl of steaming wonton soup. Seated at the counter, Dennis Herbert tucks into a plate of fried chicken and fries, gravy on the side. Born and raised in this small town, he's over 60 and still driving truck. He remembers when the Bountiful people started to show up. A few lived in the trailer court on the north side of town. "Some lived behind me in the trailer park. They didn't seem to be any trouble, just different," said Herbert. The women in their long dresses were noticeable walking into town from the work site near McDougall Flats, five kilometres west of town, he said. Sometimes they had young children with them. The town settled into a "live and let live" attitude with the small, hard-working group of FLDS people. The newcomers were polite, kept to themselves. Their small business all seemed temporary. If anybody had concerns, it seems, they kept them to themselves. Myron Thompson, a town councillor in Sundre, was a Reform MP when Bountiful people moved in. There wasn't too much talk about them, he said. "No one came to me with any concerns," Thompson added. Besides, in his view, any issues that might arise would be "left to provincial authorities." The FLDS site was located in the County of Mountain View, but the county had little to do with it, says former councillor Gerald Ingeveld. The company took an existing business so the county had no reason to get involved, he said. There was no sign the small group was trying to set up a bigger community, he said, it was just a few people living in old trailers. "It didn't look like a long-term operation," he added. Besides, there is freedom of movement in Canada, he added, so what could anyone do if the FLDS workers moved into Alberta to do business, he added. "We do have laws about how young brides can be, but we saw no evidence of those issues here," said Ingeveld. While the sprawling rural county is a bit of a Bible belt, it has also seen its share of folks with different beliefs, he said. There is a nudist colony, and years ago, there were cross-burning racists in Caroline, he added. And the Moonies once made a brief appearance. Al Kemmere was reeve of Mountain View County in 2004. He lives about 45 kilometres from Sundre. The county doesn't regulate workers' wages or health and safety conditions, so it would not have thought to investigate working conditions, he added. That is a provincial responsibility. "I think the community saw them being there on a temporary basis and that was the basis of their passive approach. 'If their beliefs were breaking the law, then there are mechanisms of society to look after that.'" University of Alberta professor Steve Kent, an expert in cults, says there's no easy way for a community to deal with a church like FLDS that arrives on its doorstep, especially if its members are well behaved. "It didn't seem there were any public issues with the FLDS people and, absent those issues, it's difficult to know what a local community could do," said Kent, who also testified at the B.C. court reference last spring. It's not the job of a county or town council to enforce criminal laws, said Kent. The provincial government, however, should have kept a closer eye, given the reports of poor working conditions and low pay, he said. "It's very clear the government has a responsibility to monitor labour conditions including proper payment for a day's work." "The province let these young people down," said Kent. In some countries, governments take a more active role in monitoring cults, says Kent. But in Canada, it's left up to private groups like Stop Polygamy Canada. Truman Oler was still working in Sundre, in his early 20s, when he started to think about leaving the church. He was tired of low pay, of having no place of his own, no possessions and no time for anything much but work — tired of coming up with \$1,000 a month in tithes to then bishop Warren Jeffs. (His mother often subsidized his tithes.) In 2002, he quietly stopped paying his tithes. His brother noticed and threatened to fire him unless he started paying again. "I just said I didn't need the church any more," said Oler. "If you leave, you go with nothing but the shirt on your back," he said. "And you are told that you'll never see your family again." Oler rejects the term "lost boys" — that's what the FLDS likes to think of those who leave the church. Still, adjusting to life outside is not easy, says Oler. That is backed up by evidence presented by Timothy Dunfield, a University of Alberta doctoral student. In his affidavit to the B.C. court, Dunfield described the impact of polygamy on young men. To reduce the competition for teenage brides, young men are forced out. Or they have to follow a complex rules to qualify to get a wife, and in the end, it's a "political decision" whether they are deemed worthy. After years of indoctrination, the young men "are ill-equipped" for life on the outside, according to his evidence. They have to learn how to make decisions, handle money, make friends or find employment. Cut off from the emotional and financial support of their families, they often end up in poverty and isolated. U.S. authorities estimate about 1,000 young men, some as young as 13, have been expelled from FLDS communities south of the border, according to Dunfield's brief. Oler has moved on, built a new life, taken training as a heavy-duty mechanic. But his battle with the church goes on. Winston Blackmore is being sued for tax evasion. He is trying to get former employees like Oler to pay part of the back taxes. (Oler already paid back taxes on his earnings.) Although the Oler mill site has been sold to another company, Oler also says he is sure other FLDS companies are still operating in Alberta. Occasionally, Oler goes back to Bountiful to visit his mother, but it's painful. "If I show up she will come out of the house to talk to me, but I am not welcomed into the house," Oler wrote in his court evidence. "I dream of going down to the place where I was raised and made to feel welcome and treated like a family member and not some stranger who has been caught stealing something. Maybe some day things will change." spratt@edmontonjournal.com Edmonton Journal

© Copyright (c) The Edmonton Journal Winston Blackmore, 52, leaves court in this file photo. Photograph by: Brian Lawrence, PNG Merlin Archive

Source: <http://www.montrealgazette.com/life/Polygamist+communities+sent+teens+work+long+hours/5454783/story.html>

12-foot fence at trouble-plagued Palmetto Behavioral Health stirs split reactions By [Glenn Smith gsmith@postandcourier.com](mailto:Glenn.Smith@postandcourier.com) Wednesday, September 28, 2011 SUMMERVILLE -- The new 12-foot-high fence outside Palmetto Behavioral Health has some neighbors feeling like a prison moved in next door. "All it needs is some razor wire," is a common refrain. But all that chain link translates into peace of mind for folks like Peggy Williams, who lives just around the corner from the treatment center for troubled teens. The fence, outfitted with special mesh and a curved top, is designed to put an end to the highly publicized escapes that have put this community on edge in recent months. "I love it," Williams said of the new fence. "I just wish they had done it sooner." Photo by Glenn Smith Reaction has been mixed over the new fence outside Palmetto Behavioral Health in Summerville. Palmetto officials released a statement Tuesday saying that previous attempts to install such a security fence at the Midland Parkway facility had been denied. They did not say by whom, nor would they reveal how much they paid for the new fence and other security upgrades. John Walker, a former maintenance worker at the center, said his supervisors pushed for a more secure fence as far back as 2007, but Palmetto executives didn't want to spend the money. Another ex-employee provided The Post and Courier with a copy of a 2007 bid from a company offering to install a 10-foot fence around the center for \$23,650. Walker said Palmetto opted for a smaller wooden privacy fence because it was much cheaper. The result was that escapes became commonplace, with teens climbing the 6-foot fence without breaking a sweat, he said. "They went over it like it wasn't even there," he said. "I kept thinking, 'What happens if one of those kids gets loose and kills somebody?' How are they going to justify that?"

Most escapes from the center have been resolved peacefully. But in 2009, a 15-year-old boy was accused of attacking and beating a 64-year-old woman after he slipped away from the center by ducking out a side door, police said. Palmetto officials have insisted they wanted to install a more secure fence years ago, but backed off after receiving resistance from fire officials and neighbors. That is why they settled on the wooden fence, they have said. Palmetto, which operates three treatment facilities in South Carolina, has been under scrutiny since four Washington teens escaped from the Summerville center in April. Citizens were stunned to learn the teens had violent histories and that one of the youths had faced an attempted murder charge in Washington. Residents and elected officials questioned why such patients were being housed in a facility surrounded by residential neighborhoods and protected by little more than a privacy fence. Those concerns grew when two more teens escaped from the facility in June, and a third bolted in August. Walker and other former workers said there were far more escapes from the facility that were never reported to police. Police records list 12 missing-person calls and nine reports of runaways from the facility since 2006. But Walker said police were seldom notified if workers could round up the escapees first. He said he participated in several such round-ups, combing nearby backyards and woods for teens who had gotten loose. Palmetto officials did not directly respond to Walker's statements when asked Tuesday, saying that the center "does not release information concerning patients or employees." Town Councilman Walter Bailey, a former solicitor, said he was pleased with the new fencing and hopes it will resolve concerns over escapes. "They have belatedly done what they should have done a while back and hopefully this will take care of their security issues." State Rep. Chip Limehouse, R-Charleston, has pushed legislation that would bar treatment centers from accepting out-of-state placements of violent mental health patients. Limehouse said he too was encouraged by the new fencing, but state officials still need to keep an eye on Palmetto. "I have to compliment them for making improvements where they can," he said. "But there just seems to be an unfortunate amount of incidents coming out of this one facility. My hope is that they will get out of the news and stay out of the news." In the neighborhood around the center, residents responded to the new fence with a mixture of relief and ambivalence. Some thought it was just right; others, that it was overkill. Evelyn Mace, who lives in nearby Oakbrook Commons, recalled seeing some Palmetto workers chasing an escapee through the neighborhood a few years back. But she said she's never had any problems with the teens there. "They've never bothered me," she said. "I'm more concerned about teenagers on the loose around here after dark leaving trash up and down the roadway." For Palmetto's part, the center seems ready to put the controversy behind it. "Palmetto Behavioral Health will continue to provide the utmost professional care for the emotionally and mentally challenged individuals that are cared for at our facilities," the company said in a statement. "We are also committed to continuing our work as a valued member of the business and health care community." Copyright © 1995 - 2011 Evening Post Publishing Co.. Source: <http://www.postandcourier.com/news/2011/sep/28/appropriate-or-overkill/>

Corporate Media and Larry Summers Team Up to Gut Public Education: Beyond Education for Illiteracy, Vulgarity and a Culture of Cruelty Tuesday 27 September 2011 by: Henry A. Giroux, Truthout | Op-Ed NOTE: This article is based on the preface of Henry A. Giroux's latest book, "Education and the Crisis of Public Values: Challenging the Assault on Teachers, Students and Public Education" (Counterpoints: Studies in the Postmodern Theory of Education), published by Peter Lang Publishing; First printing edition (July 30, 2011). Since the early 1970s, the rich, corporate power brokers and right-wing cultural warriors realized that education was central to creating a viable populist movement that served their interests. Over the last 40 years, the financial elites and their wealthy accomplices have not only mobilized an educational anti-reform movement in the name of "reform" to dismantle public education and turn it over to hedge-fund managers and billionaires; they have also taken a lesson from the muckrakers, critical public intellectuals, left-wing journals, progressive newspapers and educational institutions of the mid-20th century and developed their own cultural apparatuses, talk shows, anti-public intellectuals, think tanks and grassroots organizations. As the left slid into organizing around mostly single-issue movements since the 1980s, the right moved in a different direction, mobilizing a range of educational forces and wider cultural apparatuses as a way of addressing broader ideas that appealed to a wider public and issues that resonated with their everyday lives. Tax reform, the role of government, the crisis of education, family values and the economy, to name a few issues, were wrenched out of their progressive legacy and inserted into a context defined by the values of the free market, an unbridled notion of freedom and individualism and a growing hatred for the social contract. At the heart of this movement was a culture of cruelty and vulgarity that used education to produce a new form of political illiteracy in which there was no difference between opinions and arguments, reason and emotion and evidence and false statements. In this culture of illiteracy, science became a liability, thinking became an act of stupidity, anti-intellectualism became a virtue, social protections were described as a pathology and the social contract was dismissed as socialism. While social critic Michael Kazin does not mention the notions of education or public pedagogy in a recent New York Times article, he is right in stressing the centrality of education to the current right-wing-Christian-extremists takeover of almost every aspect of political and economic life in America - extending from the Supreme Court to the federal government to the dominant media-cultural educational apparatus. He writes: "Like the left in the early 20th century, conservatives built an impressive set of institutions to develop and disseminate their ideas. Their think tanks, legal societies, lobbyists, talk radio and best selling manifestos have trained, educated and financed two generations of writers and organizers. Conservative Christian colleges both Protestant and Catholic, provide students with a more coherent worldview than do the more prestigious schools led by liberals. More recently, conservatives marshaled media outlets like Fox News and the editorial pages of The Wall Street Journal to their cause." (1) Education has become the political weapon of choice for conservatives, and they have had astounding success in using the mainstream and new media to drown out the voices of more progressive critics. The evidence is everywhere. For instance, The New York Times is currently advertising its Watch Education Take Center Stage initiative and the keynote address is being given by the politically and morally discredited champion of neoliberal education, Lawrence Summers. Given his failed presidency at Harvard, his utterly shameful role in contributing to the financial crisis of 2008 and the failure of Obama's economic policies and his crude instrumental view of education, why would The New York Times select him as an educational leader and beacon of hope for any kind of educational vision designed to address future generations? Other speakers include the likes of Chester Finn, whose views on public education are as politically reactionary as they are theoretically bogus. Another example can be found in the ongoing Education Nation series sponsored on a number of platforms by NBC. It's endorsement of market-driven anti-public education policies are evident in its parading of the likes of Bill and Melinda Gates and their utterly anti-public, charter school, privatized and technocratic vision of education. Also included are the usual list of charter school, corporate funded anti-union, public school cheerleaders for defunding and privatizing American education. Of course, missing from these dog-and-pony shows are progressive public school reformers such as David Berliner, Stanley Aronowitz, Jonathan Kozol, Marian Wright Edelman, Donaldo Macedo, and others who have been fighting for real educational reform for the last few decades. Nor is there any mention of the many local struggling social movements fighting for public education and the ever-dissolving protections of social contract inherited from the legacy of the New Deal and the Great Society programs. Education at all levels is firmly in the hands of the rich, reactionary and the powerful. Is it any wonder given how invisible progressive forces are in this country that young people are not in the streets as they were in the sixties, refusing the future being offered to them by Wall Street and the moralizing Christian fundamentalists? Of course, this is not merely a debate about education; it is really about the emergence of an anti-reform movement that wants to create armies of low-skilled workers and consumers for the privatized, deregulated and commodified world of the 21st century where a survival of the fittest ethic has been elevated to the status of commonsense. This is a world in which the culture of cruelty is now so commonplace that audiences clap when right-wing politicians insist that people who are terminally ill should die rather than receive government support; it is a world in which the legacies and injustice of slavery and the Jim Crow era now shape a criminal justice system in which capital punishment is largely used to kill black men while, at the same time, used by crass politicians to provoke political support and cheers from audiences who could have once sat in the seats of Roman coliseums watching people eaten by wild animals; the culture of cruelty is now matched by the culture of vulgarity - reality TV shows mimic the worst values of American life; celebrity culture is now so crude that it is worse than illiterate, and celebrities such as Kim Kardashian become role models for legitimating a lethal combination of vulgarity and stupidity. The combination of vulgarity and illiteracy permeates American culture, particularly its political class. What is one to make of the current crop of Republican presidential candidates who claim, without irony, that climate change is not the result of human behavior; evolution is bad science; and in the case of the queen of idiocy, Michele Bachmann, ignore the most obvious scientific evidence about the HPV vaccine in order to make false claims about the value of this particular drug in saving the lives of young girls. In all of these examples, education becomes another way of making the larger public and young people either stupid or mindless consumers - even worse, both. The American public needs access to a new political and educational vocabulary in order to fashion democratically vibrant educational institutions; social movements; community educational centers; bookstores; and a lively, independent press. Young people, educators, activists, artists, parents, and others need alternative media such as Truthout, AlterNet and CounterPunch as popular civic outlets to make education central to building the formative culture that would create new generations of real public intellectuals, youth activists, social movements and a vibrant range of public spheres. I have taken up this issue in my newest book, "Education and the Crisis of Public Values." The book points to how educators and others can meet the current attack on education, young people and democracy itself. It offers a new

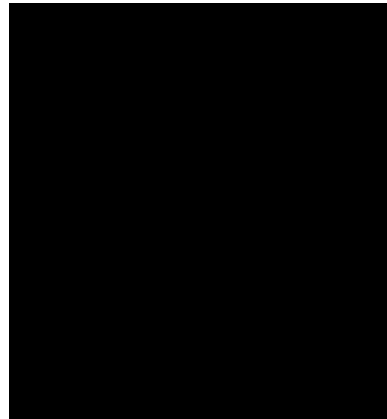
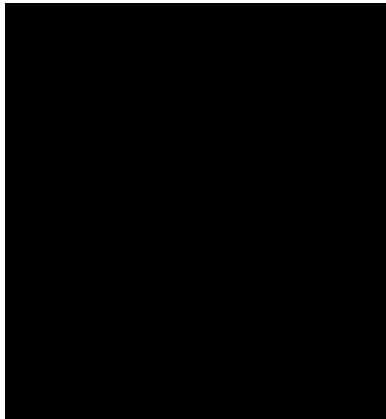
vocabulary for better understanding the crisis of education as a crisis of democracy and public life, and provides a number of suggestions for what new beginnings are necessary, all of which is outlined in more detail throughout the book. Below is an excerpt from the preface that forecasts both the swindle of education offered by conservatives, the billionaires and corporate power brokers and why it needs to be resisted with as much urgency and collective power as possible. With all due respect to Charles Dickens, it appears to be the worst of times for public and higher education in America; public schools are increasingly viewed as a business and are prized above all for "customer satisfaction," and efficiency while largely judged through the narrow lens of empirical accountability measures. When not functioning as a business or a potentially lucrative for-profit investment, public schools are reduced to containment centers, holding institutions designed to largely punish young people marginalized by race and class. No longer merely tracked into low-achieving classes, poor white, brown and black youth are now tracked out of school into what is often called the school-to-prison pipeline. Schools have now become stress centers for the privileged and zones of abandonment for the poor. Public school teachers are now viewed as the new "welfare-queens," while academics are defined less as critical intellectuals and engaged scholars than as a new class or professional entrepreneurs. Under strict policies imposed in a number of states by right-wing politicians wrapping themselves in the rhetoric of austerity, higher education at all levels is being radically defunded while simultaneously being transformed into a credentializing factory restructured according to the values, social relations and governing practices of large corporations. In both public and higher education, ignorance is not merely fostered, but embraced through the course content whose value is almost exclusively defined through a metaphysics in which anything that can't be quantified is defined as useless. Corporate pedagogy has no use for critical thinking, autonomous subjects, the stretching of the imagination, or developing a sense of civic responsibility among students. Teachers who think and act reflectively, ask uncomfortable questions, challenge the scripts of official power and promote a search for the truth while encouraging pedagogy as the practice of freedom are now viewed as suspect, if not un-American. At the same time, amid all of the despair and foolishness on the part of right-wing politicians and conservative and corporate interests, it is not entirely clear that a spring of hope is beyond reach. As I wrote this preface, workers and young people were marching and demonstrating all over the globe against the dictates, values and policies of a market-driven economy that has corrupted politics, pushed democracy to its vanishing point and undermined public values. Unions, public school teachers, higher education, and all of those public spheres necessary to keep civic values alive are being challenged in a way that both baffles and shocks anyone who believes in the ideals and promises of a substantive democracy. In the United States, union-busting politicians such as Govs. Scott Walker (Wisconsin) and Chris Christie (New Jersey) not only want to gut social services and sell them off to the highest bidder, they are also symptomatic of a political fringe movement that wants to destroy the critical culture, dedicated public servants and institutions that give any sense of vitality, substance and hope to public and higher education in the United States. As the meaning of democracy is betrayed by its transformation into a market society, corporate power and money appear unchecked in their ability to privatize, deregulate and destroy all vestiges of public life. America's military wars abroad are now matched by the war at home; that is, the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya have found their counterpart in the war against the poor, immigrants, young people, unions, public-sector workers, the welfare state and schoolteachers. The call for shared sacrifices on the part of conservatives and Tea Party extremists becomes code for destroying the social state, preserving and increasing the power of mega-rich corporations and securing the wealth of the top one percent of the population with massive tax breaks while placing the burden of the current global economic meltdown on the shoulders of working people and the poor. Deficit reductions and austerity policies that allegedly address the global economic meltdown caused by the financial hawks running Wall Street now do the real work of stripping teachers of their collective bargaining rights, dismantling programs long associated with social services and relegating young people to mind-deadening schools and a debt-ridden future. David Harvey's notion of "accumulation through dispossession" has become a basic policy of casino capitalism. How else to interpret the right-wing call to tax the poor to subsidize tax breaks for billionaires and mega corporations? Despair, disposability and unnecessary human suffering now engulf large swaths of the American people, often pushing them into situations that are not merely tragic, but life threatening. A survival-of-the-fittest ethic has replaced any reasonable notion of solidarity, social responsibility and compassion for the other. Ideology does not seem to matter any longer as right-wing Republicans have less interest in argument and persuasion than in bullying their alleged enemies with the use of heavy-handed legislation and, when necessary, dire threats, as when Wisconsin's Republican Gov. Scott Walker threatened to mobilize the National Guard to prevent teachers' unions from protesting their possible loss of bargaining rights and a host of anti-worker proposals. Obama has joined the Republican Party, leaving us with a Republican Party line and a Republican Party of extremists. We have become a culture of forgetting, obliterating both the legacy of authoritarianism that characterized the Bush-Cheney years, while supporting a new group of Republican politicians who resemble Bush and Cheney on steroids. We are more than a nation in decline; we are a nation moving toward the bittersweet simplisms, policies and values of a new form of authoritarianism. With any viable leadership lacking at the national level, both young people and workers are watching the movements for democracy that are taking place all over the globe, but especially in the volatile Arab nations and in Western European countries such as France, England and Germany. Struggles abroad give Americans a glimpse of what happens when individual solutions to collective problems lose their legitimacy as a central tenet of neoliberal ideology. Massive demonstrations, pitched street battles, nonviolent gatherings, the impressive use of the new media as an alternative political and educational tool and an outburst of long-repressed anger eager for collective action are engulfing many countries across the globe. In smaller numbers, such protests are also taking place in a number of cities around the United States. Many Americans are, once again, invoking democracy, rejecting its association with the empty formality of voting and its disingenuous use to legitimate and justify political systems that produce massive wealth and income inequality. Democracy's promises are laying bare the sordid realities that now speak in its name. Its energy is becoming infectious, and one can only hope that those who believe that education is the foundation of critical agency, politics and democracy itself will be drawn to the task of fighting America's move in the last 30 years to a politically and economically authoritarian system. At issue here is the need for a new vocabulary, vision and politics that will unleash new democratic movements, institutions and a formative culture capable of imagining a life and society free of the dictates of endless military wars, boundless material waste, extreme inequality, disposable populations and unfounded human suffering. Central to "Education and the Crisis of Public Values" is the belief that no change will come unless education both within and outside of formal schooling is viewed as central to any viable notion of politics. If real reform is going to happen, it has to put in place a viable, critical, formative culture that supports notions of engaged citizenship, civic courage, public values, dissent, democratic modes of governing and a genuine belief in freedom, equality and justice. Ideas matter as do the human beings and institutions that make them count and that includes those intellectuals both in and out of schools who bear the responsibility of providing the conditions for Americans of all ages to be able to think critically so they can act imaginatively - so they can embrace a vision of the good life as a just life, one that extends the values, practices and vision of democracy to everyone. 1. Michael Kazin, "Whatever Happened to the American Left?" New York Times (September 25, 2011), p. SR4. Source: <http://www.truth-out.org/beyond-education-illiteracy-vulgarity-and-culture-cruelty/1317131147> (Webmaster Note: HEAL does not agree with everything in the above article. But, we believe it raises some interesting points.)

New Efforts to Crack Down on Residential Programs for Troubled Teens By [Maia Szalavitz](#) Friday, October 7, 2011 The first legislation aimed at regulating residential programs for troubled teens was introduced on Thursday in the House and the Senate. The bill would crack down on hundreds of programs housing thousands of teens, many of which use punishing "tough love" regimes found to include physical, sexual and emotional abuse. The Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act of 2011 was sponsored in the House by Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.) and in the Senate by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa). A previous version of the bill passed the House twice, but was never introduced in the Senate (at the time, the relevant Senate committee was focused on President Obama's health care legislation). The legislation would prohibit sexual, physical and emotional abuse and would ban the use of deprivation — of food, sleep, clothing and shelter, for example — as punishment or for any other reason. The use of physical restraint would be permitted only for safety, and all programs would be required to provide residents with "reasonable" access to a telephone. It would require staff to be educated about what specifically counts as child abuse and how to report it, and mandate programs to disclose staff qualifications to parents. Investigations by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) in 2007-08 found dozens of deaths related to abuse at such residential programs, along with thousands of further allegations, many confirmed, of abuse. GAO investigators posing as parents also discovered widespread use of fraudulent marketing practices. MORE: [Teens Made to Do Lap Dances in School in Supreme Court Case](#) "The culture of abuse and neglect at some of these programs is simply unacceptable, as is the inadequate staff training, regulation and state oversight. Every day we wait to take action is another day that the safety of teenagers is in jeopardy," said Miller. "I hope my Republican colleagues will join me in helping put an end to these horrific abuses that put the lives of too many children in danger." Republicans, however, oppose additional federal regulations and believe these programs should be overseen by the states. "Ensuring the safety of the nation's youth is a priority for Americans on both sides of the political divide. We have learned a great deal about the abuse and neglect of troubled youth who live at residential treatment facilities," said Rep. John Kline (R-Minn.), chair of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, adding, "These at-risk youth deserve strong protections and we must ensure federal policies do not

undermine the central responsibility of state and local leaders to ensure their safety and hold abusers accountable." In 2009, I [reported](#) for TIME on allegations of sexual abuse at Mount Bachelor Academy, a residential program in Oregon owned by Aspen Education, the largest national operator of residential teen centers, which include wilderness programs and "emotional growth" boarding schools. A state investigation that followed my article found that Mount Bachelor's treatment regime was "punitive, humiliating, degrading and traumatizing" and included "sexualized role play in front of staff and students." In March, the state also substantiated claims that neglect led to the death of a teen in another Aspen program, Sage Walk. That program had been featured on a short-lived reality show called "Brat Camp." But while Oregon has some oversight of these programs, in many states, there is none at all. Nail salons and dog grooming outfits are, in fact, more strictly regulated than troubled teen programs, which routinely use corporal punishment and isolation in the guise of treatment. MORE: [Increasingly, Internet Activism Helps Shutter Abusive 'Troubled Teen' Boot Camps](#) Cynthia Clark Harvey, whose daughter Erica died of heatstroke and dehydration after staff members of the Catherine Freer Wilderness program she attended insisted that she was faking her problems, testified during the first Congressional hearings held on the issue. "I support the legislation because it preserves true parental rights: the right to free and unmonitored communication with your child, the right to family-centered treatment and the right to know there are national standards that any program must adhere to," she said. The new bill is supported by the American Psychological Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Child Welfare League and the American Association of Children's Residential Centers. The National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs, an industry group, has said it supports the "intent" of the legislation but opposes federal regulation. Maia Szalavitz is a health writer for TIME.com. Find her on Twitter at [@maiasz](#). You can also continue the discussion on TIME Healthland's [Facebook page](#) and on Twitter at [@TIMEHealthland](#). Source: <http://healthland.time.com/2011/10/07/new-efforts-to-crack-down-on-residential-programs-for-troubled-teens/>

Boy's death in juvenile detention center should jolt state lawmakers into action Posted Tuesday, Oct. 25, 2011 10 Signs of trouble were apparent at a Hood County juvenile detention facility before the death of a 14-year-old detainee this month. Why does it take a tragedy to propel the state to take a serious look at operations inside the Granbury Regional Juvenile Justice Center? Perhaps because too many local and state officials see the for-profit juvenile centers in Texas as a positive economic alternative to government-run institutions for troubled youths. Jordan Adams, a Cleburne middle school student, died in a Fort Worth hospital six days after being found unconscious Oct. 10 in his cell at the Granbury facility. A bedsheet was wrapped around his neck, according to police, who have not determined whether the death was an accident or "criminal incident." Regardless of the cause of death, when young people are placed in the custody of the state, there should be a reasonable expectation that their safety, health and general welfare will be protected. Sadly, too many heartbreaking examples point to that not being the case. State records show more than 250 complaints and serious incidents have been reported at the center since 2007, including youth-on-youth assaults, supervisory neglect and physical and sexual abuse. Perhaps the most disturbing statistic is the 133 cases of attempted suicide, an overwhelming amount in a four-year period for any group. Star-Telegram writer Dianna Hunt reported Sunday that the Hood County juvenile center, originally designed as a public-private partnership that would not cost taxpayers any money, had problems from the start. A coalition that included the county and a detention management corporation built the \$6.5 million facility through the sale of tax-exempt certificates of participation (bonds). In a convoluted scheme, the management group was to lease the facility back to the county, then rent the place to operate a juvenile detention center that would pay off the bonds. The county would own it outright after 20 years. The private corporation floundered almost immediately when the daily census was far less than the 78 juveniles it needed to be "profitable." The county took over the operation for a while and then closed the facility because it was too costly, resulting in a downgrade of the county's bond rating by Standard & Poor's. Hood County in 2007 contracted with 4M Granbury Youth Services of Rockdale to operate the center, but a surprise state inspection two years later found "numerous unsanitary and unhealthy living conditions" at the facility. Among the violations cited were supervisory neglect, failure to make routine checks on detainees and failure to provide proper medical care, Hunt reported. In response to previously alleged and actual mistreatment in state juvenile facilities, major efforts were made to enhance security, supervision and medical attention for youths assigned there. The strategy included committing juveniles to privately run facilities. Regardless of who manages the detention centers, the responsibility rests with the state, which is charged with the care of these young people. The Texas Juvenile Justice Coalition in Austin has voiced concern about the lack of adequate supervision and oversight of juvenile justice facilities, particularly the for-profit centers, according to Executive Director Ann Correa. More needs to be done, and one specific corrective measure would be for the Legislature to fund independent ombudsmen to investigate complaints and concerns as recommended by the coalition. The death of a 14-year-old boy demands that Texans act, and with deliberate speed. Source: <http://www.star-telegram.com/2011/10/25/3473074/boys-death-in-juvenile-detention.html#ixzz1btETrapG>

Exclusive videos detail tactics at teen boot camps in Pasadena--October 26th, 2011 (Pasadena Star-News)



Source: http://www.pasadenastarnews.com/news/ci_19202277

For complete story, [click here](#).

Pasadena police probe possible abuses after troubling youth camp videos surface By Associated Press, Published: October 28 PASADENA, Calif. — Police will investigate whether a crime occurred at a youth boot camp after videos surfaced showing instructors shouting at a boy wearing a tire around his neck and children being told to drink water until some vomited. Investigators will question boot camp operator Kelvin "Sgt. Mac" McFarland, police Cmdr. Darryl Qualls told the Pasadena Star-News (<http://bit.ly/vtQb7Q>) on Thursday. "Looking at the video we can only see McFarland, so we will start the investigation with McFarland," Qualls said. McFarland earlier denied to the newspaper that he appeared in the videos. A call left for him Friday was not immediately returned. McFarland was charged earlier this year with child abuse, extortion and other crimes. Prosecutors contend that he handcuffed a truant 14-year-old girl in May and told her family that she would be sent to juvenile detention unless she was enrolled in his camp. She was never enrolled. The Star-News this week released short video clips it said were made in 2009. On one, several instructors in military-style fatigues surround and shout at a boy who is wearing a heavy auto tire. At one point, the boy falls down crying but is ordered to stand again. In the other, several girls and boys are repeatedly ordered to drink water from colored plastic bottles. Several youngsters vomit. "I would certainly not subject my son or daughter or any child I know to this type of activity," City Council member Victor Gordo told the newspaper. "The short clips that I reviewed appeared to be more of a situation of intimidation and humiliation appearing to be

employed under the guise of physical activity and discipline," Gordo said. The Star-News said the videos appear to have been made in Pasadena but did not indicate how it obtained them. McFarland runs Family First Growth Camp in Pasadena, which like other boot camps uses military-style discipline and exercises with a goal of instilling character and keeping at-risk youngsters away from drugs, alcohol and crime. The camp "doesn't believe in corporal punishment, nor will it be tolerated," according to a camp website. "The young men/women who come to us are good kids who have begun to make some poor choices with friends, school, drugs, alcohol, attitude with peers and family members," the website said, adding that through the camp, "these kids seek out, find, then learn to love themselves so they can love their families and start to move in a positive direction." The camp is funded through a combination of fees and charitable donations. Enrollment is through parents, although in some states juvenile justice systems send some offenders to boot camps. However, some studies have shown that juvenile offenders sent to boot camps were no less likely to commit new crimes than those who were placed in juvenile detention or given probation. The Star-News did not specify whether the videos were taken at a Family First training session and noted that some children seemed to be wearing T-shirts from another camp. Keith "Sarge" Gibbs, who runs Sarge's Community Base/Commit II Achieve Boot Camp, said that some of the children appear to be wearing his camp T-shirts. McFarland worked for him in 2009 but left to form his own camp after Gibbs learned that he had lied about taking a required background check, Gibbs said. "He left and took 28 families and kids with him, with my shirts and some paperwork," Gibbs told The Associated Press on Friday. Gibbs said he doubted that the video was shot during one of his camps. "Those individuals (in the videos) belong to Sgt. McFarland's team. Those are his teammates," he said. Although Gibbs uses some tire drills for strength training and does make youngsters drink a lot of water after long hikes, parents are always involved in the instruction and Gibbs said he has a policy against certain actions. "You can't demean or haze the kid ... your goal is to motivate these kids, to inspire them, empower them," he said. "If that was the entire program, I don't see where the kids are learning anything." "Do they need to be forced to drink water until they vomit? I don't think so," he said. A bill introduced earlier this month by Rep. George Miller, D-Richmond, would require training for boot camp staff. It also would require boot camp instructors to report child abuse and create a federal database where parents can check the credentials of boot camp operators. "This legislation will help put an end to these horrific abuses that put the lives of too many children in jeopardy," Miller said in a statement. Copyright 2011 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Source:

http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/pasadena-police-probe-possible-abuses-after-troubling-youth-camp-videos-surface/2011/10/28/gIQA7eRhPM_print.html For more on this story, see: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2054919/California-boot-camp-child-abuse-Kelvin-Sergeant-Mac-McFarland-caught-camera.html> and <http://www.ktla.com/news/landing/ktla-youth-boot-camp-instructor-arrested.0.6674918.story>

Boot camp abuses cited By Brian Charles, Staff Writer Posted: 10/29/2011 07:13:29 AM PDT William Edwards and Helen Edwards have made additional accusations against two Pasadena-based boot camps, which find themselves in the midst of a controversy over the harsh tactics employed by instructors. (SGVN/Staff Photo by Walt Mancini) PASADENA - A man who attended Pasadena-based youth boot camps run by Kelvin "Sgt. Mac" McFarland said episodes of harsh treatment were commonplace. And the man's adopted mother said children of immigrants and the illiterate were targeted for membership. William Edwards, 18, of Pasadena, said in one 2010 instance instructors at the Family First Growth Camp, which was run by McFarland, targeted a young girl for discipline by handcuffing her to a fence and kicking dirt on her. Edwards also recalled camp attendees having to drink large volumes of water that caused vomiting and nausea. "The drill instructors would say 'we will be here all day until you finish that water and if you take too long we will just make you drink more,'" Edwards said. Neither McFarland nor his attorney Evan Dicker of the Los Angeles County Alternate Public Defender's Office, returned calls seeking comment. In recent days, questions have been raised about McFarland, his former employer Keith "Sarge" Gibbs and their respective camps after two disturbing videos were published on this newspaper's website. In one of the videos, children - some as young as nine years old - are seen being forced to drink water to the point of vomiting. In the other video, a pre-teen boy is seen being screamed at by drill instructors, including McFarland, while carrying a truck tire around his neck. At the time of the taping in 2009, McFarland was employed by Gibbs. Gibbs can be heard on speaking on one of the videos. Both men have denied being present during the videotaping. Police investigating The videos prompted the Pasadena Police Department to launch an investigation and the acts have been strongly condemned by politicians from Pasadena City Hall to the nation's Capitol. Experts in the field of child development and child abuse laws have questioned both the efficacy and legality of the acts in the videos. For Edwards, the images in the videos serve as a reminder of what he said he witnessed firsthand. "(The drill instructors) would make you squat down with the tire around your neck," Edwards said. "It makes your neck and back hurt." Edwards is one of four children adopted by Helen Edwards, a 74-year-old retired U.S. Postal Service employee. Unlike many other parents who turn to boot camps, she said she didn't enroll her children to curb bad behavior. "I am raising them all by myself and I wanted to give them the experience of what a man's role in the world is," Helen Edwards said. "A great, smooth talker" She said she enrolled her two sons and two daughters in Gibbs' camp in 2008. After a dustup over training tactics and McFarland's failure to pass a background check, Gibbs and McFarland parted ways. Wooed by McFarland's charm, the Edwards family remained with McFarland when he branched off in 2009. "He is a great, smooth talker," Helen Edwards said. She said she was so taken by McFarland that she staked the operation, writing him a check for \$2,000 to help start his camp. McFarland promised to repay, but hasn't, the retired postal worker said. Helen Edwards said she has never filed suit to try to retrieve her money from McFarland. For her investment, Helen Edwards served on the Family First Growth Camp's board of directors. For nearly a year she kept McFarland's books. But, the relationship soured when Helen Edwards began to have doubts about McFarland's ability to manage money. "In November of 2009, he went up on the monthly dues from \$200 to \$250 a month," Helen Edwards said. "And if you were late with the money it cost you a \$25 late fee." Immediately, 13 families left Family First Growth Camp. In March 2010, McFarland turned to a new "recruiting tool," Helen Edwards said. "The third week of every month, he would come in with a child - who was skipping school - in handcuffs," she recalled. "And he would call the parents and make them pay \$100 on the spot. And then \$250 at the first of the month, as part of their dues." "Walking-around money" McFarland targeted some of Pasadena's most vulnerable residents, Helen Edwards said. "He would go after the immigrants and the illiterate," she said. Many of the parents who came in to pay McFarland for "finding" their children spoke little or no English and the boot camp used translators to help with the transactions, Helen Edwards said. Helen Edwards said she would receive the \$250 and deposit the money into a business account. The \$100 McFarland took from parents for capturing truant teens "was his walking-around money," Helen Edwards said. On May 16 Pasadena police arrested McFarland on suspicion of kidnapping, child abuse, child endangerment, extortion and unlawful use of a badge. McFarland allegedly handcuffed a truant Pasadena Unified School District student and told her parents, who spoke limited English, to pay him \$100 or he would put their daughter in a juvenile detention center. McFarland has pleaded not guilty and is out on bail awaiting trial. Because of her financial dealings with McFarland, Helen Edwards said previous to seeing the videos she was reluctant to come forward with any information. She and her family left McFarland's group after adopted son Tyrone and one of the drill instructors got into a fight, Edwards said. A portion of McFarland's training forced children in the camp to wrestle adult drill instructors - at least one of whom as on active duty in the U.S. Marine Corps, she said. A match between Tyrone and a man identified only as "Sgt. Ronnie," turned into a brawl, she said. McFarland intervened and broke up the fight by reportedly using a choke hold on Tyrone, his mother said. "Tyrone, who is a big boy, almost 6-foot-tall, got free by flipping (McFarland) over his back," Helen Edwards said. "McFarland took Tyrone for a walk and told him not to come back to the camp anymore." A month later Helen Edwards said she pulled all of her children from the camp. [brian.charles@sgvn.com twitter.com/JBrianCharles](http://www.pasadenastarnews.com/ci_19222653) 626-578-6300, ext. 4494 Source: http://www.pasadenastarnews.com/ci_19222653

CDC Director Arrested for Child Molestation and Bestiality By Dr. Mercola Dr. Kimberly Quinlan Lindsey, a top official with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has been arrested and charged with two counts of child molestation and one count of bestiality. Dr. Lindsey, who joined the CDC in 1999, is currently the deputy director for the Laboratory Science Policy and Practice Program Office. She's second in command of the program office. Prior to that role, she was the senior health scientist in the Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response, an office that oversees the allocation process for \$1.5 billion in terrorism preparedness. According to CNN: "Authorities also charged Lindsey's live-in boyfriend, Thomas Joseph Westerman, 42, with two counts of child molestation. The two are accused of 'immoral and indecent' sexual acts involving a 6-year-old ... The bestiality charge says Lindsey 'did unlawfully perform or submit to any sexual act with an animal.'" Between January and August last year, Dr. Lindsey and her boyfriend allegedly involved the child during sex, and DeKalb County police claim they discovered photographs of Lindsey performing sex acts on a couple of her pets. Some of you may wonder why I've chosen to discuss this story. Some may think it's in poor taste and doesn't belong in a newsletter about health. However, I believe it's relevant to be aware that someone in charge of your child's health is allegedly engaged in child abuse. Her actions raise serious questions in my mind about her level of concern for the health and well-being of children in general. Dr. Lindsey Played Primary Role in Bogus Swine Flu Propaganda Campaign As you may recall, the 2009 H1N1

swine flu pandemic turned out to be a complete sham, with a fast-tracked and particularly dangerous vaccine being pushed as the sole remedy. Children and pregnant women were the primary targets of this dangerous vaccine. The H1N1 flu was a perfect example of how the CDC can brazenly distort reality, and often ignore and deny the dangerous and life-threatening side effects of their solution. As a result of this bogus propaganda campaign, thousands of people were harmed (and many died) worldwide. In August, it was revealed that the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine increased the risk for narcolepsy—a very rare and devastating sleeping disorder—in Swedish children and adolescents by 660 percent. Finland also noticed a dramatic increase in narcolepsy following vaccination with Pandemrix. There, an interim report issued in January of this year found that the H1N1 vaccine increased the risk of narcolepsy by 900 percent in children and adolescents below the age of 19. In the US, the H1N1 flu vaccine was statistically linked with abnormally high rates of miscarriage and stillbirths. As reported by Steven Rubin on the NVIC's blog, the US H1N1 flu vaccine was SIXTY times more likely to be reported to VAERS to be associated with miscarriage than previous seasonal flu vaccines. The only "winners" in this game were the pharmaceutical companies that received millions of dollars for this never-proven-effective and highly reactive vaccine, while being sheltered by our government from liability for any harm it caused. Dr. Lindsey played an important role in that campaign, which ended in tragedy for countless many—not from a killer flu (statistically, the 2009 H1N1 flu was Milder than usual) but from the dangerous and expensive "remedy" to this oversold non-threat. All of that said, I do want to stress that Dr. Lindsey has not yet been found guilty, and there are still many unanswered questions relating to this case. But this is not the only shocking story raising questions about the ethics of those involved in creating the CDC's health recommendations. Source: <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2011/10/28/cdc-director-arrested-for-child-molestation--bestiality.aspx> and <http://www.cnn.com/2011/10/11/justice/georgia-cdc-arrest/index.html>

Pasadena women step forward with more boot camp allegations By Brian Charles, Staff Writer Pasadena Star-News Posted: 10/31/2011 06:05:02 PM PDT
PASADENA - At least three Pasadena women say they witnessed what they considered abuse by drill instructors from Family First Growth Camp while the boot camp operated on Pasadena city property. Pasadena residents Susan Lafferty and Nancy Rose and Sierra Madre resident Julie Unamuno said they forwarded their claims of abuse to the city by email in 2009, but nothing was done. "I saw (someone) getting in their faces and screaming while the children were sobbing. Some of the (children) were as young as 8 years old," Lafferty said. "And I could not see how any of this could help a child." "I would never even yell at an animal like that," Rose said. There was "no formal investigation related to the tactics" but officials will review the 2009 emails, Pasadena spokeswoman Ann Erdman said in a statement Monday. Erdman acknowledged that city officials were aware that Family First Growth Camp, operated by Kelvin "Sgt. Mac" McFarland, used the Arroyo and Hahamongna Watershed Park, both city properties, to train children. The camp was routinely ushered off city land for failing to have a permit, Erdman said. "Anytime park safety officers encountered the operation on city-owned property, they ordered them to vacate the premises immediately," Erdman said. Neither McFarland nor his attorney, Evan Dicker of the Los Angeles County Alternate Public Defender's Office, returned calls seeking comment. McFarland was arrested on May 27 on suspicion of child abuse, child endangerment, kidnapping, extortion and unlawful use of a badge stemming from his encounter with a young girl in Pasadena. His case is still pending. In July, Judge Stan Blumenfeld decided to hold McFarland over for trial. McFarland remains free on \$185,000 bail. He is due back in court Nov. 16. McFarland's criminal record includes arrests and convictions for driving under the influence in 1991 and 2005, as well as a 2000 conviction for misdemeanor battery and a 2009 conviction for driving with a suspended license. McFarland can be seen in two videos that provide an inside look at juvenile boot camps. In one video, McFarland can be seen coaxing children to drink water to the point that several children began vomiting. In the second, he and several other adults can be seen taunting a child who has been forced to wear a tire around his neck. Those videos were released by this newspaper last week. The voice of boot camp instructor Keith "Sarge" Gibbs, who operates Sarge's Community Base/Commit II Achieve, can be heard on one of the videos. Both men deny being present for the videotaping. Gibbs has not been charged with a criminal offense. Lafferty, Unamuno and Rose all ride horses in the Arroyo and Hahamongna Watershed Park. They said the tactics employed by the Family First Growth Camp during their run-ins with the camp in 2009 bore striking resemblance to the scenes depicted in those videos. Unamuno, who is a riding instructor in the Arroyo, said she first encountered McFarland in November 2009. "I saw what appeared to be a drill sergeant was pointing his finger in a young girl's face while she was covered in dirt," Unamuno said. "She had been reduced to tears." Lafferty, Rose and Unamuno came forward after seeing the videos. Rose, Lafferty and Unamuno said they didn't see any children being forced to drink large volumes of water, but they did see children being forced to carry truck tires around their neck. During their horse rides, the women said they also saw children forced to scale steep hills during a heat wave in 2010 and also witnessed instructors regularly give obscenity-laced tongue lashings to the children. "Do you think breaking them down to be nothing and using obscenities is going to make them any better?" Rose asked. "They are not adults, they are kids and their minds are not even developed." After a handful of run-ins with the camp, the women said they decided to report the acts to Pasadena City officials. "We knew this was at the very least inappropriate behavior if not out-and-out abuse," Lafferty said. Lafferty contacted the Pasadena Department of Public Works, directing many of her emails to Martin Pastucha, the department's former director, Lafferty said. The women said they thought to call the Pasadena police, but were unable to make out a license plate on a car and were too afraid to approach the boot camp to ask for names, Rose said. It remains unclear what happened to the email sent by Lafferty, but Pasadena Police Department officials said they had no knowledge of any of the activities in the Arroyo or Hahamongna Watershed Park. "We do not have any prior complaints of child abuse against Mr. McFarland and Mr. Gibbs regarding boot camps," Pasadena police Lt. Tracey Ibarra said. Ibarra runs the Police Department's youth outreach program. Despite not having a permit, the camps returned in 2010 and were spotted in the Arroyo as recently as last summer, Rose said. The riding group began to alter its route to avoid the group, since Unamuno often takes her own children on the path. "It's unnerving to see that type of drill going on in that setting and trying to explain that to young children," Unamuno said. Meanwhile, no arrests have been made in the case, as investigators said they are still unsure a crime has even occurred, Ibarra said. "The Pasadena Police Department has had discussions with the District Attorney's Office, but there has not been any cases opened," Ibarra said. "We are still trying to determine whether there has been criminal act with identifiable suspects." The department has not contacted the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Service since it's unclear whether any laws were broken, Ibarra said. The video contains episodes recorded during McFarland's time with Gibbs, according to multiple sources familiar with the camps. Gibbs has not operated free of controversy. In 2009, he was removed from Pasadena Unified School District campuses when accusations surfaced that his tactics were "too rough," according to district officials. brian.charles@sgvn.com twitter.com/JBrianCharles 626-578-6300, ext. 4494

Source: http://www.pasadenastarnews.com/news/ci_19235352 For more on this story, visit: <http://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/More-Allegations-Against-Youth-Boot-Camp--133044633.html>, http://www.pasadenastarnews.com/news/ci_19307909 and <http://www.tmcnet.com/usubmit/2011/11/02/5899803.htm>

November 5, 2011 In State Care, 1,200 Deaths and Few Answers By [DANNY HAKIM](#) and [RUSS BUETTNER](#) For James Michael Taylor, an evening bath became a death sentence. Mr. Taylor, who was 41 and a quadriplegic, had little more ability than a newborn baby to lift his head. Bathing him required the constant attention of a staff member at the group home for the developmentally disabled where he lived, near Schenectady, N.Y. One summer night in 2005, a worker lowered Mr. Taylor into the tub, turned on the water and left the room. Over the next 15 minutes, the water slowly rose over his head. He drowned before anyone returned. Joan Taylor, his mother, remembers the words her husband said as dirt was shoveled onto their son's grave. "This is the last time they're going to dump on you," he told his dead son. James Taylor's death was no aberration. In New York, it is unusually common for developmentally disabled people in state care to die for reasons other than natural causes. One in six of all [deaths in state and privately run homes](#), or more than 1,200 in the past decade, have been attributed to either unnatural or unknown causes, according to data obtained by The New York Times that has never been released. The figure is more like one in 25 in Connecticut and Massachusetts, which are among the few states that release such data. What's more, New York has made little effort to track or thoroughly investigate the deaths to look for troubling trends, resulting in the same kinds of errors and preventable deaths, over and over. The state does not even collect statistics on specific causes of death, leaving many designated as "unknown," sometimes even after a medical examiner has made a ruling. The Times undertook its own analysis of death records and found disturbing patterns: some residents who were not supposed to be left alone with food choked in bathrooms and kitchens. Others who needed help on stairs tumbled alone to their deaths. Still others ran away again and again until they were found dead. Mr. Taylor was hardly the only resident to drown in a bathtub. Another developmentally disabled man at a house run by the same nonprofit organization drowned in a tub four months earlier. Through a Freedom of Information request to the [State Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons With Disabilities](#), The Times obtained data for all 7,118 cases of developmentally disabled people — those with conditions like [cerebral palsy](#), [autism](#) and [Down syndrome](#) — who died while in state care over the past decade. The data from the agency, which is responsible for overseeing treatment for the

developmentally disabled, included only the broad “manner” in which people died — by homicide or suicide, accidents or natural causes. By far the biggest category, other than natural causes, was “unknown,” accounting for 10 percent of all deaths in the system. The records suggested problems in care may be contributing to those unexplained deaths. The average age of those who died of unknown causes was 40, while the average age of residents dying of natural causes was 54. The Times reviewed the case files of all the deaths not resulting from natural causes that the commission investigated over the past decade and found there had been concerns about the quality of care in nearly half of the 222 cases. The records also showed that problems leading to deaths rarely resulted in systemwide steps, like alerts to all operators of homes, to prevent mistakes from recurring. Responses were typically limited to the group home where a resident died. At homes operated by nonprofit organizations, low-level employees were often fired or disciplined, but repercussions for executives were rare. At state-run homes, it is also difficult to take action against caregivers, who are represented by unions that contest disciplinary measures. New York relies heavily on the operators of the homes to investigate and determine how a person in their care died and, in a vast majority of cases, accepts that determination. And the state has no uniform training for the nearly 100,000 workers at thousands of state and privately run homes and institutions. The value of analyzing death records for problems in care that could be prevented through alerts or training has been well established, and is encouraged by the federal Government Accountability Office. Officials in Connecticut, for example, noticed four [choking](#) deaths in 2006, the first year the state published such data. They developed a statewide program — two days of initial training and a refresher course every two years thereafter. The state has had just one choking death since 2007. New York has had at least 21 during that same period. “It’s incredibly important,” said Terrence W. Macy, commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services in Connecticut. “If everybody knows you study it this hard and you have this level of detail, it’s going to have an impact.” There is no question that it can be extremely challenging to care for the developmentally disabled, a population that includes some people who are fragile and immobile and others who are unruly and inclined toward violence. But the problems in the New York system appear especially troubling given that the state spends \$10 billion a year caring for the developmentally disabled — more than California, Texas, Florida and Illinois combined — while providing services to fewer than half as many people as those states do. Lawsuits are relatively rare after the deaths of developmentally disabled people in New York, in part because economic damages are difficult to prove, given that the victims are seldom employed. And sometimes families are simply grateful to the group home for years of care for their relative. This year, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo forced the commissioners of the two agencies that oversee the developmentally disabled to resign amid a [Times investigation of group home workers who were beating and abusing residents](#). In interviews, the officials who replaced them acknowledged problems with how the state tracks and seeks to prevent untimely deaths. Courtney Burke, the commissioner of the [Office for People With Developmental Disabilities](#), which operates and oversees thousands of group homes, acknowledged that her agency suffered from a lack of transparency and what she called “a culture of nonreporting.” “One of the things I’m seeking to do,” she said last month, “is have better data on those deaths.” A Recurring Problem One evening last year, a large piece of London broil was left marinating in the refrigerator of a state-run group home in the hamlet of Golden’s Bridge, in Westchester County. The kitchen was supposed to be locked overnight. As in many homes for the developmentally disabled, residents known to be at risk for choking were not allowed to be left alone with food. But the kitchen was open during the early morning of June 5, 2010. No one noticed as Cynthia Dupas left her bedroom, opened the refrigerator and bit off a chunk of raw beef. She collapsed outside her bedroom and died. She was 51. Hers was hardly an isolated case. A quarter of the 222 death files reviewed by The Times involved a person choking to death. And given the state’s poor recordkeeping, the actual number of choking deaths is likely larger. The deaths often occur when residents try to eat food too quickly; physical limitations also play a role. Some of the fatalities came in quick succession: At a home near the Finger Lakes in 2001, a resident died after stuffing down a steak that was left on the kitchen counter after dinner, in violation of safety guidelines for several residents. Four months later, Maxwell Chaneles died at a Schenectady-area group home after being left alone to eat a steak. A nonprofit group that cared for Mr. Chaneles during the day had determined he was a choking risk who required mealtime supervision, but a second nonprofit agency that ran the group home where he lived had no such protections in place. He was 66. Less than two weeks later, Virgil Macro was served a breakfast that had not been prepared according to a meal plan devised to keep him from choking. Staff members at his Dutchess County group home also failed to supervise him while he ate. He was 39. In each case, the response suggested by the Commission on Quality of Care was mostly limited to the place where the death occurred. Workers who made mistakes were disciplined. Some employees in the home, or the local area, were retrained. But other states take broader action. In 2006, Ohio officials recognized an increase in choking deaths and issued a statewide alert. A year later, California officials noticed a similar rise in one part of the state and began an educational program that reduced deaths. A lack of standards and accepted definitions of basic terms also leads to deadly confusion. Terms like “bite-size” and “chopped,” which are key to defining what is safe for a person to eat, can be left open to interpretation by the staff at a given institution or group home. The Commission on Quality of Care regularly asks individual homes to revisit those definitions, but the state has not resolved varying interpretations. In contrast, Connecticut’s training materials, which the state credits with sharply reducing choking deaths, precisely define such terms with photographs and dimensions. State officials in New York cannot even agree on how many people are dying. The Office for People With Developmental Disabilities says 933 people in state care died in 2009. The Commission on Quality of Care says 757 did. Neither agency could explain the discrepancy. Outside experts said they were particularly puzzled that records maintained by the state would list the cause as “unknown” in more than 700 deaths over the past decade, and wondered how hard state officials had tried to determine what happened. Bruce Simmons was one of the many people the state had listed as dead of unknown causes. But a review of the records from the state’s own investigation reveals what occurred. He lived in a group home in Cortland, N.Y., which kept him under tight supervision around food because of his history of stealing food and choking. But the nonprofit group that took care of him during the day decided that was not necessary, and he choked to death in November 2008. He was 52. Lapses in Fire Safety All that is left of the house at 1534 State Route 30 in the Adirondack town of Wells is a grassy field and an empty driveway. More than two and a half years ago, the house, home to nine developmentally disabled residents, burned to the ground, killing four of them. The fire revealed shortcomings in staff training and safety standards. And the home’s evacuation plans were based on unrealistic expectations that developmentally disabled residents would be able to flee in an emergency. Large institutions for the developmentally disabled are built much like hospitals, with extensive [fire safety](#) measures. The group home had some safety features, like sprinklers in parts of the house, but was permitted to meet building codes akin to those of homes with able-bodied residents who know they should flee from a fire. Yet though the Wells fire took place in March 2009, the state has not undertaken a broad review of whether group homes, which now care for a vast majority of the state’s developmentally disabled, have appropriate safety modifications to protect residents who often do not understand that they are in danger. The fire at the house, known as Riverview, occurred in the early morning, starting in a trash can on a screen porch and spreading rapidly up vinyl siding into the attic of the L-shaped, one-story residence. An automatic alarm call was made at 5:25 a.m. to a monitoring company. The protocol established by the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities required that the company call the group home before notifying the Fire Department, which wasted minutes and violated state fire standards. By 5:30, the local fire company was dispatched, alerting Ken Hoffman, a firefighter who lived across the street and rushed over to help. When Mr. Hoffman arrived, all nine residents were still inside, but he and two staff members helped most of them evacuate. Then one resident fell, distracting the two staff members as three residents wandered back into the burning house, according to state records. There were further complications. The state had not informed local fire officials about the presence of the group home, leaving them ill prepared. “There was no contact,” said Peter Byrne, a Rockland County fire safety official who was on the panel of experts convened by the state after the fire. “If I roll into a single-family dwelling at 2 or 3 in the morning, I’m expecting mom, dad and 2.3 kids, whatever the average is, not 11 challenged individuals.” Credible investigations were performed — one by a local grand jury, one by the State Office of Fire Prevention and Control, and another by the panel that included Mr. Byrne. But a follow-up review undertaken by the two agencies most responsible for the developmentally disabled — the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities and the Commission on Quality of Care — included questions like whether residents’ day-to-day medical care needs were being met. The questions “were not germane to the fundamental questions posed by the Wells fire — what was the cause of the fire and what can we do in the future to prevent such fires from occurring in such a tragic manner,” Roger Bearden, the new head of the commission, said in an interview. Like most group homes in New York, the Riverview house was required to meet residential building codes, which are less than stringent. There were no sprinklers in the attic at the house, or on the screen porch where the fire started. Records showed that the building’s original plans required fire retardant materials on the porch ceiling and that a planned barrier wall in the attic was abandoned during construction. While the house was required to meet standards from the National Fire Protection Association, an interview with a top association official suggests that while the standards are open to interpretation, the house could have been more robustly protected. “There’s been an unresolved question about why a sprinkler wasn’t provided on that porch area,” said Robert E. Solomon, a fire safety expert at the association who served on the state panel. “Our standards would have probably put a sprinkler on that porch area where that fire occurred,” he said, which could have prevented the fire from spreading. The Riverview case also underscores widespread problems in how fire drills at

group homes have been conducted. The Times reported in March that a whistle-blower warned a senior state official in 2008 that drill records were being routinely faked or implausibly speedy evacuation times were being claimed. State investigators found that was the case at the Riverview house. The staff also seemed unprepared; time was spent battling the fire with an extinguisher instead of evacuating residents. The grand jury convened by the district attorney of Hamilton County noted that fires were common in group homes, adding, "It would be a grave mistake to view Riverview's tragedy as an isolated incident." Some steps have been taken since the fire: tighter rules guiding new construction, bringing in outside supervisors for fire drills and outside experts for inspections. But Ms. Burke's agency did not say when it would review whether other homes in the system might also be lacking fire safety features sufficient enough for developmentally disabled residents. After several weeks of inquiries from The Times, Ms. Burke said she would reconvene the state panel that investigated the fire. Mr. Hoffman said he could not shake the memory of the fire. "It's still something that comes back to my mind on a weekly basis," he said. "We lost four neighbors that night." A System's Failure No one told Joan Taylor, after her son James died in August 2005, that there had been a similar bathtub drowning four months earlier. Or that the other drowning, like her son's, took place at a group home operated by a local chapter of the New York State ARC, the nation's largest nonprofit organization serving the developmentally disabled. In both cases, there had been concerns that ARC had too few staff members to supervise the developmentally disabled residents. Dalton Lacombe died at the ARC home in Malone, N.Y., in April 2005, after being left alone in a bath for up to 20 minutes. The house had 11 residents and one overnight staff member on duty. The state recommended hiring more employees, but backed off after discussions with ARC management. The death "wasn't related to staffing levels," Lester G. Parker, executive director of the Adirondack ARC, which oversees the Malone house, said in an interview. "It was related to a staff person clearly and significantly neglecting their duties." Mrs. Taylor had pushed for an increase in staffing at her son's group home near Schenectady, where three workers looked after eight severely developmentally disabled residents. ARC officials in Schenectady declined to comment. After Mr. Taylor drowned, the organization's only significant response was to fire his caregiver. "The guy who left James unattended is the scapegoat, and the agency really took no responsibility from the top," Mr. Taylor's sister, Patricia Taylor, said. Marc Brandt, ARC's statewide leader, acknowledged that no broad changes were enacted after the drownings, but said it was up to the state, not his organization, to take action. "If they see anything that is wrong, they've always let us know," he said. Mr. Taylor's mother has been a fierce advocate for people with developmental disabilities for decades. Mrs. Taylor, 86, started a parent group, lobbied in Albany and was appointed to the capital-area Board of Visitors of the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities. She is most proud of helping get legislation passed in 2002 that gave parents control over end-of-life decisions for the developmentally disabled. "I was insulted I couldn't make that decision for my son, who I wanted to die with dignity," she said. On a recent day, as Mrs. Taylor sat on the back porch of her apartment at a retirement home in Saratoga Springs, wearing tennis shoes and shorts, she leafed through the guestbook from her son's funeral, filled with 300 signatures, including those of local elected officials. "I don't know if my kid died with dignity or not," she said. She grew up on Long Island and trained as a nurse; her late husband, Robert, was an engineer with General Electric. She knew something was wrong with James, their youngest child, when he was still a baby. Suspecting he could not hear, she slammed cupboard doors near their infant son, and he did not flinch. She got a much greater shock after a doctor told her, "Your son is mentally retarded." Doctors recommended that he be institutionalized. Mrs. Taylor resisted, but she had five other children. Dealing with James, her sixth child — quadriplegic, sleepless and with the intellectual capacity of a 3-month-old — filled her days and nights. Eventually, she felt she had no choice. "I will never forget that day," Mrs. Taylor once wrote in an essay. "My husband and I woke up that morning both fighting back the tears. I dressed James in his very best suit and we drove the 30 miles back to the institution and left him there." "We both cried all the way home," she said. "I thought it was the worst day of my life." She has done advocacy work with ARC and Mr. Brandt over the years, and calls him "a saint," but she is angry about what happened to her son. Her daughter said it was because of her mother's advocacy work that Mr. Taylor's death received attention. She worries about the developmentally disabled who die and have no family around to push for answers for them. "These deaths are marginalized because these sort of people are not valued by society," Patricia Taylor said. When she was in the fourth grade, she dreamed of taking her brother and running away with him, protecting him. She finds it hard to accept that no one was able to protect him after he grew up. "I believe that God put these people here for a purpose, because if we didn't have them to look after, we would lose our humanity," she said. "How would we know compassion? It says in the Bible, [do ye so unto the least of my brothers](#). I think that's what it's all about." Source: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/06/nvregion/at-state-homes-simple-tasks-and-fatal-results.html?_r=1

Woman recalls experience in Bassett-based youth boot camp By Frank C. Girardot, Staff Writer Posted: 11/06/2011 06:03:03 AM PST BUYA boot camp office room 304 at Bassett High School in La Puente, Calif., Friday, Nov. 4, 2011. (SGVN/Staff Photo by Keith Birmingham) ne Velazquez's youth boot camp experience she would consider uplifting or positive. Taken from a warm bed in her father's Redondo Beach home at 5 a.m. one morning, Velazquez said she was handcuffed, screamed at and videotaped by representatives of the Building Unique Youth Alternatives - a program run from an office on the campus of Bassett High School in La Puente. Things quickly got worse. "They first took me to Bassett High School for intake," Velazquez recalled. "They strip searched us and forced us on a bus where we had to put our heads down so we wouldn't see where we were going." Velazquez said she and a group of teens - many from foster homes or families new to the country - were taken to Camp Pendleton and forced to endure similar indignities for a week. Now, 20, Velazquez said she will never forget the experience - or the humiliation. "We would wake up at 5 a.m. and do vigorous exercise all day. If you fell, you were kicked and pushed and yelled at. We were called fat, whores, stupid, bitches, maggots, etcetera," she said. "I was on the ground doing exercises and had dirt kicked into my face, eyes, and mouth. They tried to force me to eat my vomit." Bassett Unified Superintendent Martin Galindo acknowledged the BUYA program has been operating at Bassett since at least 2005. He said the district has received no complaints. Sheriff's Lt. Victor Sotelo said deputies in Industry have had no complaints about the BUYA camp. "It pretty much runs independently. We don't give them a lot of oversight," Galindo said. "We don't have people there every Saturday looking at what they are doing. It's similar to any outside entity who uses our facility whether it be soccer or baseball, we count on them to run it properly," Galindo said. "But we can't monitor it." Calls to the program's office on the Bassett campus went unanswered Thursday and Friday. Brian Der Vartanian, a Glendale accountant who did BUYA's books until about 2007, said several police officers and deputies associated with the program left about three years ago. On its website, BUYA describes its program as "an intense, ten-week youth intervention program designed to change the destructive behavior of strong-willed, out of control or at-risk youth ... Our program begins with the eight-day camp component, focusing on discipline, responsibility, respect, and behavioral issues." And, BUYA promises results. "We have maintained a long-term, 85 percent success rate over our six-year history," the website notes. "The program is delivered by retired, active and reserve police officers, members of the armed forces and volunteers." A community college student near San Diego, Velazquez said she came forward to recount her experience with BUYA after seeing videos on this newspaper's website. One of those videos, shot at a boot camp run out of Pasadena, depicted children forced to drink water until they vomited. Another video centered on a young boy being forced to wear a tire around his body while a group of instructors - dressed in military garb - yelled and jostled him until he broke down in tears. Dr. Harlan Bixby, an expert on the effect of fluids in the body, said bingeing on water can be deadly. "Tap water is free of electrolytes, allowing it to penetrate cell walls without obstruction, he said. The swelling of cells does little damage in muscle cells, but can induce stroke-like symptoms in the brain, Bixby said. "That video of them forcing the children to drink water ... we had that three times a day. That was the only time to drink. After, you would have to hold the canteen above your head and if any water dripped, you would have to refill the canteen and do it again. Most of the time, we just threw it up, and didn't get any water in our systems. As Velazquez recalls, the methods used by boot camp instructors were nothing short of horrific. "They gave one teen laxatives, and made him put a (sanitary napkin) in his (rear end) and hike like that," she said. "One teen was overweight and they would taunt her telling her 'imagine there's a burger up that hill.'" Velazquez, who had been in and out of foster homes, said she attended a few more sessions and was promised a leadership role. "They would tell me to hit kids," she recalled. "I wouldn't do it, so they would hit me." Joyce Burrell, director of the Juvenile Justice Program in Human and Social Development for American Institute for Research, believes boot camps are ineffective in dealing with troubled teens, many of whom, like Velazquez, have been exposed to trauma in their personal lives. "We have to approach dealing with these children from a more trauma based approach," Joyce Burrell said about the effectiveness of boot camps. "There's a real split in terms of those who believe yelling and screaming at boot camps has it's place in treatment." Burrell sides with child development experts who believe that boot camps do more harm than good. Unable to deal with the experience, Velazquez said she overdosed on Ibuprofen and Tylenol which forced the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services to take action. Ultimately she was pulled from the program. Since leaving, Velazquez has maintained contact with other teens forced to attend the camp and has become an advocate of sorts for teens forced into youth boot camps. Velazquez, who describes herself as a "good kid" can't understand why adults would subject children to the extreme sort of punishment she endured. "They tried to break me down, but they couldn't," she said. "I'm going to do what I can to keep the focus on this issue." Staff writer Brian Charles contributed to this

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EDITORIAL Open courts for kids An L.A. judge's proposal to let the public observe dependency court proceedings is a much-needed move toward both access and accountability. November 10, 2011 Michael Nash, the presiding judge of Los Angeles Juvenile Court, has long lobbied for legislation that would allow the public greater access to the work of California's dependency courts, where the fates of children in foster care are decided. Twice, bills have been introduced in Sacramento to achieve that important objective, only to be stymied by well-meaning but misguided objections from child welfare advocates and self-interested protests from public employee groups whose members would face greater scrutiny. Now, Nash is taking matters into his own hands, for which he is to be applauded. This week Nash circulated a proposed order that would accomplish what legislators have been unwilling or unable to do: open the courts, at least here in Los Angeles. Drawing on rulings of the U.S. Supreme Court and others, it notes that such access allows the public to monitor the effectiveness of the courts and those responsible for administering foster care — essential requirements of sound and open government. "Public awareness and understanding of the juvenile court system ... would promote public involvement in the governmental processes and might deter inappropriate actions on the part of some participants," the order says, quoting an earlier appellate court ruling. Importantly, Nash's proposed order would not open every proceeding, any more than the presumption of openness in adult court means that every hearing there is open to the public. Rather, Nash is changing the current presumption in favor of secrecy to one that favors openness, while at the same time allowing parties to object if they believe secrecy is necessary in a particular case. If anyone does object, the only issue that a judge could consider in weighing that objection is whether openness would likely be harmful to the child's best interests. Judges could not close a hearing to spare the feelings of witnesses or shield foster care workers from public accountability. It's a shame that the Legislature could not bring itself to pass a bill by Assemblyman Mike Feuer (D-Los Angeles) that would have done what Nash is setting out to do. But until the state's elected leaders can find the courage to do what's right on this issue, Nash's move will allow L.A. to serve as a laboratory for gauging the benefits of openness. Moreover, the judge's willingness to tackle this question even though it may expose him and his colleagues to greater scrutiny should help confront the insidious and destructive assumption that secrecy is necessarily in the interests of children. In fact, secrecy often allows them to be harmed without consequence. In Los Angeles, where too many children suffer at the hands of a sometimes indifferent child welfare system, Nash's order is urgently needed and long overdue. Source: http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/opinion/la-ed-courts-20111110.0.6638793.story?track=rss&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+latimes%2Fnews%2Fprintedition%2Fopinion+%28Los+Angeles+Times++Editorials%2C+Op-Ed%29

latimes.com For teen program's chief, tough love may have turned criminal The operator of a Pasadena 'boot camp' aimed at turning around troubled lives with military-type discipline faces trial on charges of kidnapping and extortion for his treatment of a girl and her family. By Ricardo Lopez, Los Angeles Times November 13, 2011 The surprise visit to Alberto Ruiz's house was swift. Dress quickly, he was told. You're going to boot camp. His parents, worried about his drug use and habit of skipping school, had followed a friend's advice and called Kelvin McFarland. Ruiz's behavior had earned him a spot in McFarland's Family First Growth Camp in Pasadena, a place with a reputation for breaking gang-bangers and drug addicts and turning them into law-abiding teens. A former Marine who likes to be called "Sgt. Mac," McFarland founded the camp two years ago and boasted that his tough-love tactics and military-strict discipline were the perfect formula for reforming gang members, taming runaways and getting through to troublemakers. Ruiz, who is now 18, credits McFarland's intervention for helping him finish school and quit drugs. But authorities say McFarland's scared-straight approach crossed the line and veered into criminal behavior earlier this year when he crossed paths with another Pasadena teen. Investigators allege that in May, McFarland was driving in Pasadena when he spotted a girl walking along the street during school hours. He stopped to question her, then handcuffed her, placed her in his car and told her to direct him to a relative's home. At the relative's home, he demanded money from her father to enroll the 14-year-old in his program. The girl's father mistook McFarland for a truancy officer when he flashed a badge, Pasadena police said. McFarland is facing trial on felony charges of kidnapping, extortion, false imprisonment and child abuse, and unlawful use of a badge, a misdemeanor. Now Pasadena police are investigating possible abuses that allegedly occurred at a rival Pasadena boot camp where McFarland once worked. The Pasadena Star-News recently published videos allegedly filmed in 2009 in which McFarland can be seen yelling at teens, forcing them to gulp down water even as they retch and vomit. In one scene, McFarland and other drill instructors appear to scream at a youngster, inches from his face, as he collapses in tears under the weight of a car tire on his shoulders. The publicity has had a chilling effect on McFarland's Family First boot camp. Parents have pulled their kids out in droves. Where several dozen cadets once attended, only a handful remain. "I'm not going to lie ... we don't have 75 cadets, but we're still continuing," said Elpidio Estolas, one of Family First's directors. McFarland is quick to defend his work in the community, as is Keith Gibbs, the director of the rival boot camp. Both say they offer a last resort for exasperated parents who have nowhere else to turn. In interviews with McFarland, his cadets, their families and those who have worked with him, a complex portrait emerges. Critics describe him as a fast talker, easily seducing working-class Latino families with his authority-laden persona. Supporters say McFarland is a man filled with good intentions, who has overcome his flaws such as convictions for DUI and a misdemeanor assault. McFarland says his criminal history allows him to dissuade cadets from a life of incarceration. He talks openly about the months he was homeless and his continuing struggle with alcoholism. These attributes, he says, make him a relatable figure. McFarland is set to stand trial Wednesday, though the case has been delayed several times — once after his boot camp could no longer afford to pay his attorney, a former Pasadena mayor. He is now represented by a public defender. But McFarland continues to operate his program throughout Pasadena, in local parks and occasionally a small strip-mall church. In fact, it didn't take long for the boot camp to resume after McFarland got out of jail. In mid-June, from the stage of Faithworks Ministries church, McFarland — freshly released on bail — thanked his cadets and their families, quoting the Bible as he spoke. For days, they had rallied on his behalf outside a Pasadena courthouse, hoping a judge would reduce his bail. McFarland, a deeply religious man raised by an aunt in rural Georgia, looked on quietly. Dressed in his signature military fatigues, he occasionally barked commands as the cadets stood in formation. "I don't know of a boot camp that praises the Lord as much as we do," said McFarland, who granted The Times access to his boot camp last summer but has since refused to speak with the paper. After the morning drills, the group moved inside the church. The teens marched single file into a side room for a self-esteem workshop. Their families, meanwhile, sat in the pews, listening to a nutritionist. Involving parents in the program is a key component of success, McFarland says. "The program has benefited the children tremendously," said Mirza Balvaneda, who enrolled her son when he was only 8. "The other parents said I was brave to bring him in because he's so young, but he needed to learn some discipline." In addition to the instilling of discipline, parents — most of whom don't speak English — said they hope their children will take more initiative in their studies. When news of McFarland's arrest broke, some thought Gibbs, who operates Sarge's Community Base, was the one who had been arrested. The men have similar authoritative demeanors and dress — usually camouflage pants with dark polo shirts. They even have similar nicknames. McFarland is "Sgt. Mac," Gibbs is simply "Sarge." "People were calling me because they thought I was the one who had been arrested," Gibbs said. Gibbs said that he hired McFarland in early 2009 and that his new employee became his right-hand man. But now the two compete for recruits and offer differing views of how their relationship fell apart. Gibbs said he fired McFarland when he discovered his criminal history and heard complaints from staff that he was using excessive force when disciplining cadets. McFarland said he only followed Gibbs' orders. Gibbs has also faced allegations of child abuse. In a 2010 letter from Edwin Diaz, superintendent of the Pasadena Unified School District, Gibbs was told his permit to use school district facilities for his camp had been revoked. School officials had received reports from parents that Gibbs' boot camp tactics amounted to corporal punishment. Another parent charged that he had engaged in "an inappropriate sexual relationship" with a minor. Pasadena police investigated but never filed charges because the teen recanted her claims, Diaz wrote. Gibbs calls the allegations lies spread by disgruntled cadets who wanted out of his program. As his court date approaches, McFarland has kept a low profile, quietly running his boot camp and dismissing his critics, who he said are trying to destroy his business with baseless accusations. He says that at the end of the day, "it's all about the kids." ricardo.lopez2@latimes.com Copyright © 2011, [Los Angeles Times](http://www.latimes.com) Source: <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-sarge-20111113.0.4902275.story> For more on this story, visit: http://www.whittierdailynews.com/news/ci_19353747

Home for troubled boys is troubled By JACK BRUBAKER Staff Writer Prescott House, the last group home for juvenile offenders of its kind in Lancaster County, closed in July following negative state inspections. Its future is uncertain. The group home's owner, Sylvester "Casey" Jones, closed the facility voluntarily, but if he reopens it, the state would closely monitor its operations. For more than four decades, Prescott House has served as many as 12 male delinquents at a time in a substantial brick building at South Shippen and Green streets. The group home's reopening depends largely on whether Lancaster and

Other counties decide to resume sending juveniles to a facility that has suffered operational and financial difficulties for several years. "I'm sad that Prescott House has fallen on some hard times and hope it can be resurrected and be stronger than ever," says David Mueller, director of the county's Office of Juvenile Probation. Prescott House has worked closely with his office to meet the needs of residents over the years and has changed young people's lives, Mueller notes. On the other hand, he explains, "We're just not totally secure ... they can stay open for the long haul." Prescott House's teenage residents came from several central Pennsylvania counties. They were sentenced by the courts to stay at the group home for several months to a year for offenses ranging from theft and vandalism to drug use and firearms charges. Juveniles at Prescott House, a former residence, were not "locked down" as they are at the county's Youth Intervention Center, a facility that holds juveniles for a short time until their final disposition is determined. Group home residents attended classes at McCaskey High School and received job training. The primary goal was to develop skills and find jobs. With closure of the group home, local officials have been sending juvenile offenders to a facility outside the county. Factoring in the cost of travel for juveniles and probation officers, that can cost more than the \$146.89 a day paid to house teenagers at Prescott House. Over the past five years, the county has paid Prescott House nearly \$1 million to house and treat dozens of juveniles. Annual amounts have varied from \$323,000 spent in fiscal year 2006-07 to just over half that amount spent in fiscal 2010-11. Mueller says county officials would like to keep payments for institutional juvenile treatment in the county. They also would prefer, for rehabilitative purposes, to keep children close to their families in their own communities. But whether that happens is largely dependent on whether Jones decides to reopen Prescott House. On Oct. 26, the state's Office of Children, Youth and Families issued Prescott House a provisional license to operate through next August. Roseann Perry, director of that office, notes that reopening the group home "would be the same as starting up any program from scratch," including hiring new employees. Mueller says Jones has told him he will be able to hire a full staff. Based on that claim, the county is in the process of establishing a new contract with Prescott House. Jones refuses to discuss his plans with a reporter. A former McCaskey High School administrator and interim member of the city school board, Jones has directed Prescott House since the 1980s. In 2005, Jones and Kenneth Dupree purchased the group home for \$135,000 from the Lancaster County Council of Churches, which had opened it in 1970. Dupree later left the operation. Jones runs the group home as a business corporation under the name Jondou Inc. Although it is a for-profit business, Prescott House solicits charitable contributions of food, clothing and other items. Jones, 65, also is a bail bondsman who owes the county nearly \$500,000 in forfeited bail. He is repaying that bill at \$9,000 a month. The state's provisional license for Prescott House is a "warning to consumers and family members to know there are some issues going on at the facility," according to state Department of Public Welfare spokeswoman Anne Bale. The state has not yet accepted Jones' plan of action, she says, and is waiting to see what happens. The operation would be reassessed six months after it reopens. Annual and unannounced inspections conducted by the Office of Children, Youth and Families have found multiple deficiencies at Prescott House since at least the summer of 2009. (That office is in the Department of Public Welfare.) On July 28, 2009, state inspectors documented deficient staff training and inadequate treatment of clients in 18 categories. They also found holes in walls and a rusted bathroom vent. On June 1, 2010, inspectors again found multiple violations of state regulations, including inadequate staff training, incomplete client records, exposed wiring and a missing outlet cover. "At this point in time they struggle with keeping their residential census up and maintaining full-time employment for the staff," the inspectors noted. "Their attention to details could be improved." On Nov. 5, 2010, a routine inspection found multiple violations of state regulations, all related to tardy completion of health examinations of incoming residents. On April 5, inspectors, responding to a complaint, made an unannounced visit and found dirt and trash on residents' floors and water damage to several ceilings. Inspectors also found exposed wiring, a urine-stained toilet seat and a dirty, rusted exhaust fan. "While there was food in the facility, it did not appear to be enough for six clients," the report noted. "The staff on duty did not have a key to the freezer to access food." On June 30, inspectors conducting the annual licensing review found 20 violations of state regulations regarding employees and residents, as well as a missing basement heater cover. Jones then closed the building and dismissed the last three members of the professional staff. When the group home sheltered 12 residents, it employed seven full-time professionals and several other workers, including a cook, according to a former employee who does not wish to be named. But in March, when several employees sent an unsigned letter protesting conditions at the group home to the state Office of Children, Youth and Families and the Lancaster County Children and Youth Agency, only five full-time professionals were still working at Prescott House, the former employee says. The employees complained that they always were paid late. They said residents were not receiving well-balanced meals or sufficient food, and that the food was prepared by a cook under "unsanitary conditions." Further, they said the program increasingly was producing "negative outcomes" for residents. The employees said the group home's program had been successful in previous years, but more recently, under Jones' ownership, was "doomed for failure." Perry, the state official, says the number of state citations that Jones has received is high but not unique. "Certainly we have seen documentation of training missing or unacceptable conditions within the actual physical site in other places," she says. But she adds that there also are group homes "where there are no irregular items noted." Gary Horning, chief housing inspector for Lancaster city, says his bureau over the past several years has required Prescott House to upgrade electrical receptacles and clean up excessive amounts of trash. But the number of complaints for that type of facility, he adds, are "less than average. It's probably better than a fraternity house." While both the city and state assess the physical plant, and the state monitors employee and resident records, neither considers the solvency of the business. As the number of residents at the home has declined, so have revenues. "The need for out-of-home placement in Pennsylvania has decreased over the past few years," Perry says. "That certainly is a contributing factor." It's a challenge to operate any business these days, she notes. Operating a business with fewer "customers" is an additional burden. Lancaster County Children and Youth has not sent any clients to Prescott House for at least five years, according to James Laughman, the county's human service director. The county's Office of Juvenile Probation, the primary county agency that has referred clients to Prescott House, had three teenagers there until last spring. They completed their correction programs before the facility closed, according to Mueller. Juvenile Probation stopped sending new teens to Prescott House "when we started receiving complaints that staff members had made to the Office of Children, Youth and Families," Mueller explains. But concerns about the group home have been long-standing, he adds. "We haven't this past 10 years been completely enamored of the program," he says. "But every time we met with Prescott House we got a positive response, and changes were made." While he hopes the group home can reopen and Lancaster can send clients there, Mueller observes, "it's expensive to run a program like this. Unless you have a certain number of kids in it, you won't break even." Lancaster was sending two or three boys at a time, so Prescott House had to depend on surrounding counties to help fill other beds. The former Prescott House employee says that only Lancaster and Chester counties were sending children in the months before the facility closed. He says York, Berks and Dauphin counties had stopped using the program. jbrubaker@lnpnews.com Source: http://lancasteronline.com/article/local/496657_Home-for-troubled-boys-is-troubled.html#ixzz1djkzloZO

Uta Halee blames closure on state By [Robyn Wisch, KVNO News](#) November 15th, 2011 Omaha, NE – After 60 years serving troubled teens in Omaha, the Uta Halee Girls Village announced it will be forced to close its doors next month. Listen Now Nestled in the hills of north Omaha, the Uta Halee Girls Village has provided a serene setting for troubled young kids since 1950. The center provides counseling and residential psychiatric treatment for girls with severe emotional and behavioral problems. Uta Halee Girls Village has served troubled teens in the area since 1950. The center also closed nearby Cooper Village last year, which it managed for the Omaha Home for Boys. Leslie Byers brought her daughter to the facility several years ago because she said she had no other option. "When your child is cutting herself, when she's throwing dishes all over the place, simply because you said to go to bed, when you're afraid for your safety, and your other kids' safety," she said. Byers said when her daughter was in psychiatric crisis, the only option was to call 911, because the family had run out of lifetime in-patient insurance benefits. "... have them manhandle her, handcuff her, take her to the emergency room, give her a tranquilizer, and a couple of hours later, bring her home, all in the name of treatment. That's not treatment." The center blamed the closing, which is slated for Dec. 16, squarely on the state of Nebraska, saying the Department of Health and Human Services stopped referring kids for treatment at the facility in an effort to save money. Gary Kaplan, immediate past board chair, said DHHS has narrowly interpreted Medicaid rules that deny the center's intensive level of treatment. "If the Governor and his team weren't so effective at denying help to kids with traumas and mental illness and abuse, we would be staying open," he said. "But instead they've chosen to leave hundreds of our young people with serious needs in shelters and juvenile detention centers, inappropriate foster homes and out on the street." Gov. Dave Heineman was asked about the closing at a press conference Tuesday, and said he's not ready to comment because he doesn't have the details. Kaplan said in the past, the center has stayed open, with the help of private funds, when state support dwindled. But the facility, which has 60 beds in total, is currently serving just 14 girls in its residential program. Uta Halee also runs several community-based programs serving girls and boys that will also close. But Kaplan said the all-girl program will be the greatest loss. "A place where a girl who had been repeatedly forced to have sex with her coach, or her mom's boyfriend, or her cousin, who is reacting to that with clinical depression, with taking drugs, with acting out, with joining gangs, could come here to an all-girl environment," Kaplan said. "A place of healing with only girls around." Board members said the center is working with its current residents to find alternative

treatment. Ninety employees at the center will also be laid off. The closing comes amid state reforms to the child welfare system that have led to three providers canceling their contracts with the state, and an audit that cited DHHS for mishandling state contracts. A spokeswoman for the Department, Kathie Osterman, said the changes in Medicaid rules were not about saving money, but about coming into compliance with federal regulations. She added providers were told several months ago the changes were coming. But for parents like Leslie Byers, no matter the details, the closing simply means fewer choices for parents in crisis. Her voice cracking, Byers said, "I wanted my daughter to be safe, I wanted her to have a chance to graduate. I didn't want her to have to be here, but I wanted all those things bad enough." "So don't take that option away because I don't know where she would be. I don't know where our family would be. Source: <http://www.kvnonews.com/2011/11/uta-halee-treatment-center-to-close/#comment-5888> (Webmaster Note: Uta Halee is one of the programs specifically referenced in "[The Franklin Cover-Up](#)" and is also referenced on our site at www.heal-online.org/aacrc.htm.)

David Protes, President, Chicago Innocence Project When Juveniles Confess to Murders They Didn't Commit Posted: 11/18/11 11:15 AM ET It was Chicago's feel-good story of the week. A Cook County judge on Wednesday overturned the convictions of four men who, as teenagers in 1995, falsely confessed to the rape and murder of a 30-year-old woman. The men were cleared by DNA evidence that linked a career criminal to the crime. Vincent Thames and Terrill Swift were beaming as they exited the revolving doors of the criminal courts building at 26th and Cal. The other two, Harold Richardson and Michael Saunders, will soon be free on bond. Now the Englewood Four, as they have been dubbed, await a decision by prosecutors whether to re-try them. Meanwhile, troubling questions linger. How did the four confess to crimes they did not commit? Why did it take so long to conduct DNA testing? And, underlying it all, why has Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez persistently fought justice for the four? *** On November 7, 1994, a sanitation worker found the badly beaten body of an African American woman in a dumpster behind a liquor store in the Englewood neighborhood on Chicago's South Side. The woman was identified as Nina Glover, a prostitute. Police interviewed a resident of the neighborhood, Johnny Douglas, at the scene. But they let him go when he denied knowing Glover. Four months later, acting on a tip, police picked up four African American teenagers for questioning. According to Det. James Cassidy, the teenagers voluntarily confessed, saying they took turns raping Glover before murdering her. Primitive DNA tests excluded the teenagers as the source of semen recovered from Glover, and all four claimed their confessions had been coerced. But they were convicted based on detailed signed statements about their involvement, and dispatched to prison for terms ranging from 30 to 40 years. In 2010, two of the prisoners requested advanced "STR" DNA testing along with a database search of the genetic profiles of criminals. Cook County prosecutors opposed the tests, contending that the trial court judgments were final. But a judge ordered them, and the stunning results were revealed last May. Not only were the four teenagers ruled out, but the DNA matched a person that cops had interviewed at the crime scene -- Johnny Douglas. A man with a history of preying on prostitutes, Douglas' rap sheet was impressive: 38 convictions, including for murder and sexual assault. He was shot to death in 2008. Exoneration was at hand for the Englewood Four -- or so it seemed. *** As family members of the prisoners readied to welcome them home, State's Attorney Anita Alvarez set in motion a distinctly different course. She announced that she would vigorously fight their release. Alvarez's novel theory of the crime: Douglas had unprotected sex with Glover, left her unharmed, and she was later raped and murdered by the four teenagers. "He [Douglas] didn't kill every other prostitute he was with," Alvarez told the New York Times. "DNA evidence in and of itself is not always the 'silver bullet' that it is sometimes perceived to be," she declared. The county's chief law enforcement officer believed Det. Cassidy's version of the confessions. Otherwise, how could the teenagers have provided so many details about the crime? Turns out Det. Cassidy has a rap sheet of his own. In 1994, the year before the Englewood Four case, the detective took a detailed confession from an 11-year-old African American male who purportedly murdered an elderly Caucasian woman on Chicago's Southwest Side. A federal judge concluded the confession had been coerced, tossed out the conviction, and ordered the child's record expunged. In 1998, Cassidy was back, this time with another high-profile confession. Two African-American males -- ages seven and eight -- admitted killing 11-year-old Ryan Harris and dumping her body in a backyard, Cassidy claimed. The elaborate confessions created a national furor over pre-adolescent crime -- until the authorities found semen in Harris' panties. They sheepishly dropped the charges and eventually secured a confession from an adult male (though his actual guilt has been disputed.) Cassidy reportedly is no longer active on the force, having been reassigned to the Medical Examiner's office. (One wonders if his new job description includes obtaining confessions from the recently departed.) Point is, false confessions happen all the time. Out of the 76 wrongful convictions in Cook County since the advent of DNA testing, 25 were based on suspects admitting to crimes they did not commit, according to the Center on Wrongful Convictions at Northwestern University. False confessions are particularly common in cases involving juveniles. Just two weeks ago, the convictions of five suburban Chicago youths were upended in a case involving the 1991 rape and murder of a 14-year-old girl. They, too, had confessed to the crime and were exonerated by DNA. And, in the infamous Central Park jogger case in 1989, four of the five teenagers who confessed to the rape were later exonerated when DNA evidence confirmed another man's involvement. What is distinctive about the Englewood Four case, and deeply troubling, is that State's Attorney Alvarez will not acknowledge the mistake. She is an exception. In a study of 194 DNA exonerations, prosecutors refused to join defense lawyers in dismissing convictions in only four percent of cases where DNA evidence implicated an alternative suspect. Why is Alvarez a four-percenter? As a career prosecutor, perhaps she is blindly loyal to her troops, realizing that the blame for false confessions (unlike mistaken eyewitness testimony) falls entirely on law enforcement. Perhaps she is concerned about the large civil rights judgments that will inevitably follow if she throws Cassidy and his fellow cops under the bus. But even if we take Alvarez at her word on this subject -- "As a prosecutor, I have a duty to the victims in this case" -- then what is her duty to the Englewood Four? Haven't they been victimized for seventeen years? Re-trying these young men, an option Alvarez is considering, would compound the injustice and waste taxpayer's dollars. The system made a tragic mistake. It's time for Alvarez to confess it. Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-protes/false-confessions-juveniles_b_1100665.html

Police investigating possible sexual assaults at teen group home Posted: Nov 23, 2011 12:26 PM PST Updated: Nov 23, 2011 7:17 PM PST David Dos Santos CLEVELAND, OH (WOIO) - 19 Action News has learned of an investigation into a series of suspected sex assaults by a youth worker at a group home for troubled teens. Cleveland Sex Crimes investigators have begun filing charges against youth worker David Dos Santos. The attacks reportedly happened at WestHaven. The group home run by Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry serves girls and boys, with troubled childhoods, who are leaving foster care or other agencies -- getting ready for life on their own. The home learned of the problem last week and called county child welfare workers. Soon after Dos Santos was fired. Dos Santos is suspected of abusing two teen girls, maybe more. Source: <http://www.woio.com/story/16112615/police-investigating-possible-sexual-assaults-at-a-home-for-troubled-teens>

Mentors reach out to troubled kids through poetry of the streets kminugh@sacbee.com Published Tuesday, Nov. 29, 2011 For one hour a week over five weeks, Louis Savala sized up the two young men visiting his English classroom, "spitting" spoken-word poetry and offering life lessons. He didn't participate; he didn't share despite their encouragement. And then, on Christopher Coon and Lorenzo McNeal Jr.'s sixth visit, 17-year-old Savala found his voice. He opened up about trouble brewing with another teen. He vented about being unfairly profiled as a Norteño or a Blood because of his looks. For the first time in a long time, Savala felt he'd be heard. "Getting the chance to talk and have people listen makes me feel I can say what I need to say," the Del Paso Heights teen said. Savala is among dozens of Sacramento-area youths who have found the power of personal expression with the help of 22-year-old Coon -- who proudly goes by his last name despite the word's racial connotations -- and 23-year-old McNeal, who is known as TroubleSin. Close friends for eight years, the pair began working with teens as "poet mentors" for the Sacramento Area Youth Speaks program. Now branching out, they conduct youth workshops rooted in the art of spoken-word poetry. Educators say the young African American men from tough backgrounds can reach students in a way many teachers cannot, empowering the students, making poetry cool and mixing in advice for life. Dan Chambliss, an English teacher at Highlands High School, said he has seen many students thrive since meeting Coon and TroubleSin. "There's an underlying association," he said. And that's important, he stressed, for any teacher trying to keep students interested in learning. "(Students) feel there's a place for them at school." Coon and TroubleSin, who call themselves the E-Legal Tag Team, forged a bond when their lives were in an uproar. Poetry, they say, helped save them. Coon was 15 and recovering from gunshot wounds in Meadowview. He narrowly escaped paralysis or death. As for TroubleSin, in a word, he described himself at the time as "hostile" over a volatile situation in his south Sacramento County home. He was looking to lash out -- but instead chose to reach out. He called Coon in the hospital: "It's time to get to work" -- writing, rhyming, making words their outlet. They shared what Coon calls "war stories," building off each other's emotions to create art. Then, as now, it was their therapy. Their work covers everything from love to abandonment to issues of race. In "Family Tree," Coon and TroubleSin touch on the cycle of discord in their families. In "The Hands That Rock the Cradle," they rhyme about their turbulent relationships with their parents. Students of English teacher Erin Klentos at Vista Nueva Career & Technical High School researched the 1865 poem by William Ross Wallace of nearly the same title, looking for other cultural

references to the poem and its themes. They found it in everything from hip-hop to blues music. "I think they started to see the relevance of learning history and literature and being able to say, 'That still applies to me now,'" Kmentos said. Despite limited training, Coon and TroubleSin transition effortlessly from high school seniors to seventh-graders, gently teasing out participation and encourage critical thinking. They choose language students understand. "They say things like 'Who's a rule breaker?'" said Mark Taylor, who teaches seventh-grade English at Smythe Academy. "They're just trying to get the kids to think outside of the box, but they use terms like that to really access those kids who have a history of having behavior problems or academic problems." Coon and TroubleSin say they want teens to feel safe to speak their minds, no matter how raw the material. And it does get raw. "That's why we don't sugarcoat it: They're not sugarcoating it out there," Coon said, referring to the streets. The Tag Team has contracts with the Twin Rivers Unified School District and the Boys & Girls Clubs. Having worked with Sacramento City Unified, too, they dream of opening a center where youths can work on their art. Recently at Highlands High, TroubleSin led a discussion about the phrase "Association breeds similarity." Coon spoke of a close family friend who was a good kid and star athlete but fell in with the wrong crowd. "He's now laying in the grave because of this group. Real talk – this is serious. Please be mindful of the company you keep." Throughout their sessions with students, Coon and TroubleSin stress values such as respect and patience that apply in and out of the classroom, TroubleSin said. He tells youths that patience is what kept him alive and out of prison. "I could've acted out ... but instead I remained patient, and it's because I was patient I'm here with you today." Kmentos has seen her tough fourth-period class – her "killer bees" – practicing Coon's and TroubleSin's code since the pair started visiting. She believes their authority comes in the example they provide. They have "had a lot of bad things happen to (them), too, and they're OK. They're really grounded," she said. "You can travel through this war zone ... and you can come out OK, but you have to be on your game." Laronda Johnson, a 16-year-old student in Kmentos' class, described them as "hecka cool." "They're strong black men who do something different with their lives instead of being like other black men in this world ... (who live) that gangster life," she said. "The stuff they've been through is the stuff we've all been through," said Savala, who described his neighborhood, Del Paso Heights, as "crazy as hell." But he said Coon and TroubleSin have helped him see that he can rise above that, that "all this hustling on the street – it's nothing." On that sixth visit – Coon and TroubleSin's last to Vista Nueva – Savala embraced them. And then that night, he sent them a piece of his poetry for review. He's never felt he's had people to talk to, Savala said, except for the aging "OGs" – "original gangsters" – on the street. Finally, he found that at school. "I know there (are) people out there that care and ... who will listen," he said. © Copyright The Sacramento Bee. All rights reserved. Source: <http://www.sacbee.com/2011/11/29/4085607/mentors-reach-out-to-troubled.html#> (Webmaster Note: After School and Mentoring within the Community is a wonderful thing that we'd like to see more of in our cities and around the country.)

Assemblyman Anthony Portantino Calls for Youth Boot Camp Reforms--Whittier Daily News For complete story, [click here](#) or visit http://www.whittierdailynews.com/news/ci_19445152

Posted on Friday, 12.02.11 Feds condemn conditions at Florida youth prisons Federal civil rights investigators said two Florida youth prisons were harsh and dangerous — and likely are indicative of conditions statewide. BY CAROL MARBIN MILLER CMARBIN@MIAMIHERALD.COM Florida's youth-corrections system is so poorly administered that children are assaulted by officers, denied necessary medical care and punished harshly for minor infractions, a federal report released Friday concludes. Conditions are so severe, the U.S. Department of Justice said, that they violate the Constitution. The Justice Department's Civil Rights Division released a scathing 28-page report Friday on conditions at two North Florida youth prisons, the Dozier School for Boys and the Jackson Juvenile Offender Center. Though the two camps were both shut down by state juvenile-justice administrators earlier this year, the report said the state's "failed system of oversight and accountability" likely has resulted in dangerous conditions at youth prisons throughout the state. "These conditions return youth to the community no better — and likely less-equipped to succeed than when they were first incarcerated," Assistant Attorney General Thomas E. Perez wrote in a Dec. 1 letter to Gov. Rick Scott, adding that such practices "erode public confidence in the juvenile justice system and interfere with the state's efforts to reduce crime." Though the report is strongly worded, neither Perez nor the report itself suggested that the Justice Department intended to take further action. The investigation, which began in April 2010, concerned two large youth camps in the Panhandle — Dozier, a 159-acre campus that had been open for 110 years, and the nearby Jackson Juvenile Offender Center, or JJOC, which later combined with Dozier to form the North Florida Youth Development Center. Dozier had been the subject of intense scrutiny since October 2008, when The Miami Herald reported on The White House Boys, a group of now-older adult men who said they had been beaten and raped at the facility during their youth. And though investigators confined their research to the two Panhandle youth prisons, they concluded that the conditions they found likely permeate the state's youth-corrections system as a whole. "Florida's oversight system failed to detect and sufficiently address the problems we found at Dozier and JJOC," the report said. "We find that many of the problems we identified ... are the result of a systemic lack of training, supervision and oversight." The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice's spokesman, C.J. Drake, said Friday that the U.S. department's findings do not apply to other residential programs throughout the state. Last August, DJJ Secretary Wansley Walters said that the use of physical force on youths had dropped by 41.6 percent during the past two years as the state adopted a set of "best practices" in behavior management. In the past year alone, Walters said, more than half of the DJJ's residential programs either reduced or eliminated the use of physical force. "The issues and concerns raised in the investigative report on allegations of past staff misconduct at the closed [North Florida youth camp] are, in fact, confined to the closed facility and are not duplicated elsewhere in the DJJ system," Drake said Friday. "We have taken and will continue to take swift and appropriate action to address any conduct that violates laws, policies, or the safety and dignity of the youth in our care," he added. Since 2008, in fact, the DJJ has either closed or substantially reduced 23 residential programs across the state that performed poorly. Roy Miller, a children's advocate who heads the Florida Children's Campaign and has been a long-time critic of the state's youth-corrections program, said Friday he remains unconvinced that the state has implemented meaningful reform. "I have no confidence that this is not a systemic problem," Miller said. "Every time horrifying abuse has occurred, we get the same story from DJJ, that it is not systemic." Among the problems the U.S. Justice Department found: • Juveniles sent to the youth camps were subjected to unnecessary — and often excessive — physical force, including violent takedowns, choking and restraints that can lead to asphyxiation. In the spring of 2006, the Florida Legislature banned a host of so-called compliance techniques and takedowns in the wake of a national scandal, the death of 14-year-old Martin Lee Anderson, who died after guards at a Panama City boot camp punched, kneed and choked off his air supply during a long, violent restraint. The Martin Lee Anderson Act banned the use of stun guns, pepper spray, pressure points, mechanical restraints and psychological intimidation unless a child is a threat to himself or others. The Justice Department, however, said guards in North Florida used "dangerous" face-down restraint techniques, choked youths and used handcuffs on children who were not resisting. A September 2010 incident that was captured on video showed a guard who "appeared to strike and choke" a youth who "was not engaged in violent or disruptive behavior." The guard had "slammed" the boy into furniture and then the ground, shook the boy's arm, and then tried to force the youth's arm behind his back, though the youth appeared only to "be trying to avoid further confrontation," the report said. • Staff members at the camps also used isolation and confinement as punishment, the report said, though most experts discourage the use of isolation for all but emergency situations. And isolation was used, the report said, for "minor infractions." At Dozier, youths were placed in either a "controlled observation" area — the written procedure was to confine the youth for only a two-hour "cool-down" period — or in a longer-term Behavior Management Unit for up to 21 days. The report describes the two units as "particularly harsh environments," where youths were held in 9.8-by-5.5-foot cells with locked doors, bars and only a concrete slab for a bed. Administrators would place a "thin mattress" on the slab at bedtime. • Guards exercised "deliberate indifference" to the needs of children in their care, including youths who were at risk of killing themselves. "Suicidal youths were sent to isolation, although the facility rules prohibit confinement of such youths," the report said, adding: "This practice is very dangerous." • Youths may have been discouraged from seeking medical care, because they had to request a sick call from the same employees who may have abused them. And youths who were in the behavior management unit "did not receive adequate medical care, assessment of their mental health ... or assistance in determining whether they should be discharged from confinement." Last July, 18-year-old Eric Perez died at the Palm Beach County detention center after several guards and administrators ignored his pleas for medical attention. Perez's death remains under investigation by both the DJJ and a West Palm Beach grand jury. Source: <http://www.miamiherald.com/2011/12/02/v-fullstory/2529226/feds-condemn-conditions-at-now.html#ixzz1fSip5XLI> For more on this story and the Department of Justice's Investigation Report, visit: http://www.tampabay.com/specials/2011/PDFs/Dozier_JusticeDepartment120311.pdf

Doctors Put Foster Children at Risk With Mind-Altering Drugs By BRINDA ADHIKARI, JOAN MARTELLI and SARAH KOCH Dec. 1, 2011 — go.com Across America, doctors are putting foster children on powerful, mind-altering drugs at rates up to 13 times that of children in the general population. What's more, doctors are prescribing foster children drugs at doses beyond what the Food and Drug Administration has approved, sometimes in potentially dangerous

combinations, according to a new report by the federal Government Accountability Office. "It's just almost beyond comprehension," said Sen. Thomas Carper, D-Del., who asked for the GAO investigation. "We want the doctors and nurses that are prescribing these medicines to look at their behavior and think and ask this question. Are we doing something wrong here?" In Florida, regulators have been grappling with that question since a 7-year-old boy, Gabriel Myers, killed himself in 2009 after being prescribed a powerful mix of psychotropic medication. His psychiatrist, Dr. Sohail Punjwani, had, at different times, prescribed two drugs that carry black box labels -- warning of the need to carefully monitor patients because of the increased risk of suicidal thoughts and behavior in children, which call for careful monitoring. However, even though Gabriel visited Punjwani's office seven times, his foster father said Gabriel usually only spent about five minutes talking to the doctor. Gabriel's death was ruled an accident, but investigators pointed to the possibility that the medication may have contributed to his death. The tragedy triggered a storm of outrage across the state. "I don't accept that the only way to reach a child who is 7 years old is through psychotropic drugs," said Florida Sen. Ronda Storm, during hearings over Gabriel's death. "I do not accept that." The boy's doctor settled a lawsuit in 2010 accusing him of prescribing a toxic cocktail of psychotropic drugs to a 16-year-old patient, who suffered a sudden heart attack and died. Punjwani settled that case but admitted no wrongdoing. READ: A Resource Guide for Children in Foster Care Additionally, Punjwani was arrested for driving under the influence and cocaine possession. He pleaded not guilty to those charges but went through a court-ordered rehabilitation program. When ABC News caught up with Dr. Punjwani, he told us, "Sad stories happen but that does not mean that everything else the doctor is responsible for it because we are in the business of taking care of these children," he said. Antipsychotic medication, which can cause a litany of health problems such as severe weight gain, an increased risk of diabetes and irreversible movement disorders, is among the top-selling drugs in America. LEARN MORE: Antipsychotics Most Commonly Prescribed to Foster Children Four drug makers have paid a total of more than \$2 billion to settle claims they illegally marketed antipsychotics to children. All deny wrongdoing. "How do antipsychotics, drugs supposedly for people who have lost touch with reality, how do they develop such a wide market?" said neuropsychiatrist Dr. Stefan Kruszewski, who won millions of dollars as a key whistleblower against drug companies. There have been very limited long-term studies on antipsychotics in children. And for drugs already on the market, the duration of the studies that were used to get FDA approval for children have been as short as three to six weeks. ABC News interviewed a social worker now working in a state foster care system, who asked not to be identified. "Every child that I saw was basically on some type of psychotropic medication," the social worker told ABC News. "It's much easier to medicate a child than it is to physically restrain them, than it is to pay \$200 an hour to a therapist to talk through their problems with them." Dr. Charles Zeanah, a prominent child psychiatrist who is careful to use a minimum of psychotropic medication in children, said that doctors are under pressure from all corners to do something with these troubled children and medication is one of their tools. "The pressures that I'm aware of are pressures that come from families and schools who have kids with troubling behavior," he said. "They want something done. They want something done quickly." Still, he adds, "The general consensus is that when you're treating young children, you always try behavioral intervention before you go to medication." The problem has not gone unnoticed by some state officials. In the state of Washington, doctors and regulators have implemented a new system to oversee psychotropic medication and identify red flag cases that exceed safety limits, by dosage or number of medications, or arise because of the young age of the child. In those red flag cases, a second opinion by a child psychiatrist is needed before medication can be dispensed. And some states including Louisiana, Florida and New York are even going so far as kicking out high-prescribing doctors out of Medicaid. Sen. Carper, who called for the GAO investigation, said he was shocked by the findings. "The idea that these kids are taking one, two, three times the regular dose for a child or for an adult -- it's just the wrong thing to do," he said. "We need to get to the bottom of this and do the best that we can to stop it, not just the Congress, not just the doctors, not just the states. All of us together." ABC News' Mark Abdelmalek contributed to this report. Watch the year-long investigation tonight on "World News with Diane Sawyer" at 6:30 p.m. ET and then see more on "20/20," Friday at 10 p.m. ET.

Source: <http://abcnews.go.com/Health/doctors-put-foster-children-risk-mind-altering-drugs/story?id=15064560> Additional Links/Information On this Topic Below: <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2011/12/boy-12-tells-congress-of-years-on-stupid-meds/> <http://isepp.wordpress.com/2011/12/02/government-report-confirms-2008-allegations-that-foster-children-are-over-medicated/> <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-12-270T> <http://abc.go.com/watch/2020/SH559026/VD55156221/2020-122-overmedication-in-foster-care>

Another case of sexual abuse against children within the Assemblies of God Church. Two youth ministers with the Assemblies of God church arrested for sex crimes against children in Polk County. December 14, 2011 POLK COUNTY, Fla. - Two youth pastors have been arrested for sex-related crimes against children, the Polk County Sheriff's Office announced Wednesday. Edward Demoreta, 30, is accused of having sex at least twice with a 14-year-old student at Mulberry Middle School, while he was her teacher there. Ricardo Navarro, 27, was arrested for texting a 14-year-old member of the church youth group with lewd requests. Both suspects were youth pastors at the First Assembly of God. Source: http://www.abcactionnews.com/dpp/news/region_polk/two-youth-ministers-arrested-for-sex-crimes-against-children-in-polk-county (Webmaster Note: Assemblies of God operates and oversees the Teen Challenge programs.)

Counselor accused of sex with teen in her care enters plea Posted: Dec 19, 2011 3:03 PM PST Updated: Dec 20, 2011 10:13 AM PST By Scott Adkins - email@wave3.com Brooke Briscoe (Source: Bullitt County Detention Center) _Sunrise Spring Meadows Residential Facility_ Det. Scott McGaha SHEPHERDSVILLE, KY (WAVE) - A counselor pleaded not guilty to charges of rape and sodomy on Tuesday after deputies say she had sex with a teen in her care. Bullitt County deputies arrested Brooke Briscoe, 27, Monday morning. Briscoe worked at Sunrise Spring Meadows Residential Facility, a group home that helps troubled teens. Investigators said she had sex with the teen at the facility. Deputies launched the investigation after Child Protective Services discovered Briscoe allegedly had sexual contact with a 17-year-old male on November 11. Briscoe is charged with rape in the 3rd degree and sodomy in the 3rd degree. "Sixteen is the legal consensual age in the State of Kentucky. However, even though he's of consent the problem is it's rape in the 3rd degree because someone is in a caretaker role with him. She was a counselor for him," said Det. Scott McGaha, Bullitt County Sheriff's Office. "Unfortunately, it does occur. We see it quite often and she has been charged with that. It's just unfortunate that it happens," McGaha said. Sunrise, a faith based non-profit, is located in Mt. Washington, KY. It's mission is "to care for Kentucky children who've been abused or neglected." Sunrise released a statement. Here's a portion: "We are conducting an internal investigation and are reviewing our policies and procedures to determine if there is anything we need to change to avoid a situation like this in the future." Briscoe was placed on administrative leave once authorities launched an investigation. Sunrise terminated her employment Monday. Copyright 2011 WAVE News. All rights reserved. Source: <http://www.wave3.com/story/16356564/deputies-arrest-counselor-charged-with-rape-and-sodomy>

Posted on Tue, Dec. 27, 2011 6 fired at Fla detention center where teen died The Associated Press Six employees of a South Florida juvenile detention center where a teenager died will be fired. The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice announced Tuesday that the Palm Beach Juvenile Detention Center's superintendent and assistant superintendent were fired. Four detention center officers also will be fired. Officials said a review of the facility's operations and management revealed that the six violated policies and procedures. Police and prosecutors are still investigating the death of 18-year-old Eric Perez in July. The teen died hours after seeking help for a severe headache and vomiting. An autopsy is pending. DJJ Secretary Wansley Walters said the agency could not wait for the outcome of the criminal investigation to discipline the employees because "necessary changes" at the center can't begin until "appropriate personnel changes" are made. Source: <http://www.miamiherald.com/2011/12/27/v-print/2563012/6-fired-at-fla-detention-center.html#storylink=cpy>

Local pastor found guilty of teen's sexual assault 7:26 PM, Feb 9, 2012 SACRAMENTO, CA - An area pastor who befriended a troubled teen and eventually molested her was convicted of eight counts of sexual assault of a minor. Cornelius Taylor and his wife let the teen move in with them when she was 16. According to the Sacramento County District Attorney's Office, Taylor began going to the girl's bedroom and sexually abusing her several times a week, even after she turned 18. Taylor faces up to seven years, eight months in prison when he is sentenced. Source: <http://www.news10.net/news/article/177811/2/Local-pastor-found-guilty-of-teens-sexual-assault?odyssey=tab%7Ctopnews%7Cbc%7Clarge>

Convention Focuses On Institutional Abuse By Jonathan Van Dyke Staff Writer | Posted: Wednesday, February 22, 2012 12:15 am Society's pillars - its institutions - are not immune to its horrors. This is a fact that in some ways helped form Survivors of Institutional Abuse, which is committed to increasing "national awareness about these deceptively practicing, indoctrinating, exploitive, mentally/physically/sexually abusive and spiritually harmful facilities." Not every institution is bad, but many times victims of such abuse have little idea where to go to get help, organizers said. "It was formed based on a need from survivors of institutional abuse," said Jodi Hobbs, founder and president of SIA. The abuse could come from any number of cultural institutions like church, school, juvenile hall, foster care or residential treatment. "I am actually a survivor myself, and in my research to try and find help for myself, there just wasn't much help out there," Hobbs said. SIA will host its first major event this weekend at the Queen Mary, which is free to the public but requires preregistration.

The theme of the event is United With One Voice. Together We Are Strong. Hobbs said her search for help and answers allowed her to encounter others who had been effected by institutional abuse. She found several other social networking groups that had the same goals as she did - eventually she formed SIA to try and bring all the disparate groups and resources together under one umbrella. "We kind of went on this journey alone," she said. "But we discovered it was better to do this together. The weekend's event will bring panels, movies and speakers onto the Queen Mary in order to discuss the many different topics that touch upon institutional abuse. "This is the first one of its kind ever - it's kind of a history-making event," Hobbs said. "We're looking to help through actions like mentorship and we want to help through the journey of healing." Generally, the people who come to SIA for help have been adults who still are dealing with the issues that an institution put them through as a child, Hobbs said. "They're the children who lived through it and now they're adults trying to find their way, and we want to help them do that," she added. The weekend event will include movie screenings, several speaker panels, a dedication ceremony and the SIA People's Choice Awards. Hobbs said the choice of using the Queen Mary was an obvious one for her. "Water is very healing and calming," she said. "We wanted this to be by the beach. The Queen Mary kind of provides that perfect atmosphere." SIA is a nonprofit group and Hobbs said it tries to cater its counseling and help to people based on individual needs of each personal story. The convention website www.sia-convention.org has a complete agenda and people can preregister there. The website www.sia-now.org has more information on the organization itself. WHAT: Survivors of Institutional Abuse Convention WHEN: Friday-Sunday, Feb. 24-26 (varying times) WHERE: Queen Mary COST: Free (require preregister) Source: http://www.gazettes.com/to_do/convention-focuses-on-institutional-abuse/article_01447924-5ce7-11e1-b793-0019bb2963f4.html

Tue Feb 21, 2012 at 08:32 AM PST [The Abusive Side of a Tennessee Christian Group Home](#) by [lisakerr](#) Two young women I recently spoke with in intimate and heart-breaking interviews learned the hard way that celebrity Christian endorsements and pretty pink websites can't cover up the dark, abusive side of Mercy Ministries. Over the past few weeks, they've shared stories with me of Mercy staff's use of coercive control and domination to attempt to "treat" them of their medical and psychological disorders and how Mercy required mandatory HIV and STD testing, as well as detailed confessions from the girls about their sexual past relations (specifically about any lesbian or bisexual experiences) upon intake. (Article originally published on [RH Reality Check](#)) Two young women I recently spoke with in intimate and heart-breaking interviews learned the hard way that celebrity Christian endorsements and pretty pink websites can't cover up the dark, abusive side of Mercy Ministries. Over the past few weeks, they've shared stories with me of Mercy staff's use of coercive control and domination to attempt to "treat" them of their medical and psychological disorders and how Mercy required mandatory HIV and STD testing, as well as detailed confessions from the girls about their sexual past relations (specifically about any lesbian or bisexual experiences) upon intake. Mercy Ministries is a Nashville, Tennessee based group which was accused of misrepresenting their counseling and recovery services to young women in Australia in 2008. The misrepresentation in Australia was two-fold. First, they claimed their services were free but had the girls sign over their government checks. Second, the ministry claimed to be using licensed therapists and professional counseling methods. In 2009, Mercy admitted their guilt in misrepresentation on both counts and paid back \$120,000 of government aid it had wrongly taken from the girls who attended—in Australia. Although the media attention reached the United States, the founding group (based in Nashville, TN) was never investigated further. Instead Nancy Alcorn, the founder of Mercy Ministries took the investigation as a sign from God that the group was under "spiritual attack" and took fundraising efforts into high-gear. In 2009, founder [Nancy Alcorn's blog](#) stated: Since [the scandal], we have reorganized the governing structure of Mercy Ministries to bring new levels of oversight and accountability, have increased our funding efforts, and are in the process of opening two new homes—one in California, one in North Carolina—over the next two years. (Emphasis my own) The most interesting part of the statement is a complete disregard for the admittance of guilt for misrepresenting their services. Instead, Mercy put extra effort in "increasing funding efforts." Could this be because the scandal brought a large loss of donation support? Plenty of evidence can be found online about sponsors who cut off financial support and stopped their endorsements of the ministry program after the scandal occurred. Hillsong Church in Australia is one such group. In 2009, [they issued a statement](#) about their involvement with Mercy Ministries claiming that they cut all ties with the group. ...[W]e sever any affiliation with Mercy Ministries internationally, and would not be associated with any attempt by Mercy Ministries Inc or Mercy Ministries Ltd, to recommence within Australia, under that or any other name... We would encourage those, that any investigation involves, to cooperate fully. Religious groups like Mercy are hard to pin down when it comes to accountability—legally and otherwise. Abuses in large-scale ministries can range from financial irresponsibility, misallocation of funds, exorbitant salaries for founders, violation of employment laws to medical malpractice. Abuses like these often get overlooked until a whistleblower within the group speaks up. "These groups often operate under the radar of government oversight," [Marci A. Hamilton](#), shared with me when I spoke with her last week about possible government oversight of a group like Mercy Ministries. Professor Hamilton, author of [God vs. the Gavel](#), is one of the United States' leading church/state scholars, specializing in issues involving religious entities that harm others. Hamilton is also an advisor for victims in many clergy abuse cases, including cases involving child abuse. Upon further investigation, I found Marci's statement rang true. When I inquired about Mercy Ministries licensing with the state, Grant Lawrence Director of Communications for the Department of Mental Health, confirmed my suspicions that Mercy Ministries is not licensed by the Department, which gives group and residential homes guidelines and best practices. (They are licensed as a child-placing agency by the Department of Child Services which only governs children under age thirteen.) The Department of Mental Health also oversees the young adults within these facilities, providing each young woman with a social worker and licensed medical care. If Mercy isn't licensed by the Department of Mental Health, how can they claim to be providing proper medical treatment and licensed therapy to young women who are rape and sex trafficking victims, suffer from depression and are suicidal? They can't. According to [Mercy's own website](#), qualifications to work at the program include a bachelor's degree and maturity in their relationship with God. Although the site claims that their counselors have either a master's degree in counseling or psychology (or be working toward such a degree) and meet state licensing requirements, there are two issues with this. One, statements from Mercy graduates counter this statement. Many residents claim that their counselor was not certified, trained or experienced to deal with the issues they faced such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and suicidal thoughts. Two, Mercy is not licensed with the Department of Mental Health nor are they a licensed medical treatment facility. They are governed by their own Board of Trustees which doesn't include medical or counseling personnel. Three, even if their staff is licensed, as they claim, the real issue is the curriculum they teach and what they consider "best practices" as opposed to what secular therapists use as standard practice. In upcoming articles on Mercy Ministries, I'll continue to examine the stories of two young women whose lives were negatively impacted on the group, the curriculum and therapy "methods" that were used to treat them and what experts in the field have to say about groups like Mercy. According to graduates, Mercy Ministries has a dark side that even the bright pink logo can't hide. Originally posted to [lisakerr](#) on Tue Feb 21, 2012 at 08:32 AM PST. Source: <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2012/02/21/1066794/-The-Abusive-Side-of-a-Tennessee-Christian-Group-Home>

Teen Mania: Endurance Bootcamp Or Religious Cult? FOX 11 News Investigative video report Updated: Thursday, 23 Feb 2012, 9:49 AM PST Published : Thursday, 23 Feb 2012, 7:41 AM PST [Reporter: Gina Silva](#) [Posted by myFOX11 Editor/Producer: Jeffrey Thomas DeSocio](#) DALLAS - It's an intense military style Christian retreat that promises to transform lives and inspire a greater love for God...and for thousands - it did just that. But Gina Silva reports some teens say they were traumatized, and accuse "Teen Mania" of being a cult. Check out the FOX 11 News Investigative video report Teens marching day and night...Crawling through mud and pushing their bodies to the limit. All in the name of Jesus... We have video of a program called "E.S.O.A.L." -- it stands for Emotionally Stretching Opportunity Of A Lifetime. This bootcamp-style Christian retreat...offered by the "teen mania" ministries. Teens here are called interns. They're given a number and assigned to a group with a captain as their leader. This camp is located two hours east of Dallas, Texas. The E.S.O.A.L. retreat is just one part of a full-year of Christian leadership training. Thousands have gone through it. Many say this is a life-changing experience...A spiritual awakening... Young people are growing with their relationship with Christ they're growing with their relationship with each other attaining spiritual maturity, building strong friendships. But others call teen mania the worst thing they've even been through... Source: <http://www.myfox11.com/dpp/news/investigative/teen-mania-endurance-bootcamp-or-religious-cult-2012-02-23>



Long term effects on survivors/victims of abuse By [Janet Parker \(about the author\) opednews.com](#) Torture is the calculated physical and psychological assault on the individual, a practice used to instill fear, punish or degrade, to dehumanize, or to obliterate the self. It is often said that anyone who has been tortured remains tortured, long after the physical wounds have healed. Torture is the deliberate infliction of severe pain by one human being against another. It leaves particular kinds of mental and psychological scars. This trauma is different from other traumas because torture is a violation committed in secret and in spite of official denial. Many believe that torture only occurs in the most repressive regimes. In reality, torture is widespread in all parts of the world. Although it is often perpetrated by police or security forces, it can also be carried out by armed forces, detention authorities such as immigration officials, hospital staff, or prison wardens. Torture can be physical or psychological. New methods of torture are, unfortunately, invented every year. Many are most familiar with physical torture such as severe beatings, extraction of nails or teeth, burns, electric shocks, suspension, suffocation, excessive light, heat, cold or noise, sexual aggression (rape and other sexual violence), forced nudity, isolation and sensory deprivation, mock executions or simulated drowning. However, psychological torture can be as traumatic and inflicts egregious harm. The psychological wounds of both physical and psychological torture last a lifetime. The coercive methods of Straight Inc. and other abusive residential treatment centers were designed to obliterate the sense of self so as to instill fear and force obedience to authority in young teens. Abusive methods of Straight Inc. included sleep deprivation, beatings, sexual humiliation, sexual assault, prolonged sitting or standing in forced positions, isolation and detention for prolonged and indefinite periods of time, forcing one teen to abuse another, and prolonged denial of rest, sleep, food, water, adequate hygiene. These same forms of abuse are utilized in many other residential treatment centers. Many victims continue to suffer in silence. Torture victims commonly report feelings of fear, guilt, shame, anger, disillusionment, insecurity and humiliation. For victims of torture, finding the courage to come forward and speak about what happened to them is very difficult. This is true for the many thousands of US children who were physically and psychologically abused and sometimes sexually abused in the program called Straight Inc. What happened behind the closed doors of Straight Inc., Roloff Homes, WWASPS, Teen Challenge and other programs is deeply personal and highly traumatizing. Speaking about it can evoke for survivors a range of emotions because the memories are triggers for retraumatization. Survivors are reluctant to speak publicly and may not have fully revealed their experiences to families and/or friends. In some instances, they may not have come to terms with it themselves. Survivors of torture find it very challenging to heal and try to move forward with their lives. Many victims from Straight Inc. and other abusive teen centers express frustration that, despite the fact that their torture occurred and was verified, it has not been publicly acknowledged. Survivors come away with different expectations of what constitutes justice. Some speak of the importance of criminal prosecutions, while others speak about civil compensation, rehabilitation or prevention of recurrence. All of them realize that there is a need to restore the sense of dignity and control that was taken from them when they were tortured. The Survivors/Victims of institutionalized abuse have responded with courage and resiliency and have launched a variety of legal challenges to these practices and also actions of activism and advocacy as well as a web of survivor support networks. The Web sites [Fornits.com](#), [TheStraights.com](#), [Heal-online.org](#), and others have collected many of the survivors' stories. [\[i\] H.E.A.L.](#) and International Survivors Action Committee (ISAC) both previously provided reports about this abuse. Source: <http://www.opednews.com/articles/Long-term-effects-on-survi-by-Janet-Parker-120225-802.html>

Paul Babeu's Suspicious Past as School's Headmaster By Monica Alonzo published: March 08, 2012 Former DeSisto School student Melissa Burech Late school founder Michael DeSisto The Massachusetts mansion that served as the school's headquarters Subject(s): [DeSisto School](#), [Paul Babeu](#) The most riveting detail to come out of Paul Babeu's three-year tenure as head of a private Massachusetts boarding school for troubled teens was his close relationship with a 17-year-old student there. Former students of the now-defunct school tell New Times that they often saw Babeu showering attention on fellow student Joshua Geyer. "I'd see [Babeu] around campus all the time," says Melissa Burech, who attended DeSisto School during Babeu's tenure. "And I saw [Babeu and Josh] together more than they should've been. I saw [Babeu] take him off campus." Babeu's sister, Lucy, alleges that Babeu was engaged in a sexual relationship with Geyer. The Rose Law Firm — hired by Babeu after allegations arose that he and his lawyer, Chris DeRose, threatened his Mexican ex-lover with deportation if the man revealed their romantic relationship — did not return calls for comment on his relationship with the student. Babeu, however, denied wrongdoing through the firm. Students say Babeu was a constant presence at DeSisto. The school occupied an expansive campus in the Berkshires of Massachusetts, where wayward teens, plagued with such problems as drug addiction, depression, anorexia, and mental illness, received what was deemed therapeutic treatment. Babeu was headmaster and executive director at DeSisto from April 1999 to August 2001, and students say they often saw him milling around campus with the school's founder, the late Michael DeSisto. Since the scandal involving [his ex-lover broke in New Times on February 17](#), Babeu has minimized his role at the school, which was investigated for nearly two decades because of allegations that students endured systematic neglect and sexual and physical abuse there. Babeu, elected Pinal County sheriff in 2008 after serving as a police officer in Chandler for several years, lately has claimed he did not interact with students and had no direct supervisory responsibility over staff at DeSisto. But students who attended the school tell New Times that they saw Babeu in daily meetings where administrators discussed issues facing the school, including its disciplinary practices — which included students being forced to sit on metal folding chairs facing a corner for hours on end and students getting stripped naked and forced to wear nothing but bedsheets. Babeu's camp has carefully parsed denials that he engaged in a sexual relationship with Joshua Geyer. That is, Babeu, who would have been in his early 30s at the time, has not denied having a relationship with Geyer; he's only denied having an "inappropriate" relationship with his former student, according to his legal handlers. One justification for this statement could be that Geyer was old enough to consent to sexual intercourse in Massachusetts. The sheriff has eluded questions about how he could have developed a close relationship with a DeSisto student if his job did not involve dealing with students. [ABC 15, in a report on Babeu's years at the school](#), received signed, but undated, letters from the former student. The Rose Law Firm released the letters to the station. "I have never at any time lived or engaged in any inappropriate sexual relationship with Paul Babeu," the first letter reads. "I have remained personal friends with Paul Babeu." The second reads, "I never lived with or engaged in any sexual relationship with Paul Babeu while I was a student at DeSisto private school." The station said neither letter was notarized and that there was no proof the letters were written by the student. New Times was unable to reach Geyer for comment. Lucy Babeu tells it differently, recalling a time when she saw Geyer at her brother's home in Massachusetts, and when she confronted her brother about the boy, Paul Babeu confessed that he was in love with Geyer. Melissa Burech and other students who knew Geyer, and attended DeSisto while Babeu was headmaster, recall signs of a close relationship between the two. Burech, who followed her family to Arizona a few years ago and now lives in Deer Valley, says she had friends in common with Geyer, friends in whom he confided about his "inappropriate" relationship with Babeu. "Because the school was so intense, so cult-like, you developed close bonds with people," she says. "I think Josh looked to [Babeu] for guidance, and I believe Paul twisted that, abused that power to get what he wanted." Another

student, who grew up in New York, also found herself at DeSisto while Babeu was in charge of the school. The former student, who spoke on condition of anonymity, confirms what others have said: Babeu and Geyer were "together a whole lot," and Geyer "got taken off campus for lunch a lot" by the future National Sheriff of the Year. She says word got back to students that the pair often went to the Panda House, a Chinese restaurant in the area. "Everybody on campus knew about it," she says. "When Josh left the program, and so did Paul, it was a big thing about them dating. Everybody knew." The woman described Babeu as Geyer's "commitment holder," a title the school gave to staff members selected by students to monitor their progress. "You would go to someone you could trust, or [whom] you could speak to about your problems," the former student says. "They were supposed to help you heal." When Babeu took over as the school's headmaster, it was operating unlawfully without a state license, and it already was embroiled in lawsuits from dissatisfied parents. Each family paid tuition of about \$65,000 a year for their child to be in an environment that was "excessively punitive" and created "an extreme risk of injury even death," the Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services [said in legal papers](#). This state agency "received many allegations of abusive practices at the school," [state investigators said](#), adding that Massachusetts officials repeatedly were denied access to the campus and to student files: "The school effectively stonewalled the OCCS, claiming [DeSisto School was] not subject to [state] licensing, but refusing to provide necessary information to back up [the] claim." The school argued that it didn't need a license because it wasn't serving enough special-needs students. According to Massachusetts law, if more than 30 percent of the student population was made up of such students, a license was required. When state officials finally forced open the school's files in 2001 after almost 20 years of complaints, they classified more than 40 percent of the student body as special needs. The school ultimately shut down in 2004 because it was unable to comply with state mandates. Court and state records [paint a chilling account of life at DeSisto](#), including during the time that Babeu ran it. One student refused to stop leaning against a wall and was physically restrained for several hours. Another who threw a plate and got into an argument was tied up for nearly six hours. A student forced to sit in a metal chair for weeks, facing the corner, wasn't properly medicated, became severely depressed, and urinated and defecated on himself. The teen eventually was taken to the hospital for treatment for pneumonia. Records show that students had to take group showers, "denying them privacy and leading to instances of sexual abuse." A few months after a court ordered the school in 2001 to either shut down or apply for a license, Babeu resigned. He recently told various media outlets that he was only responsible for the school's operations, including maintenance of the grounds. But he told another story [on a campaign website](#). There, Babeu described his time at DeSisto as a period when he was "frequently recognized for his effectiveness in personnel management and fiscal abilities." In 2002, when he applied for a job as a Chandler cop, Babeu noted on his application that, while at DeSisto, he supervised directors of the school and 80 full-time employees. Babeu counters allegations of his relationship with the student or his knowing about abusive conditions at the school by attempting to discredit his sister. He portrays himself as a victim under attack by a mentally ill family member. Babeu, the second-youngest of 11 children, described his family as one with "lots of different personalities" in a [2010 interview with the Arizona Daily Star](#). "I've seen lots of different things in our family, but that's all family business," he said at the time. Babeu's representatives at the Rose firm now are [divulging this "family business"](#) by releasing allegations detailing Lucy Babeu's alleged mental illness. According to the firm, she was placed in psychiatric care on two occasions, had her children taken away, and has been a frequent drug abuser. Lucy Babeu denied these claims to New Times, calling them "slanderous." The sheriff, a candidate for Congress in Arizona's conservative 4th District, says he's also a victim of attacks by political enemies. On March 3, during [an interview with Newsmax](#), Babeu says the timing of the allegations are suspect. "[His being gay was] pushed around for months and months — in fact, for years," he told the conservative website. "Political opponents have threatened me, trying to go to the newspapers and the TV stations . . . clearly, looking at the timing of this election. They're literally five months away from primary ballots being mailed to voters, we being 10 points ahead." That was then. A new poll — taken after New Times broke the story that Babeu's Mexican ex-boyfriend says the sheriff and his lawyer tried to intimidate him into keeping the love affair secret — showed Babeu six points behind Congressman Paul Gosar in the 4th District. The former lover, Jose Orozco, says the sheriff's attorney raised threats of deportation when he refused to sign a document promising he would never disclose details of the affair. Orozco has filed notice that he intends to sue Babeu and Pinal County for \$1 million for violating his civil rights. Babeu denied that he or his camp did anything inappropriate then, too, portraying himself as a conservative politician under attack because he is gay. And he again played the victim card, claiming Orozco had hacked into his campaign website and his Twitter account and had stolen his identity — charges that seem unlikely given that the sheriff gave Orozco access to his websites and accounts. Orozco and his lawyer, Melissa Weiss-Riner, say he turned over everything Babeu and DeRose requested but that they still pressured him to sign the non-disclosure document concerning the romance. An interesting side note is that Babeu, in 2002, [went public about getting sexually abused](#) by a Catholic priest in Springfield, Massachusetts. He said he was outraged because the church took years to defrock the priest who had abused him, his older brother Francis, and other children. It is similar outrage that moved DeSisto alumni to speak out against their former headmaster and the abusive treatment they received, partially under his reign. The New York student, who attended DeSisto from 1998 to 2003, is surprised to hear that Babeu now describes himself as a career-long advocate for victims' rights. "When did he become that guy? When did he become so involved in victims' rights? Why didn't he see problems in the [DeSisto] program, see that things needed to change?" she says. "He would hear about kids starving in the corner . . . You'd think he would know that was wrong." Melissa Burech, sent to the school from West Virginia when she was 15 because of a history of depression, says, "Things got worse" during Babeu's reign. "He signed up to be an administrator at this school, and he didn't do anything to help us or change what was happening there," she says. When state officials finally got on campus and gained access to students, their files, and school staff, the school was ordered to immediately stop its most abusive practices — such as strip-searching students, barricading them in their bedrooms with mattresses (or with staff sleeping outside doors), and banishing them to remote areas of the campus. Students, sent to what was known as the "farm," were not allowed to attend academic classes and were forced to perform manual labor for five to eight hours a day before they could eat or drink, Massachusetts child welfare authorities reported. "We had to cut down trees or restore the buildings," Burech says. "It was a big joke that we attended the school of the janitorial arts." The former student from New York recalls being forced to hold hands with several other girls for days at a time, no matter where they went, unless they were sleeping or eating meals that were limited to 15 minutes each. "We had to go to the restrooms that way, take showers that way, get dressed — try to put on our underwear that way," she says. "We had to hold hands under the stalls and, even if we had a male staff member [supervising], we had to ask for permission to take our hands apart so we could do what we needed to do in the bathroom. It was humiliating." She says they would rotate so that each girl had a chance to be at the end of the human chain and have the privilege of a free hand. "We all had different problems, obviously; that's why we were in that school," she says. "But we weren't stupid. We knew this behavior was wrong, and we knew it wasn't helping. It was just a way of torturing us." Burech now is attending school to become an occupational therapist. "If I saw [Babeu] today, I would say 'thank you' because those horrible experiences taught me to be a fighter," she says. "No matter what, he is part of my past. But I'm speaking up now because I want to inform Arizona about his past so he doesn't become part of our future." Source: <http://www.phoenixnewtimes.com/content/printVersion/2952182/>

Supreme Court orders new trial in 16-year-old's suicide at boarding school for troubled teens THE ASSOCIATED PRESS First Posted: March 09, 2012 - 10:22 am Last Updated: March 09, 2012 - 1:07 pm MISSOULA, Mont. — The Montana Supreme Court has ordered a new trial in a wrongful death lawsuit filed by the mother of a 16-year-old Colorado girl who committed suicide at a Montana boarding school for troubled teens. A Sanders County jury decided in October 2010 that World Wide Association of Specialty Programs and Schools of Utah and its founder, Robert Litchfield, were not negligent in the October 2004 death of Karlye Newman, the Missoulian (<http://bit.ly/vrP6hQ>) reported Friday. Newman hanged herself with a sweat shirt after six months at the now closed Spring Creek Academy Lodge near Thompson Falls. Her mother, Judith Newman, sued WWASP and Litchfield for wrongful death, negligence, breach of contract, fraud and deceit. WWASP provided the policy and procedure manual for Spring Creek Academy Lodge. The Supreme Court ruled Tuesday that retired Justice [John Warner](#), who was brought in to hear the case, wrongly barred the jury from hearing evidence that other WWASP-affiliated schools were shut down and investigated for abuses. "We conclude that the District Court abused its discretion when it limited the evidence concerning negligence to what Karlye knew and what happened to Karlye," Justice Patricia Cotter wrote. "The District Court determined it appropriate to admit evidence of what Karlye knew, but exclude evidence of what the defendants knew" about other suicide attempts at affiliated schools and conditions at Spring Creek. Cotter added that, "Without this information, the jury could not determine whether it was foreseeable to these defendants that Karlye was at risk of injury while a student at Spring Creek." James Manley of Polson, one of several attorneys representing Judith Newman, said the ruling means they'll get to retry the case "with all the evidence this time." Newman filed her initial lawsuit in 2006. It went to trial in 2010 after dismissals and out-of-court settlements whittled the list of defendants down to WWASP and Litchfield. Spring Creek, which settled with Newman, closed in 2008. Her lawsuit claimed the school misled her about her daughter's progress and condition, ignored signs that she had become suicidal and contributed to her death through a series of harsh punishments that included solitary confinement and refusing to allow the girl to have any contact with her parents. The defendants argued Newman failed to disclose previous suicide threats by

Karlye before she was enrolled at Spring Creek and that Newman signed off on Spring Creek's methods prior to enrolling her daughter. The defense said Spring Creek wouldn't have accepted Karlye had it known about the earlier suicide attempts. However, the school's brochures indicated the facility was suitable for suicidal youths, the Supreme Court noted. WWASP, which provided the policy and procedure manuals for several schools was the subject of other lawsuits, including a federal lawsuit involving 353 parents and former students who accuse the firm of assault, battery, false imprisonment, fraud and racketeering. Newman's case will be remanded back to District Court. Manley said he will ask for a new judge. Source:

<http://www.therepublic.com/view/story/a02e98e64ead4ee823bc92551b56209/MT--Supco-Boarding-School-Suicide/> Also see: http://missoulain.com/news/local/montana-supreme-court-orders-new-trial-over-suicide-at-spring/article_1e13bc1e-699d-11e1-a973-0019bb2963f4.html, <http://www.greatfalltribune.com/article/20120309/NEWS01/120309009/Montana-Supreme-Court-orders-new-trial-boarding-school-suicide?odyssey=tab%7Ctopnews%7Ctext%7CFrontpage, and http://www.sheboyganpress.com/usatoday/article/38760007?odyssey=mod%7Cnews%7Ctext%7CFrontpage%7Cp>

Former juvenile corrections officer jailed Associated Press March 15, 2012 A former juvenile corrections officer has been jailed after being accused of sex crimes. The former employee, Ardith Brown, faces charges of felony child molestation and sexual assault against persons in custody, the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice said in a statement late Wednesday. Brown was a former staff member at the Regional Youth Detention Center in Gainesville. She was fired on Feb. 2, after an internal investigation into allegations of an inappropriate relationship with a 14-year-old in the department's custody, authorities said. Brown was being held in the Hall County Jail. Jail records did not indicate whether she had an attorney. The Gainesville case is the latest in a series of investigations involving the Department of Juvenile Justice, which began a system-wide review after the beating death of a 19-year-old at an Augusta facility. "As a result of our surprise inspections at all 27 Georgia juvenile detention centers, we've observed many of our Juvenile Corrections Officers become more diligent in monitoring youth activity at all our facilities," Commissioner Gale Buckner said in a statement. The agency recently named a new director of the Augusta Youth Development Campus, which has been at the center of several investigations involving its staff after the beating death. Nine workers at the Augusta youth center have been fired since November. Two others were demoted and offered positions at different facilities. Source: http://www.ajc.com/news/former-juvenile-corrections-officer-1386082.html?cxttype=rss_news_82001

Boot camp operator charged with rape March 28, 2012 The operator of a camp for troubled youth already facing kidnapping and other charges from a 2011 incident was charged Wednesday with sexually assaulting two 14-year-old girls in 2004. Kelvin McFarland, 42, operator of Family 1st Growth Camp, is being held on \$275,000 bail after pleading not guilty to five charges from the 2004 incidents, which did not occur in Pasadena, according to Los Angeles Deputy District Attorney Carolina Lugo. Source: http://articles.pasadenasun.com/2012-03-28/the626now/31251155_1_boot-camp-pasadena-police-investigation-camp-for-troubled-youth Additional Coverage of this story is available at: http://articles.pasadenasun.com/2012-03-28/the626now/31251155_1_boot-camp-pasadena-police-investigation-camp-for-troubled-youth <http://altadena.patch.com/articles/local-boot-camp-instructor-charged-with-sexual-assault-of-teen-girls> http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/29/kelvin-mcfarland-charged_n_1387778.html <http://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2012/03/28/boot-camp-operator-charged-with-sexually-assaulting-teen-girls/>

Body Bags and Child Torture: Mitt Romney's New Approach to Education [Become a Fan](#) [SAVE AS FAVORITE](#) [VIEW FAVORITES](#) By [Ruth Hull](#) ([about the author](#)) [Become a Fan](#) (17 fans) -- Page 1 of 1 page(s) [opednews.com](#) Are body bags better than books for educating the next generation? Is vomit really proper food for teens? Should children be forced brush their teeth with toilet water? If you say, "Yes," Mitt Romney is the President for you. One wonders how it is that parents are rooked into spending \$20,000 to \$100,000 to place their kids in American Gulag Schools, such as World-Wide Association of Specialty Programs (WWASP, run by Robert Litchfield, Mitt Romney's former campaign finance director) or the Aspen Educational Group (run out of San Rafael, California as part of Mitt Romney's Bain Capital). No wonder Mitt Romney was hesitant to release his tax records. Before you vote in a Presidential election, you may want to research this issue for yourself. Representative George Miller (D-CA), former chairman of the House Committee of Education and Labor, had a hearing on the subject. Legislation passed the house, only to go nowhere in the Democratically-controlled U.S. Senate. Let's look at what came out in that hearing. This is a video from that official [hearing](#) you should see before you go to the polls. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkmGgH11Dmk&feature=related> The organization HEAL has put together a list of suspected and confirmed abusive behavior modification programs in the United States. <http://www.heal-online.org/childtortureusa.htm> On this list are 19 facilities owned by Mitt Romney's Aspen Educational Group. There is another list of additional facilities that were closed down after the abuse or deaths came to the attention of investigators. An example of Mitt Romney's fine Aspen education is Mount Bachelor Academy in Oregon which was closed after an investigation revealed that students were required to engage in sexual rituals and other abuse. This was followed by more allegations of abuse from students and former students. See <http://online.wsj.com/article/AP16c969450d924f65b8ba47fd8c0869a.html> Mt. Bachelor Academy is but one of many Romney's Aspen Education Group's child abuse locations. The deaths have been mounting. Will the families of Sergey Blashchishen (<http://www.cafety.org/privately-funded-programs/794-media-release-sheriff-recommends-death-by-homicide-at-sagewalk-or-sagewalk>) who died in an Aspen program in Oregon and Mathew Myer (<http://www.heal-online.org/killer092509.pdf>) who died in an Aspen program in Texas and families of other Aspen victims get a warm fuzzy feeling if Mitt is elected Commander-in-Chief. 16 year old Aaron Bacon claimed to be sick and Aspen accused him of faking his illness. After 30 days of this "fake" illness, Aaron succumbed to death. So, your kid blew chemistry and got a B last year? He is a family embarrassment who would be better fixed or eliminated? Mitt Romney can help you. But how do you get your kid to an Aspen school? The NYRA and a variety of youth organizations have sounded the alarm to teens about Aspen and WWASP. Your son may not go willingly to his death. Don't worry. The bounty hunter in this video can escort your kid from his bedroom to the torture chamber in handcuffs, if necessary. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8VLEHOM9js> The National Youth Rights Association has been speaking out against behavior modification schools for quite some time. Part of the trouble is that these schools are private and there is essentially no regulation of private schools. Read this article written by Natasha Hull-Richter during her tenure as President of the Orange County chapter of the National Youth Rights Association. WHO ARE WE? WHAT ARE WE? ARE WE HUMAN ENOUGH TO STOP AGE-RELATED TORTURE AND MURDER? <http://creativemethods.net/gulagschools.html> One additional note involves the psychiatrists who send other people's children to die in these institutions. They should be thoroughly investigated and have their licenses removed. Then there are the parents who are willing to send their kids off on the advice of an outsider that it will fix their kids, who were probably broken by the parents in the first place. These parents and doctors should pay big bucks to any surviving children. There is no excuse for child abuse or torture. The police who refuse to take reports of child abuse should be fired without pensions. The District Attorneys, like Tony Rackauckas, who refuse to prosecute child abuse, should be barred from public office for life. The judges who refuse to take the needs of children into account in divorce proceedings should be thrown off the bench. The political parties (hint, hint: Democrat) who use children, while doing nothing to promote youth rights, should be ostracized by voters. Like women, children are treated as worthless slaves to be exploited in the American system. It's time this changed. One of the organizations that is working to change things is the [National Youth Rights Association](#). I recommend everyone check it out. <http://youthrights.org> This leaves the question of whether the Republican Party is planning a serious challenge to Barack Obama. Romney's connection to these torture schools is fairly well known. Polls show that Ron Paul could beat Barack Obama. So why would the Republicans go with a candidate with such a strong weakness as Mitt Romney instead of choosing a likely victor in Ron Paul? Could it be that Romney is a token candidate preparing the way for four more years of Obama? Watch the polls for Obama's landslide on November 6, 2012. Source: <http://www.opednews.com/articles/Body-Bags-and-Child-Torture-by-Ruth-Hull-120419-192.html>

Children in Solitary MAY 3, 2012 by Jean Casella and James Ridgeway This week, the The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry released a policy statement condemning the use of solitary confinement for juveniles. There is no comprehensive data on how many teens and even younger children are in solitary confinement in the United States, but it is safe to say that the number run into the thousands. Juveniles in adult prison often end up in solitary confinement, and isolation is widely used in juvenile facilities as well. On the ACLU "Blog of Rights" today, David Fathi, Director of the ACLU's National Prison Project, puts the statement in context: As any parent knows, teenagers are different than adults. This common-sense observation is backed by hard scientific evidence; we know that an adolescent's brain continues to grow and develop well into his or her twenties. The fact that teenagers' brains are still developing makes them especially vulnerable to trauma of all kinds, including the trauma of social isolation and sensory deprivation. That's why the leading American child psychiatry association just approved a policy statement opposing the use of solitary confinement in correctional facilities for juveniles. The

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry represents over 7,500 child and adolescent psychiatrists and other interested physicians. This groundbreaking policy statement from adolescent psychiatry experts comes not a moment too soon. While recent settlements in ACLU lawsuits in Montana and Mississippi include limits on solitary confinement for youth, the practice remains alarmingly widespread, with thousands of persons under 18 held in solitary on any given day, in juvenile facilities as well as in adult jails and prisons. I remember the first time I visited a 13-year-old boy in solitary in an adult prison – his voice hadn't changed yet and he was too young to shave, but that didn't save him from being locked alone in a cell for 23 hours a day. Solitary confinement can be harmful for people of any age, but it's especially damaging to youth. The 17-year-old plaintiff in the ACLU's Montana case tried to kill himself several times while in solitary confinement in an adult prison. And while youth in solitary are a relatively small percentage of the total population of juvenile facilities, they account for more than half of the suicides. Fortunately efforts are underway to end this inhumane and destructive practice. In California, Sen. Leland Yee introduced a bill to ban solitary confinement for juveniles except in the most exceptional circumstances. The bill attracted considerable support, but eventually failed to pass out of committee. And in West Virginia, the Division of Juvenile Services recently announced a state-wide ban on the practice. Click here to read the rest, and to sign the ACLU's petition against solitary confinement. Source: <http://solitarywatch.com/2012/05/03/children-in-solitary/>

Kidnapping charge stems from 'boot camp' drug intervention May 10, 2012 02:58:30 PM [Share This](#) | [Print Story](#) | [E-Mail Story](#) By [Todd R. Hansen/Colusa County Sun-Herald](#) A Napa man was arrested after he reportedly took his 13-year-old grandson to Letts Lake in northwest Colusa County with the idea of getting him off drugs in a "boot camp" setting, the Colusa County Sheriff's Department reported. The reported victim "stated that he was accused of being on methamphetamine ... and stated he has never tried meth," sheriff's Lt. Shane Maxey said. The teen told investigators that his grandfather, Robin M. Jones, 64, and his father, Michael Jones, grabbed him from his sleep about 1 a.m. Tuesday, hog-tied him and then took him against his will to Letts Lake, Maxey said. The grandfather reportedly told other campers in the area that the teen was in "boot camp" under his custody, Maxey said. A U.S. Forest Service agent saw the boy and his grandfather arguing Wednesday, and stopped to see what the dispute was about. The teen told the agent he had been taken up to the lake from his Vallejo home against his will, Maxey said. The Colusa County Sheriff's Department was called about 3:30 p.m. The grandfather was arrested about 90 minutes later. Jones was booked into Colusa County Jail on suspicion of kidnapping, false imprisonment and child endangerment. Bail was set at \$100,000. The boy, who lives with his father, was turned over to Child Protective Services for release to family members, Maxey said. No charges have been brought against Michael Jones, said Maxey, but the investigation continues. Maxey is not sure why Letts Lake was chosen by Jones, but suspects he was familiar with the lake. Source: <http://www.appeal-democrat.com/articles/grandson-116076-colusa-took.html#ixzz1ud8oU41x>

Source: <http://nky.cincinnati.com/article/ab/20120614/NEWS0103/306140136%26Ref=AR> Report: Nonprofit's kids got wrong pills Enquirer Exclusive: State officials allege maltreatment at Campbell Lodge Boys' Home 12:48 AM, Jun. 15, 2012 Written by [Jim Hannah](#) A Northern Kentucky home for at-risk youths failed to consistently provide three meals a day, a bed and clean clothes to the boys living there while improperly dispensing psychotropic medications to its residents, according to an investigative report obtained by The Enquirer that was prepared by Kentucky's top social-service agency. Some of the children at the Campbell Lodge Boys' Home also told investigators the staff antagonized them, roughed them up and at times medicated them with other children's prescriptions, according to a statement of deficiencies presented to the home on June 5 by the Office of Inspector General of the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services. "It is apparent that the environment included cursing, intimidation, humiliation, unnecessarily rough handling and hitting," state investigators wrote in their report. What state investigators found at the sprawling 78-acre facility resulted in the removal of about 25 children, the layoff of about 50 employees and the firing of Executive Director Barry Jones. The home has no residents now but apparently hopes to resume operations if it satisfies state authorities it has fixed the problems. A spokesman for the Cabinet for Health and Family Services said the results of its investigation "speak for themselves" and declined to answer specific questions about what would happen next at the home, including whether a criminal investigation was in the offing. Lodge attorney Ben Dusing, a former federal prosecutor who conducted a parallel internal investigation, released a written statement on the findings. "By any standard, the ... investigations suggest that the (Lodge) has fallen short of its long-standing mission - that of helping our region's at-risk young men," Dusing said. "Of course, this is unacceptable. The deficiencies and conduct identified in both the state and internal investigations must be - and will be - addressed directly, transparently and fairly." He said the home has not lost its state child-care license. The home has operated on a bucolic hilltop overlooking the Ohio River since it was founded by a priest in 1958 as a residential alternative for neglected or dependent boys ages 10 to 18. An independent board now operates the home that houses an average of 74 children over a year. It receives about \$1.2 million in tax dollars annually, 76 percent of the nonprofit's budget. Jones, who earned \$96,652 per year, referred all questions to his attorney, Walter Hornbeck. "During Mr. Jones' tenure as executive director of Campbell Lodge Boys' Home, he maintained the highest professional standards," Hornbeck said in a written statement. "As executive director he administered Campbell Lodge Home in compliance with all state statutes and administrative regulations and in accordance with the policies, procedures and directives of its board." Dusing said Jones was "removed" from his job after the state investigation found that the "significant problems" were the result of "noncompliance with internal policies and procedures, as well as instances of mismanagement." Some of the most serious findings involve the mishandling, mislabeling and improper dispensing of prescription medications. Children reported learning how to swallow their medications with no water to avoid drinking from a communal cup that one described as "nasty." One home staff member told inspectors he was ordered to give another child's attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder medication to a resident who began "acting out," according to the state investigation. The staff member admitted making handwritten labels with the child's name and dosage instructions even though the pills were not the same strength as prescribed. When state investigators looked in the home's medicine cabinet, they found two different strengths of the antidepressant Citalopram in the same bottle. Medical documentation, along with prescription pills, was dumped in a trash can that children emptied, in violation of numerous regulations and the federal health privacy act, investigators found. Investigators also observed another common complaint they heard from the children: They were not getting three balanced meals a day. The children reported they would be given a cereal bar or chips to take with their morning medications, but not served a meal that met the nutritional guidelines of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The majority of the staff and children interviewed confirmed that it was common for residents to sleep on mattresses on the floor or on a sofa. While both those practices violate state regulations, the staff told investigators it was done because children feared the dark or their roommates.

Other people began to notice that the children might not have been receiving proper care. State investigators found a email written by a public school teacher begging the home to give her student a clean shirt so he would quit trying to wear it inside out to prevent other students from picking on him. The maltreatment would agitate the children, but when they acted out, they were roughed up, state investigators found. The children reported that staff members would restrain them so harshly they would cry, get carpet burns and black eyes. "Based on case record review and interviews, it was determined that the facility failed to create an atmosphere conducive to treatment, as required by the regulation," investigators wrote. In one incident, a child reported that when he threatened to run away, the staff antagonized him by saying they would give him an hour head start. Another child said the "staff always has an attitude" and "gets 'smart' with the kids." One child said a staff member constantly harassed him about his weight. At one point, someone filed a police report on the home for endangering the welfare of a minor, the state investigator said. A copy of the police report was not provided to The Enquirer. Investigators attempted to follow up on reports of staff using arm locks and choking but found no "specific documentations" on the incidents. Children would complain to home officials about their care, state investigators found, but nothing was done. One child reported hearing a staff member saying, "They will cover each other up." Another child called the grievance form "a waste of paper."

Wednesday, Jul 18, 2012 11:45 AM UTC Dark side of a Bain success A for-profit health company bought by Bain -- that Romney profits from -- has exploded in size and tales of neglect By Art Levine Clockwise from top left: Brendan Blum, Sergey Blashchishen, Matthew Meyer and Lindsey Poteet. Aspen Education already faced a wrongful death lawsuit over Meyer when Bain and CRC Health Group bought the company in 2006. Six deaths since the takeover, including Blum, Blashchishen and Poteet, have generated either lawsuits or complaints of neglect. It seemed a world away from the executive suites of Bain Capital when Dana Blum, a recent widow living in Portland, Ore., made the fateful decision to send her son Brendan to Youth Care, a residential program for troubled teens located in the suburbs of Salt Lake City. Brendan, a 14-year-old boy with Asperger's syndrome, had been extremely aggressive for years; he was even arrested a few times after attacking members of his family. Local therapists hadn't helped, and six months after her husband died, Dana was frantically casting about for solutions. A consultation with UCLA's neuropsychiatric unit convinced her that Youth Care's therapeutic and educational program would finally make a difference. Four months into his stay there, Brendan had earned a reputation as a temper-prone student who tried to shirk his obligations. So on the afternoon of June 27, when he complained to medical staff that he felt very sick, as if something were "crawling around" in his stomach, his concerns were dismissed. After 11 p.m., he woke up, complaining of stomach pain, and defecated in his pants. The on-duty monitors took him to the Purple Room, a makeshift isolation room used to segregate misbehaving students. There, he suffered a long night of agony, howling in pain and repeatedly vomiting and soiling himself. According to court transcripts and police reports, the two poorly paid monitors on duty did little more than offer him [water, Sprite and Pepto-Bismol](#). They never telephoned the on-call nurse and waited until nearly 2 a.m. to contact the on-call supervisor, only to leave a voicemail. There was little else they felt they could do — Youth Care's protocol on emergency services meant they were too low on the totem pole to call 911 themselves. "They didn't trust our judgment in emergency situations," explains Josh Randall, a former Youth Care residential monitor, who wasn't on duty that night. "If you're working for \$9.50 an hour on the graveyard shift, you don't want to buck the system." At any rate, the monitors had little expertise in how to respond — it was an entry-level job requiring only a GED, plus a CPR and safety course overseen by Youth Care itself. When the morning staff arrived at 7 a.m., they discovered Brendan facedown on the floor of the Purple Room, his body already stiff with rigor mortis. The state's [chief medical examiner](#) later determined that Blum had died of a twisted-bowel infarction, which requires emergency surgical intervention. "It made me very angry that they couldn't provide better emergency services for my son," Dana Blum told the online magazine [Momlogic](#). "I feel like he was murdered" — although, in fact, no court has ever found Aspen or its staffers guilty of murder. Blum, who, with the help of insurance and school district aid, paid Youth Care \$15,000 a month to care for her son, made those remarks in 2009; she can no longer speak publicly about Brendan's death, according to the terms of a settlement she reached last year in a [wrongful death lawsuit](#) against Youth Care and its parent company, Aspen Education. The failure at Youth Care was not due simply to the carelessness of a few workers — a point underscored when a Utah court found that the threshold needed to pursue criminal negligence charges against the two monitors in 2008 wasn't met and the charges were dismissed. And it wasn't the only example of alleged negligence or abuse at treatment centers for adult addicts and "troubled teens" that are owned by Aspen's parent company, CRC Health Group, according to a Salon investigation based on government reports, court filings and official complaints by parents and employees, along with interviews with former clients and staff. Our investigation found previously unreported allegations of abuse and neglect in at least 10 CRC residential drug and teen care facilities across the country, including three I visited undercover in Utah and California. With rare exceptions, such incidents have largely escaped notice because the programs are, thanks to lax state regulations, largely unaccountable. Court documents and ex-staffers also allege that such incidents reflect, in part, a broader corporate culture at Aspen's owner, CRC Health Group, a leading national chain of treatment centers. Lawsuits and critics have claimed that CRC prizes profits, and the avoidance of outside scrutiny, over the health and safety of its clients. (We sent specific questions on these basic allegations to CRC and owner Bain Capital. CRC would answer only general questions; Bain did not reply.) And CRC's corporate culture, in turn, reflects the attitudes and financial imperatives of Bain Capital, the private equity firm founded by Mitt Romney. (The Romney campaign also did not reply to written questions.) Bain is known for its relentless obsession with maximizing shareholder value and revenues. Indeed, this has become [a talking point of late](#) on the Romney campaign trail; he bragged to Fox in late May that "80 percent of them [Bain investments] grew their revenues." CRC, a fast-growing company then in the lucrative field of drug treatment, was perhaps a natural fit when Bain acquired it for \$720 million in 2006. In conversations with staff and patients who spent time at CRC facilities since the takeover, there are suggestions that the Bain approach has had its effects. "If you look at their daily profit numbers compared to what they charge," Dana Blum said of CRC's Aspen division in 2009, "it's obscene." That point, ironically enough, was underscored by the [glowing reports](#) in the [trade press](#) about its [profitability](#). The purchase of CRC came seven years after [Romney publicly announced his retirement](#) as CEO of Bain Capital, where he had been [in charge](#) since its founding in 1984. But at the time of his departure, Romney worked out an arrangement to continue to [share in Bain's profits](#) as a limited partner in the firm. Today, he is still an investor in 48 Bain accounts. Though he has refused to disclose their underlying assets, some information about them can be gleaned. For example, he has reported at least \$300,000 to [\\$1.2 million, if not more, in fluctuating annual earnings](#) from [Bain Capital VIII](#), the convoluted \$3.5 billion array of related [funds](#) that owns both name-brand companies such as Dunkin' Donuts and the lesser-known CRC Health Group. Most of these funds were made more attractive to privileged investors by being [registered](#) in the [Cayman Islands tax haven](#). And Romney's connections to CRC run even deeper: Of the three Bain managing partners who sit on CRC's board, two, John Connaughton and Steven Barnes (with his wife), gave a total of half a million dollars to [Restore Our Future](#), the super PAC supporting Romney. They also [each donated](#) the \$2,500 maximum directly to his campaign. Bain takes over When Bain purchased CRC, it looked like an investment masterstroke. The company, founded in the mid-'90s with a single California treatment facility, the Camp Recovery Center, had quickly grown into the largest chain of for-profit drug and alcohol treatment services in the country, with \$230 million in annual revenue. Under Bain's guidance, its revenue has nearly doubled, to more than \$450 million. CRC now serves 30,000 clients daily — mostly opiate addicts — at [140 facilities](#) across 25 states. In the first five years after its acquisition, Bain had already extracted nearly \$20 million in management-related fees from the chain, although Bain investors haven't cashed in yet through dividends or an IPO. Bain's purchase, a [leveraged buyout](#), also saddled CRC with massive debt of well over \$600 million. According to company executives and independent analysts, hands-on oversight of subsidiary companies is a hallmark of both Bain and CRC. Romney's campaign literature boasts about Bain taking exactly this sort of direct role in helping to [turn around failing companies](#). "Over the life of an investment, they have a strong management team willing to participate," Sheryl Skolnick, an analyst with CRT Capital, a leading [institutional brokerage](#) firm, says of Bain. The CRC acquisition immediately made Bain owner of the [largest collection](#) of addiction treatment facilities in the nation. Unlike some Bain Capital acquisitions, which [led to massive layoffs](#), the company's approach with CRC was to boost revenues by gobbling up other treatment centers, raising fees, and expanding its client base through slick, aggressive marketing, while keeping staffing and other costs relatively low. But that rapid pace of acquisition couldn't be sustained in the mostly small-scale drug treatment industry alone. So Bain Capital and CRC set their sights on an entirely new treatment arena: the multibillion-dollar ["troubled teen" industry](#), a [burgeoning](#) field of mostly locally owned residential schools and wilderness programs then serving, nationwide, about 100,000 kids facing addiction or emotional or [behavioral problems](#). One of CRC's first acquisitions under Bain ownership was the Aspen Education Group. Founded in 1998 with about six schools, Aspen Education had expanded to 30 troubled-teen and weight-loss programs by 2006, including Youth Care of Utah. With Bain's backing, CRC purchased Aspen for nearly \$300 million in the fall of 2006. Less than a year later, Brendan Blum was dead. At the time of the CRC acquisition, Aspen already had a history of abuse allegations, including at least three lawsuits, and two known patient deaths, one by suicide. Featured on ["Dr. Phil"](#), it grew out of schools inspired by the ["tough-love" behavior-modification approach](#) of the discredited Synanon program, which was eventually exposed as a [cult](#). By 2006, Aspen was facing a wrongful death lawsuit, [later settled](#), over an incident in 2004 in which a 14-

year-old boy, Matthew Meyer, perished from heat stroke just eight days into his stay at its [Lone Star Expeditions wilderness camp](#) in Texas. Nevertheless, less than a year after Meyer died, NBC's "Dateline" extolled Lone Star as part of a puff piece on Aspen's success with [overweight teens](#). As an [Aspen press release](#) boasted, the show told how a rebellious student who did a stint at Lone Star "returned a month later with a new outlook on life." In October 2006, just nine months before Brendan Blum died and as Bain's deal to purchase Aspen Education was being finalized, CRC received a far less upbeat assessment of Aspen's services. Following some phone conversations, family therapist Elisabeth Feldman walked into CRC's Cupertino, Calif., headquarters to see Dr. Thomas Brady, a psychiatrist then serving as CRC's chief medical officer, in order to confront him about a host of issues at Youth Care. She had stumbled upon the problems while trying to help her son's former girlfriend, a teenage girl who had suffered what Feldman called "gross mistreatment" at Youth Care. Of particular concern to Feldman was a three-month delay before Youth Care hired a psychiatrist to assess the young woman's deep depression and a failure to treat her Lyme disease. Feldman's ultimately unsuccessful crusade to get the woman released had led her to seek the services of a Salt Lake City lawyer, Thomas Burton, who had settled two lawsuits against Aspen Education for fraud, neglect and abuse. Feldman had been part of Brady's professional referral network for years, but this visit wasn't congenial. Feldman presented Brady with a 100-page sheaf of legal and corporate documents — including her affidavit describing "brutish punishment and isolation" at Youth Care — about Aspen Education programs in order to help support her charges of abusive treatment and neglect. These claims included reportedly covering up the alleged sexual assault of a female student by an Aspen employee at Turn-About Ranch in Utah; the girl was [later duct-taped and restrained by staff](#), a former employee, Toni Thayer, told Feldman, after writing complaints about abusive staff conduct to management, state regulators and the Garfield County sheriff in 2004 — but no sanctions followed. (Subsequently, a [lawsuit](#) filed in June 2012 charged that staffers at the ranch engaged in the "torture" of a 15-year-old girl in 2005.) According to Feldman, Brady said he wasn't aware of any problems at Youth Care or Aspen Education and sought to mollify her about Bain's pending purchase of Aspen: "I have to trust that Bain did their due diligence," she recalls him saying. Dr. Brady confirmed, by email, that he spoke on the phone and met with Feldman, but said he has "no recollection" of making those remarks. And he insists that the documents she brought didn't support her claims of mistreatment. Even so, he says he took her concerns seriously and that CRC and Aspen conducted a thorough review. "I came to the conclusion," he said, "there was no merit to the accusations." He remained as CRC's medical director until May 2009 and said that although he encountered a few "untoward event" cases at Aspen during his time there, he saw no "pattern" of unsafe care. At any rate, Bain's purchase of Aspen Education went ahead smoothly. When, months later, Feldman learned about Blum's death, she was horrified to realize her warnings had had no effect. "For Bain and the big guys, nobody cared," she says. "It was all about the money." Questionable deaths When he died, Brendan Blum's was the first publicly reported death due to apparent neglect in CRC's 12-year history. But in the six years since Bain Capital acquired the company, there have been at least five more seemingly preventable deaths of patients at CRC's residential programs. Since the Bain takeover, critics and former employees charge that corporate attitudes have too often emphasized cutting costs and limiting public scrutiny at the expense of safety and quality of care. These tendencies appear to have produced risky, potentially life-threatening practices — only a handful of which have drawn public attention. Several lawsuits have been filed against CRC over mistreatment of its clients, but the company has never acknowledged any wrongdoing and has kept confidential any damage payments arising from legal settlements. CRC is a significant player in the [scandal-prone](#), decentralized field of residential teen treatment that has more than 1,000 scattered facilities; the firm has nearly 36 therapeutic schools, wilderness sites and weight-loss programs catering to youth. The latest [lawsuit](#) over CRC's current practices was filed in January against CRC's prestigious \$40,000-a-month [Sierra Tucson drug treatment center](#) in Arizona, for the allegedly poor monitoring and treatment of what the lawsuit says was an obviously suicidal 71-year-old patient, Dr. Edward Litwack; the center's own staff had assessed him as a "high" risk for suicide, requiring one-on-one supervision. He was reported missing last August, but it took two weeks for the staff to find his corpse on the grounds. Last October, after an investigation by Arizona regulators following Litwack's disappearance found 42 major violations, the center was put on one-year probation. The regulators found that ill-trained monitors spent too much time patrolling on golf carts rather than actually interacting with patients. CRC had purchased Sierra Tucson in 2005 for \$130 million as its "[crown jewel](#)" shortly before [plans to sell CRC](#) to Bain were announced. "Then the business side started controlling admissions," says a former employee, who worked at Sierra Tucson before and after the CRC acquisition. "It doesn't take a brain scientist to realize that if you reduce staff [in key programs] and add sicker patients, there's going to be trouble." With the addition of a [new 44-bed lodge in 2007](#), staff at Sierra Tucson was stretched thin, former staffers say; by 2009, a state licensing office [fined the facility](#) for having insufficient staff to prevent [high-risk patients](#) from [wandering off](#). Other incidents suggest a corporate culture that often downplayed safety and quality of care. In 2010, at least two drug treatment patients died at the overcrowded New Life Lodge in Burns, Tenn., according to wrongful death lawsuits and an [investigative series](#) in [the Tennessean](#). According to an account in the Tennessean, based on public records and interviews with people at New Life Lodge, one of the patients, a 29-year-old mother named Lindsey Poteet, had come down with pneumonia and was drifting into unconsciousness when she was driven in a private van to a Nashville hospital 30 miles away. The journey was undertaken on orders of the facility's medical director, although another hospital lay just eight miles down the road. Poteet stopped breathing en route and died the next day in Nashville. The other, Patrick Bryant, [died on his 20th birthday](#) just four days after being admitted to New Life; his mother alleges that he'd been misprescribed several medications and had been unresponsive for hours before being discovered by staff. A third patient, 18-year-old Savon Kinney, [died last October](#) just days after leaving New Life in a state of disorientation, his sister told the newspaper; his death sparked a state investigation. After the Tennessean [series](#) appeared last summer and fall, the state's Department of Mental Health froze all new admissions to the facility. (It was finally allowed to admit a smaller number of new patients in early April.) One former patient, Malca Fox, who had befriended Poteet at New Life, told me that she called state Medicaid (also known as TennCare), the facility's primary funder, to complain that the facility was far too overcrowded for personalized care. "All they [New Life] care about is making money," she said. In 2009, the state of Oregon forced the closing of two teen programs run by Aspen Education. [State investigators](#) found nine cases of abuse and neglect at Mount Bachelor Academy in central Oregon, including incidents of "sexualized role play," in which young patients were allegedly forced to do [lap dances](#) during therapy sessions. After Mount Bachelor and its director threatened costly lawsuits, the state's Department of Human Services [softened the language](#) of the report; CRC claims the allegations were false (while also fighting \$37 million in abuse lawsuits over the school's [pre-CRC practices](#)). Even so, DHS "stands by our findings," a spokesman says of the 2009 report. That same year, at SageWalk Wilderness School in Hampton, Ore., 16-year-old Sergey Blashchishen died of heatstroke on his very first school hike, in an incident eerily reminiscent of Matthew Meyer's 2004 death in Texas. One morning in August, Blashchishen suited up in an 80-pound backpack; by afternoon, [the heat had topped 80 degrees, and he was soon staggering, drifting off the trail, and complaining of dizziness and exhaustion](#). Staffers contended he was faking his symptoms and [failed to call 911](#) until his pulse had stopped; that death is the focus of a [negligent homicide investigation](#). To CRC officials, the lawsuits, criminal investigations and state sanctions all come in response to isolated events, aren't "[systemic](#)," and shouldn't reflect on the dedication and [quality](#) of a large company serving 30,000 trouble-prone teens and substance abusers each day. The company declined to respond to a memo outlining allegations made by alumni, parents and former employees about questionable practices at specific programs, citing a [legal requirement](#) to protect patient confidentiality. But a [public relations consultant](#), Robert Weiner, who works closely with CRC and its most prominent board member, [Gen. Barry McCaffrey](#), President Bill Clinton's drug czar, did respond in general terms in a phone interview: "The people you cited can whine all they want, but that's just a bunch of specifics we can't talk about compared to 30,000 people a day we're making better lives for." "In a human-run company there will be human errors in some cases," he added. "But in other cases, it's garbage." In a December 2011 press release in response to the Tennessean series, CRC vice president Jonathan Ciampi [disputed](#) criticism of CRC over the reported deaths, citing positive surveys of parents and clients, and certification by government regulators and accrediting agencies. "Safety and quality are our highest priorities." And in a conference call last fall for investors, CRC's new CEO, Andrew Eckert, discounted the developments in Tennessee as merely "unwelcomed bumps in the road." In fact, later in the call he claimed that "CRC is in the process of staking its ground as the definitive leader in clinical excellence." Camp recovery: More patients, more revenue Such claims of excellence do not seem to have pierced the canopy of the Santa Cruz redwoods, home to Camp Recovery, the first drug treatment facility CRC purchased in the mid-'90s. Nestled on 25 hilly acres in Scotts Valley, Calif., Camp Recovery is an idyllic setting for recovery for as many as 70 adults and teens at a time. Yet after Bain purchased CRC in 2006, according to former employees, safety and quality eroded, while state agencies periodically reported increasingly more troublesome findings after 2006 regarding conditions at the camp. "It got progressively worse," says Tom Corral, a counselor who was employed there before CRC bought Camp Recovery and worked there on occasion after the Bain takeover. Meanwhile, prices were steadily jacked up from about \$6,000 a month to as high as \$18,000. Under Bain ownership, Corral says, "they've been under a lot of pressure to cut costs, and they've been squeezed for profit." What most alarmed Corral and other former employees was that ever sicker and more mentally disturbed patients kept being admitted. The governing view, Corral recalls, was, "You've got to keep them at all costs." Camp Recovery is registered with the state as a [nonmedical facility](#).

and so patients needing intensive medical or psychiatric care should be referred elsewhere. But such restrictions soon collapsed, say former staffers, in a drive for profits. “Certified nurses were reprimanded when we complained to the intake office,” says one former nurse. “When I didn’t want to admit a person who was falling down drunk, they wrote me up.” Former staffers say that Camp Recovery’s business staff even began to pressure nurses to knowingly admit patients with potentially deadly [MRSA infections](#), which, [the CDC warns](#), may require treatment by an infectious disease specialist. Shawn Botoroff, a former clinical technician who left Camp Recovery last year, said that when she started in 2007, nurses were primarily responsible for determining who was stable enough for admission. But they were soon overridden by camp administrators seeking to rope in more clients, Botoroff and other former workers say. To Denise Murphy, a former director of the camp’s adolescent unit, the decline became especially noticeable in 2008, when a new executive director took over, Bobby Stearns, hand-picked by CRC, who was determined, according to complaints to the NLRB, to [crush a unionization drive](#) and keep down costs. “It was so dangerous there, they’re lucky they didn’t get sued,” Murphy says. According to complaints made by staff at the time to the now-reorganized California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs, CRC cut back on everything from drug-testing kits to staffing levels. In a 2009 interview, Stearns said any staff cuts were due to declining patient numbers. But eventually, the Department of Social Services, which has oversight over the facility’s 17-bed adolescent unit, confirmed that caseloads had soared and kids ran wild at night. [The agency demanded corrective actions](#) — improvements that former employees say were in large part ultimately abandoned. Equally troubling, former staffers report a pattern that echoes the events surrounding the deaths of Brendan Blum and Lindsey Poteet at other CRC facilities: When patients face a medical crisis, ambulances are usually not summoned. Instead, “techs,” whose emergency training, the former employees say, is generally limited to a two-hour CPR course, are ordered by supervisors to use a van lacking medical equipment to drive patients to the emergency room in nearby Santa Cruz. The tactic, say former employees, helps prevent the facility from being flagged in the 911 system, risking unwelcome attention from state or local officials. The administrative resistance to calling 911 was so pronounced that when one overmedicated, mentally disturbed patient fled the facility in hysterics one summer day in 2008, she was left to lie on the road outside the gate, screaming for help before collapsing into convulsions. One camp executive told staff on duty at the time, “Leave her alone. We don’t want to make a scene,” according to Botoroff and other former staffers. It was left to neighbors to call 911. Nevertheless, the camp still makes more emergency calls than any comparable facility in the Santa Cruz area, according to addition and ER doctors who reviewed 911 log data we obtained — perhaps a measure of just how ill many of the patients are at this nonmedical facility. [That log showed 158 calls between January 2008 and August 2011](#). “That’s a lot of calls,” a local government official says. “It ought to be investigated.” Logged 911 calls represent only a small portion of total ER visits, the official observes, because it doesn’t account for people who arrive by other means. Camp Recovery’s drive for secrecy was especially pronounced when it came to potential instances of sexual misconduct, violence or drug use among the adolescents in treatment, former staffers say. “There were several situations in which we were told by the director of the adolescent unit, per [current executive director] James Bailey, not to call 911,” says Botoroff. Former staffers speak of wild nighttime teen assaults on weaker youth or even staff, and recount hushed-up incidents of underage girls having sex with adult male patients at their cabins. “They were trading favors for cigarettes and alcohol,” Botoroff says of one such incident she encountered. In almost all such cases of on-site crime, according to an employee complaint to state regulators, the orders handed down from Stearns, the former executive director, in 2009 were clear: “We don’t contact the police.” State investigators were rarely able to confirm the most serious employee allegations on the few occasions when they bothered to investigate, a review of state reports shows. But this could be due to efforts by managers to cover their tracks. Trevor Botoroff, a former Camp Recovery counselor and Shawn’s husband, says that sometimes managers would rewrite log sheets to make them seem more benign. At other times, supervisors would simply remove them. Murphy, the camp’s former adolescent director, came to see CRC as “the slumlords of treatment.” Other evasions are commonplace at Camp Recovery. The camp openly advertises that it offers [prescription-based medical detox](#), though it is not licensed as a medical facility to do so. A failure of oversight But such complaints against CRC have rarely led to consequences for either their drug treatment or youth programs. The troubled teen industry in particular is a regulatory Wild West, with [some states lacking any licensing system at all for these residential programs](#). Even some states that do license, such as Utah, appear unable to guarantee patient safety: about 10 young people are known to have died since 1990 while attending Utah residential and wilderness programs. Regulators often [shield the teen care industry from genuine scrutiny](#), according to [investigations](#) by the [GAO](#), congressional hearings in [2007](#) and [2008](#), and reports by such mental health advocates as the [Bazelon Center](#) and [Mental Health America](#). In California, regulation of drug treatment facilities appears especially ineffective. California’s Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs, for example, has never investigated the deaths of nearly 200 patients over five years at CRC’s 12 outpatient [methadone clinics](#). Mostly likely, addiction experts say, the clients’ rampant substance abuse is the culprit, not sloppy practices at CRC, but that supposition has not been rigorously tested. In fact, Pennsylvania regulators [cited two of CRC’s methadone clinics](#) for failing to [properly screen patients](#) for drugs or narcotic use, a [potentially deadly](#) oversight. Weiner, the CRC spokesperson, said that CRC itself would doubtless look into any client deaths: “At least somebody’s going to wonder why they didn’t come in for their treatment the next day.” “The programs have experienced the reality that there are no consequences [if anyone dies](#),” says a knowledgeable ex-government official about California’s drug programs, including CRC’s methadone clinics, which have become the chain’s cash cow. With nearly 27,000 daily clients nationwide at [54 outpatient clinics](#), CRC founder Barry Karlin was dubbed by Treatment magazine “[America’s Methadone King](#).” Loose oversight seems to have been critical in enabling CRC to flourish. It’s hard to imagine, in particular, that without the scandalously [weak](#) monitoring of the teen treatment industry CRC’s Aspen division would be able to continue its harshly regimented, unproven behavior-modification methods and dicey emergency protocols. “Without regulations and enforcement, this profitable industry will continue to have actors that present unacceptable risks to the children they serve,” U.S. Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., said last year when introducing a [federal oversight bill](#). A culture of abuse and neglect? This apparent lack of oversight in the teen industry, combined with a widespread view by providers that their charges are manipulative troublemakers, has allowed a toxic culture of psychological abuse and medical neglect to [prevail](#), according to parents, alumni and federal officials. As Greg Kutz, a GAO investigator, said in testimony about the industry in general before Congress, “It seemed that the only way program managers would believe they [the students] were not faking it is if they stopped breathing or did not have a pulse.” That culture is visible even at Aspen’s most upscale residential programs, such as Island View in suburban Syracuse, Utah. One former student there, Colleen Davidson, now 20, who graduated from the program in 2009, recalls her alarm when she coughed up blood one morning as she stood at the bathroom sink. She says she was never allowed to see a doctor because by the time the nurse wandered by a few hours later, another student had rinsed the blood from the sink. “They assume you’re lying,” she says. For months, CRC denied me press access to any of its facilities, so I visited Island View last August posing as a father of a troubled girl. During that visit, director Laura Burt confirmed this skeptical stance toward potential medical emergencies. She said the nursing staff would see my daughter immediately in case of a medical crisis but would monitor her if they suspected fakery: “We’re not going to rush her to the hospital if she’s just saying that and there is nothing that says it.” In March 2008, Duane Bernard rescued his son Matthew, then 16, from another Aspen program, [Adirondack Leadership Expedition](#) in Saranac Lake, N.Y., after gleaming from one of his son’s monitored letters the brutal conditions he was enduring. Matthew, who was sent to Adirondack by his mother during a custody dispute, later told his father of food deprivation, neglect of serious medical complaints, and cruel taunting by instructors, including an incident when field staff pressured one kid to lick clean a urine-soaked cup. Medical neglect, Duane Bernard says, was ingrained in Adirondack’s get-tough “[wilderness therapy](#).” Father and son say that during Matthew’s monthlong stay, he was required to go camping in subfreezing weather with too-thin clothing and sleeping gear, and he soon developed severe numbness and frostbite in his right foot. But he wasn’t taken to an urgent care facility until shortly before his release and required eight months of medical treatment afterward. Duane Bernard [wrote](#) in April 2008 to state officials alleging child abuse, enclosing [Matthew’s written descriptions of his alleged maltreatment](#), but the state’s child protection agency said it had [no jurisdiction over Adirondack](#). “They blew us off,” Bernard says. I heard Matthew’s experience echoed in conversation after conversation with Aspen alums, many of whom suffer nightmares and PTSD-like symptoms. Hannah Sangillo of Bethesda, Md., now 19, ended up at [SUWS of the Carolinas](#), Aspen’s showcase wilderness program in North Carolina’s breathtaking Pisgah National Forest, in 2010. She now considers her 49-day summer stay “child abuse.” She recounts one of several instances of heat exhaustion she experienced during hours-long hikes designed to promote self-reliance and personal growth. Even on scorching, humid days, when temperatures soared into the mid-90s, groups of girls were saddled with 60-pound-plus packs, exceeding Girl Scout safety guidelines. “I was not able to walk straight,” she says of one incident. “I was stumbling and sweating profusely. I kept telling people I needed to stop and they said: ‘No, we can’t stop yet.’” She temporarily blacked out, only to be dragged to her feet by fellow campers and prodded along the trail at the urging of what SUWS calls its “[highly trained](#)” field instructors. By the end of the summer ordeal, nearly half of her small team of girls had collapsed during hikes, she says, without receiving any medical attention. Throughout their time there, neither Sangillo nor Hannah Spungen, a 2007 SUWS graduate, ever saw a single staffer actually help young residents with medical problems. These included everything from heroin withdrawal to all-night vomiting caused by drinking from [fecal-contaminated](#) streams during

their daily hikes. Before I interviewed the two alumni, I met with Shawn Farrell, executive director of SUWS of the Carolinas, who insisted to me that emergency care is a top priority. (Subsequently, CRC declined to answer any questions about allegations of medical neglect at this SUWS program. Shawn Farrell, the executive director of SUWS of the Carolinas, insisted to me that emergency care is a top priority. He says field staff are instructed to radio in symptoms of any injuries or illness immediately to the base camp's field medic and, if needed, arrange transport to a hospital only eight miles away. "We want the doctors to do the diagnosis," not the outdoors staff, he says. But this policy appears to fall apart in the execution. In Spungen's experience, "There's no protocol in place to make sure it's safe for you." These incidents seem to illuminate an institutional culture that allowed Sergey Blashchishen to die in 2009 before ever receiving emergency medical aid. As one government investigator told me about the field instructors at SageWalk, where Blashchishen died, "They were highly trained, but the culture overrode that." The SageWalk Field Instructor Manual — like other Aspen manuals, vetted by CRC, according to a former CRC official — requires staff to go through a rigid "chain of command" before emergency help can be summoned. "There are inherent delays in a system like this," the investigator observed. CRC spokesman Weiner defended those procedures: "If there's a [medical] issue they should go to the top supervisors," he said. "I don't see how that's wrong to make sure you're doing the right thing. That's why they're not the boss." Yet Weiner also insisted that CRC is "aware of complaints and problems at Aspen and wants to make sure it has the best practices possible." To that end, he pointed to a recent initiative by CRC to ensure that all its teen programs are certified by two leading accrediting agencies, CARF (the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) and a body known as the Joint Commission, a 60-year-old [industry-funded nonprofit](#) that accredits thousands of health care programs in the United States. This is perhaps of scant comfort, given that members of Congress harshly criticized the Joint Commission in the wake of revelations of medical negligence at Walter Reed and other Joint Commission-accredited hospitals. Moreover, many facilities in one of the most notorious chains in the teen treatment field, [Straight Inc.](#), were approved by accrediting agencies, including the Joint Commission, until they [shut down](#) in the wake of lawsuits and state action. Some maintained their high ratings even after Straight Inc. and several of its spinoffs were hit by state investigations and at least 90 lawsuits alleging abuse. No turnaround from the turnaround experts. Despite the accumulating lawsuits, state investigations and even criminal inquiries, Bain Capital has yet to force a major shake-up in the culture or leadership of CRC. Aspen co-founder Elliot Sainer and CRC [CEO Barry Karlin](#) remained in their executive posts until they [retired](#) in 2007 and 2010, respectively. Both now serve on the CRC board of directors. [Trina Packard](#), the executive in charge at Youth Care when Brendan Blum died, remains in her post to this day. Rather than instituting reforms, CRC seems to have responded to the series of lawsuits, in part, by requiring parents to sign elaborate contracts that feature sweeping "hold harmless" clauses even in the case of death. "This is a business-driven model: caveat emptor," one Utah Education Department official conceded on background. The contracts leave parents like Julie Scheule, a Wisconsin mom, with [little recourse](#) when they suspect deception or abuse. In 2007, she sent her daughter, then 15, to an Aspen facility in Utah, since closed, called [Aspen Ranch](#). Aspen, she now charges, "abused parental trust, abused our bank account, and abused the kids in their care." She had a change of heart when she realized she was being hit with thousands of dollars in extra costs and flew to the ranch to remove her daughter. She recalls her daughter hugging her, trembling, and saying, "Please mama, take me out of here." Aspen uses what the teen treatment industry calls a "levels" model that grants more privileges and freedoms as students follow the rules, but imposes sanctions of varying severity on those who slip up or disobey. Punishments were more often psychological than physical. According to former students, emotionally brutal isolation punishments and peer-driven encounter "therapies" were commonly employed to break down resistance, especially at Island View. For Colleen Davidson, the former student there who coughed up blood, the worst part was when students were prodded to confront each other about real or fabricated transgressions in harsh encounter sessions. (In fact, she says, they were very similar to the group therapies cited in the June "torture" lawsuit against Turn-About Ranch.) The sessions were so terrifying that girls resorted to desperate measures to avoid attending, according to Davidson. She recalls that some girls choked themselves to induce fainting; one rubbed feces in her own eyes to cause an infection. "They break you down, but they don't really build you back up," she says of the Island View approach. "I have nightmares from it, and the memories are really awful." The no-data zone CRC declined to address any program-specific allegations. A company spokesperson, Kristen Hayes, instead summed up the company's approach in a written statement: "Our mission is to bring best practices to our industry in clinical excellence and quality patient care," she wrote by email. "Our comprehensive risk and compliance protocols help to ensure the delivery of the safest, proven treatment processes." CRC has said that its teen care programs are based on recognized and evidence-based programs, including one called contingency management. But critics suggest that the approach as actually applied by Aspen is inconsistent with contingency management — which emphasizes primarily positive reinforcement — while alumni and lawsuits filed over the years by parents of former teen patients describe instead a distorted atmosphere of [terror and punishment](#) that undercuts their possible utility. But there are virtually no independent, well-designed, peer-reviewed studies showing that any residential programs for troubled teens [actually work](#) — and none at all for the behavior-modification approaches employed by Aspen. [Research](#) funded by the Department of Justice and a literature review by the [NIH](#) both found, in the context of youth violence and crime prevention, that get-tough, [discipline-based approaches](#) generally do more harm than good. Shy of evidence, CRC's PR machine offers up testimonials from pleased parents and [CRC-funded surveys](#) of parents and students that report positive outcomes. Hayes put me in touch with one of these parents, the mother of a self-destructive, drug-abusing 15-year-old son whom she sent to Island View, the Aspen program Colleen Davidson attended, after other treatments had failed. "I didn't want to stand around and wait for my child to die," she says bluntly. Enrolling him in Aspen, she says, was the turning point. "I wish all kids were as lucky as my son," she says. And what can't be washed away by good PR can always be described as an unavoidable tragedy. At Youth Care of Utah, admissions counselor Claire Roberts offered up this sort of soft-focus gloss when she told me about the death of Brendan Blum. "It was very traumatizing for us," she said. Then she added philosophically, "These things happen." No plausible deniability Mitt Romney may not know the details of Brendan Blum's death, but it is difficult to imagine he [wouldn't be aware of the troubles](#) facing CRC and the [residential teen-treatment industry](#) as a whole. Not only are two of his major campaign donors, Connaughton and Barnes, on CRC's board, but two of his key advisors, Robert Lichfield and Mel Sembler, faced firestorms after allegations of abuse emerged regarding their own [residential treatment chains](#). Meanwhile, Ann Romney has said that she would make [helping troubled teens](#) a top priority as first lady. And CRC is roaring ahead with an expanded sales force; Eckert, the CEO, told investors in May, "We now have [sales] coverage in every major metropolitan area in the United States." The Romney campaign did not respond to queries about his investment in CRC. But candidate Romney has been outspoken about his belief that for-profit health care companies can flourish only without onerous regulations. "I had the occasion of actually acquiring and trying to build health care businesses," he said during a primary debate last year. "I know something about it, and I believe markets work. And what's wrong with our health care system in America is that government is playing too heavy a role." [Crystal Manganaro](#) likely has a different view. She is the mother of Matthew Meyer, the 14-year-old who died at Aspen's Lone Star program in 2004, and has forcefully advocated for a federal crackdown on teen residential programs, including those run by Aspen. "For those of you who have not lived through losing a child due to negligence, you just cannot imagine what it feels like unless you have walked through it and deal with it every day of your life," she said in 2009. "My son is dead and there is nothing I can do about that, but I'll be damned if my son died in vain." This article was reported in partnership with The Investigative Fund at The Nation Institute, with generous additional support from the Fund for Investigative Journalism. Art Levine is a contributing editor at Washington Monthly. Source: http://www.salon.com/2012/07/18/dark_side_of_a_bain_success/print/

Source: ktla.com/news/landing/ktla-lapd-officers-boot-camp.0.6164232.story ktla.com Disturbing Video Surfaces From 'Boot Camp' Run by LAPD Officers KTLA News 4:45 PM PDT, July 31, 2012 LOS ANGELES (KTLA) -- Two LAPD officers are under investigation for running a weekend boot camp for troubled teens in Hollywood. The 'military-style' boot camp was run by two officers, Ismael Gonzalez and Alex Nava, both from the LAPD's Central Division, the Contra Costa Times reports. Based on footage posted to [YouTube](http://www.youtube.com), it involved aggressive tactics, including screaming at and taunting the kids. Two online videos show drill instructors screaming at young participants, disparaging them, and, in at least one instance, challenging one child to a fight. Much of the footage shows the children struggling to complete sets of push-ups and other difficult endurance exercises. In one scene, a group of exhausted-looking girls calls out, "316, sir," as they count off another squat with their hands held behind their heads. Several kids are seen crying during the exercises or as instructors lean down into their faces to shout at them. In one scene, a male officer pushes a girl from her knees into push-up position. In another, a young boy is brought to tears by an expletive-filled tirade. Most of the kids appear to be pre-teens or teenagers, but at least one child in the video looks to be about six years old. The program and videos were first reported by the Los Angeles Daily News. Gonzales told the Contra Costa Times that the program was modeled after the LAPD's Juvenile Impact Program, which also uses military-style tactics to scare juveniles straight. They saw that the LAPD program was effective, so they decided to start their own, he said. Gonzalez and Nava called their class the Juvenile Intervention Program. It has been in operation since February. An LLC for the class was formed last November, while their website states the program is a registered non-profit, the Times reports. They reportedly charged \$200 -- twice the cost of the LAPD's program. The class met once a week for 12 weeks, and parents also received counseling. The LAPD says it did not know about the program, and that it will investigate both the class and the conduct of the officers. Source: <http://www.ktla.com/news/landing/ktla-lapd-officers-boot-camp.0.506366.print.story> For more on this story, visit: <http://laist.com/2012/07/31/lapd-officers-under-fire-for-running-boot-camp.php>, http://blogs.laweekly.com/informer/2012/07/video_la_cops_rogue_hollywood_boot_camp.php, and http://www.contracostatimes.com/california/ci_21194988/internal-affairs-investigating-2-lapd-officers-running-military

Originally published Thursday, August 2, 2012 at 5:58 PM A former Seattle-area mental-health counselor who had worked with troubled youth was recently charged with allegedly possessing and dealing in child pornography. By Sara Jean Green Seattle Times staff reporter A former Seattle-area mental-health counselor who had worked with troubled youth was recently charged with possessing and dealing in child pornography. Malcolm Hayes McKay, 72, surrendered his health-care credentials in 2007 for a sexually explicit online chat with an adult who was posing as a teen. McKay was never charged with a crime in the earlier case, but he was fired from the Ruth Dykeman Children's Center and surrendered his license as a counselor in 2007 after he sent "naked, graphic" photos of himself three years earlier, according to the state Department of Health. McKay thought the person he was chatting with was a 14-year-old boy. In a 2005 letter to the Health Department, McKay said he had a "sexual addiction" that was "out of control," according to department records. The new case dates to September 2009, when the Seattle Police Department's Internet Crimes Against Children Unit launched an investigation of McKay after an employee at YouTube filed a complaint with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, according to charges filed by King County prosecutors. Detectives determined McKay uploaded seven videos to YouTube, six of which showed either teen or young boys engaged in sex with adult men, charging documents say. McKay's computers, external hard drives, a digital camera and miscellaneous storage media and thumb drives were seized from his Seattle apartment, according to the charges. Among the files found on the items seized under warrant were 152 files of a child who had previously been identified by law enforcement, the charges say. According to three of the file names and descriptions of the videos, it appears the boy was repeatedly videotaped while being sodomized by someone claiming to be his father. McKay was charged July 20 with possessing depictions of minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct and dealing in depictions of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct. Prosecutors received the case from Seattle police June 14, said Dan Donohoe, spokesman for King County Prosecutor Dan Satterberg. It's unclear why it took almost three years for the case to be forwarded for a charging decision. After pleading not guilty Thursday morning before Superior Court Judge Theresa Doyle, McKay was ordered to report to the King County Jail to be fingerprinted, court records show. He spent less than an hour in custody before being released, according to jail records. Before surrendering his credentials in 2007, McKay had a private practice, counseled troubled teens at the Ruth Dykeman Children's Center and worked as an educator for the Northwest AIDS Foundation. He was also listed as an educator for the Seattle Institute for Sex Therapy, Education and Research and was quoted several times in The Seattle Times on topics related to sexuality. The earlier investigation did not turn up any evidence of inappropriate behavior with his clients. Information from Seattle Times archives is included in this report. Sara Jean Green: 206-515-5654 or sjgreen@seattletimes.com Source: http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/localnews/2018836564_childporn03m.html

Judge: Lawsuit against Utah-based schools for troubled teens will be heard in St. George THE ASSOCIATED PRESS August 15, 2012 - 3:32 pm EDT ST. GEORGE, [Utah](http://www.fox43.com) — Abuse charges in a lawsuit against a Utah company that ran a network of domestic and international schools for troubled teens will be heard in St. George, a judge has ruled. Fifth District Judge James Shumate ruled Tuesday the case should remain in southern Utah because most of the companies named as defendants — and the people operating them — call [Washington](http://www.fox43.com) County home. An attorney representing more than 350 former students and family members had argued the case should be moved to [Salt Lake City](http://www.fox43.com) to avoid prejudice and travel costs for his clients. The students are from more than three dozen states, England and Canada and attended the residential school programs between the mid-1990s and mid-2000s. The suit claims the World Wide Association of Specialty Programs and Schools, based in St. George, subjected the students to systematic abuse. The students claim they were denied food and medical care, lived in filth and suffered extreme emotional, physical and sexual abuse. Named as defendants are World Wide and its three principals, Robert B. Lichfield of Toquerville, and Brent M. Facer and Ken Kay, both of St. George. Also named are a network of about 50 affiliated businesses and individuals, which the lawsuit claims were controlled by the organization's principals through either family relationships or written management agreements. The lawsuit renews claims in a 2006 lawsuit filed in Salt Lake City's U.S. District Court that was dismissed last year for jurisdictional reasons. Dallas-based attorney Windle Turley, who represents the families, argued Tuesday for moving the case back to Salt Lake City, saying it would be easier for plaintiffs to travel to the Salt Lake area than to St. George, the Spectrum of St. George reported. He also said a Washington County trial would be prejudicial in favor of the defense. A Salt Lake City judge sent the case to Washington County in June in response to a defense motion. Attorney Stewart Harman, who represents the defendants, argued it should remain in Washington County because that's where "the documents of this alleged conspiracy would be located," The Spectrum reported. Shumate sought to assure Turley that St. George has sufficient resources to handle the complex case. The judge is allowing different parties to participate in various court hearings via telephone. He scheduled an Oct. 2 status conference to ensure the case is progressing. The students' attorneys say World Wide has operated more than 20 schools in seven states and in Costa Rica, Jamaica, Mexico, Samoa and the Czech Republic. They allege in court records that many of

the schools were open for only short periods because of their failure to comply with licensing and regulatory laws, because of abuse allegations and because the organization's "principals drained excessive funds off the top." In June 2011, a student who claims he attended Casa by the Sea filed a separate federal lawsuit against World Wide and its owners. Carl Brown Austin, 25, of Spokane, Wash., says he spent nearly two years in the Ensenada, Mexico, school and was a "virtual prisoner" in programs that meted out primitive punishment for hours on end. When Austin's lawsuit was filed, Facer told The Associated Press he had served on World Wide's board but that the organization had shut down because there was no longer a need for its programs. Asked why former students might bring such accusations, Facer said children brought to such schools have a history of misrepresenting the truth. ____ Information from: The Spectrum, <http://www.thespectrum.com> (Story distributed by The Associated Press) Source: <http://www.therepublic.com/view/story/17c8089ab06649b3a849a33d4392d5c2/UT--Boot-Camp-Lawsuit#share>

Defense seeks victims medical records in sex-abuse case <http://www.standard.net/stories/2012/08/30/defense-seeks-victims-medical-records-sex-abuse-case>
August 31, 2012 FARMINGTON — A woman who worked at a residential treatment program for juvenile sex offenders is accused of sexually abusing one of the residents. Becky Evans, 40, is charged with second-degree felony forcible sexual abuse. According to court documents, from October 2011 to December 2011, Evans "caused a minor male victim to touch her breasts and genitals, skin to skin." Evans was charged in March after Clearfield police concluded an investigation. She appeared in 2nd District Court on Thursday. A jury trial has been set to run Dec. 10 through Dec. 12. A hearing for oral arguments concerning a motion filed by defense attorney Mark Moffat is set for Oct. 11. Moffat is seeking the therapy, treatment and discipline records of the 16-year-old boy who is the victim. According to the motion, Evans worked at Youth Health Associates, a residential treatment program for juvenile sex offenders. The teen "had been committed to the YHA facility for treatment for sexual offenses he committed against a minor," according to the document. The defense claims in its motion that Evans was made aware of the boy's history of aggression, impulsive behavior and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and the behavior of the boy may have led to the accusations. According to the documents, Evans denies having the teen touch her sexually. Deputy Davis County Attorney Cristina Ortega filed a motion opposing the defense's request for the boy's records. According to the prosecutor's court documents, the records between a therapist and patient are privileged. It also says the defense has not shown any history of the teen "struggling with issues related to honesty and trustworthiness," so providing the therapy records is not justified. Brian Garlock, owner and clinical director of YHA, said Evans worked for the facility for about a year. "She actually quit when everything came out," Garlock said. Garlock said his company has facilities across the state, including the one in Clearfield, and employs 200 people full time. They are provided with training concerning boundaries, "because even small boundary violations send the wrong message and we will fire people." YHA came under scrutiny in 2006 after Raechele Elton, 22, was raped and stabbed to death by Robert Cameron Houston, who was 17 at the time. Elton was a counselor at the Clearfield facility, where Houston was a resident. Source: <http://www.standard.net/stories/2012/08/30/defense-seeks-victims-medical-records-sex-abuse-case>

Tuesday, August 28, 2012 Volusia Rehab Center Worker Arrested For Molesting Teen DAYTONA BEACH, Florida -- The Volusia County Sheriff's Office has arrested a former child specialist following accusations that he molested a teenage client at the residential addiction treatment program where the man worked. The defendant, 34-year-old Corey Hodges, was fired by Stewart-Marchman-Act Behavioral Healthcare after the allegations surfaced earlier this month. While no other criminal offenses were uncovered during the investigation, other teenage girls at the program told law enforcement that Hodges was a pervert who would stare at their bodies, make inappropriate sexual comments and purposely drop things so that he could watch them bend over to pick them up. Hodges is facing one charge each of lewd or lascivious molestation and lewd or lascivious conduct. The victim is a 15-year-old girl who is a client at the RAP, or Residential Adolescent Program run by Stewart-Marchman-Act. Hodges started working at the Daytona Beach facility in February. Earlier this month, the girl disclosed that Hodges had allegedly molested her two times last month while she was in her room at the RAP program. On both occasions, the victim said Hodges touched her breasts under her shirt and also rubbed her over her clothes and kissed her on the lips. Both times, she said that Hodges told her not to tell anyone about it. On a third occasion, the girl said that after she broke her finger playing football, Hodges drove her to the hospital. On the way back, the victim said that Hodges rubbed her thigh and told her to pull up her shorts, but she refused and nothing more happened. Investigators with the Volusia County Sheriff's Office's Sex Crimes Unit interviewed other teenage girls at the program. One, a 17-year-old, told investigators that Hodges would ask her for hugs, made comments about other girls' bodies and talked about beating up a boy she was dating because Hodges was jealous. An 18-year-girl said Hodges told her that she should be a stripper because she had a nice body. And a 14-year-old girl revealed to investigators that while going through heroin withdrawal, Hodges ordered her to get out of her bed even though she told him that she was naked. She got up and tried to cover herself with a blanket, but she said that Hodges ordered her to drop it. During questioning by investigators, Hodges -- who lives in Palm Coast, Florida -- denied the allegations. Surveillance video from inside the facility showed Hodges going into one of the girls' rooms, in violation of staff policies. He also violated their policies when he drove the girl to the hospital instead of having a female employee do it. On Monday, investigators with the Sheriff's Office's Sex Crimes Unit obtained an arrest warrant for Hodges. He was arrested Tuesday by the Flagler County Sheriff's Office and transported to the Volusia County Branch Jail in Daytona Beach, where he's being held on \$60,000 bond. Any other victims or anyone with information about Hodges is asked to call the Sheriff's Office's Sex Crimes Unit at (386) 323-3574. Source: <http://news.brevardtimes.com/2012/08/volusia-rehab-center-worker-arrested.html>

David Chura, Teacher, Author, "I Don't Wish Nobody to Have a Life Like Mine: Tales of Kids in Adult Lockup" The Harm We Do: Kids in Solitary Confinement Posted: 09/07/2012 5:19 pm When most Americans hear the familiar constitutional phrase "cruel and unusual punishment" they can tell you what it means, at least to them. Hanging. Flogging. Chopping a hand off. Chain gangs. Putting juvenile offenders in solitary confinement is high on my list of "cruel and unusual punishment." What else do you call locking up fifteen, sixteen-year-olds, some even younger, in total isolation for 24 hours a day, in some cases for months at a time, never leaving their cells? "All an inmate's needs are met right here," was the way the warden of the adult county jail where I taught high school students proudly described it as he gave a group of professionals a tour of the new Special Housing Unit (SHU). It was true. Each cell had its own phone, shower, toilet, concrete bed, and adjacent small enclosed rec area. All an inmate's needs were met, except for the most essential: human contact of any kind. These conditions are intolerable for anyone and are replicated nationally in our jails. The United Nations Human Rights Council reported that the U.S. has more inmates in solitary confinement than any other democratic nation. But locking up a kid in those conditions, a kid with more energy than a playground can hold; whose body at times practically vibrates with urges that many more advantaged teens struggle to control; whose emotional and intellectual development is at best undernourished, can only be called "cruel and unusual." Human Rights Watch agrees. It's recently released "Against All Odds: Prison Conditions for Youth Offenders Serving Life Without Parole in the United States" documents the overuse of solitary confinement with minors and its devastating effects on them, effects heightened by the prospect of life without parole. The young people interviewed considered isolation a "profoundly difficult ordeal," leaving them with "thoughts of suicide, feelings of intense loneliness or depression." But it's not just "lifers" in solitary who experience those "profound effects." I saw it when I visited my jailhouse students who were locked up in "the cage," as they called it. They were there because corrections deemed them a threat to "safety and security." In too many cases, however, that "threat" came from their acting-out behaviors due to untreated mental health issues or ADHD. Still others were seen as "pains in the ass" who "just needed to be taught a lesson." It didn't take long for the new SHU to fall apart, the way everything else does in prison. Walls were scuffed and gouged from inmates being dragged in; cell door windows were smeared as guys jammed and angled their faces to see anything, anyone. The only thing shattering that intense sensory deprivation was the sound of inmates shouting to each other, howling through the thick walls, trying to connect with another human, announcing to the world, "I'm still alive." And when they weren't screaming, they were sleeping -- 15, 16 hours a day. My students deteriorated as well. Once in isolation they abandoned any sense of civilized behavior. Young guys who would come to class shaven and showered, smelling of Old Spice deodorant, in fresh county oranges, now reeked of unwashed bodies; their hair dirty and matted, faces fuzzed; their eyes caked and puffy from sleep. I would bang on the window until they woke up and lifted their heads from under the pillows and blankets they burrowed under against the cold. They'd shuffle over to the door and we'd squat on our own sides of the concrete and glass wall and talk through the meal tray slot. It was then that I'd be hit by their sour, foul breath as though they were slowly decaying from the inside out. Finally in 2009 the Department of Justice investigated these abuses. The DOJ reported that half of the inmates in the SHU were between 16 and 18, and that the average stay in isolation for juveniles was 365 days. As a result of these "extremely lengthy sentences," the mental health of these young people worsened significantly, aggravated "by the jail's failure" to provide routine treatment. Unfortunately, this is far from an isolated case. Abuses of minors in solitary are happening around the country. I don't know how many people get the irony involved here, but I do know that the kids I taught did, even though they never "got" irony in class: We lock children up in inhuman conditions in order to teach them how to act

human. Unfortunately, as studies have shown, inmates learn a far different lesson. When they leave isolation they are angrier, more distrustful, more cynical about ever getting justice, and more prone to violence. What could be a more "cruel and unusual punishment" than to confirm these young people's bedrock belief that America as it is now has no place for them other than behind bars? Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-chura/juvenile-offenders-solitary-confinement- b_1864770.html

[A Terrifying Way to Discipline Children](#) by [prisonmovement](#) Happening more and more at schools across the country... kids are being arrested for minor infraction of rules, restrained, hand cuffed, and placed in rooms all alone. Our 'challenged' children are often the targets-are your kids safe from this type of treatment? What would YOU do if your this happened to your child? By BILL [...] [Read more of this post](#)

No state oversight at Southeast mental-health facility [Purchase Image](#) Exterior of the Blue Sky Behavioral Health Clinic at 52 Federal Road in Danbury, Conn. / Terence Corcoran/The Journal News Written by [Terence Corcoran](#) Filed Under [News Putnam County, New York](#) [Putnam Hospital Center](#) SOUTHEAST — Two men who ran a residential mental-health treatment facility the state shut down last year for violating patients' rights have formed a new company at the same locations that apparently does not require state oversight. Life Assist opened in Southeast earlier this year after the New York State Office of Mental Health shut down SLS, or Supervised LifeStyles, for ignoring state regulations and repeatedly violating its patients' rights. Unlike its predecessor, Life Assist stresses on its website that it does not provide clinical or treatment services and that it is not a residential or group home. As such, it is not subject to state oversight. Life Assist, a for-profit company, does promise to partner its clients who have substance-abuse or mental-health issues with a "life coach," provide clinical services through affiliated companies and get them a furnished apartment — all for a monthly fee. Life Assist is part of Blue Sky Behavioral Health, a Connecticut-based company formed by a former SLS owner, Joseph J. Santoro, and its former chief operating officer, David J. Palmer. Palmer is listed as executive director of Life Assist on its website and is chief executive officer of Blue Sky Behavioral. Santoro is listed as an owner of Blue Sky in papers filed with Connecticut. In an application last year with the Connecticut Department of Health to open Blue Sky Behavioral, an outpatient facility in Danbury, Palmer stressed the work he had done at SLS but never mentioned the New York investigation that led to its closure in December. Last month, a Life Assist client died outside one of its buildings on Tonetta Lake Road in Southeast. Arsen Keleshian, 40, of Greenwich, Conn., became combative with staff members and police before disrobing. Police subdued Keleshian, but he later died at Putnam Hospital Center in Carmel. The incident involved some type of physical altercation, but police did not use pepper spray or a Taser on Keleshian, said Capt. William McNamara of the Putnam County Sheriff's Office, whose deputies responded with state troopers. For full story, visit source: <http://www.lohud.com/article/20120828/NEWS04/308270065/No-state-oversight-So>

Jerry Brown, California Governor, Signs SB 1172, Bill Banning Gay Conversion Therapy For Minors Posted: 09/30/2012 11:45 am EDT Updated: 09/30/2012 2:20 pm EDT Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/30/jerry-brown-sb-1172-gay-conversion-therapy-california_n_1926855.html 2,126 175 California Governor Jerry Brown [on Saturday signed a historic bill](#) that will protect lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) minors from "reparative" therapies administered by mental health professionals aimed at altering sexual orientation or gender identities and expressions. Senate Bill 1172, which [the National Center for Lesbian Rights notes](#) was co-sponsored by the NCLR, Equality California, Gaylesta, Courage Campaign, Lambda Legal, and Mental Health America of Northern California, and supported by dozens of organizations, is the first law of its kind in the United States and will become effective on January 1, 2013. "Conversion" or "reparative" therapies include a wide variety of techniques from counseling to shock therapy to -- in extreme cases -- exorcism, used in an attempt to "cure" individuals of their homosexual and transgender orientations and identities. However, in recent years, even those who once championed the idea that someone can convert to heterosexuality have admitted that viewpoint is flawed. In April, Dr. Robert Spitzer, author of a landmark 2001 study that claimed gay people could be alleviated of their homosexuality, admitted that, "In retrospect, [I have to admit I think the critiques \[of my study\] are largely correct](#)... The findings can be considered evidence for what those who have undergone ex-gay therapy say about it, but nothing more." [As SFGate.com reported, Brown said](#), "This bill bans non-scientific 'therapies' that have driven young people to depression and suicide. These practices have no basis in science or medicine and they will now be relegated to the dustbin of quackery." In a press release, the Human Rights Campaign responded to Brown's signing of the bill: "We're grateful to Governor Brown for standing with California's children. LGBT youth will now be protected from a practice that has not only been debunked as junk science, but has been proven to have drastically negative effects on their well-being. We commend Governor Brown for putting children first, and call on all states to take California's lead on this issue. We will continue our fight against this kind of child abuse, which has been deemed harmful to children by all major mental health, medical, and child welfare organizations." According to HRC, over 50,000 people had [signed a petition urging the governor to sign the bill in the past week](#).

State to 'colonel': License your military school or deal with a prosecutor By [Alexandra Zayas](#), Times Staff Writer Published Wednesday, November 21, 2012 Alan Weierman, the self-titled colonel whose unaccredited military school has been allowed to house children for years despite abuse allegations, got an ultimatum from the state this week: Get licensed or close. The Department of Children and Families warned Weierman in a letter that he has 30 days to earn a state license or DCF will seek criminal prosecution and is prepared to ask a judge to permanently shut down his [Southeastern Military Academy in Port St. Lucie](#). The action is part of a statewide crackdown on unlicensed children's homes prompted by a Tampa Bay Times investigation that found hundreds of children are being housed outside of state oversight. Most of these homes operate legally under a religious exemption. However, the Times found five homes operating with no state-recognized credentials, and state officials subsequently found three more. All have been asked to show proof that they are trying to get accredited. Weierman's academy, a home for boys that combines religion and military-style discipline, is the first to be given a 30-day warning of legal action. If the state seeks a court order, it would mark the first time it has tried to shut down any unaccredited children's home since 2009, when DCF unsuccessfully sued to close a boys' home run by Weierman at the time. If a judge sides with the state, about a dozen boys living at Southeastern Military Academy could be sent home to their parents, who are paying \$28,600 in tuition for them to learn obedience and discipline. DCF officials said they may issue warning letters to more homes but are still investigating. Weierman said this week that he would consult his attorney about how to respond. "I know they have a job to do and am confident that once they see our evidence, they will accept the place we are in the process," Weierman told the Times in an email. "I am not opposed to licensure," he said. "But I also am not opposed to a criminal proceeding about this. I can just imagine the state attorney's face when he is presented with this case. Like all he has to do is prosecute unlicensed boarding schools." After his long, contentious relationship with DCF, it appears unlikely the department would grant him a license. The last time they did, more than a decade ago, it was a short-lived decision both sides soon came to regret. In 2000 alone, DCF responded to allegations six times and found credible evidence in four investigations, including cases involving asphyxiation and beatings. Weierman said the allegations were false. He said DCF workers were dishonest and unfair and complained that DCF calls allegations "verified" using a lower burden of proof than used by the courts. In 2001, on the day DCF was scheduled to present evidence to a judge to revoke his license, Weierman surrendered it. He soon earned accreditation through the Florida Association of Christian Child Caring Agencies, a nonprofit group empowered by state law to regulate religious children's homes that choose to avoid a state license. FACCCA accreditation would still be an option to save Weierman's school, if he can earn it within 30 days, but FACCCA discontinued his accreditation in 2004 because his home, once a shelter for kids of all ages, had evolved into a boot camp. Weierman has since operated his academy as a "boarding school." In Florida, boarding schools must register with the Department of Education. But the agency only keeps a list of the schools. It does not regulate or inspect them. Since the school left FACCCA in 2004, DCF has responded to 13 allegations of abuse and neglect at Weierman's group home. In six cases, investigators verified the incidents, which included physical and mental injuries, medical neglect, threatened harm, bizarre punishment and asphyxiation. In 2008, a runaway told police he had been shackled for 12 days, beaten, choked to unconsciousness and berated with racial slurs. DCF investigated and found that all 16 boys at the home had been mistreated, including some who said they had been bruised and bloodied. The department called parents to remove all the boys, but prosecutors declined to pursue charges. In 2009, the state sought a permanent injunction to keep Weierman from housing children, noting that he was not accredited as was required by law. But a judge declined the state's injunction request and said Weierman was making a "good faith effort" to get accredited. Weierman is still trying. He says the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is expected to review his school in March. But as far as DCF is concerned, his time is up. Alexandra Zayas can be reached at azayas@tampabay.com or (813) 226-3354. Source: <http://www.tampabay.com/news/education/state-to-colonel-license-your-military-school-or-deal-with-a-prosecutor/1262771>

HEAL SUPPORTER CYNTHIA ORTIZ BEGINS WORKING WITH STATE SENATOR PHIL GRIEGO TO AMEND NEW MEXICO'S LAWS TO BETTER PROTECT CHILDREN FROM INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE IN JANUARY, 2013: Phil A. Griego (D-NM--State Senator) introduced legislation on

January 24th, 2013 to improve legal protections for victims of child abuse and institutional abuse. The bill was SB 252 and we hope it will be re-introduced next session. For more information on this legislation, visit: <http://www.nmlegis.gov/Sessions/13%20Regular/bills/senate/SB0252.pdf>

HEAL SUPPORTER CAROLINE MALLARY PETITIONED MASSACHUSETTS STATE LEGISLATORS TO AMEND LAWS TO BETTER PROTECT CHILDREN FROM INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE IN JANUARY, 2013: Katherine M. Clark (D-MA--State Senator) introduced legislation based on Mallary's petition in January, 2013. The bill is S. 46 and has been referred to the Committee on Children, Family, and Persons with Disabilities. For more information on this legislation, visit: <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/188/Senate/S46>

UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL: Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Juan E. Méndez
February 1st, 2013

Excerpt from Report Summary:

The present report focuses on certain forms of abuses in health-care settings that may cross a threshold of mistreatment that is tantamount to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. It identifies the policies that promote these practices and existing protection gaps. By illustrating some of these abusive practices in health-care settings, the report sheds light on often undetected forms of abusive practices that occur under the auspices of health-care policies, and emphasizes how certain treatments run afoul of the prohibition on torture and ill-treatment. It identifies the scope of State's obligations to regulate, control and supervise health-care practices with a view to preventing mistreatment under any pretext. The Special Rapporteur examines a number of the abusive practices commonly reported in health-care settings and describes how the torture and ill-treatment framework applies in this context. The examples of torture and ill-treatment in health settings discussed likely represent a small fraction of this global problem.

Source: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session22/A.HRC.22.53_English.pdf (If the report is not available at this link, [request a copy](#) and we will send it to you.)

SIA March 2013 Mark Levine



MARK LEVINE, HEAL ADVISOR, SPEAKING AT [SURVIVORS OF INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE](#) MARCH IN APRIL, 2013

HEAL CALIFORNIA, KENTUCKY, AND HEADQUARTERS' CHAPTERS PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL MARCH AGAINST CHILD ABUSE ON APRIL 22ND, 2013. (See: <http://www.heal-online.org/mac2013.htm> for more information)

S. 833, EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITHOUT HOMES ACT OF 2013, INTRODUCED BY SEN. PATTY MURRAY (D-WA) (See: <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/s833> for more information)

This bill has been submitted twice since 2009. The purpose is to keep children and youth in their communities and ensure that public schools are meeting the needs of all students regardless of income inequality or disability. HEAL supports this legislation and believes it will help put an end to the misuse of public funds in sending public school children out of their home states to fraudulent and abusive residential programs out of state.

HR 1893, KEEPING ALL STUDENTS SAFE ACT, INTRODUCED BY REP. GEORGE MILLER (D-CA) ON MAY 8TH, 2013 (See: <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/hr1893> for more information)

This bill's purpose is to prevent and reduce the use of physical restraints and seclusion in schools. HEAL supports this legislation and believes it will help stop the abuse rampant in schools and programs for children and youth.

HR 1981, THE STOP CHILD ABUSE IN RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS FOR TEENS ACT OF 2013, INTRODUCED BY REP. GEORGE MILLER (D-CA) ON MAY 15TH, 2013. (See: <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/hr1981> for more information) This is the most recent submission of this legislation which dates back to 2005 (HR 1738). This legislation would place additional programs under the regulations of the US Department of Health and Human Services. Problems with this legislation include that it does not specifically address requiring faith-based programs for youth be covered/regulated and since many States hold those programs exempt from regulation, it is unlikely that faith-based programs will be covered. In addition, programs that are currently "regulated" by the US Department of Health and Human Services regularly fail to protect consumers from fraud and abuse and rely on third-party accreditation bodies (i.e. Joint Commission) to provide oversight. Those accrediting bodies then rely on self-assessment as the primary source for information regarding compliance. While HEAL supports additional regulations, we fear that passing a law such as this with no real teeth will simply pacify consumers into enrolling loved ones in fraudulent and abusive programs while State agencies pass the buck from one agency to another to avoid serious regulation of this out of control industry.

HEAL CONFIRMED THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS TO BE CLOSED IN 2013:

Eckerd's E-Ma-Henwu in North Carolina

Camp Tracy Children's Home in Florida

Camas Ranch (WWASPS) in Montana

Cross Creek Programs (WWASPS) in Utah

Academy at Swift River (Aspen/CRC) in Massachusetts

Hope Home and Academy in Mississippi

Austin Sendero Recovery in Texas

Victory Christian Academy aka Lighthouse of Northwest Florida in Florida

For more information on these closures, see <http://www.beyondbusiness.net/youarenext.htm>

HEAL ILLINOIS LAUNCHES FIRST PETITION TO CHANGE ILLINOIS' LAWS TO BETTER PROTECT CHILDREN AND YOUTH FROM INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE: Petition launched on March 17th, 2014. Learn more about our State Action Campaigns at <http://www.heal-online.org/action2.htm> and sign the petition now at: http://petitions.moveon.org/sign/illinois-general-assembly?source=c.tw&r_by=10225086

HEAL PARTICIPATED IN NATIONWIDE MARCH AGAINST CHILD ABUSE: HEAL participated in the national March Against Child Abuse in Monroe, WA on April 5th, 2014. For photos and more regarding our support and participation in this event, [click here](#).

Mom Calls Rehab Place a Private Prison By JONNY BONNER
April 7th, 2014

SALT LAKE CITY (CN) - A mother claims in court that her teenage daughter was taken from Texas by a human trafficker and locked up at a secret "private prison" in Utah, where she was made to perform "mindless tasks of blind obedience." Miriam Blank sued Bain Capital, Aspen Education Group, Aspen Institute of Behavioral Assessment, the Harris County Office of Human Resources and Risk Management, Guardians of Hope and two people, in Federal Court. Blank claims her 16-year-old daughter, H.N., was removed from the Lone Star State by lead defendant Jack Nuszen, N.H.'s father, after he tried to portray her as an unfit mother to their five children. Blank claims the move was intended to thwart her visitation rights and "to spite and torment" her. "Jack Nuszen has used the biased Harris County Family Court system to case Miriam Blank as an unfit mother to their five children," the lawsuit states. "Although he is guilty of physically abusing N.H., he has, by falsely obtained court orders and engaging a human trafficking service, removed H.N. from her school, where she was an outstanding student and well-adjusted young woman, and against her will and without her consent, forced her relocation from Texas to Utah, where she is confined by the defendant Aspen against her will and without her consent in one or the other of its locked down compounds. There, she is locked up for an indefinite time, having done nothing wrong or truant solely to deprive her of her freedom and cause extreme anxiety to Miriam Blank, her mother, as to her whereabouts and welfare." Blanks says her daughter is being held an undisclosed and possibly remote area, where successful escapes are rare. "H.N. had no hearing as to why she was taken away and locked up. There was no forum for complaint, for explanation, for appeal, or protest against the placement, either before, during, or after it occurred. The only option was to run away, but these private prisons are often located in remote areas and are closely guarded in any event. Successful runs are rare, and most often police retrieve the escapee," the 21-page complaint states. "Once confined, no contact with the outside world is allowed, except with the persons transferring custody to the prison. Contact with family members or friends is not allowed, and even contact with the family member or agency that transferred full and complete custody to the prison is monitored, and the inmate knows that any disparaging remark or complaint about the prison will be punished by a loss of all privileges earned, meaning having to start at the bottom all over again to rise from level to level by successfully completing mindless tasks of blind obedience." "The hapless minors will soon learn that they can be locked up for their entire minority as long as there is money to pay for it. The custody transfer agreements allow the private prisons to do anything they want to the minors and can enforce compliance with their demands by punishment, sometimes extremely harsh, medication at the handlers' discretion, forced disclosure of private deeds or thoughts, public confession of past deeds or thoughts, etc. "What the private prisons do to the minor children whom they have incarcerated, if done by their parents or custodians on the outside, would be swiftly prosecuted as child abuse and false imprisonment." Blank claims defendant Guardians of Hope - the alleged human trafficker - and operator and defendant Norma Willcockson removed N.H. from school and transported her across state lines. She claims that once inside the private prison, "These helpless children can be deprived of freedom, of contact, correspondence, and communication with family and friends, or anyone outside the compound; they can be deprived of legal counsel; of sleep, food, privacy, dignity, education; compensation for their labor; the right to refuse treatment or enforced medication; or the need of a second opinion regarding the propriety of the treatment forced upon them; of the right to grieve, to object, to recourse, or to appeal; Harris County made no investigation of the private prison where it allowed H.N. to be sent." Blank claims she has copies of bills that Aspen submitted to Nuszen for its services, but the residential treatment center has refused to provide any information about H.N. "The county and its agents either know or should know that Aspen and its co-defendants incarcerate and isolate minors for an indefinite period of time who have never been adjudicated as truant or violators, and throw them in with other minors who may have been highly truant and adjudicated as misdemeanants, or who may have various forms of mental illness, criminal records, or drug addictions," Blank claims. "The county and its agents know that the prefrontal cortex of H.N. is not fully developed and that its complicity in inflicting upon her undeserved gross and unfair punishment will have a permanent deleterious effect upon her mental and emotional development, and will at the very least, cause her to suffer into adulthood the ravages of post traumatic stress." Bain Capital purchased Aspen Education for \$300 million in 2006. Analysts estimated that companies like Aspen had profit margins of 10 to 20 percent of revenue, The New York Times reported in 2005, according to Blank's lawsuit. Blank's attorney did not respond to inquiries by press time. In January, the companies were [sued](#) by parents who claimed Dr. Phil paid to have their teenage daughter locked up. Blank seeks an injunction and a writ demanding that N.H. appear before a court in Utah, plus punitive damage, for civil rights violations and negligence. She is represented by Thomas Burton.

Source: <http://www.courthousenews.com/2014/04/07/66859.htm>

LA-area boot camp instructor sentenced for abuse Published 6:55 pm, Monday, April 21, 2014 LOS ANGELES (AP) — A former instructor charged with abusing youngsters at a Southern California boot camp for troubled teens has been sentenced to 60 days in jail. [Edgar Alvarado](#) also was given 30 days of community labor Monday and forbidden to perform any counseling, training or care involving children. He pleaded no contest to felony child abuse. Prosecutors say Alvarado owned "Recon 180," a paramilitary-style camp for troubled children with headquarters in East Los Angeles and a training facility in the mountains. Prosecutors say youngsters there underwent grueling physical regimens and some teenagers claimed they were punched, slapped or stomped. Several were hospitalized. Source: <http://www.sfgate.com/news/crime/article/LA-area-boot-camp-instructor-sentenced-for-abuse-5419340.php>

The It Gets Better Project has launched a new campaign to put an end to conversion/reparative therapy and treatment (aka brainwashing/coercive thought reform to change sexual orientation). Please contact them to share your story and to get help stopping this abuse. Victims of Conversion/Reparative Treatment Speak Out Now—<http://www.itgetsbetter.org/page/s/endconversiontherapy?source=20140306email> (Announced: May 8th, 2014)

JODI HOBBS, SIA FOUNDER, WITH OPENING CEREMONY FOR [SURVIVORS OF INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE](#) CONVENTION IN MAY, 2014

(Special Note: HEAL does not endorse nor support OWN network or anyone affiliated with HARPO Productions due to the ongoing enrollment of children by HARPO Productions programs (i.e. Dr. Phil) in fraudulent and abusive programs. In addition, other HARPO shows have presented programs and referrers/program networks such as Hazelden on Rachael Ray. We encourage Dr. Strozier to educate Oprah regarding her programs' complacency and active support of institutional abuse. (It even happens at her own program in Africa, see: <http://abcnews.go.com/International/troubles-oprah-winfreys-school-south-africa/story?id=12950275>)

HEAL ADVISOR, MARK LEVINE, IS RUNNING FOR CONGRESS IN VIRGINIA! (2014) Please volunteer and/or contribute to this campaign! With Rep. George Miller (D-CA) retiring, we need a strong voice in Congress who will take a stand against institutional fraud and abuse. Learn more and sign up at www.levineforcongress.com.

By [Jessica Trufant](#) May 14, 2014 3:32PM **Marshfield man accused of raping teen worked with troubled teens in Quincy** A Marshfield man accused of plying an underage, teenage girl with alcohol before sexually assaulting her at his Ferry Street home was employed at a Quincy program for teens with drug and alcohol issues. PHOTO/ Marshfield Police Joseph Regan, 49, of 1181 Ferry St. MARSHFIELD -- A Marshfield man accused of plying an underage, teenage girl with alcohol before sexually assaulting her at his Ferry Street home was employed at a Quincy program for teens with drug and alcohol issues. Stephanie Paauwe, director of development for Volunteers of America Massachusetts, on Wednesday said Joseph Regan, 49, of 1181 Ferry St., has been fired from Rebound Adolescent Treatment Program, located on Moon Island Road in Quincy. "Joseph Regan is no longer an employee of the Rebound Program for failure to report for work," she said. "We've been notified of the allegations made against Mr. Regan and are fully cooperating with authorities. At this time, our thoughts and prayers are with the victim and her family." Regan is charged with reckless endangerment of a child, enticement of a child under the age of 16, indecent assault and battery on a child age 14 or older, statutory rape with an age difference of more than 10 years and selling or furnishing alcohol to person under the age of 21. Regan is being held without bail pending the outcome of a dangerousness hearing scheduled for Thursday in Plymouth District Court. Police say that Regan offered a teenage girl a ride before giving her alcohol and driving her around. Regan allegedly then brought her back to his home, where he sexually assaulted her. Paauwe said the victim is not a client of the **Rebound Adolescent Treatment Program**. She could not say how long Regan had worked there. Marshfield Police Lt. Arthur Shaw said police executed a search warrant of Regan's home and vehicle last Tuesday after the incident was reported to them earlier that day. Regan on Sunday showed up at Marshfield police station with his attorney to turn himself in to officers. Calling Regan a "dangerous predator," Shaw said police want to speak to anyone who may have been assaulted by him in the past or who has any information that adds to the case. "We encourage any other potential victims to come forward, as we do consider this individual to be a dangerous predator," Shaw said. Shaw said Regan is not currently a registered sex offender and does not have any sexual assault charges on his record. Anyone with information should contact Marshfield Police Detective Greg Davis at 781-834-5591 ex. 141. <http://www.patriotledger.com/article/20140514/NEWS/140518042>

CT task force spars with parents over billing fraud in family court By [Anne Stevenson](#), Communities Digital News [Family Life](#) February 1, 2014 New Haven Court House CONNECTICUT, December 26, 2013 (Story received May 23rd, 2014) — Colleen Kerwick, Hector Morera, and Dan Lynch say they are fit Connecticut parents with open family court cases who are struggling to pay millions in questionable court ordered fees spanning several years. This year, dozens of CT parents like Kerwick and Morera complained to the legislature that the court has misused the court appointment process to force parents into business relationships with unvetted and inappropriate court affiliated vendors who are bankrupting them through questionable billing practices. Despite a [2010 State auditor's report](#) showing millions misappropriated from the Judicial Branch's [\\$500 million annual budget](#), a legislative task force established to assess CT's broken family courts disagrees with parents who blame internal fraud for the court's issues and say an audit of the court's books and contracts is unnecessary. In November 2013, Kerwick, a CT based entertainment attorney, told me about her "high conflict" divorce from a well to do Connecticut businessman Kenneth Savino. Police reports show that Savino had previously been arrested for assaulting Kerwick, and in April 2012, Savino was [arrested again](#) on risk of injury to a minor charges in addition to charges that he interfered with police. Kerwick says that collectively, the family has spent about \$610,000 on litigation costs. Although the guardian ad litem Karen Tarpey billed the family [more than \\$40,000](#) to represent the best interests and wishes of Kerwick's and Savino's child, billing records show she spent very little time actually meeting with the child. Controversial child psychologist [Sidney Horowitz](#) also billed the family \$20,000 to perform a custody evaluation. Savino received custody of the child after both professionals failed to provide the court with information sufficient to end her custody. Kerwick says that all of the professionals appointed to her case failed to warn her that Horowitz was [in business](#) with Judicial Branch officials who oversaw her case, and that other litigants had raised troubling questions about Horowitz's [controversial billing practices](#). When Kerwick's savings began to dry up and she raised questions about the integrity of the billing practices of the professionals appointed onto the case, Kerwick says suddenly her lawyers had marbles in their mouths and the ink in their pens began to dry up. "After paying \$110K in attorney's fees, I learnt that being pro se is more effective," says Kerwick. "That said, I'm only 2 years in so I may lose yet by attrition. My ex can outspend me." Hector Morera's experience with the Connecticut courts was similar to Kerwick's. In 2012, Morera was facing outrageous [legal bills](#) when he lost custody of his children, despite the fact that he has no history of abuse or neglect. In October 2013, a court order severed Morera's access to his children after local media reports exposed the fact Morera was ordered to pay [a \\$30,000 GAL bill](#) for services not clearly identified. The tab for all Morera's legal bills currently totals over \$52,000. Dozens of parents like Morera and Kerwick say their life savings and retirement accounts have been wiped out by the family courts. They want an audit to assess the extent of internal fraud in the system. Task Force Conflicted Over Whether to Audit State Vendor Payments to Family Court Professionals. In 2013, the Connecticut legislature established the [Task Force to Study Legal Disputes Involving the Care and Custody of Minor Children](#) to evaluate complaints from dozens of affected parents. The task force will assess complaints that the family courts are not only mishandling cases, but also facilitating widespread taxpayer funded fraud. Affected parents say that unethical vendors appointed to their cases are padding the bills by creating unnecessary conflicts and forcing them to pay for evaluations and services the families do not need. Parents are forced to deal with these vendors, because they have immense power to influence the outcome of their family court cases. Now complaints are surfacing that task force leaders have serious conflicts of interest. Insiders say these questionable professionals may also be blocking the efforts of honest task force members to meaningfully investigate and address the fraud and waste of State resources. Pointing out discrepancies in the rates that both parents and the State are required to pay for identical services, task force member Jennifer Viranault contends that a financial audit is needed to determine how the family court and the Public Defender's office are funding guardian ad litem and expert OPD bankrolls on some [575 family court cases](#) annually. However, task force co-chair Susan Cousineau has thus far opposed efforts to obtain such billing records from the State.

Long time court reform advocates Michael Nowacki and Cheryl Martone have also raised concerns that none of the task force's members are parents who have experienced the family court's dysfunction first hand. They also say Connecticut legislators have appointed several family court industry officials who are affiliated with the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC). Both Nowacki and Martone say it is a conflict of interest for AFCC members to oversee the task force charged with solving problems in the family courts created by the same questionable Judicial Branch vendor's [programs](#) and members. [AFCC affiliated](#) task force members include attorney Sharon Dornfeld, Justine Rakich Kelly of the [Children's Law Center](#), and Judicial Branch administrator Joseph DiTunno who has helped oversee the court's problematic [grant programs](#) and operations for over a decade. Task force co-chair Susan Cousineau co-founded the AFCC's CT chapter with [several of the judges](#) whose decisions have been recently called into question by parents referenced in this article. According to an article published in [Communities Digital News](#), the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) and its CT chapter are Judicial Branch vendors founded and operated by the CT family court's own salaried State employees. Questions have arisen as to why the Judicial Branch paid the AFCC to perform many functions in the family courts when the organization's members and directors are the same court employees who already receive a State salary to perform the same essential services. The Washington Times story focused on the AFCC's troubling past with the authorities and the organization's role in dozens of CT cases where parents were bankrupted by questionable bills. According to the IRS and various state offices, multiple AFCC chapters across the country have been repeatedly shut down by the IRS and authorities for violations of various laws and regulations. Since the Washington Times Communities story was published in May 2013, there has been no indication from law enforcement that they are investigating AFCC's activities. Although the corporation's sub regulatory activities in CT remain under investigation by the Secretary of State, the Secretary's office claims it has no duty or intention to report to law enforcement any information regarding the outcome of their investigation. Prior State Audits Uncover Widespread Mismanagement of Judicial Branch Resources, Lack of Communication With Law Enforcement This was not the first time [State authorities](#) had questioned the Judicial Branch's book keeping without filing a criminal case. In 2010, the Connecticut State Auditor released [a report](#) which detailed how the Judicial Branch's "lack of internal controls" resulted in severe mismanagement of the agency's \$200m budget and internal administrative operations. Auditors also identified tens of millions intended to reach the State's most at risk families through Judicial Branch vendors which remained missing or improperly accounted for. However, Auditors failed to refer their findings to law enforcement to determine whether criminal activity had played any role in the misappropriations. The Connecticut State auditor confirmed in writing that their office chose not to report to law enforcement any of the "discrepancies" or evidence of possible fraud and criminal activities discovered during the course of their review of the Judicial Branch. The auditor [wrote](#) that he determined that his office had no duty to report such findings because it went beyond stated scope of the audit: "Our audit was focused on the Judicial Branch's lack of internal control, and therefore there was no follow up made with law enforcement." Connecticut's Office of the Chief Public Defender has also been the subject of several scathing State audits which detailed similar widespread mismanagement of taxpayer resources. Each year, OPD oversees the representation of thousands of indigent defendants in criminal and child welfare cases, as well as bankrolls the attorneys and experts appointed onto them. According to their annual report, OPD also financed more than [575 GAL's](#) appointed onto family court cases. At a September 2013 Connecticut Freedom of Information Act Commission hearing, the OPD disclosed the following facts at the hearing: (1) OPD has not consistently kept an accurate tally of payments made to court appointed professionals, (2) OPD and the Judicial Branch do not always formally vet such contractors or require competitive bidding or consumer protection contracts to obtain such [State sponsored] appointments in the family courts, (3) OPD often pays some of the contractors appointed onto cases at rates that are several times the legislatively mandated rate for the same professional services, and (4) OPD will not open their books to disclose how much money is spent or allow the public to review the administrative billing records for its office operations. Despite these revelations, task force co-chair Tom Weissmuller says the State's bankrolling of GAL is done at reasonable State rates of about \$50 per hour with a cap of \$500 per case. While Weissmuller does sympathize with the complaints of parents about the [GAL system](#) as a whole, he notes that the task force is unable to conduct such an audit because no mechanism exists which would allow the task force to audit or assess privately bankrolled professionals. Paul Boyne, a CT father whose rights were taken away after he questioned the integrity of the billing statements submitted by the taxpayer funded professionals appointed onto [his family court case](#), disagrees with Weissmuller. Boyne says that an audit of OPD's books to document allegations of billing fraud is exactly what is needed. Yet instead of auditing the books, Boyne says some task force members are blaming victimized parents for the State's mismanagement of its' own multi-billion dollar family court industry. Susan Skipp, another CT parent who says she was driven into bankruptcy and had her parental rights effectively severed after she raised concerns that her family had been targeted by a family court [billing fraud scam](#), also says an audit of the Judicial Branch's books is needed to restore public confidence in the agency's activities. "If the Judicial Branch were a for-profit corporation, the board of directors would start 'fixing' it by conducting a financial audit of the company's book keeping records to see where all their money is going" says Skipp. "It does not make sense for members to block internal efforts to obtain financial records that document the financial dealings between problematic vendors and the State." Yet according to task force insiders, this is exactly the approach that the Legislature and the Judicial Branch appear to have taken. Skipp says that if the purpose of the task force was to address parents complaints about billing scams in the family courts, "perhaps the task force should start by ending the PR campaign blaming victimized parents for the State's own shoddy work and mismanagement of the Judicial Branch." "I just want to spend time with my kids" says Skipp. "Why does the court have to make this so difficult?" Read more at <http://www.commdiginews.com/life/ct-task-force-spars-with-parents-over-billing-fraud-in-family-court-6410/#JIG3IkImhVP6es1.99>

Sex abuse alleged at Utah youth home Courts » September trial set for Spanish Fork youth home employee. The Salt Lake Tribune First Published May 29 2014 04:28 pm Last Updated May 29 2014 04:32 pm A September trial date has been set for a man accused of sexually abusing two 14-year-old girls at a group home for troubled teens in Spanish Fork. Charges filed in 4th District Court allege that Wade Russell, 60, committed the crimes while employed at Extended Family Services. One girl said that on Nov. 3, 2013, her third night at EFS, Russell went into her room, lay down next to her bed and fondled her over her clothing, according to charging documents. She said she knew of another girl who also had been abused. Security camera footage from that time shows Russell's feet "sticking out of the doorway as if he is lying down," court documents claim. The girl's roommate confirmed that Russell was lying close to the victim, prosecutors say. The other victim said Russell sexually abused her on multiple occasions after she arrived at EFS in June 2013. She said that on Nov. 2, Russell asked her to join him in the laundry room because he could turn off the lights and escape the security cameras. Video from outside the laundry room allegedly shows Russell entering the laundry room and turning off the lights before the girl followed him inside. She claimed that Russell molested her then, and later the same day in her room. The second victim said Russell also used his cell phone to show her pornography. A job evaluation for Russell by EFS in August shows he was told not to have "any contact with female residents alone or out of the view of the camera," and that he was told to stop "hugging the young girls," according to charges. Charging documents do not indicate why those instructions were given. Russell denied to police touching either of the girls sexually and said the events recorded on camera amounted only to poor judgment on his part. When asked for his cell phone to search its browser history, he said he lost the phone, police reported. Russell is charged with three counts of aggravated sexual abuse of a child, and one count each of forcible sodomy, sodomy of a child and attempted rape of a child, all first-degree felonies; and seven counts of second-degree felony forcible sexual abuse; and two counts of third-degree felony dealing in material harmful to a minor.

Source: <http://m.sltrib.com/sltrib/mobile3/58004247-219/russell-abuse-girl-camera.html.csp>

What happens when you introduce troubled teens to theatre Posted on: 11:31 am, May 27, 2014, by [Sarah J. Clark](#) Share this: [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Pinterest](#) [Google](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Email](#) MANHATTAN, N.Y. — "I wish I could take it back. Actually, no. I don't wish I could take it back because what happens to me afterwards is one of the best things that happened to me in my entire life," Christopher Thompson said. Thompson is talking about an altercation he had at school. He hit a fellow student in the face with a lock. The student went to the hospital, received stitches and pressed charges. Thompson's life has never been the same. He's now a changed man with the help of [Stargate Theatre Company](#). It was launched in 2013 by the [Manhattan Theatre Club](#). It employed seven court-involved young men to write and perform a play. "I see kids whose confidence is built, whose ability to express themselves is better than when they came in," Judy Tate, an artistic director with Stargate. Tate is actually a four-time Emmy Award-winning playwright. For more than 10 years Tate has worked with troubled youth. "One of the reasons why I feel so dedicated to these young men is maybe they come from areas that have been left behind," she said. Youth that have participated in the program admit it's a completely different environment for them. "When I first walked in, I was shy," Thompson said. "I just didn't feel comfortable. I felt out of my skin. And I was like, 'Aghhh, this is awful, why am I here? I'm not a talker! But I need the money, so why not stay?'" Tate said at first many of the young men who come in are wary of any type of authority figure. "And here I am putting them in this situation and we're asking them to play," she said. "Gradually, over the course of time, their shoulders start to go down and their backs start to straighten up. Sometimes you start to see a smile

where sometimes you might not have seen a smile before. Stargate had its first public performance in August 2013. "When we perform? Oh, my God, it's like heroine. It's like the greatest drug ever," Thompson said. The young men aren't after fame or fortune. They perform because the love it. "Even if people would have said, 'Wow, you guys are awful,' we'd be like, 'We did it and you didn't. You're just mad,'" Thompson said. "I really enjoy performing. I love it." For more information about Stargate Theatre Company, visit their [website](#). Source: <http://fox4kc.com/2014/05/27/what-happens-when-you-introduce-troubled-teens-to-theatre/>

Local family encourages others to become foster care parents May is foster care awareness month [Small Text Medium Text Large Text Print Email](#) Local family encourages others to become foster care parents Show Transcript Hide Transcript More than 150 kids in our community are in foster care right now... and about 40-percent of them are not guaranteed a home. News 8's Brittany Schmidt introduces us to one foster-care family...whose been taking in kids for more than 3 decades....Brittany Mark, Maxine and Tom Jacobs started doing foster care in 19-76... Now more than 80 kids later, they say it's one of the most rewarding experiences of their life... My husband Tom and I have been married 41 years. Maxine is a retired ICU nurse...and Tom is a retired police officer We have two biological children, one just turned 40 this week and the other one is 36, and we have six grandchildren. They always knew they would have a big family When they left the house, we didn't like the empty nest part of it, we wanted children in the home, we enjoy that, we enjoy the confusion and the noise and all the things that go along with having a larger family. Tom and Maxine knew they had more love to give...so they decided to get into foster care. When we first started, we went through the licensing process, we were actually going to do care for adults....and the plans changed. Isaac came to us when he was 10, just about 11, it was suppose to be a short-term, like 3-6 monts foster placement before he went back home. Joy and Respect. We were pretty overwhelmed by that, coming from a little 10 year old boy so that always kind of stuck with us. Over the months, Isaac became part of the family. We had talked about it but he was never in a position that we thought he would be adopted because re-unification is the goal. Until one day...Isaac decided to make his short-term stay...a permanent one. TOM -- He came home and says I would you to sit down, I want to talk to you about something, he said I am going to let you adopt me and we went from there. Isaac was adopted by the Jacobs in 2007. He had his own room, a stable family...and all that was missing was a dog. He always wanted a dog because he had a dog when he was living at home with mom. When the Jacobs finally got a dog, they let Isaac name her. MAXINE -- and he named her joy. So that just made me feel that the joy and respect that he really wanted in his life that he is attaining that. Isaac is just one of the many lives the Jacobs have touched... It's really rewarding, there is much more reward than anything else. It's not only families who can think about foster care options. single parents and community members are encouraged to consider becoming a foster parent as well. Thanks Brittany, There are about 70 licensed foster homes in La Crosse...and the county is hoping to double that in the near future. If you would like more information about foster care...head to our website- news-8-thousand-dot-com LA CROSSE, Wis. (WKBT) - May is Foster Care Awareness month and local agencies are encouraging community members to take a chance on foster care. Related Content WKBT, News8000.com More than 150 kids in our community are in foster care right now and about 40 percent of them are not guaranteed a home. However, one family has been doing it for over three decades and said it's one of the most rewarding experiences of their family members' life. "My husband Tom and I have been married 41 years," said Maxine Jacobs, a foster care parent in La Crosse. Maxine is a retired ICU nurse and Tom is a retired police officer. "We have two biological children, one just turned 40 this week and the other one is 36, and we have six grandchildren," said Maxine. They always knew they would have a big family. "When they left the house, we didn't like the empty nest part of it. We wanted children in the home, we enjoy that, we enjoy the confusion and the noise and all the things that go along with having a larger family," said Maxine. The Jacobs knew they had more love to give so they decided to get into foster care. "When we first started, we went through the licensing process, we were actually going to do care for adults and the plans changed," said Tom Jacobs, a foster care parent in La Crosse. "Isaac came to us when he was 10, just about 11, it was supposed to be a short term, like three to six months foster placement before he went back home," said Maxine. Before Isaac moved in with the Jacobs, he told his social worker he wanted two things in life, joy and respect. "We were pretty overwhelmed by that, coming from a little 10-year-old boy so that always kind of stuck with us," said Maxine. Over the months, Isaac became part of the family. "We had talked about it but he was never in a position that we thought he would be adopted because re-unification is the goal," said Tom. Until one day, Isaac decided to make his short-term stay a permanent one. "He came home and says I would like you to sit down, I want to talk to you about something, he said I am going to let you adopt me and we went from there," said Tom. Isaac was adopted by the Jacobs in 2007. He had his own room, a stable family and all that was missing was a dog. "He always wanted a dog because he had a dog when he was living at home with mom," said Maxine. When the Jacobs finally got a dog, they let Isaac name her and he named her Joy. "So that just made me feel that the joy and respect that he really wanted in his life that he is attaining that," said Maxine. Isaac is just one of the many lives the Jacobs have touched, but they say they receive more than they give. "There is much more reward than anything else," said Maxine. It's not only families who can think about foster care options... single parents and community members are encouraged to consider becoming a foster parent as well. There are about 70 licensed foster homes in La Crosse...and the county is hoping to double that in the near future. If you would like more information about foster care, you can contact the La Crosse County Human Services Department at 608-789-4834. Copyright 2014 by [WKBT News8000](#). All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Source: <http://www.news8000.com/news/local-family-encourages-others-to-become-foster-care-parents/26165942>

May 25, 2014 1:33 AM by Sam Salzwedel **Family takes child welfare crisis into own hands** TUCSON - Steve and Nancy Boccardo think they have taken in about 50 foster children over the years. "We were trying to figure out a count the other day and didn't quite get there," Steve Boccardo said. "We know we've done 14 in the last couple." Some children have stayed in their home for 24 hours. Others stay a couple years. The Boccardos adopted four. They say the fosters are just like their two biological children. "The kiddos are just regular kids that need love," Nancy Boccardo said. "And they need a structured loving home and a place to lay their head until their families are healed." About 3,400 children in Pima County are in foster care across 700 homes. There are 14,000 foster children in the state of Arizona. The Boccardos grow attached to the children but are happy to see them go back to their families. "It's sad. It's bittersweet," Nancy Boccardo said. "But kids want to be at home with their biological families." The Arizona legislature is starting a special session Tuesday. Lawmakers hope to solve some of the problems the state's child welfare agency has been facing. Rep. Ethan Orr believes the session will only last 3 days and will deal with 3 main issues. He wants the state to offer a childcare subsidy to families that are trying to work and raise children. "If you don't have some assistance, there's a tendency to fall back on the Section 8 or the TANF and the more expensive government subsidies," Orr said. "And then sometimes people don't have the ability to take care of the kids. And then they end up in the system." He also wants CPS workers to have better access to data. Orr said a caseworker might not know if they are seeing a family with no CPS record or an extensive one. He also said access to data like animal abuse records could help workers see a bigger picture to analyze a situation. Orr said the state needs to take better care of the employees. He said a high turnover rate is costing taxpayers money. He hopes to see new retention bonuses for workers who stay with the agency for certain amounts of time. "They have to help families and see families when they're at their absolute worst," Orr said. "What kind of support do we give them when they go home? What kind of support do we give them so they don't get burned out?" To become a foster parent, about a dozen agencies in Pima County help with the training and licensing of families. Source: <http://www.kvoa.com/news/family-takes-child-welfare-crisis-into-own-hands/>

Doctor concerned burned foster child at risk Doctor concerned burned foster child at risk By Darcy Henton, Calgary Herald May 26, 2014 [Comment](#) 5 A veteran Strathmore emergency room doctor fears a vulnerable foster child may be in peril after she was returned to a foster home where she suffered serious burns to her face five months ago. Dr. David Rudkin told the Herald the two-year-old severely developmentally impaired aboriginal girl suffered first-and second-degree burns that he believes were the result of either abuse or extreme neglect. A former medical examiner and 30-year physician, Rudkin, 55, said he decided to speak out because he doesn't believe there has been an adequate investigation, and child welfare officials have returned the child to the foster home where he believes other foster children could also be at risk. "It's obvious no one is interested in doing anything," he said in an interview. "I think this is another catastrophe waiting to happen." But Human Services spokeswoman Kathy Telfer said the ministry is aware of the incident and believes it was investigated thoroughly by Child Intervention Services and the RCMP. "All parties involved in the investigations indicated that the injuries were accidental," she said. "We have also been working closely with the home and following up with the child frequently." Rudkin said he saw the child "looking distressed and in pain" when she was brought to emergency in January the morning after suffering the burns. The male foster parent accompanying her said the foster mother was bathing the child in the bath tub with a shower spray nozzle when one of the other children in the home turned the tap to hot, Rudkin said. "The burn pattern was suspicious or peculiar in that it was strictly confined to her face and did not go to her scalp, ears or neck," he said. "It would have been a significant amount of time there was hot water sprayed on this kid's face to cause this peculiar burn pattern ... It just didn't make sense this would have been a hot water burn."

Rudkin said it was also concerning that the foster parents waited 12 to 15 hours to bring the child to emergency. "I think this kid would have been screaming in agony and they would have acted on it, but they didn't," he said. After the child was transferred to Alberta Children's Hospital in Calgary, Rudkin said he followed up to see if anyone there had raised concerns about the nature of the injury. When he found out they had not, he contacted RCMP and Alberta child welfare officials to raise the alarm. Rudkin said when he called back later to find out what was being done, he found the case had been closed. The RCMP constable assigned to the case told him she visited the home and talked to the foster parents but didn't find anything worrisome or suspicious, Rudkin added. The doctor said he was astonished he was not interviewed by police or child welfare investigators. When he attempted to advocate for the child, Rudkin said he was referred to a series of child welfare officials who were "surly and defensive" and who said they couldn't talk about the case because of privacy concerns. He said at the bare minimum, the children should be removed from the foster home pending a proper investigation by child welfare officials and police. "I see kids with all sorts of injury all the time. I am trained as a family physician and I have been doing this for close to 30 years," he said. "Usually I can see the mechanism of the injury. It's pretty clear. This one? There's no way it could have happened like that. I just don't believe it."

Doctor concerned burned foster child at risk But Telfer said RCMP investigated the home and later that day indicated they would not be pursuing charges as they felt the explanation was credible. Telfer noted a child abuse team at the Alberta Children's Hospital also worked closely on the investigation. "We take any report of alleged abuse or mistreatment of a foster child seriously and we will take whatever action is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of all of our children in care," she said. "We strive to have one of the most stringent screening processes for foster parents in the country." Rudkin took his concerns to the Alberta Child and Youth Advocate, but that office only looks into systemic issues arising from serious injuries, and a spokesman said it didn't find any in its review of the file. "We expect the decisions made by those responsible for her care will ensure her safety and her interests are the primary considerations," said the advocate's spokesman, Tim Chander. "We have assigned an advocate to ensure this child's interests are being considered by decision-makers." The situation arose after Human Services Minister Manmeet Bhullar launched an overhaul of the child welfare system to address concerns raised by an Calgary Herald-Edmonton Journal investigation last fall. The series revealed that child welfare workers frequently failed to follow basic policies and procedures in a range of areas from proper safety inspections of foster homes, completing criminal record checks on foster parents and other care providers and ensuring foster children received proper medical attention. The newspaper investigation also found repeated instances of caseworkers failing to follow policy that required they have frequent face-to-face meetings with foster parents and foster children. In some cases, children were not seen or foster parents visited for months. But Telfer said workers now have regular contact with foster children and foster parents, and all foster homes undergo a home assessment before being approved and are reviewed annually. "We monitor the safety and wellbeing of foster children after they are placed in a foster home," Telfer added. dhenton@calgaryherald.com

Source: <http://www.calgaryherald.com/news/alberta/Doctor+concerned+burned+foster+child+risk/9877118/story.html>

Foster care home need still exists Wednesday, May 28, 2014 12:00 AM Comments (1) There are 20 children faced with foster care in Greenwood. These children have been brought into the care of the state because of neglect or abuse of some sort. There are 11 resource foster homes in Greenwood. The number 11 can be misleading to those who find comfort in knowing that at least 11 homes can offer care to some of the children in care. What's misleading is that some of the 11 homes might already have children placed in them; the 11 homes might not be licensed for the children that are currently in care or may even be a safe haven for children from a neighboring county. So, let's think about this as if there were no homes in Greenwood that have made the commitment to care for children in foster care. In order to become a resource foster family you must be 21 year of age or older, be able to pass background criminal checks, fingerprint and SLED checks, have a physical done by a doctor that states you are physically and emotionally able to care for a child or children, the home must pass DHEC and fire marshal inspections and you also show your family is financially responsible and complete 14 hours of pre-service training. If you are interested in answering this call to help children in foster care by becoming a resource foster family, contact the South Carolina Youth Advocate Program at 864-312-6700 or visit www.scyap.com for information. Betsy Manning Greenwood Source: <http://www.indexjournal.com/Content/Opinion/Opinion/Article/Foster-care-home-need-still-exists/8/154/25729>

New group home regulations adopted in East Norriton; 15 'grandfathered' group homes not affected By Carl Rotenberg, The Times Herald Thursday, May 29, 2014 EAST NORRITON — The board of supervisors held a public hearing on group home zoning regulations Tuesday and filled a gaping hole in the enforcement and control of the permitted use by unanimously adopting the new regulations. Both the Civil Rights Act of 1968 and the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 require that American towns allow group homes in all residential districts. Group homes are defined as a "residential facility used as living quarters by any number of unrelated persons requiring special care, specifically designed to create a residential setting for the mentally and physically handicapped. The individuals may be either transient or permanent residents." Township Manager Don Delamater said, "a few residents had some questions about the legality of group homes and how can they be located in residential neighborhoods" during the public hearing. Several concerns raised by members of the East Norriton Planning Commission at a May 21 meeting were rejected by Solicitor Sean Kilkenny in a May 27 memo to the board of supervisors. Annual inspections by the fire marshal cannot be imposed because it raises "fair housing, equal protection and ADA issues," Kilkenny said. Regulation of medical waste for a group home cannot differ from the treatment given by township officials to another township resident. Group homes cannot be required to either pay an annual fee or obtain an annual license. The group home operator is already required to apply for a permit. A suggestion that the ordinance should prohibit renting a part of a group home to individuals without disabilities was ruled out by federal regulations guaranteeing that families, and group home residents, can freely reside in a home. The ordinance requires, "group homes shall be permitted by special exception in the AR, BR, BR-1, MR, GA, CR, HR, HR-1, RR, RP, RO, ATR and IN zoning districts subject to additional requirements." The zoning hearing board would hold a public hearing and decide on granting the special exception. A group home operator will have to provide a fire sprinkler system in the home and all attached buildings, a fire alarm system, a dimensioned floor plan, a statement detailing adequate trained staff supervision, a minimum of four off-street parking spaces, a prohibition against outpatient services and a requirement that one non-resident caretaker employee shall be on the premises at all times. If the home has more than four residents, the operator will have to provide one additional off-street parking space for every two residents above the four-resident regulation. The board responded to the complaints of resident Rick Mumma in March about a grandfathered group home in the 200 block of Beechwood Road that provides care for two individuals. The home is rented by Firely Enterprises of Harleysville, which complied with the previous township regulations for group homes. Mumma estimated there were 15 group homes in the township that will not be subject to the new regulations because they began before the township enacted the new rules. In other business, Steve Tambini, the operations vice president at Pennsylvania American Water (PAW), told the board about the problems at the Norristown water treatment plant that caused a boil water advisory last week for six townships, including East Norriton. Tambini described the turbidity (cloudiness) problems with the intake water stirred up by two heavy rainstorms in early May and added another reason for the plant's decreased clean water production, said Delamater. "One of their treatment tanks was under maintenance and repair," Delamater said, "because a sweeper arm needed to be repaired." The board authorized Delamater to submit a Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) grant application for a traffic calming study on Old Arch Road. The \$32,000 grant, if it is approved in October, will be supplemented with an \$8,000 match by East Norriton officials. The board recently lowered the speed limit on part of Old Arch Road to 25-miles-per-hour. The Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI) is a grant program of the DVRPC that supports local development and redevelopment efforts in qualifying municipalities of the Delaware Valley, according to the [DVRPC website](http://www.dvrpc.org). Follow Carl Rotenberg on Twitter @CarlWriter.

Source: <http://www.timesherald.com/general-news/20140529/new-group-home-regulations-adopted-in-east-norriton-15-grandfathered-group-homes-not-affected>

Court defeat for Edina parents trying to bar son with mental disorder from marrying Article by: [PAUL WALSH](#), Star Tribune Updated: May 27, 2014 - 8:47 PM Group home resident wins new hearing on his competence to marry. [resize text](#) [print](#) [buy reprints](#) [Share3](#) It's going to take a lot more to keep a 27-year-old group home resident from marrying the woman he loves than a court ruling and his Edina parents' objections. The state Court of Appeals, pointing out that people with court-appointed guardians are allowed to marry in Minnesota, [ruled Tuesday](#) that a lower court failed to meet the burden of proof when it barred Michael O'Brien from someday exchanging wedding vows with the woman he has been dating for more than three years. Describing marriage as a

"fundamental right" afforded to anyone who has the "sufficient mental capacity" to understand it in contractual terms, the appeals panel said the District Court must review the case anew because it did not look deeply enough into O'Brien's ability "to understand the meaning, rights and obligations of marriage." The case is not about whether O'Brien would make a good husband. O'Brien's attorney Steve Beseres acknowledged soon after the ruling that "Mike is a nice kid with significant problems. But they've allowed people in prison and all sorts of different situations [to marry]." Judith and Timothy O'Brien have been guardians for their son since 2004, when the court cited his "serious, persistent mental disorder," namely struggling with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, mild mental disability and being bipolar. Judith O'Brien testified in the lower court about Michael having shot out cabin windows with a BB gun, once grabbing the steering wheel of a group home van and other misbehavior while he was a minor. As guardians, the O'Briens take care of all of Michael's daily living needs, as well as his medical and psychological care. Michael has said he gets along fine with his parents, but he feels they put too many limitations on him. A psychiatrist on behalf of the parents said Michael functions at a level below an IQ of 71 and his "overall broad independence" is that of someone slightly less than 10 years old. Michael's attorney said it's his [clients](#) hope that he and his fiancée, a client in a Twin Cities special-needs program, can someday live in a group home for couples. Meantime, Michael sees her a couple of times a week at her residence and stays over once a month. The O'Briens' legal challenge is preventing the couple from setting a wedding date, Beseres said. The Appeals Court ruling notes that Michael's fiancée described their relationship in testimony as "very loving," while Michael contributed that "he is in love with her." It concluded "Because the district court did not make sufficient findings to establish that Michael lacks the capacity to understand the meaning, rights, and obligations of marriage, we reverse the district court's declaratory judgment that Michael lacks the [competence](#) to marry ..." Tim O'Brien expressed disappointment with the appeals court ruling, noting that his son has had self-control difficulties for many years that sometimes erupted into "incoherent rage." Although he didn't reject the notion that Mark might someday be well enough to wed, Tim O'Brien said, "At this point in time, in my opinion, he lacks the ability to comprehend what a marriage contract entails." Beseres said he believes his client's parents have their heart in the right place but are on shaky legal ground. "I don't think anybody has any ill will," the attorney said. "You do anything you can for your kids." Paul Walsh • 612-673-4482 Source: <http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/health/260820251.html>

Senate passes bill aimed at protecting children; may vote to formally disapprove of DSS head By SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press May 29, 2014 - 7:22 pm EDT [AAA](#) COLUMBIA, South Carolina — The South Carolina Senate approved a bill Thursday to protect children from parents who abuse drugs and debated whether to formally disapprove of the Department of Social Services director. A no-confidence vote could come next week. The bill is named for 22-month-old Jaidon Morris, who died in 2008 of a drug overdose a week after being returned to his parents from foster care. Sponsoring Rep. Mike Forrester, R-Spartanburg, said he hopes his bill prevents other children's deaths. If children are removed from their home because of drug use, the measure would require drug tests before a court rules on parents regaining custody. It also gives the Department of Social Services greater ability to end visits between a parent and child. "At the end of the day, we'll have something benefiting the children who can't look out for themselves," Forrester said. The bill now returns to the House. The Senate's approval followed an amendment requiring the children's welfare agency to tell lawmakers annually how many children are in the agency's care and on social workers' caseloads. Another Senate amendment requires audits of the agency every three years. The additions come as a Senate panel investigates potential problems at the agency. A growing number of senators are calling for the ousting of its director, Lillian Koller. Gov. Nikki Haley continues to support her. DSS is a Cabinet agency. Haley's office has dismissed the calls for resignation or firing as election-year politics. On Tuesday, three House Democrats introduced a resolution seeking a no-confidence vote in Koller. It was quickly discarded in the Republican-led House. But the effort is increasingly bipartisan in the Senate. A resolution introduced Thursday by three Republicans and three Democrats says the agency under Koller's leadership has failed to protect the state's abused and neglected children. The Senate unanimously agreed to put the resolution directly on the calendar, bypassing the committee process and allowing a vote on the no-confidence measure Tuesday. "It's time," said Sen. Katrina Shealy, R-Lexington, a member of the panel looking into DSS. "All the problems are not Koller's fault. But they haven't gotten any better. They're not going to get any better." The panel has asked Koller to return for a third day of testimony next Wednesday. Senators have focused on the deaths of two children in Richland County and one in Charleston County. Koller acknowledged last week that many caseworkers' loads are too large. She said the agency is working to set practical goals to make caseloads manageable for social workers. The agency has repeatedly said the average caseload statewide is six, but senators say some employees complain of being responsible for up to 100 cases. Panel members browsing a folder of data last week said it showed few workers with less than 10 cases. DSS still has not provided that packet to reporters. The Legislature can't force Koller out. That is a decision for Haley, who appointed her in 2011. But Sen. Joel Lourie, D-Columbia, said the Senate will reform the agency with or without Koller, in next year's budget process. The panel he sits on will make recommendations on the appropriate number of social workers and their salaries. Senate President Pro Tem John Courson, R-Columbia, called for Koller's resignation last month. However, he doesn't support the resolution, saying Thursday he doesn't want to set a Senate precedent. In response to Thursday's Senate action, the agency released a statement saying it supports any effort to help DSS better serve South Carolina's children and families. "DSS will always welcome the opportunity to work with our legislators and community partners about the countless hours and complex decisions our front-line workers make every day to protect the at-risk children of our state," the statement reads. "We are dedicated to delivering the most innovative services possible and will never stop working for ways improve our methods and practices." Source: <http://www.therepublic.com/view/story/6da30e2d58374637baaf1e84cd07e8cc/SC--Jaidons-Law>

Newport gets support with group home law Laguna, Costa Mesa chip in toward cost of petitioning the Supreme Court to hear the city's case. Email Share 33 By Emily Foxhall May 29, 2014 8:07 p.m. Two of Newport Beach's neighboring cities have pledged their support as it gears up to petition the [U.S. Supreme Court](#) for a hearing on its group home law. Laguna Beach and Costa Mesa have promised to contribute funding toward the costs of filing amicus briefs, which are written arguments submitted by independent organizations, often in favor of the petitioner. In Newport's case, the briefs are intended to sway the court to hear the case. Related [Topics Justice System Laws and Legislation Trials and Arbitration See more topics »](#) X [Courts and the Judiciary U.S. Supreme Court](#) Newport Beach plans to submit its petition to the Supreme Court by Aug. 18, asking the justices to reverse a 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruling that said a Newport Beach ordinance governing group homes could be challenged for discriminatory intent. At least three groups — the International Municipal Lawyers Assn., the League of California Cities and the Pacific Legal Foundation — are then expected to submit amicus briefs, said City Atty. Aaron Harp. It will cost roughly \$30,000 in attorney time and printing cost for each brief, Harp said. He anticipated that much of the attorney time would be donated and that the three groups would take on some costs. So far, Costa Mesa and Laguna Beach each pledged \$10,000 toward the costs. The city of Claremont said Newport Beach could use its name in support but did not give money, Harp said. "The decision of the 9th Circuit impacts all cities," he said, "and they're interested in supporting our challenge to that ruling." Newport Beach also spent \$280,000 to [hire prominent attorney Theodore Olson](#) to work on its petition. The case centers on a municipal law adopted in January 2008 that placed strict limits on group homes, an issue with which many other cities have wrestled. Group homes had previously been operating freely in residential areas, according to court documents. The ordinance effectively prohibited new group homes from opening in most residential areas and required existing group homes to complete the same permitting process required of new ones. The total number of facilities in a neighborhood is taken into account during the permitting process, the documents continue. Newport Beach residents had been complaining about traffic issues, cigarette smoke and noise caused by their ever-changing cast of neighbors. But the new rules forced out many of the group homes because they could not qualify for the newly required permits. In the ongoing legal battle that ensued, a three-person panel of 9th Circuit Court of Appeals said last fall that the ordinance [may have illegally discriminated](#) against group homes for recovering alcoholics and drug users based on disability. But other 9th Circuit judges — although unable to find enough support to rehear the case — wrote a different opinion. They maintained that the panel's decision inappropriately allowed a neutral law that was fairly enforced to be challenged based on an accusation of ill intent. The city agreed, and felt prompted to petition the Supreme Court. "Until this decision, the rule has been that if a city adopts a neutral law that treats people the same and is fairly enforced, like the city's ordinance, you don't get to file a lawsuit to try and find out what the City Council was thinking at the time they adopted the law," Harp explained in an email. "This is a fundamental shift in the law and we hope that that the United States Supreme Court will take this case to ensure that local governments can continue to operate efficiently without bearing the burden and expense of frivolous lawsuits," he said. Group home operators Pacific Shores Properties, Newport Coast Recovery and Yellowstone Women's First Step House can file responses to the petition after the amicus briefs are submitted. The group homes are being represented by the Loma Mar-based firm Brancart & Brancart. The firm will evaluate an appropriate response as the time nears, Elizabeth Brancart said. A decision on whether the case will be heard is expected by the end of the year, Harp said. If it is not heard, the case will return to trial. Source: <http://www.dailypilot.com/news/tn-dpt-me-0530-amicus-brief-newport-20140529.0.6448988.story>

Teen Arrested for Setting Fire at Group Home 12:50PM Saturday May 31, 2014 Share With Facebook Twitter MySpace Yahoo! Google (CHATTANOOGA, Tenn.) -- A 17-year-old was arrested Tuesday after allegedly setting a fire at the Scholze Adolescent Center in Chattanooga. Firefighters responded to a report around 9 p.m. at 911 Pineville Road and found small flames coming from a ceiling vent in one of the residential rooms. The damages were estimated at \$500 and no injuries were reported. A 17-year-old was charged with aggravated arson and transported to the Juvenile Detention Center. The investigation is ongoing and others at the group home may face charges, according to officials. Source: <http://www.wgowam.com/common/more.php?m=58&ts=1401366008&article=D957A5FAE6AD11E3B51EFEFDADE6840A&mode=2>

May 30th, 2014: HEAL Launches New Petition to Demand Utah Courts Allow for Satellite (aka Remote) Testimony when Parties/Victims are Non-Residents! Please sign now at: <http://petitions.moveon.org/sign/utah-courts-legislators>

Sex abuse alleged at Utah youth home | The Salt Lake Tribune Sex abuse alleged at Utah youth home Courts » September trial set for Spanish Fork youth home employee. | The Salt Lake Tribune First Published May 29 2014 04:28 pm • Last Updated May 29 2014 04:32 pm A September trial date has been set for a man accused of sexually abusing two 14-year-old girls at a group home for troubled teens in Spanish Fork. Charges filed in 4th District Court allege that Wade Russell, 60, committed the crimes while employed at Extended Family Services. Photos [View photo gallery \(1 photos\)](#) Join the Discussion [Post a Comment](#) One girl said that on Nov. 3, 2013, her third night at EFS, Russell went into her room, lay down next to her bed and fondled her over her clothing, according to charging documents. She said she knew of another girl who also had been abused. Security camera footage from that time shows Russell's feet "sticking out of the doorway as if he is lying down," court documents claim. The girl's roommate confirmed that Russell was lying close to the victim, prosecutors say. The other victim said Russell sexually abused her on multiple occasions after she arrived at EFS in June 2013. She said that on Nov. 2, Russell asked her to join him in the laundry room because he could turn off the lights and escape the security cameras. Video from outside the laundry room allegedly shows Russell entering the laundry room and turning off the lights before the girl followed him inside. She claimed that Russell molested her then, and later the same day in her room. The second victim said Russell also used his cell phone to show her pornography. A job evaluation for Russell by EFS in August shows he was told not to have "any contact with female residents alone or out of the view of the camera," and that he was told to stop "hugging the young girls," according to charges. Charging documents do not indicate why those instructions were given. Russell denied to police touching either of the girls sexually and said the events recorded on camera amounted only to poor judgment on his part. When asked for his cell phone to search its browser history, he said he lost the phone, police reported.

Sex abuse alleged at Utah youth home | The Salt Lake Tribune Cont. Russell is charged with three counts of aggravated sexual abuse of a child, and one count each of forcible sodomy, sodomy of a child and attempted rape of a child, all first-degree felonies; and seven counts of second-degree felony forcible sexual abuse; and two counts of third-degree felony dealing in material harmful to a minor.

Source: <http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/news/58004247-78/russell-abuse-girl-camera.html.csp>

State Falls Behind On Abuse Registry For Group Home Workers **Fired group-home workers remain in the field** [Comments](#) 10 Email Share By JOSH KOVNER, jkovner@courant.com 7:15 p.m. EDT, May 29, 2014 The state department responsible for the care of thousands of intellectually disabled clients has failed in dozens of cases to place the names of group home workers fired for abuse onto a registry – created for the purpose of alerting other group homes not to hire those workers. As a result, potentially dangerous individuals remained in the field, free to be hired by unwitting agencies and possibly perpetuating a cycle of abuse, according to a state audit released Thursday. As of late 2013, there was a backlog of 182 cases in which a fired worker's name had not been entered into the abuse and neglect registry at the Department of Developmental Services, according to the report by the state Auditors of Public Accounts. [Topics Accounting and Auditing](#) Department officials acknowledged Thursday that the backlog has increased to 184 since September 2013, despite hiring additional workers to handle the registry cases. Thirty-nine new cases have come in, and the registry unit has processed 37 of them. [Purchase your Officially Licensed UConn National Championship Gear HERE!](#) The names of the fired group home workers haven't been entered because the required hearings before developmental services officials haven't been held. State law requires that, within 45 days after the worker is fired for substantiated abuse, the department notify the worker that his name has been submitted for placement on the registry and that a hearing will be convened. "Until the decision is rendered to place an employee on the registry, they can continue to work in the field of direct care, with another employer, potentially putting other clients at risk," the report states. The auditors said developmental services was failing to monitor the pending registry cases, and that its method of gathering information on the behavior of workers for private contractors was fragmented. In its response to the finding, the department said it has hired four people to work in the registry unit and is establishing a single system to capture information on abuse and neglect. The department said it was also looking to hire more hearing officers. The audit also found that the pace of investigations into serious cases of abuse and neglect that come to the attention of the department is too slow. When allegations arise at a developmental services facility or at a private agency that contracts with the state, investigations are generally required to be completed within 90 days. The auditors looked at the 243 open investigations as of Sept. 30, 2012, and found that all of them were older than 90 days and that many were older than six months. One was 53 months old. "The consequences [of these delays] are potentially serious," the auditors wrote. "Timely completion of investigations permits quicker action ... pertaining to the health and welfare [of clients]." Department spokeswoman Joan Barnish said the agency "will be ... including key partners from other agencies, the provider community and families to develop strategies for simplification and quality improvement to the investigation process." Copyright © 2014, [The Hartford Courant](#) Source: <http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-workers-fired-abuse-0530-20140529.0.1023222.story>

Gardner-Simmons Home closing after 26 years Updated 1:38 am, Friday, May 30, 2014 0 [Larger](#) | [Smaller](#) [Printable Version](#) [Email This](#) Georgia (default) Verdana Times New Roman Arial [Font](#) Page 1 of 1 TUPELO, Miss. (AP) — The Gardner-Simmons Home will close later this year after taking and caring for girls without a place to call home. The home was started in 1988. Last year, the Gardner-Simmons home rebranded as the [Providence House Maternity Home for Girls](#) and took in pregnant young women who needed a safe place to carry their child to term. [Erin Stubbs](#), president of the Gardner-Simmons Home for Girls' and Providence House board of directors, told the Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal (<http://bit.ly/1jxd3zf>) the two girls who were living in the home when the decision to close was made were moved. Stubbs said the closure will include the home and the foster program. He said a formal announcement will come in June. The organization was named for [Margaret Gardner](#) and [Robin Simmons](#), best friends and Chi Omega sorority sisters who were hit by a truck on Mississippi Highway 6 outside of Oxford while participating in a walkathon for the sorority. Once it was established as a group home, the organization expanded to organize foster families to serve girls the house couldn't hold. A 2008 court decision led to a reorganization of the foster care system, putting a premium on placing children in family and foster homes within their community and making group homes the lowest priority for placement. Following the ruling, group homes were seeing fewer and fewer children referred — a change that caused many group homes, like Tupelo's [Alpha House](#), to close due to lack of funding and lack of need. The first resident under the new Providence House mission entered the home Jan. 7, 2013, and since, four young women have used the home's services, two delivered babies and one lived in the home for over a year as she learned about pregnancy and then worked to adjust to her new life as a mother. ___ Information from: Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal, <http://djournal.com> Source: <http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Gardner-Simmons-Home-closing-after-26-years-5515429.php>

Keeping Kids Safe Focus of Foster Care Conference in Holyoke May 30th, 2014 HOLYOKE, Mass. (WGGB) — Foster care professionals gathered in Holyoke on Friday to address the growing need for providing at risk children with better care. This is the fifth year that the Treehouse Foundation has addressed the issue of foster care in America. The event was held at Holyoke Community College. Right now, there are 9,000 children in foster care in Massachusetts. "The need is tremendous. As a foster adoptive parent myself, I feel every child needs to be rooted in family and community and this is our vision here that everyone comes together to make sure all children are rooted in family and community," says Judy Cockerton of the Treehouse Foundation. Among the speakers was Bishop W.C. Martin who made the trip all the way from Texas. He called on the church to help at risk kids. "We have a very small church, less than 200 members, and we have adopted 76 children from the state and have gotten them into lovable homes, and members of the church have supplied wrap around services to help the children," says Bishop Martin. Among those being honored was Paul Fitzsimons, Deputy Commissioner of field operations for the Mass. Department of Children and Families. A recent report said DCF can do more to protect young children following the tragic death of 5-year-old Jeremiah

Oliver of Fitchburg. DCF says the whole community needs to work together to solve the problem. "No one department can be in the home, in every home, every hour of every day. Children are either supported or failed by all the adults in their life," says Fitzsimmons. Fitzsimmons says DCF has hired more than 200 staff members to help ease large caseloads. Source: <http://www.wggb.com/2014/05/30/keeping-kids-saaf-focus-of-foster-care-conference-in-holyoke/>

A Closer Look at Foster Care in the State May 30, 2014 by [Editor](#) in [Children's Health](#), [NC Health Beats](#), [State Health Policy](#) with [2 Comments](#) By Hyun Namkoong **In the wake of two abuse scandals in foster homes, House lawmakers want to study the quality of Department of Social Services policies for DSS employees who are foster parents.** The recommendations from a joint legislative committee formed after last year's legislative session advised the creation of [a continued study committee](#) to more thoroughly examine the complicated DSS system. "There was so much to look at, so many things, in such depth," said Rep. Sarah Stevens (R-Mount Airy), the primary sponsor for the bill. "We recommended a continued study." A 2013 scandal involving Wanda Larson, a Union County social services employee and a 11-year-old boy who was found handcuffed to a porch [with a dead chicken hanging from his neck](#) prompted state lawmakers to study policies for employees who serve as foster parents in the system. The language for HB 1104 specifically directs the study committee to investigate whether or not a director or employee of a county DSS should be allowed to serve as a foster parent. "I am pleased that the committee will look at the foster-care system more closely," said Nancy Carter, executive director for SaySo, an advocacy organization for youth affected by the out-of-home care system in the state. "For years, folks weren't addressing any issues." In North Carolina, [more than 14,000 children](#) are in foster care. The study committee will also look into what can be done to shorten the length of time children wait in foster care for "forever homes," a permanent placement. Findings from last year's study committee show that children remain in foster care [for an average of two years](#), which concerns advocates and lawmakers alike. "I anticipate bringing out a big piece of legislation in the long session," Stevens said. Source: <http://www.northcarolinahealthnews.org/2014/05/30/a-closer-look-at-foster-care-in-the-state/>

Teen shoots dead older brother, 18, in front of mother as the sibling tried to convince him to go to a wilderness camp for boys with behavioral issues Clayton Bronson, 18, a dedicated churchgoer and volunteer, was trying help his troubled brother Turner, 15 The pair got into an argument on May 22 in their Las Vegas and Turner shot Clayton in the stomach As their mother, Wendy, called 911, Turner is alleged to have shot Clayton in the head He has been charged as an adult with murder Wendy Bronson said they do not keep firearms in the house and does not know where her son go the gun By [Joel Christie](#) Published: 23:22 EST, 30 May 2014 | Updated: 08:39 EST, 31 May 2014 64 shares [375 View comments](#) A troubled Las Vegas teen has been charged as an adult with first-degree murder after allegedly shooting his older brother during a heated discussion in front of their mother. Police say Clayton Bronson, 18, a dedicated churchgoer and volunteer, was trying to help his younger sibling Turner Bronson, 15, get his life back on track when the teen produced a gun and shot him. Turner made his first court appearance on Friday after being charged with murder, looking exhausted after spending the last week in jail, The New York Daily News reported. Clayton was scheduled to graduate from Sierra Vista High School in three weeks and planned to attend the University of Nevada, Las Vegas to study computer science and robotics. SHARE PICTURE Copy link to paste in your message +6 Turner Bronson,15, makes an initial appearance in Clark County Justice Court on Friday, May 30, 2014 in Las Vegas. Bronson, who turns 16 on Sunday, will be tried as an adult on one murder charge in the shooting death of his brother, 18-year-old Clayton SHARE PICTURE Copy link to paste in your message +6 Te 15-year-old and his brother Clayton Bronson, 18, fought several times leading up to the fatal shooting because Clayton wanted his brother to 'get his life together' SHARE PICTURE Copy link to paste in your message +6 Killed: Clayton's obituary stated that he was devoted to his church, school, family and community. He taught Sunday school at Good Samaritan Lutheran Church, volunteered at the church's coffee shop and a sandwich ministry SHARE PICTURE Copy link to paste in your message +6 Clayton died three weeks before his scheduled graduation from Sierra Vista High School. He had been accepted to UNLV, where he planned to study computer science and robotics 'Clayton kept telling Turner to get his life together,' the boys' mother, Wendy Bronson, told investigators, according to the [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#). The teens' mom heard the boys fighting from her bedroom before hearing a gunshot and running to find Clayton holding his stomach and saying Turner had shot him, police say. Clayton was trying to get Turner to go to a wilderness camp set up to help boys with behavioral issues. Wendy called 911 and followed the dying boy followed to the living room. But Turner then walked up to within three feet of his brother and shot him in the head as his horrified mother watched, according to the Review-Journal. He hid the revolver behind a couch cushion and paced the house until cops arrived, the newspaper reported. The mom told cops there were no guns in the home and she had no idea where her son got the weapon. SHARE PICTURE Copy link to paste in your message +6 A police report stated Turner Bronson, who was not under the influence at the time, had difficulties answering questions, as well as smiling and chuckling at inappropriate times. SHARE PICTURE Copy link to paste in your message +6 Clayton Bronson kept telling his brother to get his life together. Turner Bronson then shot him During questioning by police, Turner 'had difficulty answering questions' and 'would smile and chuckle at inappropriate times', according to the Review-Journal. Turner Bronson, who will turn 16 on Sunday, will be tried as an adult on one murder charge. Clayton Bronson, or 'Clay' as many called him, was a student ambassador who had traveled to France, Italy and Greece. He played baseball, ran with his high school track team, liked to snowboard, earned a second-degree black belt in taekwondo, and he was an avid cyclist. 'He had the unique ability to include everyone, especially those who were shy and would have otherwise been on the sidelines,' an obituary in the Review-Journal said. 'It was important to Clay to make sure no one felt left out ... Clay had a contagious enthusiasm for life that influenced and touched the lives of all who had the privilege to know him.' Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2644505/Disturbed-teen-shoots-dead-older-brother-18-mother-sibling-tried-convince-wilderness-camp-boys-behavioral-issues.html#ixzz33LUZNUQA> Follow us: [@MailOnline on Twitter](#) | [DailyMail on Facebook](#)

(HEAL Special Note: Children are abused, tortured, and killed at many wilderness programs throughout the US. If Bronson was aware at all of the abuses that go on at wilderness programs, we believe such legitimate fear for his own well-being should be taken into consideration and that any charges against him in this tragedy be mitigated by understanding the legitimate terror Bronson may have felt when told he should agree to be sent to an unregulated wilderness program where children are known to be abused, killed, and become institutionalized for life. It is unfortunate that his family did not research the behavior modification industry prior to suggesting their son enroll in such a program.)

Group home counselor accused of drug possession with intent to sell by Kyle Wind Published: May 31, 2014 Article Tools Font size: [A](#) [A](#) [A](#) Our Social Networks Facebook Sign Up [Text Alerts](#) | [newsletter](#) R A group home counselor and driver for ChildFirst Services faces numerous drug and weapon-related charges after state troopers found suspected heroin, cocaine and raw marijuana at his home, the Wayne County district attorney's office said Friday. State troopers and the district attorney's office drug task force detective also found drug paraphernalia, an electronic scale and two .22 caliber revolvers with obliterated serial numbers during the search of the home Abraham Nyanti was renting in Lake Twp. District Attorney Janine Edwards said authorities were still investigating whether the 24-year-old sold or gave drugs to any youths but at this point was "thankful that the officers were able to make this arrest before a child who Mr. Nyanti supervised was hurt." Police went to Mr. Nyanti's 107 Batzel Road home in Lake Ariel after neighbors had complained about "suspicious activities" and smelled burnt marijuana when they spoke with him at his door, authorities said. Mr. Nyanti allowed police to search him and his home, during which police found, among numerous items, multiple bags of suspected heroin stamped with the word "Barbie" and one bag of what authorities believed was cocaine, prosecutors said. Authorities charged Mr. Nyanti with felony possession with intent to deliver a controlled substance and two felony counts of possession of a firearm with altered manufacturer's number and several related counts. Mr. Nyanti was being held at Wayne County Prison in lieu of \$75,000 bail, and his preliminary hearing was scheduled for 9 a.m. Wednesday at the Wayne County Courthouse. Contact the writer: kwind@timeshamrock.com, [@kwindTT on Twitter](#) Source: <http://thetimes-tribune.com/news/group-home-counselor-accused-of-drug-possession-with-intent-to-sell-1.1695587>

State DCF To Close Group Home In Manchester Follow Your Town News On The Courant's [Manchester Facebook Page](#) [Comments](#) 2 Email Share 8 By JESSE LEAVENWORTH, leavenworth@courant.com The Hartford Courant 5:41 p.m. EDT, May 30, 2014 MANCHESTER — A group home for abused and neglected boys, the focus of neighborhood concerns because of the many police calls to the house, will close within the next three months, a state official said Friday. Reacting to the news, Mayor Jay Moran, who lives near the Nutmeg Drive home, said, "I think the neighborhood is going to be happy because of the amount of police activity. We're a very welcoming neighborhood, but that's not what we were expecting." The group home "is being closed for a number of reasons, but most especially because it is not being fully used and is not needed," Gary Kleeblatt, spokesman for the state Department of Children and Families, said on Friday. [Topics Crime Homicide Southington](#) "While the capacity of the program is for six children, only two children are currently living in the program," Kleeblatt said. "The Hartford region has a total of four of these short-term stabilization programs, and clearly the one on Nutmeg Drive was not

being fully utilized. In addition, there was a relatively high level of police responses to the program." [Sample Our Free Breaking News Alert And 3 P.M. News Newsletters] Opened in 2006, the home is a STAR (Short Term Assessment and Respite) facility operated by Southington-based Community Residences Inc. The mission of the STAR program "is for at-risk, abused, or neglected children to have a safe, stabilizing experience with the support of caring staff in a short-term, home-like, therapeutic setting," according to the CRI website, <http://www.criinc.org/children-s-services/star-program.html>. The DCF has been reducing group care across the state, placing children instead with family members and in other settings, Kleeblatt said. Residents' fears and long-term doubts about management of the home peaked in the summer of 2011 with the arrest of Charles Wilson, 19 at the time, who was accused of shooting and killing a local convenience store clerk and another man in Hartford in May of that year. Wilson, who wasn't living in the Nutmeg Drive home at the time of the shootings but had lived there several years earlier, was sentenced in 2012 to 55 years in prison for the Manchester killing and other crimes. His arrested raised concerns among residents about the kind of teenagers who were brought into the program. Beyond safety concerns, police have cited the many calls officers answered regarding residents of the home who were absent without permission. Calls reached a peak in 2009, with a total of 129 (from Jan. 1 to Dec. 9). Of those, 117 were about missing persons. The calls dropped significantly after state Rep. Jason Rojas, D-Manchester, arranged the first meeting of neighbors and officials in August 2011. But Moran said police have been out at the home more frequently in the past year. The home will be closed in 60 to 90 days, Kleeblatt said. The two children now in the program, he said, "will receive individualized discharge plans that will ensure their specific needs are met." "We want the best for these kids, obviously," Moran said. "There's no ill will toward these children or the goal of the group home. ... But safety is first and foremost in the community, and the fact that there's police presence all the time scares people." Copyright © 2014, [The Hartford Courant](http://www.hartfordcourant.com) Source: <http://www.courant.com/community/manchester/hc-manchester-group-home-0531-20140530.0.5534744.story>

Dunn Co. group home worker accused of stealing money, diamond ring from residents By: [Andrew Fefer](#) - [Email](#) Posted: Fri 4:08 PM, May 30, 2014 By: [Andrew Fefer](#) - [Email Home](#) / [Headlines List](#) / Article MENOMONIE, Wis. (WEAU) -- The assistant manager of a group home near Elk Mound is accused of stealing money from several residents, petty cash, as well as pawning a resident's diamond ring. Prosecutors filed eight felony theft charges against Erin Instenness, 42, of Chippewa Falls on Friday. A warrant was also filed in the case. Instenness is accused of taking the money between January 2013 and April 2014. A total of more than \$4,400 was reported missing from seven residents of Brotoloc North's Tara Place in the Town of Elk Mound last month. Its website says residents there can be mentally ill, developmentally disabled, or alcohol or drug-dependent. A criminal complaint says Instenness has worked for the company for 16 years, and when an administrator asked her about the missing money, she denied taking it. Investigators say that administrator also found a receipt in Instenness' desk from a diamond ring that was pawned. They later determined the ring belonged to one of the residents. The complaint says Brotoloc paid back the residents for their losses. Source: <http://www.weau.com/home/headlines/Dunn-Co-group-home-worker-accused-of-stealing-money-diamond-ring-from-residents-261302981.html>

Aurora man convicted of sexually assaulting woman in group home By [Kirk Mitchell](#) [The Denver Post](#) Posted: 05/30/2014 03:23:25 PM MDT [Add a Comment](#) Updated: 05/30/2014 04:26:58 PM MDT A 50-year-old Aurora man has been convicted of sexually assaulting a 55-year-old at-risk adult in a group home for the mentally ill, officials say. William Jesse Rattler and his wife were operating an unlicensed home for mentally ill patients at 1708 N. Lansing St., said Sue Lindsay, spokeswoman for Adams County District Attorney Dave Young. Rattler was originally charged with two counts of sexual assault on an at-risk victim involving two women who were living at the home. An Adams County District Court jury convicted him on one count and acquitted him on the second count, Lindsay said. Kirk Mitchell: 303-954-1206, denverpost.com/coldcases or twitter.com/kirkmitchell Source: http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_25867406/aurora-man-convicted-sexually-assaulting-woman-group-home

How DeWitt investigator uncovered \$17K welfare theft at Syracuse psychiatric hospital [Print](#) By [Douglass Dowty](#) | ddowty@syracuse.com The Post-Standard Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#) on May 30, 2014 at 4:03 PM, updated May 30, 2014 at 5:11 PM Mark Roberts Officer Christopher Fuller DeWitt, NY -- A caregiver in a group home for people with disabilities knew in February something wasn't right. A resident's welfare benefits card had been wiped out in a matter of weeks. The employee discovered this after taking the resident shopping. There was no way that much money should have been spent so quickly. DeWitt police were called. While the group home was run by the Hutchings Psychiatric Center in Syracuse, the home was located in DeWitt. Detective Chris Fuller obtained the expense histories for benefit cards belonging to all the residents in the home. He tracked those expenses to Sam's Club and Price Chopper, among other places. Those were both places with membership programs that allowed Fuller to find out who actually bought the groceries. Sam's Club required a membership card and Price Chopper had the AdvantEDGE card. Fuller discovered that one of the group home workers, [Alphonso Bradshaw](#), 62, had used the card. He also tracked purchases to Bradshaw's wife, nieces and other friends and family. The total amount of benefits stolen was \$17,332.90 during a two-year period. Expenses included luxury food items like crab legs, steaks and shrimp. Sometimes there were two or three orders per purchase. "They were pretty much doing their grocery shopping with these cards," Fuller said. The number of victims also expanded during the investigation, encompassing five at the DeWitt group home and four others at a Syracuse group home, Fuller said. That included all of the residents whose benefit cards Bradshaw had access to, the detective said. These were lower-functioning people who needed assistance when going shopping in the community. Some residents lost more than \$3,000 each to Bradshaw, according to a criminal complaint. During the investigation, Fuller also discovered that another worker, Ethalyn Crowder, 51, also stole from a patient, he said. She knew Bradshaw, but the two didn't appear to be colluding together on the crime, the detective said. Meanwhile, Hutchings alerted the state Inspector General's Office, which has oversight in regards to the hospital. The Inspector General's Office contacted Fuller. The office provided hospital records, including Bradshaw's timesheets and resident records showing whether they had been taken shopping on days the cards were used. The evidence showed that the cards were used by non-authorized people on days the residents were not shopping, Fuller said. Last week, officials from the inspector general's office arrived in town to collaborate with Fuller in interviewing suspects and witnesses. Bradshaw [confessed to stealing the welfare](#), saying he sold the cards to friends, family and a store on the city's South Side in exchange for money to support his crack cocaine habit. Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott announced the charges Thursday against Bradshaw and Crowder. She also listed nine of Bradshaw's friends and family who made purchases on the stolen cards. (The full list is in previous stories.) Fuller credited an alert caregiver for uncovering the thefts. "Luckily, one employee was on top of things," Fuller said. "The balance was much higher, but he knew there was no way the resident had spent that much money in a short amount of time." Now, the state Inspector General is going to probe more group homes to see if other workers are abusing the system in the same way, Fuller said. Source: http://www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2014/05/how_dewitt_investigator_uncovered_17k_welfare_theft_at_syracuse_psychiatric_hosp.html

Rutherford Foster Care Concerns Updated: Friday, May 30 2014, 07:34 PM EDT A Rutherford County woman fears for her two-year old son's safety after he was taken by D.S.S. Jessica Lovelace says she has no idea where her 2 year-old son is now. **She says she knows D.S.S. took him from her imperfect but loving home and put him in an abusive one.** Jessica Lovelace says her two year old son was a happy toddler, then in December tragedy struck when his baby sister died. Lovelace says her daughter was born premature with a cleft palate and accidentally died of malnutrition. "I didn't make no mistake with my daughter. Because when I left the hospital I was under the impression I was doing right not wrong and if I needed to do more I would have been there," says Lovelace. With her baby's death under investigation, D.S.S. placed her other child in foster care. Lovelace says she noticed some bruises on him during the first two visits, but it was the third visit on Wednesday that prompted her to call 911. "These bruises were large. That was hand prints on his arm. They say it was a bite. No you can tell fingers from teeth," says Lovelace. In addition to being covered with bruises, Lovelace says he was filthy and smelled like urine. D.S.S. workers say they are working on the problem. "We check somebody out and when we place a child in a home, we feel sure they're safe. But we can't predict what could happen. But when we find out something happened we take immediate action," says John Carroll with Rutherford County D.S.S. Carroll would not say if the toddler had been removed from the foster home. The Rutherford County Sheriff's Department says they are investigating the foster parents and right now they're not saying who they are. Rutherford Foster Care Concerns Source: http://www.wlos.com/shared/news/features/top-stories/stories/wlos_rutherford-foster-care-concerns-16451.shtml

Report on Children in Foster Care Breaks New Ground A new report that WestEd contributed to is an "invaluable tool" for school districts as they develop plans to improve the academic achievement of youth in foster care, says Jesse Hahnel, the Director of the National Center for Youth Law's Foster Youth Education Initiative. [The Invisible Achievement Gap, Part 2](#) (PDF) examines the relationship between foster care characteristics and academic achievement for students in foster care. **According to the report, students who lived in group homes or had experienced three or more foster placements in one school**

year had the lowest academic achievement of all students in foster care. This report follows an earlier WestEd report, [The Invisible Achievement Gap, Part 1](#), describing the dismal academic achievement of California's 43,000 school-aged students in foster care. In this latest study, researchers found that regardless of the characteristics of their foster care experience, students in foster care remained a distinctively disadvantaged subgroup. The Invisible Achievement Gap, Part 2, is a collaboration between the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning at WestEd and the California Child Welfare Indicators Project. Source: <http://www.wested.org/new-report-on-children-in-foster-care-breaks-new-ground/>

Third DeSoto teen accuses teacher of having sex with him [Share on facebook](#) [Share on twitter](#) [Share on gmail](#) [Share on email](#) [Share on print](#) [More Sharing Services](#) 6 Posted: Jun 05, 2014 6:29 PM PDT Updated: Jun 05, 2014 6:29 PM PDT By: Calvert Collins - [bio](#) | [email](#) A third DeSoto teen has come forward to accuse his teacher of having sex with him. He joins two other 16-year-old boys who took English from Pamela Jones at Athletes for Change - a treatment facility and school in Glenn Heights for troubled teens. Once news broke of Jones' arrest for indecency with a child, the third teen told administrators he too was involved with her. All three teens were about to be discharged from the six-month program when the alleged sexual encounters happened. Dallas police have interviewed the first two and will interview the third. Jones' husband called the program's president on Tuesday morning and informed him of the alleged sexual encounters between his wife and her students. Dennis DeVaughn, president of Athletes for Change, says he had no choice but to turn her in. "We have an obligation, once any abuse or neglect we're notified of, we have not only a moral, but a legal obligation to make that call and we did," DeVaughn said. Dallas police say the first alleged incident happened on April 26 in Jones' car parked outside the victim's aunt's house. The second occurred on May 31 in her house where her four children played in another room. The third teen claimed he and Jones met at a Chili's, then went with her to a nearby motel. Jones started teaching English in January at the program. DeSoto ISD contracted with Athletes for Change and paid Jones' salary. The students inside Athletes for Change aren't typical. There are only 14 boys who live, play and study inside the residential facility. All have criminal records and have been court-ordered to the program. The organization's president fears the allegations will have long-term effects on his facility. "It's a shame, but we did the best we can in our program," DeVaughn said. Source: <http://www.myfoxdfw.com/story/25708135/third-desoto-teen-accuses-teacher-of-having-sex-with-him>

County tightens laws for group homes Group homes in neighborhoods limited to 4 people [1](#) By Gabriel Khoulis gkhoulis@covnews.com 770-728-1409 Newton County residents have consistently spoken out against efforts to open group or personal care homes in their neighborhoods, saying extra traffic and noise will ruin the peaceful nature of their neighborhoods and open the door for future unwanted development. Over the past several years, county commissioners have generally sided with residents and turned down applications that faced significant resistance. At the May 20 board meeting, the Board of Commissioners changed the county's law to make it even more difficult to open a group or personal care home in a Newton County neighborhood. The Board voted 4-0 (Commissioner Nancy Schulz was absent) to change the county's ordinance to place further restrictions on group homes in residential areas, including: -- Outlawing group homes from having more than four residents, including the manager -- Requiring the manager to actually be a resident of the home -- putting this use in line with other home occupation businesses Group homes already require a conditional use permit to locate in residential areas -- they're also allowed in some commercial zonings -- but now they'll have to meet the extra requirements. If a group home operator wants to have more than four people living in the home and wants the manager to be a non-resident, then the group home must be placed in a commercial setting. Jenny Carter, with the county attorney's office, said the change was made because concerns have consistently been raised about the compatibility of larger homes in residential areas. Carter recommended limiting the number of residents to four, based in part on studying other counties' ordinances and the fact the average household size in Newton County was 2.93 people (based on U.S. Census statistics from 2008 to 2012). During the public hearing required for an ordinance change, a man spoke in opposition to the change, saying group homes that keep youth often need to have at least six to eight people in order to make a profit. He said the state will only provide so much funding per person. In addition, the man said forcing group homes to move to commercial areas take children out of residential areas and put them into less appropriate commercial areas. Group homes serve multiple functions, including housing people with physical or mental disabilities who need help with basic life tasks. Group home voted down During the zoning portion of the May 20 meeting, before it had voted on the group home ordinance change, the Board of Commissioners voted down a personal care home proposal. Leroy Mack was seeking a conditional use permit for a personal care home to have up to five residents along with one resident manager at the 1,900 square-foot home at 110 Roberts Road, off of Brown Bridge Road. Roberts Road ends in a cul-de-sac and about 30 lots have access to the road. Multiple Roberts Road residents opposed the home, saying they would like for their quiet road to remain completely residential, including Scott Miller, who provided a detail slide show presentation. Miller said the personal care home could lower other residents' property value and resale ability. The Board voted 4-0 to deny the request for a conditional use permit. Source: <http://www.covnews.com/section/1/article/52932/>

Man convicted of sexually assaulting woman at group home for mentally ill patients in Aurora THE ASSOCIATED PRESS May 31, 2014 - 3:11 pm EDT [AAA](#) BRIGHTON, Colorado — A jury has convicted a man of sexually assaulting a 55-year-old woman at a group home for mentally ill patients in Aurora. The Adams County District Attorney's Office says 50-year-old William Jesse Rattler was convicted Friday of sexual assault on an at-risk victim. Prosecutors say he and his wife were operating an unlicensed home for mentally ill patients. Rattler was charged with two counts of sexual assault on an at-risk victim involving two women who were living at the home. The jury convicted him of one count but acquitted him of the other. Rattler is scheduled to be sentenced July 30. Source: <http://www.therepublic.com/view/story/e2c86994097c4145adfb2068b2ad7e4/CO--Sex-Assault-Patients>

Woman's group home thefts alleged Posted: Friday, May 30, 2014 10:21 pm MENOMONIE — A 42-year-old Lake Hallie woman has been charged with stealing items from a group home where she works in Elk Mound. Erin L. Instenness of 3555 S. Joles Parkway, has been charged in Dunn County Court with eight counts of theft of movable property, with each charge carrying a maximum penalty of three years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. The thefts occurred April 1, online court records show. A warrant was issued Friday for Instenness' arrest. Source: http://www.leadertelegram.com/local_news/story/article_acd4d4c8-e872-11e3-a35c-001a4bcf887a.html?mode=print

Marin grand jury urges county to beef up foster care program Report says better funding, communication needed [By Nels Johnson njohnson@marinij.com](#) @nelsjohnsonnews on Twitter Posted: 05/31/2014 04:21:52 PM PDT Marin officials need to pay more attention and allocate more funding to foster care programs, recruit more foster parents and improve staff communication with them, according to the civil grand jury. The jury's latest report, "Shining a Light on Foster Care," says a \$5,000 budget for recruiting foster parents is inadequate and asserts communication involving social worker staff and parents needs improvement including "a protocol to return calls within 24 hours." In addition, the county Department of Health and Human Services should "budget sufficient funds to provide foster children with therapy by licensed clinical psychologists or therapists rather than relying predominantly on interns," the jury said. Heather Ravani, assistant health and human services chief who oversees foster care, said officials welcome the jury's detailed review, noting the nature of the recommendations speak well of the overall program and the dedication of the professional staffers involved in it. Budgets can be increased, she noted, but recruiting foster parents is always a challenge. Those interested may call 473-5028 or go to marinhhs.org/foster-care. Overall, foster parents report good experiences with the staff they deal with, Ravani said, noting, "We pride ourselves on having good relationships with foster parents." And the use of interns, she said, has been abandoned under new federal health care procedures. "We do appreciate the thoroughness of the jury report and the attention they gave to the program," she added. The jury noted that the number of children in foster care fluctuates, rising from 79 in July 2012 to 101 during 2013. Last February, 91 children were in foster care. "Though the numbers may appear small, their need is great," the panel said. "The challenge is the successful balancing of child safety with the preservation of families." The jury concluded that decisions on removing a child from a family home are difficult, quoting a court official as saying some cases are so close "it's impossible to know exactly what to do." Those who suspect child abuse may call 473-7153, the jury said. The jury report reviewed foster program procedures and noted foster parents expressed concern about issues including lack of communication and inadequate monthly reimbursement allowances, which range from \$657 for infants and toddlers to \$820 for youths 15 to 19. "Nobody makes money fostering children," one social worker told the jury. Source: http://www.marinij.com/marinnews/ci_25873376/marin-grand-jury-urges-county-beef-up-foster

Jury's out on managed care of Medicaid : Business Jury's out on managed care of Medicaid Saved Save Article [My Saved Items](#) [Print](#) [Email](#) 2014-06-01T00:15:00Z 2014-06-04T13:28:33Z Jury's out on managed care of MedicaidBy Jim Doyle jdoyle@post-dispatch.com 314-340-8372 and Virginia Young vyoung@post-dispatch.com 573-556-6181 stltoday.com June 01, 2014 12:15 am • [By Jim Doyle jdoyle@post-dispatch.com 314-340-8372 and Virginia Young vyoung@post-dispatch.com 573-556-6181 Loading...](#) × Related Photos [« Buy Now »](#) A rainbow colored covered walkway connects the new Centene

building to the original on Wednesday, May 14, 2014 at Centene in Clayton. Photo by Stephanie S. Cordle, scordle@post-dispatch.com [Enlarge Photo](#)

[Managed care companies make unconscionable profits](#) In “Who best to deliver care” (June 1), reporters Jim Doyle and Virginia Young did a great job in writing around the elephant in the room: nam... [Read more](#) In 2008, Centene Corp. took on a contract to manage health care for 30,000 foster children in Texas — a tough new challenge for the Clayton-based Medicaid contractor. Texas state caregivers had been prescribing a lot of psychotropic drugs to these children and adolescents. As these youngsters were shuttled from one house to another, Centene executives said, state authorities often lost track of which medications the children were taking. “I think the state understood that their ability to manage this population was limited,” said Keith Williamson, Centene’s general counsel. Within a year of winning the contract, Williamson and other Centene executives said, the Texas foster care program was being more effectively managed: The state budget for foster children had declined, and the number of psychotropic drug prescriptions was reduced significantly. One key: Centene created a “health passport” for the children, an electronic medical record that follows them from county to county and into adulthood. Centene executives cite their success with the foster care program as an example of how a managed care company can provide quality care while saving money. But in Texas and other states, managed care of Medicaid continues to spark debate. “There are some cost savings — the Texas Legislature wouldn’t do it otherwise. (But) with the rollout of any managed care in a state, there are always concerns about quality of care,” said Clayton Travis, a health coverage policy analyst at Texans Care for Children. F. Scott McCowan, a clinical professor at University of Texas School of Law and director of the Children’s Rights Clinic, agreed that Centene has significantly reduced the number of psychotropic medications for foster kids through a “retrospective review” of children’s medications. But McCowan says it may take years before the state realizes significant cost savings in the foster care program. And managed care has yet to solve the problem of recruiting enough physicians willing to accept Medicaid rates of pay, he adds. While trends have favored managed care of Medicaid — about 35 states and the District of Columbia now contract with for-profit companies to manage their Medicaid population — there have been some high-profile stumbles along the way. In Kentucky, litigation continues over Centene’s early termination of its Medicaid contract. Centene executives say that Kentucky’s contract rates were based on misleading information regarding its Medicaid population. In Texas, state officials last month canceled a managed care contract with a Xerox subsidiary. The move came after the attorney general’s office sued to recover hundreds of millions of dollars that the company allegedly paid for Medicaid claims that were not properly reviewed. Xerox, which denies any wrongdoing, blamed unscrupulous dentists for taking advantage of the program. In 2012, Connecticut jettisoned its Medicaid contractors, saying it preferred to use the millions that went to administrative costs and profits to instead boost pay for primary care doctors and improve care. The head of the Medicaid program said the state lost confidence in the managed care contractors. “Their measured performance is not impressive,” Mark Schaefer told Kaiser Health News. MISSOURI HESITATES In Missouri, where lawmakers again turned down federal money to expand Medicaid eligibility, there also was reluctance to expand managed care. Currently, three managed care companies provide services in about 54 of the state’s 114 counties, covering less than half of the state’s 823,761 Medicaid participants. Legislative committees this year recommended a Centene-backed bill that would have shifted more children and parents into managed care policies run by private insurance companies. “I believe it’s a way to give the state some cost-certainty and better health outcomes,” said the sponsor of one of the bills, Rep. Todd Richardson, R-Poplar Bluff. But the House shelved the bill, and a similar proposal stalled in the Senate. Sen. Rob Schaaf, R-St. Joseph, a physician, led the opposition. “It’s not been shown that managed care for sure saves money,” Schaaf said. “There’s mixed research on that. We do know that it tends to limit the care of some people, especially the ABD (aged, blind and disabled) population, who are less able to navigate their way through it.” A study commissioned by the Missouri Medicaid program and performed by Mercer and Associates reported 2.7 percent annual savings for the current Medicaid managed care groups in Missouri. But Schaaf said that savings was wiped out by the study’s margin of error. And critics also contended that any savings stemmed from inadequate provider networks and denial of medically necessary services. In the end, the managed care bills died when the Missouri Legislature’s session ended May 16. “I would rather not just do stuff to make managed care companies wealthy but rather, to take better care of the recipients or save the taxpayers money, or both,” Schaaf said. The Missouri Medicaid Coalition, which is seeking to expand Medicaid coverage in the state, has not taken a position on whether these services are better provided by a state agency or a contractor. Bill Scheffel, Centene’s chief financial officer, insists managed care is focused on improving health care while saving tax dollars. “We provide quality health care, we save states money and we give them budget predictability,” Scheffel told the Post-Dispatch, adding that profit margins for the managed care industry are comparatively narrow. To measure the quality of health care, the company uses various metrics, such as rate of receiving immunizations, prenatal checkups, dental care for children, and follow-up appointments after discharge from a hospital. They also include hospital readmission rates and polls that show “member satisfaction” among Medicaid enrollees. One of Centene’s goals is to make certain patients receive proper care and don’t unnecessarily drive up their health care costs. For example, too many Medicaid patients use emergency rooms for routine care, rather than visit primary care physicians, said Holly Benson, chief executive of Healthcare Enterprises LLC, a Centene holding company that oversees four subsidiaries. “If you invest in primary care and preventive care, it means they’re getting the right care in the right setting,” she said. So far, managed care companies in Missouri appear to be meeting patients’ expectations. “I haven’t heard a lot of complaints about any of the managed care companies, and usually I do if someone is a bad actor in the health marketplace,” said Andrea Routh, executive director of the Jefferson City-based Missouri Health Advocacy Alliance, a watchdog organization for patients. But the jury is still out regarding the industry’s track record in delivering quality health care. “Based on the data provided by managed care companies, we’ve seen some modest increases in quality of care and some cost savings,” said Dr. Karen Edison, director of the Center for Health Policy at the University of Missouri. But it’s not clear if expanding managed care would yield similar results, she said. “The Medicaid managed care population is largely women and children, and they’re healthier and less costly than the older patients with multiple, chronic conditions like diabetes, heart disease and cancer,” Edison said. “It’s hard to imagine that you can translate the cost savings seen from managed care of women and children to the sickest Medicaid patients,” she said. Tim McBride, a health economist at Washington University, serves on a health policy advisory committee for Centene. Yet even he thinks Centene and other managed care companies need to provide more data to determine the effectiveness of these programs. “We as taxpayers give a check to these companies,” said McBride, “and we don’t get as much evidence or information back as I would like to see.” Source: http://www.stltoday.com/business/local/jury-s-out-on-managed-care-of-medicare/article_81ce0fc8-9eb4-5796-9dca-2072bac34cf6.html

MacArthur Foundation Fellow Tells World How to Improve Foster Care System Posted: 06/02/2014 12:51 pm EDT Updated: 06/02/2014 12:59 pm EDT [Print Article](#) [Share 33](#) [Tweet 14](#) [Email 2](#) [tumblr reddit](#) Recently, I asked Founder and Publisher of Youth Communication, Keith Hefner, his opinion on the current state of the foster care system because he has been helping foster youth use writing as a cathartic tool for decades. Beyond winning the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, he received the Luther P. Jackson Award for Educational Excellence from the New York Association of Black Journalists in 1977. Hefner is a 2004 graduate of the Columbia University Graduate School of Business, Institute for Non-Profit Management, Executive Level Program. Marquis Cabrera: What are your thoughts on the state of the current foster care system? Keith Hefner: The experience of foster care for most young people is the foster family. While many families are excellent, far too many are not. And, of course, children lose whatever support they have from those families at age 18 or 21 -- which is far too early for most to succeed on their own. Marquis Cabrera: Can you tell me about Youth Communication and any innovative programs you support? Keith Hefner: I am disposed to like programs that increase youth voice in the system. Represent [Magazine] does that through writing. The Mockingbird Society does that (in Washington State) through lobbying. Foster Youth in Action does that in several states by training young people to advocate for themselves and their peers at the county and state level. The Jim Casey Youth Initiative runs programs in several states that increase youth involvement. These are all wonderful programs, but they are afterthoughts. They need to be built into the system and well-funded. Marquis Cabrera: What methods or approaches do you believe will help to innovate the foster care system inasmuch that more youth will beat the odds? Keith Hefner: To put pressure on systems to improve foster families. The first step should be systematically collecting reports from foster youth about the quality of their placements. These teen reports should not be determinative, but they should figure strongly in agency decisions. For example, consistently low-scoring homes should be given the opportunity to improve. Such a scoring system would expose the low quality of many homes, and put pressure on agencies to close them (which would likely create a massive shortage of foster homes). The prospect of that would put real pressure on agencies and government to figure out how to solve the problem. Solutions could include more intensive support for birth families (to cut the number of youth who need foster homes in the first place), better training for foster families, higher pay for taking foster youth to attract a wider range of families, etc. But the first step is to create methods by which young people themselves can rate their experience in foster homes so agencies and the public cannot just bury their heads in the sand and ignore what's happening. Another thing we have noticed is that youth often have multiple workers -- employment specialist, housing specialist, social worker, etc. The cast of adults that teens must interact with is too large, and as we know, when everyone is responsible, no one is responsible. It's well known that a connections with stable, caring adults are important for youth

in care. Systems should be designed to increase the likelihood that foster care professionals can serve that role. Finally, foster care systems need to find ways to provide a series of (declining) supports to youth until their mid- or late-20s -- housing, medical care, tuition support, mental health services, etc. For foster children, the state is the parent. For children who are not in foster care, the "new normal" is that many or most parents continue to provide support for them children well into their 20s (e.g., financial support, tuition, a bedroom, keeping the children on their health plan, etc. etc.). The state, as parent, needs to recognize that parenting has now changed and expelling youth at 18 or 21 -- especially the society's most vulnerable youth -- is cruel and immoral. The few post-18 and post-21 supports, like ETVs, need to be greatly expanded. For example, youth in care should leave the system with a voucher for \$5,000 in mental health services, to be used any time up to age 40. **That could be paid for by cutting the vast amounts of money spent forcing youth into therapy before they are ready to engage it.** Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/marquis-cabrera/macarthur-foundation-fell_b_5418977.html?utm_hp_ref=impact&ir=Impact

Barbara Brooks: Former foster parent charged with raping children ruled competent to stand trial [WCPO Staff](#) 4:37 PM, Jun 2, 2014 Barbara Brooks Copyright 2013 Scripps Media, Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. CINCINNATI -- A Colerain Township woman accused of sexually abusing children she babysat was ruled competent to stand trial Monday. Barbara Brooks, a 63-year-old former Hamilton County foster parent, pleaded not guilty in June 2012 to charges of sexually assaulting four different children she babysat between January 2000 and Feb. 27, 2007. Officials said the rapes occurred in her homes in Mt. Healthy and Springfield Township. During court proceedings in September 2013, defense attorneys attempted to introduce seven new witnesses to the case after opening remarks were made. Prosecutors were unaware of the witnesses, and some of them were in court listening to the start of the trial. That created an issue of separating witnesses from jurors and the court beforehand. Prosecution in turn was offered an option to allow the witnesses, declare a mistrial, or not allow the witnesses to be called. The third option, according to prosecutors, would have left open doors for multiple appeals if a jury convicted Brooks. Attorneys decided a mistrial, and a new trial date with new jurors, and possibly a new defense, was the best option. That new trial will start Sept. 2. Brooks is charged with 15 counts of rape and three counts of gross sexual imposition. If convicted of all the charges, she faces the possibility of spending the rest of her life in prison, said Hamilton County Prosecutor Joe Deters. Brooks was a foster parent from 1996 until 2008, according to Hamilton County Job and Family Services spokesperson Brian Gregg. Police arrested Brooks on June 7, 2012 after a relative of the alleged victims, who are now 18 and 23-years-old, reported to police that the babysitter had abused them between 2000 and 2003. In 2008, a child sex abuse complaint was made against Brooks, said Gregg. Cincinnati police investigated, but didn't file charges. Brooks resigned from the foster care program and Job and Family Services officials permanently terminated their relationship with her. "These cases are always difficult to comprehend," Deters said in a previous news release. "We are glad that the victims had the courage to come forward so that we can make sure that Brooks is never in a position to care for a child again." Source: <http://www.wcpo.com/news/local-news/hamilton-county/barbara-brooks-former-foster-parent-charged-with-raping-children-ruled-competent-to-stand-trial>

News Application withdrawn to convert Litchfield's Tollgate Hill Inn into drug treatment center The Tollgate Hill Inn in Litchfield. Shako Liu — The Register Citizen By [Shako Liu](#), The Register Citizen Posted: 06/02/14, 7:31 PM EDT | Updated: 4 days ago [# Comments](#) A blueprint of the drug treatment facility that was proposed for the Tollgate Hill Inn as seen in April. Shako Liu — The Register Citizen LITCHFIELD >> Tollgate Center, LLC withdrew its proposal to convert the Tollgate Hill Inn into a treatment center for at risk youth last month, just one month after their application was submitted to the town's Inland Wetlands Commission. Nancy Lacko, secretary of the Inland Wetlands Commission, said the application never went to a hearing or to the Planning and Zoning Commission before it was withdrawn. The original plan said the proposed facility would provide an inpatient program for youths age 13-18, targeting three to four month stays. Clay Lifflander, owner of Hudriv Investments LLC, a small cap private equity firm in Dobbs Ferry, New York, said previously that he and fellow owner James Foy found the Tollgate Hill Inn in a search for potential locations in the Northeast. They thought the property was ideal for the proposed facility because of its buildings and acreage. After they dropped the application in Litchfield, Foy and Lifflander are scheduled to present a similar plan to the Zoning Board of Appeals of West Stockbridge, Massachusetts next week. They've proposed to turn the Williamsville Inn into a residential drug treatment center for adolescents. Jerry Elias, a home owner in West Stockbridge, said he has a house half a mile away from the Williamsville Inn, and he goes there every summer and stays as long as possible. He doesn't think it's the right location for the proposed facility. "They have this very sophisticated proposal [in Litchfield], but then they just suddenly packed up and left," Elias said. "It's a great concern to me. I think there is a need for this type of facility, but I wonder that's the appropriate location for it. I wonder if people in Litchfield felt the same way." Lacko said she doesn't know why there was such a sudden withdrawal of the application, as no reason needs to be provided for withdrawal. Owners of the Tollgate Hill Inn couldn't be immediately reached for comment. Reach Shako Liu at 860-489-3121 ext. 316. Source: <http://www.registercitizen.com/general-news/20140602/application-withdrawn-to-convert-litchfields-tollgate-hill-inn-into-drug-treatment-center>

Group home owners believe they are targeted by licensing changes - Las Vegas MyNews3 - KSNV Group home owners believe they are targeted by licensing changes [Video Images State requirements pose threat to group home residences](#) Group home owners and advocates are outraged and feel their homes are being threatened by new classification requirements Reported by: [Sandra Gonzalez](#) Email: sgonzalez@mynews3.com [Print Story](#) Published: 6/02 6:29 pm Share Updated: 6/03 11:46 am LAS VEGAS (KSNV & MyNews3) -- Group home owners and advocates are outraged and feel their homes are being threatened by new classification requirements. They say proposed legislation would devastate their industry. The Gentle Breeze looks like an average house in its neighborhood near Spring Mountain and Rainbow, but it's not. It has emergency exits, a sprinkler system, and lots of documents on the walls. That's because it is a licensed group home. Resident Ronald Schaub, an active 87 year old resident, loves his independence there. "I like being around people my own age, not that I dislike younger people because I was there," Schaub said. The home is classified as one that all patients are physically able to get out, should there be a fire. The owner, Miki Ton, wishes she could have the home also licensed to care for patients with physical or mental challenges including Alzheimer's. She, along with almost 200 advocates for group homes who were at a health care committee meeting, believe the rules changed on them without notification. "It's been hectic because we can't fill up our homes because we cannot get Category One residents. We went through this for over a year," Ton said. She says to change classifications for patients who cannot evacuate alone would cost the home thousands of dollars to change the sprinkler system to meet the requirements, for starters. And if Ronald falls or becomes disabled, he fears he'd have to leave this home and go to assisted living, where he's been before. "It was not the best place. It was nothing like this," he said. Chief of the State Fire Marshal Division Pete Mulvihill says his division has not yet made the classification requirement changes that group home leaders are complaining about. Both parties are divided and legislators have heard a lot of testimony, but they're confident that eventually common goals will be agreed upon. The battle will continue as advocates to retain the single family resident status are asking Gov. Brian Sandoval and federal leaders for help. Source: http://www.mynews3.com/content/news/Group-home-owners-believe-they-are-targeted-by/CNBE_8uPjku_9AC77YGRjQ.csp

U.S. Department of Education Releases Guidance to Improve Educational Outcomes of Children and Youth in Foster Care Details Created on Monday, 02 June 2014 20:21 Written by IVN Washington, DC - Today the U.S. Department of Education is releasing resources to emphasize and support the needs of foster care students. In addition to new guidance, ED has launched a dedicated web page, Students in Foster Care, and issued a joint letter with the U.S. Department of Health Human Services to education authorities about increasing educational stability for children and youth in foster care. The guidance released today will make it easier for caseworkers, child welfare agencies and tribal organizations responsible for the placement and care of children and youth in foster care to have direct access to their education records. The guidance provides states with information to implement the Uninterrupted Scholars Act (USA), an amendment to The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). It also details the amendment's impact on the confidentiality provisions in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The guidance will help states improve educational and developmental outcomes for students in foster care by providing authorized agencies with access to the records they need to meet the early intervention or educational needs of the students. "This guidance is part of our efforts to raise awareness of the needs of this vulnerable student population. When a child is removed from their family and placed in out-of-home care the disruption is extraordinary. Many have to change schools once or sometimes several times," said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. "This guidance will help lessen the impact of these disruptions and help provide students in foster care with educational stability, by making their school records accessible to those in charge of their care. We also hope it will shine a light on the benefit of these students staying in their schools and within an education community that can support them through a difficult period." The USA amends FERPA in the following two ways: First, it permits educational agencies and institutions to

disclose students' education records to authorized child welfare agency representatives and tribal organizations. Second, the USA also allows educational agencies and institutions to disclose students' education records to authorized child welfare agency representatives and tribal organizations following a judicial order, without requiring additional notice to the parent. ED is working with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to provide new resources to support educators and child welfare professionals in their work to improve the well-being of students in foster care. ED and HHS released a [letter](#) advising local educational and child welfare agencies to coordinate efforts to ensure the educational stability of students in foster care under the Fostering Connections Act. ED also launched the [Students in Foster Care](#) webpage this week, which provides information on important laws, guidance and technical assistance materials. The new guidance, letter and web page are just three of ED's continuing efforts to improve outcomes for children and youth in foster care. The Department has also worked to raise awareness of the impact of the Uninterrupted Scholars Act on the IDEA. The Obama administration believes that if we can improve the lives of the most vulnerable students, it will lead to better outcomes for all students. Source: <http://www.imperialvalleynews.com/index.php/news/national-news/9034-u-s-department-of-education-releases-guidance-to-improve-educational-outcomes-of-children-and-youth-in-foster-care.html>

Panelists talk with Maine tribes about trauma of foster care, separation from families [Print Email Share Tweet](#) Nell Gluckman | BDN Ester Attean, the co-director of Maine-Wabanaki REACH, presents on the history of Maine's Truth and Reconciliation Commission at the United South and Eastern Tribes Inc. board meeting. [Buy Photo](#) By [Nell Gluckman](#), BDN Staff [Follow on Twitter](#) [Find on Facebook](#) Posted June 02, 2014, at 7:40 p.m. Last modified June 03, 2014, at 6:28 p.m. BAR HARBOR, Maine — The organizers of the Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission hope the work they have done uncovering the stories of tribal members who were involved with the child welfare system will inspire other states to tackle such an undertaking. "One of our dreams would be if this work spread out to other states and helped other state child welfare agencies resolve what is going on with them," Martha Proulx, a manager at the Office of Child and Family Services, told the social services committee of United South and Eastern Tribes Inc., an association of tribes that is holding its semiannual board meeting in Bar Harbor this week. Proulx was one of several representatives from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Maine-Wabanaki REACH, the organization that established the commission, who talked to the committee about their work on Monday afternoon. The mission of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is to understand the trauma suffered by members of the Wabanaki tribes who were taken from their families by the state and put into foster care or boarding schools over the course of more than a century. In 2013, [a committee of five commissioners was sworn in](#) and given the task of gathering testimony from tribal families and welfare workers in order to establish a more complete history of the events and create a set of recommendations for how to improve child welfare services and avoid such events in the future. "We're about trying to make visible truths that have been held inside, in some ways, as secrets," Carol Wishcamper, one of the five commissioners, told the social services committee on Monday. "Telling the truth, in our minds, will lead to the healing," she said. "And that healing, hopefully, will bring change." Wishcamper said those working with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to gather statements have acquired about 40 testimonies from members of the Wabanaki tribes — the Penobscot Indian Nation, the Micmac, the Maliseet and the Passamaquoddy tribes in Pleasant Point and Indian Township. The commissioners visited all the Wabanaki communities to introduce themselves and hold talking circles, Wishcamper said. They've met with about 110 people in these settings. Community members who attend are invited to give statements publicly, or they also may speak to a single commissioner with a trained statement gatherer present, said Rachel George, the commission's research coordinator. The statements are recorded on an iPad and archived with the participant's permission. Those who choose to participate are given full control of the statement, George said. They can edit, revise or completely withdraw their statements if they prefer. The presence of a commissioner during the statement gathering is important to the process, George said. "They want to tell [their story] to somebody who is an authority figure," George said. "So many people have been told that that never happened, or 'I don't believe you.'" The commission's entire budget comes from fundraising efforts, Wishcamper said. Jointly, the commission and Maine-Wabanaki REACH have a budget of about \$800,000. Starting in late June, the commission will turn its attention to Mainers who are or were involved with child welfare services and are not members of a tribe. George said they hope to hear from foster and adoptive families, Department of Health and Human Services personnel, individuals who provide counseling, lawyers and police officers. Truth and reconciliation commissions exist worldwide to provide survivors of traumatic events the opportunity to heal. A commission was convened in South Africa after apartheid and another was created in Canada to address that country's use of boarding schools for First Nations children. Maine's panel is unique because both the victims and the perpetrators have been involved from its inception, according to Proulx, who works with Maine-Wabanaki-REACH. Maria Girouard, the Penobscot community organizer, said this work goes beyond talking about child welfare services. "The work of the TRC has really enabled the community to start talking about healing," she said. "To start recognizing the many, many hurts that we have." Source: <http://bangordailynews.com/2014/06/02/news/state/panelists-talk-with-maine-tribes-about-trauma-of-foster-care-separation-from-families/>

Cuts devastate area treatment center Perry Behavioral Health Choices can only apply for \$200K in state grants Jun. 4, 2014 | [0 Comments Email Print Share](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Tumblr](#) [StumbleUpon](#) [Reddit](#) [Del.icio.us](#) [Digg](#) [A](#) [Purchase Image](#) Stanton Villa in New Lexington is a residential treatment center for women. / Chris Crook/Times Recorder Written by [Anna Rumer](#) Staff Writer Filed Under [News Local News](#) [John Kasich](#) [Purchase Image](#) [Zoom](#) Brooke Byers, right, and Lori Sharrer talk about their time at Stanton Villa in New Lexington. The facility, shown above, is a residential treatment program for women. / photos by Chris Crook/Times Recorder More ADVERTISEMENT NEW LEXINGTON — When Lori Sharrer was injured in a car accident at age 19, she never dreamed the painkillers she was prescribed would send her into a spiral of addiction. After 16 years of drug addiction, during which she lost custody of her two children, Sharrer is now a proud graduate of Perry Behavioral Health Choices' Stanton Villa program and coming up on 100 days of sobriety. But the program that helped her escape the clutches of drugs is in now in danger after a grant "realignment" by Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services leaves PBHC scrambling for funds. Stanton Villa, a 10-bed women's facility for those struggling with addiction, provides 80 Ohio women per year with programming and education helping them to fight their addiction, with an average of 64 women emerging about six weeks later sober and on their way to physical and emotional recovery. "I learned to love myself here. I hated myself," Sharrer said. "Sometimes I think I wasn't that bad. I never shot up or anything, but I was that bad with the pills. I saw hundreds of doctors in one year. The drug addiction, it just catches on, and you have no conscience. You don't care about anything but your next high." The services that helped Sharrer are now looking for a new way to stay open after a change was made in the way the Ohio Department Mental Health and Addiction Services are awarding Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grants. The department has decided to end the practice of "floating" money from the Ohio general revenue funds to SAPT providers while waiting for the actual grant money to come in from the federal government, often months late. Realigning the distribution schedules to match one another will "restore predictability and sustainability to the field," OMHAS Director Tracy Plouck said. However, realignment requires the existing \$62.6 million of federal funding awarded in Ohio grants to be spread over six quarters rather than the normal four quarters, leaving Fiscal Year 2015 \$20.9 million short starting in July. Plouck admits this realignment will jeopardize some local services but blames the government's delayed grant disbursement practices for the necessity of action. "We're as frustrated as everyone else and hope that the federal government will reverse its decision or resolve the problem it has created," she said in a statement. The Muskingum Area Mental Health and Recovery Board — which serves Coshocton, Guernsey, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble and Perry counties — will have to deal with a funding reduction of almost \$365,000 because of the realignment. PBHC, the organization with the largest allocation, will face almost a 33 percent reduction in its \$800,000 budget. Its most affected service will be Stanton Villa, which has up to this point been run almost solely with SAPT grant funds. The program costs a minimum of \$492,400 annually, but this year, PBHC will be allowed to apply for only \$200,421 from the government. "It's like a kick in the gut," Executive Director Theresa Snyder said, "We're going to make plans to stay open at this point, but I honestly don't know." The funding cuts come at a time in which PBHC was already having financial difficulties, after an employee was caught embezzling more than \$200,000 in 2012. Although \$60,000 was covered by their insurance and the employee was ordered to pay back the sum of the money, Snyder said she doesn't expect to see the money again. The combination of loss and grant reduction means Stanton Villa would only be able to pay four of its eight employees, most of whom are making just above minimum wage. The burden of the additional funds will fall upon outpatient treatments offered by the organization, Snyder said, as the majority of Medicaid and private insurance reimbursements come from nursing services. Medicaid expansion was supposed to be the saving grace of the realignment, with Ohio MHAS estimating an infusion of \$557 million into the field in FY 2015. Stanton Villa's clientele was already vastly covered by Medicaid, however, and Snyder said she has seen virtually no increase in Medicaid payments since the expansion. Even outpatient treatments haven't been impacted greatly, she added, with less than a 10 percent payment increase now responsible for the deficit in other areas. Though Gov. John Kasich's mid-biennium review has allocated an extra \$3 million to aid local chapters who are struggling with their budgets, local organizations are still bracing for the inevitable disruption to their services. Snyder hopes to get assistance from the

community in approving a levy renewal later this year as well as from the Muskingum Area Mental Health and Recovery Board. The board has promised to help the program stay open, but Snyder knows there might not be much it can do at this point. "Their hands are pretty much tied," she said. "I know they'll do everything they can to help make sure we have the funding we need, but the field is very busy and there's a lot of demand and just no funding." Snyder said she has seen a worrying increase in the need for services in the past few years, especially concerning heroin and methamphetamine addicts. Even without hard drugs in the picture, there's plenty of work to be done, she said. Before she came to Stanton Villa, Brooke Byers hadn't realized she had a problem with alcohol. Growing up in an alcoholic home, Byers had lost more than 80 jobs and was arrested for public intoxication and a DUI before her time at Stanton Villa. "I was a blackout drinker. Once I started, I couldn't quit until I was passed out, picked up, or pulled over," she said. Wanting a mindset change but not expecting to stop drinking, Byers admitted herself to Stanton Villa in 2014. "Coming (to Stanton Villa) was probably the best thing I could have done for myself. It changed my life tremendously especially with my family," she said. "Just understanding that I don't have to be that person for people to like me. I'm very funny, I'm very bright. I'm just so happy now. I had gotten to the point where I didn't like me anymore." After graduating the program within one week of one another, Sharrer and Byers are now living together, attending 12-Step meetings and looking for jobs. They keep in touch with the clinical staff that helped them get their lives back in line, and they agree that, without the support and programming provided by PBHC, they wouldn't be where they are today. The option for those struggling with addiction could become even more rare if grant funding continues to be slashed, Snyder said. The next closest facility comparable for women is at the Rural Women's Recovery Center in Athens, a 16-bed facility Intake Coordinator Becky Barber said already faces a significant waiting list filled with women from all across Ohio. Long waiting lists and scrounging for funding aren't new for those involved in the mental health and addiction fields, though. Even at such a pivotal moment in what Kasich called "a public health crisis," Snyder continues to see a reticence of both individuals and the government to pay into addiction services, part of which she believes comes from anger centered on drug-related crime. "This field is necessary and relevant, but no one wants to fund it or look at it," she said. "We're angry and resentful. ... There's a lot of good that comes out of here, but it's bare bones."

Source: <http://www.coshoctribune.com/article/20140603/NEWS01/306030021/Funding-cuts-devastate-addiction-treatment-centers>

Dunwoody zoning board delays vote on Manget Way eating disorders center By Ralph Ellis The Dunwoody Zoning Board of Appeals decided Tuesday night to postpone a decision on an eating disorders treatment facility that wants to operate in a Dunwoody residential neighborhood. The board will take up the question again at 7 p.m. June 16. The Center for Discovery (CFD), a California-based company, spent about \$1 million on a house and property at 1364 Manget Way for the eating disorders treatment center. Up to six teenaged girls would live there while being treated, the CFD says. Residents of the neighborhood, with support from the Dunwoody Homeowners Association, are fighting to stop the center. They're worried about traffic and complain the city green-lighted the center without telling them. About 120 people showed up for the Tuesday night meeting, most of them opponents of the facility. Many wore stickers that said, "I support the Manget Way neighbors." The zoning board of appeals must first decide whether it's even going to discuss the situation. City planner Rebecca Keefer signed a zoning confirmation letter Jan. 13, and ordinances say the residents' appeal should have been filed within 30 days. But they didn't file until April 22. Linda Dunlavy, lawyer for some homeowners, said they had no idea the eating disorders center was in the works. The city didn't tell anybody and CFD didn't post signs or notify people in the neighborhood, she said. She said the zoning board of appeals is entitled to consider "the totality of the circumstances" and that the clock should start from the time residents heard about plans for the facility. But Josh Belinfante, local lawyer for CFD, said there's no gray area. "The ordinance provides no exception," he said. Some board members seemed conflicted. Vice chairman Ardy Bastien wondered, "What gives us the right to decide beyond the 30 days?" Chairwoman Gerri Penn said she had "a real problem with expecting people to appeal the unknown." "I find it impossible to appeal in 30 days if they don't know about it," she said. If the zoning board of appeals decides to hear the appeal, the next question will be whether the city correctly classified the eating disorders facility. Keefer's zoning confirmation letter says it's a personal care home, which is allowed in a residential neighborhood. Dr. Craig Brown, CEO of CFD, said doctors and nurses would periodically visit the center but would not stay there 24/7, though psychologists would. "They're not there for medical treatment," Brown said of the patients. "They're there for psychological stabilization." Dunlavy contends the city made a bad decision and that the facility should actually be classified as a medical treatment facility, which zoning laws don't allow in residential areas. "She [Keefer] merely relied on the claims of the Center for Discovery," Dunlavy said. "This is not a personal care home. This is a commercial business. This is a medical facility." No matter what the zoning board of appeals decides, the next step in the battle may be Superior Court, since any decision cannot be appealed to the city council. Up to six girls between the ages of 11 and 18 would stay in the eating disorders center and receive 24-hour care. The typical treatment duration runs between 45 and 90 days, the CFD said. Brown said this would be CFD's first operation in Georgia. Other eating disorders centers are also located in upscale neighborhoods, he said, because that's where the problem is usually found. Source:

<http://www.reporternewspapers.net/2014/06/04/zoning-board-delays-vote-magnet-way-eating-disorders-center/>

Two deaths in privately run group homes stir concern in N.J. June 3, 2014, 10:06 PM Last updated: Wednesday, June 4, 2014, 3:10 PM By STEPHANIE AKIN STAFF WRITER The Record elizabeth lara/staff photographer The North Jersey Developmental Center in Totowa is one of two state-run facilities that are being phased out. Two men with severe mental and physical disabilities died from choking on food months after they were transferred from the North Jersey Developmental Center in Totowa to privately run homes as part of a massive restructuring of care for the disabled, according to union members and family advocates. The circumstances surrounding the deaths of Richard Fornarotto, 54, and Steven Cortes, 65, are uncannily similar and point to what some advocates for the disabled say are widespread problems in the way the state has undertaken its plans to close the North Jersey Developmental Center and the Woodbridge Developmental Center, a process that the state says will help improve treatment to thousands of people by better integrating them into their communities, but which advocates say has unnecessarily upended hundreds of lives. The deaths come at a time when families of those in the developmental centers are fighting the closures, saying such a drastic change could have devastating consequences. However, many circumstances surrounding the deaths are unknown, including whether they were the result of unfortunate accidents or whether the shift from one facility to another played a role. State officials, citing federal medical confidentiality laws, declined to confirm details about the deaths, including Cortes' and Fornarotto's names. But Nicole Brossoie, a spokeswoman for the state Department of Human Services, wrote in an email that there was no "causal connection" between deaths of residents and transfers from community centers. "Individuals with developmental disabilities often have multiple medical conditions that can shorten their lifespan — regardless of where they live," Brossoie wrote. "The administration firmly believes that all individuals deserve to be cared for in the least restrictive environment available." Fornarotto and Cortes were both under the care of state-appointed guardians, meaning they had no living relatives to manage their affairs. They had both lived in state institutions like the North Jersey Developmental Center since they were children but were transferred to private group homes in recent months, part of the first wave of residents to make the move. And they both choked on bits of food — Fornarotto on a cupcake and Cortes on a sandwich — according to sources with knowledge of their cases. "These deaths sadden me but they do not shock me," said Geoffrey Dubrowsky, a member of the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities, which advocates for the disabled, and a relative and guardian of three people with disabilities. "When you move somebody from a facility where they have been most of their lives, surrounded by the people who know what kind of care they need, these results must be expected." Fornarotto and Cortes were among the 639 residents scheduled to be moved from the North Jersey and Woodbridge centers when the state announced the controversial decision in August 2012 to close both institutions and move as many of their residents as possible into privately run group homes, which are smaller and more integrated with surrounding communities and can help some of the higher functioning residents live fuller lives. The move reflects a long-standing shift in national experts' opinions about the best way to care for the developmentally disabled — people with such conditions as intellectual disabilities, autism and cerebral palsy — and responds to budget constraints, changes in public policy and regional New Jersey politics. The closures will save the state \$27 million for the next fiscal year, money that will be redirected to community housing, where there are long waits for beds, as well as day programs and other services, officials have said. With a \$1.6 billion budget, the state Division of Developmental Disabilities provides services to more than 40,000 disabled individuals, of whom 2,340 have lived in the seven developmental centers. An additional 8,000, most living with their families, are on a state waiting list for community services, such as group homes and day programs. The decision to close the centers was also hastened by a 2013 settlement with a state advocacy group, Disability Rights New Jersey, which argued in a federal lawsuit that the state was not complying with U.S. Supreme Court mandates to allow people with developmental disabilities to live in the least-restrictive and most-appropriate setting. The settlement sets a deadline for mid-2017 for the state to move, "all individuals determined to be eligible for community placement" — about 600 people. The developmental centers are closing far sooner. The Totowa center is scheduled to close on July 1 and the Woodbridge center will close on Jan. 1. Brossoie said that, per capita, only Arkansas and Mississippi have more

people with developmental disabilities living in institutions and that Governor Christie recommended \$102 million in, "new and annualized funding for community placements and community services and supports," in his budget recommendation for fiscal 2015. But Christie's plans to bridge a state budget gap over the next 13 months, announced late last month, also include skipping a \$13 million one-time payment to those that provide community-based services to the disabled, such as — adult day care centers and group homes. "Has any of this happened in a developmental center in the past? Yes it has, but not to this degree," said Jenelle Blackmon, staff representative of the AFL CIO, who represents staff members at the Totowa center. The union stands to lose dozens of jobs when the centers are closed. Brossoie did not answer questions about the rate of deaths in developmental centers versus the rate of deaths in community settings. Cortes was born in Newark but had been in developmental centers since he was 8 years old, according to remarks at his funeral in May. Caregivers at the Cerebral Palsy Home in Livingston, where he was transferred in October, said he wasn't there long enough for them to know him well, but they were moved by his smile and his evident joy in living. He had a medical condition that made it difficult for him to swallow, although he was a very fast eater, according to staff members familiar with both cases who relayed detailed information to Blackmon and a relative of a developmental center resident. The staff members would not speak to a reporter directly because they feared for their jobs. Cortes was supposed to be on a diet of only ground-up or pureed food and to always be in direct eyesight of a caregiver, those sources said. But he was alone in an office on May 17 when a staff member heard a thump, the sources said. No one knew he had choked until the paramedics who were called to respond found the food lodged in his throat, the sources said. Fornoratto was on a group trip from the Benchmark Group Home in Branchburg to a ShopRite in February when he grabbed a cupcake from a shelf and stuffed it in his mouth. When he started choking, the group home staff members ran to get water and asked store customers to watch him, the sources said. State law requires staff members to immediately perform CPR and call 911, Blackmon said. He died Feb. 19. Blackmon said the staff at a developmental center would have known that because they are required by federal law to meet higher standards of care than group homes, which are designed for people who can function at a higher level and would benefit from greater integration into the community. Advocates against the closings said they accepted the rationale behind the decision to move people out of the developmental centers. But they said the process has been carried out too quickly to ensure the safety and well-being of vulnerable residents. "I believe their safety is being compromised," said Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttie, D-Englewood, who said she had received numerous calls from family members who are concerned about reports of the deaths. Email: akin@northjersey.com - See more at: <http://www.northjersey.com/news/two-deaths-in-privately-run-group-homes-stir-concern-in-n-j-1.1028426?page=all#sthash.lms4yem2.dpuf>

Marystown council votes against Blue Sky youth home proposal [CBC News](#) Posted: Jun 04, 2014 11:45 AM NT Last Updated: Jun 04, 2014 4:12 PM NT Facebook 27 Twitter 0 Reddit Share 27 Email Related Stories [Marystown residents upset about plans for youth home](#) [Teen worried about future after Burin youth home closure](#) The council in Marystown has voted against a proposal from a company to open a youth care home in a part of the town. Area residents attended a public meeting on Tuesday night to express their concerns regarding Blue Sky opening and managing the home in their neighbourhood. A group of concerned residents in Marystown attended a public meeting on Tuesday night, as council voted to reject Blue Sky's proposal to open a youth care home in the town. (CBC) Blue Sky takes care of foster children who have a myriad of needs — from those requiring temporary accommodation to those dealing with serious issues. Town council had previously held two meetings for residents to voice their opinions. "You keep saying this is a foster home, but it is a group home who can house children with drug addictions, sex offenders, aggressive behaviour, youth corrections involvements and so on," Marystown resident Wanda Barron said. The residents said the company quietly moved youth with behavioural issues from Burin to Marystown, with no notice to the residents, and no regard for their concerns. "This affects the safety of our kids, it is a needless worry put on our seniors that may affect their health, we will not feel safe and no one else will want to live there," Barron said. Councillors said their decision was not an easy one because the lines between a group home and a business are unclear. Marystown Councillor Lisa Slaney. (CBC) But in the end, council voted against the proposal from Blue Sky. "If we're going to move forward as a council and say, 'Yes this is a permitted use in a residential area,' we then have to realize the precedents that we set and how you bring that to the future because you will open up a can of worms," said councillor Lisa Slaney. In March, the provincial government announced [a new framework for staffed residential care](#). Part of that process included the awarding of a private contract for three youth care homes on the island: T.J. MacDonald Achievement Home in Burin, Pine Heights Group Home in Grand Falls-Windsor, and the Bay St. George Youth Assessment Centre in Stephenville. Blue Sky CEO Anne Whelan said she was disappointed with Tuesday's decision and the reaction from the residents. "Fundamentally, what we heard tonight was a 'not in my backyard' kind of conversation," said Whelan. "People don't mean to be judgmental about people with physical or mental impairments. I think engaging in more public understanding is really the key." Council did, however, leave the door open for Blue Sky to propose another location for the home. Whelan said she will appeal council's decision first. Source: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/marystown-council-votes-against-blue-sky-youth-home-proposal-1.2664386>

Disabled Clients' Protections Lacking Disturbing questions about how the state Department of Developmental Services is protecting its clients [Comments](#) 1 Email Share EDITORIAL The Hartford Courant 7:00 p.m. EDT, June 3, 2014 Two news stories reveal disturbing gaps in the state Department of Developmental Services' safety net. State auditors have discovered a large backlog in the list of group home workers fired for abuse of clients, The Courant reported this past week. The registry list alerts other group homes not to hire the fired employees. It's a good system — if it's kept up to date. But the auditors discovered there's now a backlog of 184 cases waiting to be added to the registry, meaning those former employees could be hired again by unsuspecting group homes. [Topics Southbury Accounting and Auditing Maps Connecticut, USA Purchase your Officially Licensed UConn National Championship Gear HERE!](#) That exposes residents to an unacceptable level of risk. Creating the registry isn't as simple as just identifying those who have been fired because of abuse. It's a complex process, including notifying the workers, conducting investigations and holding hearings on each case. Those accused must be given due process. But acting quickly is important. Having such a large number of open cases means potentially dangerous people might again be able to work directly with those living in group homes. To its credit, DDS has hired four additional staff to help process the backlog, with one more to join soon. It also says it is fixing the "fragmented" way it gathers information about workers. Those are steps in the right direction. Another issue facing DDS is the 2012 death of a resident of [Southbury Training School](#). The relatives of 61-year-old Jackie Kiley Jr. became alarmed when the intellectually disabled man, who lived at Southbury for many years, developed an infection and became sicker and weaker. They tried to intervene on his behalf, but Mr. Kiley died. As reported in The Courant on Sunday, subsequent investigations have shown serious lapses in the treatment he received. The two cases are not parallel; Southbury is not a group home, and there is no abuse alleged in Mr. Kiley's case. But these reports raise disturbing questions about how DDS is keeping the state's most vulnerable residents safe. Source: http://www.courant.com/news/opinion/editorials/hc-ed-dds-bad-service-20140603.0.2805383_story

Foster care employee accused of sexual abuse Rikki Salzman faces charges [NEXT STORY](#) [York County student makes cancer discovery](#) Text Size: [ASmall Text](#) [AMedium Text](#) [ALarge Text](#) Foster care employee accused of sexual abuse MILLERSVILLE, Pa. — A Lancaster County foster care employee is accused of having a sexual relationship with a boy at a Millersville home. Rikki Salzman Rikki Salzman [View Large](#) Photos Rikki Salzman [Video: Watch Susan Shapiro's report](#) Photos: [Recent Susquehanna Valley arrests](#) Rikki Salzman, 32, is charged with institutional sexual assault, corruption of minors and unlawful contact with a minor. Officials say the acts took place at the [Aborvale Manor facility](#), a foster care placement home, in Millersville. Salzman was an employee there. Officials first became aware of the alleged child abuse from the Department of Public Welfare on Jan. 16, 2014, according to the affidavit of probable cause. In a mandatory reporting form, the DPW relayed allegations that a female employee was involved in a sexual relationship with a juvenile male. When investigators spoke to the supervisor of Arborvale Manor, Mervin Fahnestock, on Jan. 23, they learned that there had been an internal investigation and Salzman had been suspended and later fired. Staff logs from Arborvale showed that there had been documented meetings with Salzman to discuss a variety of "inappropriate and unprofessional" interactions between her and the male residents in the facility, according to the affidavit. "Fahnestock also provided a video from the facility which is monitored by surveillance cameras that showed an inappropriate interaction between (Salzman) and (the alleged victim). Fahnestock also provided a documented interview of another male resident ... in the facility that provided extensive information and details regarding the sexual/intimate relationship that was occurring between Salzman and (the alleged victim)," the affidavit states. Several months later, the affidavit states that investigators talked to the alleged victim, who said that he and Salzman "were involved in an intimate relationship that included hugging and kissing on multiple occasions during his stay at Aborvale Manor." Read more: <http://www.wgal.com/news/foster-care-employee-accused-of-sexual-abuse/26328250?ixzz34Bxpz8wX>

Living in a tent under a DC bridge How often do so many of us walk past or drive by a homeless person and wonder how they ended up on the streets? Andrea McCarren reports. WUSA9 Andrea A McCarren, WUSA 6:23 p.m. EDT June 3, 2014 905 CONNECT [30 TWEETLINKEDIN](#) 4

COMMENTEMAILMORE WASHINGTON, D.C. (WUSA9) -- How often do so many of us walk past or drive by a homeless person and wonder how they ended up on the streets? It is almost an everyday part of life in a city like Washington. WUSA9's Reporter Andrea McCarren and photojournalist Joe Martin recently stopped to talk to a woman living amidst a row of tents. "This is my home," said Shontay Alexander, unzipping her tent. When she turned 21, her time in the foster care system came to an abrupt end. "On my birthday, they were like, bye," she said. She has been homeless ever since, giving up one of her few possessions to buy a tent that's now her home. "I sold my laptop," she told us. "It's hard. It's sad." Shontay's mother died when she was just 13. "I don't know my Dad," she said plainly. As a little girl, Shontay bounced between foster homes. Today, unemployed and alone, her welfare checks go straight into a bank account. "I have dreams. I do. To get off the street. Do something positive," said Shontay. Among her meager belongings is a teddy bear. "Reminds me of my daughter," she said. A two year-old who is now in foster care, just like her mom. Shontay denies having any issues with drugs or alcohol. She says she has never been diagnosed with a mental illness. And she has no criminal history. And now, she says her primary goal is getting her daughter back. We wondered if she had any family and were able to track down Shontay's brother in DC. WUSA9 asked if he knew she was homeless and living in a tent. He said she "chose to go that way." So we asked, "Does anyone lucid ever choose to be homeless?" Her brother responded, "We're as baffled as you are." Source: <http://www.wusa9.com/story/news/local/2014/06/03/dc-woman-homeless-foster-care/9924595/>

Director must repay \$23,000 stolen from Grafton group home By Gary V. Murray TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF gmurray@telegram.com 4 comments | [Add a comment](#) WORCESTER— The former director of a group home for disabled adults in Grafton was placed on probation and ordered to pay full restitution after pleading guilty Wednesday to charges of stealing \$23,000 from several residents of the home. Prosecutors said Sonia J. Boutin, 49, of Watertown stole the money from six residents of a Seven Hills Foundation community home for developmentally disabled adults in 2003 and 2004, while working as residence director of the home at 118 Providence Road in Grafton. Ms. Boutin was placed on probation for 5 years and ordered to pay \$23,000 in restitution to the foundation after pleading guilty in Worcester Superior Court to six counts of larceny of more than \$250 from a disabled person and two counts of identity fraud. The identity fraud charges involved allegations that Ms. Boutin, formerly of 19 Nottingham Road, North Grafton, used the personal information of residents to establish telephone and electricity accounts in the victims' names for her North Grafton home. As residence director, Ms. Boutin was in charge of making sure the group home's bills were paid and residents' money was used for their benefit, according to Assistant District Attorney John A. O'Leary. The prosecutor said Ms. Boutin instead cashed checks made payable to residents under her care, purchased money orders and deposited them into her personal checking account. Mr. O'Leary said the thefts came to light after a 2004 foundation audit uncovered discrepancies in patient funds, including missing cash. Ms. Boutin told foundation officials the discrepancies were the result of "paperwork errors" and that she would straighten them out, according to the assistant district attorney. He said Ms. Boutin did not return to work after being contacted by foundation officials. When Grafton police reached out to her, she told them they could keep her last paycheck and that she would not be returning to the area, according to Mr. O'Leary. Her lawyer, Keith T. Higgins, said at an earlier hearing in the case that Ms. Boutin called Grafton police before being indicted in 2005 and left a message saying she was in a shelter for battered women and would not be returning to Grafton any time soon. Saying Ms. Boutin's crimes involved "a significant breach of fiduciary duty" to "vulnerable victims," Mr. O'Leary recommended that she be adjudicated a common and notorious thief and sentenced to 2 to 3 years in state prison with 5 years of probation and an order of restitution. The recommendation that Ms. Boutin be judged a common and notorious thief, which was later adopted by Judge Janet Kenton-Walker, increased the maximum penalty of 10 years' imprisonment on the larceny charges to 20 years. Mr. O'Leary said the Seven Hills Foundation repaid the victims and that the restitution paid by Ms. Boutin should go to the foundation. Mr. Higgins recommended that his client, a divorced mother of three, be placed on probation and ordered to pay back the money she stole. Mr. Higgins said sparing his client a prison sentence would enable her to continue working at the realty company where she is now employed so she could make her restitution payments and would also allow her to raise her 14-year-old son. If Ms. Boutin failed to pay the restitution or otherwise violated the terms of her probation, she could ultimately be sentenced to up to 20 years in prison, Mr. Higgins told the court. Judge Kenton-Walker, who discussed the case with the lawyers in a lobby conference before accepting Ms. Boutin's guilty pleas in open court, said advisory sentencing guidelines did not call for a prison sentence in Ms. Boutin's case. The judge also said she felt it was more important that Ms. Boutin be allowed to keep her job so she could pay back the money she took. "No matter how miserable and rotten your own life is, nobody has the right to take advantage of people who can't help themselves, and that is just what you did," Judge Kenton-Walker said to Ms. Boutin. "You need to pay back every dime that you took — no matter how long that takes you," the judge said. Judge Kenton-Walker, who retained jurisdiction of the case, ordered that \$2,000 in restitution be paid immediately and that the balance of the money be paid at a rate of not less than \$100 a month. "I will be watching, trust me," the judge warned Ms. Boutin. "You have a chance here. Let's see what you do with it. It's entirely up to you," she said. Contact Gary V. Murray at gmurray@telegram.com. Follow him on Twitter @GaryMurrayTG Source: <http://www.telegram.com/article/20140604/NEWS/306049579/1116/RSS03&source=rss>

Woman will stand trial for beating in Detroit group home Caretaker accused of using broom handle, cord to beat autistic woman [Small Text Medium Text Large Text Print Email](#) DETROIT - A 49-year-old Detroit foster home worker has been bound over to stand trial in the videotaped beating of a disabled woman with a mop handle and extension cord. [Kadia Konate Dennard](#), 49, is accused of using a broom handle and extension cord to hit the victim, Vera Gossett, at Strathmoor Manor. She had originally been charged with abuse and assault, but an additional charge of torture was added during a hearing Thursday. Quick Clicks [Woman charged with beating autistic resident in group home Video exposes caretaker beating autistic woman](#) A co-worker at the home recorded video of the incident on her cellphone. Gossett has a severe form of autism and can't speak. Her mother, Jacqueline Gosset, has mobility issues and decided to move her daughter into the group home seven years ago. She said she trusted the home until she saw the cellphone video, which contains graphic content. "It hurts, it hurts, it's painful to see my child like this," the mother said. "It's very painful." Dominique Blade, the certified nursing assistant who shot the video, had just started working at the group home. She said she was so disturbed by what she saw that she decided to start recording things. Blade testified that she saw Dennard abuse Vera Gossett for three hours. "She started hitting her ... all over her body," Blade said. "She [Konate-Dennard] told me, 'Well this is the way you have to handle her, she's an animal, you have to handle her and deal with her like this,'" Blade said. The owner, Bartholomew Ajulufoh, has had his license revoked and it isn't the first time he's been investigated by the state. Last year he was found guilty for how another resident had been restrained. Vera Gossett has been moved to a different home and is doing better. The other residents have also been taken out of the home. Source: <http://www.clickondetroit.com/news/court-hearing-thursday-for-woman-charged-with-beating-woman-in-group-home/26327516>

R.I. tightens procedures for prescribing psychotropic drugs for children in foster care Published: June 04, 2014 11:20 PM [Comments 9](#) 104 49+10 0 3 12 By Lynn Arditi Lynn Arditi Providence Journal Journal Staff Writer larditi@providencejournal.com Published: June 04 2014 11:20 PROVIDENCE, R.I.— Rhode Island's child welfare agency has brought in a psychiatrist to oversee the prescribing of psychotropic medications for youths in its care in the wake of growing nationwide concerns about the overreliance on these medications for foster children. More than 500 youths in the care of the state Department of Children, Youth and Families in 2013 were prescribed antipsychotics, antidepressants and other psychotropic medications, according to an analysis of data from Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island, an HMO that serves Medicaid recipients. Many of these children were prescribed multiple medications, which increases the risk of side effects. "There are too many kids on meds and too many kids on multiple meds," said Dr. Elizabeth A. Lowenhaupt, a child and adolescent psychiatrist at Rhode Island Hospital who is overseeing the program at DCYF. "It's really about making sure we have services that are alternatives to the meds." In one extreme case, she said, a child was on six psychotropic medications and a doctor was requesting permission to add a seventh to treat the side-effects. Instead, she said, after talking it over "he decided to take the child off three medications and the side effects went away." Until this year, the DCYF had allowed regional administrators with no medical expertise to sign medication consent forms authorizing requests for new prescriptions for children and adolescents who have no parent or other legal guardian to oversee their medical care. New regulations enacted by the DCYF now require these administrators to get the approval of the department's consulting psychiatrist, in this case Lowenhaupt, for any new prescriptions for psychotropic medications for these youth. Administrators also must identify "red flags" for any new medication requests — including those for children under the age of 6 or for those taking three of more such medications — and seek the consulting psychiatrist's permission before approving them. Other red flags, she said, include children who are prescribed two or more of the same category of medications, such as two antidepressants, those taking more than the daily recommended dosage, and those who are taking any psychotropic medication without therapy or other behavioral health services. The data from Neighborhood Health showed that 518 youths — 22 percent of the 2,360 youths in state care — were taking psychotropic medications during the fourth quarter of 2013. Of those, 140 were taking two psychotropic medications, 86 were taking three and 54 were taking four or more. (A report released in April by the General Accounting Office found that hundreds of foster

children in several states studied, as well as those in the general population, were prescribed five or more psychotropic medications even though there is no medical evidence to support such a regimen.) Of the 518 youths up to age 21 taking such medications, 442 were 17 years old or younger, according to Colleen Carron, an epidemiologist and director of data and evaluation for the DCYF. Among them were 32 children under 6 years old, the report showed. Most of those children were 4- or 5-year-olds who were being treated with ADHD, or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, medications, Lowenhaupt said. The report provided no comparison data for the use of psychotropic drugs among foster children with those of youths in the general population. However, a 2011 report by Neighborhood Health showed that children in state care in Rhode Island were three times more likely to be prescribed psychotropic medications than those in the general Medicaid population. Nationwide, children in foster care are prescribed psychotropic medications at a rate four times higher than the general Medicaid child population, and more often receive multiple medications, according to a study by the nonprofit Center for Healthcare Strategies. Rhode Island is one of six states where state child welfare officials are working with the Center for Healthcare Strategies to improve policies and procedures to reduce reliance on psychotropic medications in children. The other states are Vermont, New York, New Jersey, Illinois and Oregon. The project, funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, provides technical support to help states develop and adopt more effective protocols for use of psychotropic medications. Janice DeFrances, the DCYF's director, said the department had applied for a grant to participate in the project in 2011, and when it wasn't chosen she offered to fund the effort anyway. The department has since received some technical support from the center for its work, she said. On Twitter: [@LynnArditi](#) Source: <http://www.providencejournal.com/breaking-news/content/20140604-r.i.-tightens-procedures-for-prescribing-psychotropic-drugs-for-children-in-foster-care.ece>

Youth collects gifts for kids in foster care [Story Comments](#) [Share](#) [Share](#) [Print](#) [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#)
[Previous](#) [Next](#) Nile Trice Posted: Thursday, June 5, 2014 12:05 am [Youth collects gifts for kids in foster care](#) By Bridges O'Neil St. Louis American Pattonville High School sophomore Nile Trice recently celebrated her 16th birthday in a unique way. Nile hosted a party at the Creve Coeur Ice Skating Rink where she collected more than \$1,600 in gifts to be donated to the Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition. Attendees at Nile's birthday party earned free admission by bringing items most frequently requested by foster children – an MP3 player, bath and body products, a gift card or a remote control vehicle. It is a tradition Nile began when she was in the sixth grade. Within five years, she has raised nearly \$5,300. "The one thing I've learned through my birthday charity events is that we all have the power to touch another person's life in a positive way," Nile said. "You just have to want to do it and not let anyone or anything stop you." Because of her efforts, Nile said many people have told her that they plan to host similar birthday charity events. "We actually had a family that was thinking about adopting a child," Nile said. "We're all very proud of her," said Pattonville Principal Joe Dobrinic. Dobrinic said that Nile is a dedicated student and a young lady with outstanding principles. Each year she selects a different local charity to support. This year she wanted to do something more personal in honor of her 9-year-old brother Jadon, who is adopted. The Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition is a United Way agency. For 25 years, the agency has strived to create permanency in every foster child's life by recruiting and supporting foster and adoptive families in the St. Louis metropolitan area. Nile donated her gifts to the organization's Birthday Buddies Program, coordinated by volunteer Fonda Fontroy Richards. The program matches donors with requests from foster children who would not otherwise receive a gift on their birthdays. Richards, who has volunteered with the Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition for nearly four years, is the adoptive mother of six and the proud grandmother of 15. "Foster parents are often short on funds but long on love," Richards said. "They want to give their foster children a gift, but just don't have the financial means. We are always looking for more donors – especially for older teens who often go without." Like Alexis, who will celebrate her 16th birthday in July and is in need of a donor to make her birthday wishes come true. Alexis has been in foster care for about two years. For her 16th birthday, Alexis has requested tickets to a St. Louis Cardinals game, a gift card to Forever 21, or a Fandango gift card that she could use at a movie theater. According to Shelley Thomas-Benke, director of FosterServe Volunteers, over 50 percent of children in the Birthday Buddies Program are teenagers in transitional or independent living who have high chances of aging out of the foster care system without families. "They really have no adult in their life close to them who are buying them gifts," Thomas-Benke said. Gifts should be donated by July 16 to reach Alexis in time for her birthday. Prospective donors can view the birthday wishes and notify the organization of their desire to fill a request or more. For more information, visit www.foster-adopt.org/BeaBirthdayBuddy. Follow this reporter on Twitter: [@BridgesONeil](#). Source: http://www.stlamerican.com/news/community_news/article_0788f08c-ec5d-11e3-bed7-0019bb2963f4.html

Report Raises Concerns Over Homelessness After Foster Care Daily Real Estate News | Wednesday, June 04, 2014 About 25,000 young people age out of foster care each year, with a large number then facing homelessness, according to a [new report](#) released by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and Department of Health and Human Services. The report sounds an alarm to policy makers for the need to increase funding to programs to better serve this population and for greater research to determine what type of housing programs best work for former foster-care children. Youth who age out of the foster-care system may be the "single age group most at risk of homelessness," according to research. Young people in foster care typically age out of foster care on their 18th birthday. Some states extend that to 21. Between 11 and 37 percent of youths who age out of foster care have experienced homelessness, according to the report. What's more, research shows that 25 to 50 percent of these young adults leaving foster care "couch surf, double up, move frequently within a short period of time, have trouble paying rent, and face eviction." "All the available research underscores that these young people are too often faced with the hard choice of being precariously housed or living on our streets or in our shelters," says Katherine O'Regan, HUD's assistant secretary for policy development and research. "As we work toward ending homelessness, policy makers at every level of government must consider the unique challenges of young people who exit a system of care with little or no housing options available to them." Source: "[New Report Examines Housing Challenges Faced by Youth Aging out of Foster Care](#)," RISMedia (June 3, 2014)

How one county keeps troubled teens out of prison 10 June 2014 by [Ted Roelofs](#) Bridge Magazine contributor Benton Harbor resident Cree Coates on intensive probation for young offenders: "It made a huge impact." More than a decade ago, Berrien County, in Michigan's southwest corner, embarked on a juvenile justice plan built from a core belief: Nothing matters more than family. In 2001, officials in the county's family court system created programs aimed at kids who were at greatest risk of committing a serious crime. One program targets truant teens who had scrapes with the juvenile court system, in which parents and teens learn constructive family dynamics. Another offers intensive probation for teens at high risk of committing crimes, where probation officers all but become part of the family. The results are impressive. According to court data, the average number of juveniles sent to juvenile facilities dropped from 120 in 2001 to 35 in 2010. Recidivism dropped from 56 percent in 1998 to 17.5 percent in 2012. Elvin Gonzalez, who oversaw the programs when he became director of the Family Court in 2001, said the strategy is built on matching high-risk youth with community-based programs with proven track records. Those programs most often begin and end with family. "It is the central domain in a youth's life. Kids live in an ecology. They don't live in a bubble. They live in a family system," Gonzalez said. Before the shift, Gonzalez said, kids who were getting in trouble were usually sent to out-of-county juvenile facilities for a year or more. But that strategy did not address the troubled homes so often at the heart of their problems. Now many remain in their home community, with resources directed at making home and family a constructive – and not destructive – force in their lives. While the programs cost money, it cost more money to send troubled kids away. The average cost of community-based programs in Berrien County is about \$5,000 per youth. The average cost of placing kids in a juvenile facility is \$91,710 a year, Gonzalez said. Berrien County sent 112 youths to residential juvenile facilities in 2000. It sent 80 in 2013. Getting to know teens The first step is an in-depth assessment of boys and girls and their risk factors for committing crime. Some at highest risk are placed in a home-based, five-month treatment program known as Multisystemic Therapy, a system developed in the 1970s by a Virginia psychologist. It focuses on the array of factors that affect chronic juvenile offenders, including their homes and families, schools, neighborhoods and peer group. It employs three masters-degree level therapists and a supervisor, engaging the children and family members in individual, family and parent therapy sessions in their homes. Therapists also visit the these young people in school and at community or neighborhood sites. "We have worked with families that are literally homeless," said Edie Zars, who supervises the program. "We have worked with cases of domestic abuse and a parent with chronic health issues. We had youth that have had parents pass away. "The things we do range from helping families get furniture, get transportation, arrange medical treatment. We have a saying, 'Whatever it takes.'" Youths diverted from formal processing in juvenile court are enrolled in a nine-month program that includes multi-family classes and up to 20 family coaching sessions, plus up to 10 months more after the youth completes the program. From November 2010 to June 2012, 44 juveniles were served by this program. Of those, 23 graduated and 11 are still in the program. The others either dropped out or were discharged for getting into trouble. Of those who graduated, 82 percent did not commit new crimes during the following 18 months. The county also operates an intensive probation program that overlaps with the in-home

treatment program for highest-risk youths. Two probation officers supervise caseloads of up to 20 juveniles, making frequent contact at home each week. The officers make sure the young people are attending school and meeting other requirements of probation. Part of the family The court-ordered program, typically nine to 12 months, is for youth who have been adjudicated delinquent and are at risk of more serious crime. "We become part of the family," said probation officer Jamey Frank. "We go to the home. We meet them at their jobs — all aspects," she said. "We go to schools. When you see a kid that often for a year, you become really close to them." Frank believes this approach is more likely to work than sending youth away. "Here we are working with trying to maintain in the community the supports they are going to have to live with. The reality is, that's their family and you have to make the best of the situation they are in." In 2006, Benton Harbor resident Cree Coates entered intensive probation at 14 after years of skipping school, getting into fights and running away from home. Coates recalled that her mother, a registered nurse, did her best to help. "I was just a kid with bad behavior. I got around with the wrong crowd," she said. Under intensive probation, she had to produce daily signatures from her teachers that she was at school. She received in-home counseling from a therapist. Probation officer Frank became a most familiar face. "I was seeing her almost every day, even on the weekends. She would just pop up," Coates said. Something clicked. Coates, now 22, completed the program and graduated from high school. She is now married, enrolled in Lake Michigan College and two semesters short of a degree in corrections, parole and probation. "She inspired me to do more with my life," Coates said of her probation officer. "It made a huge impact." Source: <http://bridgemi.com/2014/06/one-solution-for-teenage-criminals/>

Are We Overmedicating Kids in Foster Care? A third of the kids in foster care diagnosed with ADHD have been treated with off-label antipsychotic drugs. That's too many children getting medicine we know too little about. By [Dawn Post](#) | Friday, Jun 6, 2014 [Share on reddit](#) [Share on facebook](#) [Share on twitter](#) [Share on linkedin](#) [Share on stumbleupon](#) [Share on email](#) [Share on print](#) [Share on gmail](#) [More Sharing Services](#) [55](#) A recent study reported in the Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology reveals that one third of children in foster care diagnosed with ADHD have been treated off-label with an atypical antipsychotic medication. As a parent, would you consent to your child being prescribed an atypical antipsychotic medication? I submit that the label alone should raise alarm. Atypical antipsychotic medications are major tranquilizers and neuroleptics used to treat psychiatric conditions. Some atypical antipsychotics have received regulatory approval for adults for conditions such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, dementia, autism, obsessive compulsive disorder and major depressive disorder. Most atypical antipsychotics are not approved by the Food and Drug Administration for use by children. But they can legally be used off-label, which means the drug can be prescribed to treat a condition for which it does not have FDA approval. News Topics [Justice](#) [Health and Environment](#) Author [Dawn Post](#) [About](#) | [RSS](#) These medications can cause troubling side effects in adults, including muscle rigidity, slow movement and involuntary tremors resembling Parkinson's Disease, as well as substantial weight gain, among other things. Because of the small body of evidence about the use of atypical antipsychotics by children and teenagers, it's difficult to determine their short term effectiveness and safety. And little is known about their long-term safety and efficacy due to the dearth of studies on this topic. Little is also known among many of the professionals prescribing these drugs about the mental-health impact of entering foster care. When children are initially removed, those who have experienced trauma as a result of removal and the abuse or neglect they suffered in the home will respond in various ways and, thus, there is no uniform means of identifying a traumatized child. For example, some children may suppress their feelings to protect themselves from further disappointment and rejection; others may outwardly misbehave, possibly because that is what they believe is expected of them or because they believe this act of sabotage will allow them to return home. Simply put, it may, in fact, be very difficult to identify from the child's outward behavior whether a child is experiencing trauma. In addition, services often center on correcting the child's behavior in the foster home as reported by the foster parent. As a result, the behaviors are addressed without identifying and treating the root cause. It is undisputed that children in foster care have a disproportionately high prevalence of mental health disorders. In New York City studies have shown that a large majority of children in foster care have a mental health problem serious enough to warrant treatment, yet most remain undiagnosed and untreated or, if they are detected, they are over- or irresponsibly medicated. Moreover, even children who have a diagnosis in foster care do not receive adequate or appropriate mental health services. Even for those families who access mental health treatment, they are generally restricted to one of many "Medicaid Mills" which are in the business of processing as many patients as possible. Assuming they are given a block of time, they are frequently faced with practitioners (frequently interns) who simply do not understand the dynamics of foster care and adoption and who cannot offer successful treatment and interventions. In addition, foster parents simply seek a quick fix to address what they perceive to be disruptive behaviors in the home. As a result, situations like this where foster children are medicated with atypical antipsychotics arise. There is action on a national level to address the issue. The PsychDrugs Action Campaign, an initiative of the National Center for Youth Law in Oakland works collaboratively with former foster youth, their advocates, and state agencies to develop more effective regulation of psychotropic medication for foster children and improved access to alternative treatments. By publicizing progress in states such as Florida, Texas, Georgia, Ohio, and California, the PsychDrugs Action Campaign seeks to help all the states to adopt reforms that are being developed in the most progressive states. For example, in Ohio they are using Pharmacy Benefits Claims data to identify the most dangerous prescribing practices and using psychiatric consults and supports to review the children's cases and the prescribers' progress towards safer prescribing. Particularly in those situations where psychotropic medications were prescribed to children under age of 6, where children were prescribed two or more antipsychotics for more than 60 days, or where children were prescribed four or more psychotropic medications concomitantly. In Texas, a recent law requires that kids who've been prescribed medication be seen by their prescribing physician at least every 90 days and requires that judges overseeing a child's foster care case be informed of behavioral and pharmacological treatments at all court hearings. Unfortunately, New York has not yet responded as other states have with proposed and enacted reforms. The Administration for Children's Services has issued guidelines encouraging physicians to "start low and go slow." According to an ACS "Quality Assurance" document, the prescribing psychiatrist must document his "reasons for prescribing the medication; name and dosage of medication and the date prescribed; previous non-pharmacological interventions; and expected results of the medication and potential side effects." Promisingly, a Psychotropic Medication Committee is currently being formed to provide further guidance in this area for ACS. We need to raise consciousness inside the local child welfare community and beyond. Potential financial motives must be recognized: Psychotropic medication usually elevates the child's classification from a "basic" rate to "special" or "exceptional," a change accompanied by a significant increase in financial compensation. Motivations in reporting of foster children's behaviors must be closely examined not only for financial incentives but also for practitioners taking the easy way out in terms of managing the behaviors. In reviewing records our office has seen a child as young as 2-and-a-half medicated with an atypical antipsychotic for "disruptive, unpredictable, and aggressive behavior." Emphasis must be placed on identifying and securing quality and consistent mental health services for children in foster care outside of the standard "Medicaid Mills" to provide for comprehensive treatment plans for children including therapy, parent-management training and specialized educational programs for biological and foster parents. And individuals like me, a member of the court community, must educate themselves about these drugs and seek to intervene if necessary with the legal tools available to us. We need to do better for our foster children. The views expressed are those of the author and not the organization. Source: <http://www.citylimits.org/conversations/255/prescriptions-and-foster-care>

Ex-boot camp guard sentenced for sex with inmates [0](#) More By Associated Press June 6 GEORGETOWN, Del. — A former guard at a boot camp program at the Sussex Correctional Institution has been sentenced to three years in prison for having sex with female inmates. Thirty-nine-year-old Christopher Peck of Felton, who had pleaded guilty to six counts of having sex in a detention facility and one count of official misconduct, was sentenced Friday in Superior Court in Georgetown. Delaware's Department of Corrections suspended the boot camp program after Peck was charged in December. The program aimed at keeping first-time offenders from committing new crimes. The News Journal of Wilmington reports (<http://delmarvane.ws/1k29Zvd>) that Peck, an Air Force veteran, admitted in court that what he did was wrong. ___ Information from: The News Journal of Wilmington, Del., <http://www.delawareonline.com> Source: http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/ex-boot-camp-guard-sentenced-for-sex-with-inmates/2014/06/06/1daaae8-eddf-11e3-8a8a-e17c08f80871_story.html

When Foster Youths Reach 18, to Whom do They Turn? When Foster Youths Reach 18, to Whom do They Turn? [5](#) Saved Save Article [My Saved Items](#) [Print](#) [Email](#) [Buy Now](#) [Buy Now](#) Aging Out of Foster Care DREW NASH • TIMES-NEWS Roxy McMinn, 18, talks about her future after foster care while Independent Living Coordinator with Magic Valley Youth and Adult Services, Susan Baca listens behind her at the city park Friday, June 6, 2014 in Jerome. 2014-06-07T02:00:00Z When Foster Youths Reach 18, to Whom do They Turn? By Alison Gene Smith alsmith@magicvalley.com Twin Falls Times-News June 07, 2014 2:00 am • [By Alison Gene Smith](#) alsmith@magicvalley.com (0) Comments Related Galleries [Gallery: Aging Out of Foster Care Blog: Foster Care - More than Fits in Print](#) "Foster kids will try hard to hide and won't open up unless they feel like they trust you," Martin said. [Read more](#) JEROME • How do I work a washing machine? Can you send me some pizza money? My car is making a funny sound — help? Parents whose children recently moved out

are familiar with such questions. But to whom do foster care children turn after they reach age 18? A parent isn't always a text message away. Many foster-care children struggle to build the life-long relationships that some people take for granted, said Susan Baca, independent living coordinator for Magic Valley Youth and Adult Services. The agency currently is helping 62 youths aged 18 and over throughout the Magic Valley. Eight more will turn 18 later this year. The program, which contracts with the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, helps adults become employable, works with at-risk youth and trains foster parents. Once children turn 18, they can sign themselves back into the system until they graduate high school. They must agree to abide by foster care rules but are free to leave any time. That's what Roxy McMinn did when she turned 18. She signed on to stay with her foster parents. Then a few weeks later, she ran into her birth mother. "She said, 'We need to reconnect,' and I said, 'I think you're right.'" That worked for a while, McMinn said. Then she lived with her brother, then went back to her birth mother's house. Now she's looking forward to moving into an apartment near the College of Southern Idaho, where she'll start classes in August. She said education is the goal that keeps her going. She wanted to be the first in her biological family to graduate from high school. Now she's thinking about majoring in early childhood education. Mercedes Martin, 18, recently started college and moved back in with friends where she formerly lived while in foster care. Leaving the system was nerve-wracking and exciting, she said. "It was like, 'I'm going to be on my own. What do I do?' But — 'I'm going to be on my own, this is awesome!'" At 18, Martin moved into an apartment on her own. Then she began to feel overwhelmed and concerned about her safety. A family she had lived with before welcomed her back. "They reminded me, 'You don't have to live alone if you don't want to.'" When Martin was growing up, her family moved a lot — from New York City, to Atlanta, to Twin Falls. They rarely stayed in one place for long. "I don't think I stayed in one place for more than a year," she said. She moved from school to school and struggled with classes. Now, with some stability, she's making progress. She recently started classes at Aletheia Christian College in Jerome. "I've learned more in one semester of college than 12 years of school," she said. Martin described her living conditions in Queens, N.Y., as "the ghetto ... a constant battle for safety." She said she used to carry a pocketknife everywhere and trained in mixed martial arts, focusing on jujitsu. Now that she feels safer, she's focusing on how to budget. Initially when on her own, she worried about budgeting and did a lot of research. "I obsessed," she said. McMinn's biggest worry was all the responsibility that comes with being an adult. "You're 18. If you do something wrong, there are consequences." One of her biggest surprises was learning that she could leave her foster home when she turned 18. Going from two years of rules to freedom was hard, she said. Baca said, "It's immediate independence." She said the independent living programs cover some very basic things that some foster children don't learn. Things such as where to find a doctor, how to make an appointment, how to get transportation, budgeting, banking, cost-comparison shopping, cooking healthful meals and even doing laundry. The agency starts working with foster children when they're about 15 to begin learning essential life skills. Closer to the 18th birthday, each child has a meeting to plan their future. The plan can change but serves as a guideline. The program helps foster children think about college and vocational programs, and some money is available to help pay for much of their college costs, Baca said. The program aims to keep foster children off the streets. "I can't say that hasn't happened," Baca said. "It's not a perfect system." Martin and McMinn are in groups that speak to foster parents, prospective foster parents and social workers. They try to explain how everyone in the system can better help teens. Youth and Adult Services can stay involved with a foster child until age 21 — or 23, if the youth is in college. "They don't make you feel like you owe them," Martin said, but she feels as if she should repay the program somehow. "You pay that back by all the good things you do in your life," Baca told Martin. The Magic Valley is desperate for more foster parents, Baca said. Those who can't be foster parents can help with respite care, giving foster parents a break. That requires a background check and short training. People also are needed to serve on boards and donate items such as suitcases. "Too often, their (foster children's) stuff is moved in garbage bags," Baca said. Call 211, the Idaho Care Line or Magic Valley Youth and Adult Services at 208-734-4435. The goal of foster care is to reunite a child with the birth parents when it's safe, or find a permanent family if reunification isn't possible, Baca said. Some prospective foster parents worry that they'll fall in love with a foster child, then have to give the child up to their biological parents. Others want to try foster parenting but worry about the effects on their birth children. Baca said she tries to work with new parents to quell their fears. McMinn and Martin said they're doing well on their current paths and look forward to the future. "Here, it's like a heaven on earth kind of thing," Martin said. Source: http://magicvalley.com/news/local/when-foster-youths-reach-to-whom-do-they-turn/article_8608f6a0-0f2e-542f-ad01-43640d194e2e.html

Racial Disparities in Michigan's Foster Care System June 6, 2014 by [Patrice Garnette](#) A recent [report](#) by the Michigan Race Equity Coalition in Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice discusses racial disparities in the Michigan adoption system. Children of color enter into the foster care system at a higher rate due to abuse and neglect (1.3 times more than white children). Children of color also more likely to age out of the foster care system and not return to their families. Of the 13,000 children in Michigan's foster care in 2013, minority children are 2.1 times more likely to age out of the foster care system. Broken down by race, black children are 2.3 times more likely, American Indian children are 1.4 times more likely, and Hispanic kids were 1.1 times more likely to have to leave the foster care system because of their age. Also, black children live with families that are investigated for abuse or neglect at a rate 1.6 times higher than white children. Key suggestions from the report are as follows: Continue to increase the number of foster care workers Increase the level of assistance available to foster care students who are in college or who are working until they reach 21 Improve data collection and increase data-driven decisions for improvement Increase funding to improve measures to prevent foster care neglect and abuse Patrice Garnette, Joint Center Graduate Scholar, The George Washington University Law School. Source: <http://jcpes.wordpress.com/2014/06/06/racial-disparities-in-michigans-foster-care-system/>

Green Bay group home for teenage mothers closing its doors By Gabrielle Mays Published: June 8, 2014, 10:36 am Updated: June 9, 2014, 1:12 pm GREEN BAY — A Green Bay group home for teenage mothers is closing its doors at the end of the month. Marion House has been serving the community for two decades. The group home is located on Green Bay's west side on North Taylor Street. Raven Coley and her daughter Nevach will have to find a new place to call home. "I've lived here for about two years," said Coley. During that time Coley says Marion House has given her better opportunities. "I think it was good for me to be here because if I would've stayed where I lived, I probably wouldn't have graduated," Coley said. Now Coley has her high school diploma. She's also gained some parenting skills from Marion House. "[I've learned] not to co-sleep with your child and how to feed your child the right stuff," Coley said. The group home opened in 1994. And today is the last remaining group home for teenaged mothers in Wisconsin. "The need for group home type housing for young teenage mothers and their children has changed dramatically. The counties that were placing historically with us are now looking to do relative placement," said Marion House Board Member Ann Weiss. The organization also lost federal funding. Marion House also offers transitional apartments for teen moms. Now the building, along with the group home, and all other assets will belong to Freedom House. "It's bittersweet," said Freedom House President Robyn Davis. Freedom House supports homeless families and gives them the skills they need to live on their own. The home is currently helping 12 families. Freedom House's president says 44 families are on a waiting list. "It will mean that we can help more people. We will not be using the assets here as a shelter. It's purely going to be for transitional housing and then we're going to determine what the next step will be for the use of the group home," Davis said. Davis says families will most likely move into the building within the next couple of months. As for Coley, she says she's sad to see Marion House close but she's working and looking for a new apartment. Marion House says it's currently helping about six young women find new places to live. Source: <http://fox11online.com/2014/06/08/green-bay-group-home-closing-its-doors/>

Woman gets prison for allowing kids to be molested Posted: Jun 07, 2014 4:41 PM PDT Updated: Jun 07, 2014 4:41 PM PDT WILKES-BARRE, Pa. (AP) — A Pennsylvania woman has been sentenced to 3½ to 10 years in prison for taking two children to a state prison so they could be molested by a convicted killer. Forty-two-year-old Rebecca Ann Butler of Danville was sentenced Friday in Wilkes-Barre. Prosecutors say Butler brought the girls to the State Correctional Institution at Retreat for several years, starting when they were 4 and 7 years old, to visit 47-year-old Andre VanCliff. He is serving a life sentence. Butler was convicted of two counts each of child endangerment and conspiracy to allow indecent assault of a child. Luzerne County Judge Michael Vough told Butler it was the "worst behavior" from a mother he'd seen. Butler admits putting the kids at risk but denies conspiring with VanCliff to have him molest them. Copyright 2014 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Source: <http://www.wfmj.com/story/25720607/woman-gets-prison-for-allowing-kids-to-be-molested>

Graham denies foster respite home By Jay Ashley / Times-News Published: Saturday, June 7, 2014 at 15:28 PM. GRAHAM — "Inconsistencies and unanswered questions" doomed a request for an emergency foster placement home this week in Graham. Mollissie Peterson of Burlington requested the Graham City Council issue a special-use permit to operate a group home in a residence on Providence Road. Peterson did not attend the meeting. In her stead, Delmonte Blackwell, a co-director with Peterson of the Alamance Academy, said the home was to be used as an emergency foster respite home for children 12 to 18 years of age, rather than a group home for more troubled youth. These homes, he said, are for children who have been taken out of their homes by

departments of social services for one reason or another. No more than four boys would stay in the home for no longer than 30 days, he said. Peterson previously appeared before the planning and zoning commission, which tied in a vote to allow the special-use permit. Blackwell spoke of having more than four children in the home, but later admitted he was talking about the Alamance Academy rules and not the plans for the Graham site. There was also a discrepancy in the square footage of the home. Blackwell said the youngsters would be monitored 24 hours a day by three shifts of workers. Neighbors Tisa Long and Blake Marley expressed concerns about placing young people in a neighborhood with high traffic and a reputation for drug busts. They also said they did not know what the plans for the home had been until two days ago. Source: <http://www.thetimesnews.com/news/top-news/graham-denies-foster-respite-home-1.329939>

Sauk Rapids treatment center fined in infant's death Kirsti Marohn, kmarohn@stcloudtimes.com 9:19 p.m. CDT June 7, 2014 Buy Photo Journey Home is a residential facility providing primary chemical dependency programming and housing for chemically dependent women and their children. (Photo: Times photo) Buy Photo 493 CONNECT [TWEET](#) [LINKEDIN](#) 4 COMMENT EMAIL MORE SAUK RAPIDS The Minnesota Department of Human Services has fined a home for mothers recovering from chemical dependency and their children and ordered its license to be placed on conditional status after determining it was at fault in the 2011 death of an infant. DHS launched a critical review of Journey Home, a Sauk Rapids residential treatment center operated by CentraCare Health, after a second baby died there in September 2013. In that case, the infant drowned after his mother fell asleep while bathing him. In an order issued last month, DHS did not find any maltreatment in the drowning. But in the first incident, the agency determined Journey Home was responsible for neglect of the mother and her infant, who died in October 2011. DHS issued Journey Home a \$1,000 fine and ordered its license to be placed on conditional status for two years. CentraCare has appealed. The first death wasn't reported to DHS until May 2013, said Jerry Kerber, DHS inspector general. The agency was investigating the first death when the second death occurred, prompting the review. "Any death in a treatment program is of very, very serious concern to us," Kerber said. Journey Home is a residential treatment center for chemically dependent women and their children that has operated for 25 years. Mothers receive parenting support through classes and counseling. The facility is supervised 24 hours a day. CentraCare spokeswoman Jeanine Nistler declined an interview request because of the ongoing appeal. She emailed a statement that read, "Journey Home and all CentraCare Health services regularly review our policies and procedures to ensure that we are providing the best possible care to our patients and ensuring the safety of patients and visitors." Tragic event According to the DHS investigation memo, on Oct. 1, 2011, a woman under Journey Home's supervision allowed her 6-week-old infant to sleep in an unsafe location and position. The infant died during sleep. The mother was diagnosed with substance abuse disorder and had two children removed from her home through child protective services. She and the infant shared a bedroom, which had a single bed and a bassinet. According to the report, the woman brought the infant to a staff person at about 4:45 a.m. and said the infant was unresponsive and cold. CPR was started and the infant was taken by ambulance to the hospital, but died. The woman told law enforcement she had fed and rocked the baby to sleep at about 11 p.m., then laid the infant on her bed propped on a pillow. She fell asleep until 3 a.m., then watched television until 4:40 a.m., when she noticed the infant "didn't look right," according to the DHS report. An autopsy found no developmental problems, disease, injury or trauma. Co-sleeping in an adult bed with a pillow and blanket was noted as a significant condition contributing to the infant's death. According to the DHS report, on the night of the incident, a staff person reported checking on the woman three times. Each time, the staff person saw the woman awake in her bedroom holding the infant on her lap. Because the woman was awake, the staff person did not request that she move the infant to the bassinet. Journey Home staffers were trained that if they observed a mother sleeping with her infant in bed with her, they were to wake her and have her return the infant to the bassinet. Staffers were concerned for the safety of the infant in the woman's bed because she was on a high dose of methadone, and sometimes fell asleep while holding the infant during the day, the DHS report states. Methadone is a narcotic often substituted for heroin in treatment programs for drug addiction. Journey Home's internal review noted that the woman received training on the importance of having infants sleep on their backs in a bassinet. When arriving at Journey Home, parents are given information that included safe sleep techniques and the dangers of co-sleeping. DHS noted that Journey Home's policy at the time stated, "We discourage mothers from having their newborns sleep in their bed with them because of the possibility of suffocation but we do understand mothers may choose to sleep with their infants at times." Photos taken by law enforcement the morning of the infant's death show the bassinet was filled with snacks and soda. DHS found Journey Home was responsible in the first death because staff were aware of the risks involved with an unsafe sleep arrangement, the woman's high dose of methadone and her vulnerability as a parent. "They were aware that the mother was prone to falling asleep while caring for the infant," Kerber said. It also was clear that the bassinet wasn't being used, he said. 2nd death In the death last September, a woman staying at Journey Home fell asleep while bathing her child. The woman was also taking methadone. The woman told investigators she had started the water in the bathtub, left the drain open and used a washcloth to wash the baby. She left the baby in the bathtub while she used the toilet, and fell asleep. When she woke up, she saw the infant floating in the bathtub, which had filled with water. Efforts to resuscitate the child failed. DHS concluded that although the baby's death was tragic, Journey Home wasn't responsible. A staff person had checked on the woman at least four times the morning of the incident. Journey Home has a policy stating mothers are responsible for their children at all times unless they are signed into day care. The second death wasn't as predictable, Kerber said. While Journey Home staff were aware that the mother occasionally fell asleep, they didn't know she was going to bathe the child at that time. Unique model Journey Home is one of only six residential treatment programs in the state that allow parents to bring their children. Kerber said such programs are beneficial because they increase the likelihood of chemically dependent parents participating in treatment. "There are people who need treatment, but are refusing to go to a treatment program because they don't want their children to end up in the child protection system," he said. "This is really a nice alternative to that, in that they can bring their children with them and the bonding can continue." However, such programs raise questions about what times the parent or the center's staff is responsible for the child, Kerber said. "This arrangement presents unique risks," he said. "And we're certainly reviewing regulations in this area to see whether or not they're adequately addressing this situation." Kerber said he's confident the center is taking the deaths very seriously. DHS's order requires Journey Home to improve its assessment of parents and their ability to provide necessary supervision of their children. A contested case hearing will determine the outcome of Journey Home's appeal. If DHS's ruling is affirmed, a conditional license means Journey Home will be subject to closer and more frequent monitoring, Kerber said. Follow Kirsti Marohn on Twitter @kirstimarohn. Source: <http://www.sctimes.com/story/news/local/2014/06/07/sauk-rapids-treatment-center-fined-infants-death/10179079/>

The Hidden Danger of Internet Addiction Mania: Sketchy Treatment Centers Written by [Whitney Mallett @whitneymallett](#) June 7, 2014 // 02:38 PM EST If your loved one is plagued by [turtleneck syndrome](#), characterized by a hunched forward posture causing numbness in the fingers or wrists, they may be suffering from an addiction to their smartphone, tablet, or other wifi-connected device. Poised to be the illness of the future, it's likely [Internet addiction](#) will also be the next moneymaker for America's multi-billion-dollar troubled teen industry. As the media jumps on [study](#) after [study](#) sensationalizing the amount of time tweens and teens spend online, we should be looking at regulating the programs marketed toward fixing the youngest pathologically screen-obsessed generation. The United States has lagged behind Asia in diagnosing and treating Internet addiction. [China's Tao Ran opened the first treatment program](#) in a Beijing military hospital in 2004 and [South Korea soon followed suit with similar internet bootcamps](#), while internet addiction was only added as an appendix to the DSM in 2013. Better late than never, residential facilities across America are beginning to see a market in underage net addicts. America's first Internet addiction treatment program, [reSTART](#), which opened in 2009 in Seattle not far from Microsoft's headquarters, now has a youth program. And other behavioral modification programs usually targeted at rebellious and/or drug and alcohol-addled teens are adding Internet addiction to the laundry list of problems they solve. One of these programs, [Liahona Academy](#), shared this [infographic](#) with Motherboard in an unsolicited email. The US, however, should look at the proliferation of internet bootcamps in China as a cautionary tale. Over the past decade, hundreds of residential facilities for net-addicted teens have cropped up from Hebei to Guangxi. These facilities vary wildly. Ran, an expert in net addiction who holds a masters degree in medicine, runs a legitimate treatment program—the help he provides families is apparent in the independent documentary [Web Junkies](#). But other facilities in the country are often run by quacks and snake oil salesman happy to pocket the yuan desperate parents are willing to fork over. Treatments at these facilities include unlicensed electrotherapy, and abuse that has ended in at least two deaths. 15 year old Deng Senshan died from a beating he suffered his first day at the Qihang Salvation Training Camp in Nanning City in 2009. The tragedy resulted in the China's Ministry of Health drafting guidelines for bootcamps which ban physical punishment, destructive surgeries, and forced lockups. Ran, the net bootcamp's pioneer, has been an advocate for increased regulation in the industry, and told [Wired](#) these oversights are at least a "first step." A year later, [another teen Chen Shi was reportedly beaten to death at another camp in the Hunan province](#). Western media is quicker to pounce on human rights abuses abroad than at home. Shenshan's and Shi's deaths were more widely reported than instances of alleged abuse at residential

treatment centers in the US. While treating Internet addiction in the US is very recent, bootcamp style facilities targeting troubled teens have been a growing industry for decades—there are even [escort services that will kidnap your teen](#) to get them there—and allegations of abuse have been numerous. In 2005, 33 states reported more than 1,600 staff members were involved in incidents of abuse in these residential programs, and a [2007 report from the US Government Accountability Office](#) examined 10 closed civil or criminal cases from 1990 to 2004 where a teenager died. These programs are big money. Back in 2002, Forbes estimated the troubled teen was a [\\$2 billion a year industry](#). While as in China, these therapeutic boarding schools, wilderness camps, and behavior modification centers (some promising to de-gay teens) can vary wildly, the problem is that right now they are totally unregulated at the federal level. An effort to draft a bill enforcing standards for these programs was [introduced to Congress](#) last spring but did not progress past the committee stage. A new documentary [Kidnapped for Christ](#) about an American residential program in the Dominican Republic, executive produced by Lance Bass, is striving to galvanize greater support for regulations. The US isn't the only country just beginning to tackle internet addiction. In January, the [first Internet addiction program in Sweden](#) launched. And while the teen addicts in the Chinese camp featured in Web Junkies are all boys addicted World of Warcraft and other MMORPGs, Patrik Wincent at the Stockholm center reported that most of their prospective patients were girls addicted to social media. If the US wants to tackle Internet addiction head-on and avoid the inconsistent and potentially harmful programs that will likely crop up in a vacuum of services, South Korea provides the best model. Bootcamp-style programs [are government run](#) and counseling is funded by taxpayers. The Ministry of Public Administration and Security is making the dangers of Internet addiction a mandatory part of the curriculum from preschool to high school. This seems like a preventative measure that could limit how many youth might otherwise eventually need to attend an extreme residential program that separates parents and children and introduces the risk for potential institutional abuse. Source: <http://motherboard.vice.com/read/the-hidden-danger-of-internet-addiction-sketchy-treatment-centers>

Wrongful-death suit filed against DSS, foster parent in Charleston infant's death [Christina Elmore Email @celmorepc](#) Jun 7 2014 10:00 pm Jun 8 8:57 am
Former DSS Director Lillian Koller By all accounts, the birth of Aiden Dean Clark was nothing short of miraculous. His mother, wheelchair-bound from spina bifida, had miscarried three times before Aiden was born July 7, 2011. The hopeful beginnings of new life in the family came to an abrupt end less than two weeks later after state social workers removed him from his parents' Charleston home. They had placed Aiden with a foster mother after allegations of abuse surfaced against his father shortly after the baby's birth. Aiden died 15 days later. Aiden's parents stood by the then-brain dead infant at Medical University Hospital as doctors turned off the machines keeping him alive. His father held Aiden's tiny foot as the baby took his final breaths. Ellen Babb, an attorney for the family, said this didn't have to happen. A wrongful death lawsuit she filed last week in Charleston County alleges Aiden essentially suffocated after the foster mother left him alone in a sweater box instead of a crib. The suit is the latest in a string of setbacks for the beleaguered state Department of Social Services, which has been the subject of widespread criticism regarding its practices and child deaths that have occurred on its watch. Former DSS Director Lillian Koller and the foster mother, Jennie Downard, 71, of North Charleston, are both named as defendants in the suit. Aiden's parents weren't identified in the court documents. Charleston County Coroner Rae Wooten said she can't say whether the baby died as a result of the foster mother's actions. A lengthy and thorough investigation conducted by her office failed to determine a manner or cause of death, she said. "Whatever Ellen Babb alleged in her complaint is what she believes to be the case," Wooten said. "It's not necessarily based in fact." No criminal charges were filed in the case, North Charleston police spokesman Spencer Pryor said. "As a result of our investigation at the time, there was no evidence presented to show any intentional and harmful acts, nor was there any probable cause to lead to criminal charges in this incident," Pryor said. DSS spokeswoman Marilyn Matheus would not speak directly to the allegations in the suit, but she defended the decision to remove Aiden from the parents' home. A DSS investigation and subsequent court order resulted in his father being placed on the Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect and Aiden's placement with a well-regarded foster mother, Matheus said. "Law enforcement conducted a full investigation into this incident and the police report described Ms. Downard as a wonderful woman and caring person, that in no way was suspected of any wrong doing," Matheus said in a statement. "As an agency, we are constantly exploring new ways to better serve the at-risk children of this state and will never stop fighting to place them with the best and most devoted foster parents possible." Agency problems The family's wrongful-death suit was filed in the wake of some state lawmakers' calls for a massive overhaul of DSS to ensure South Carolina's children are adequately protected. Gov. Nikki Haley announced changes last month to the department's Richland County office after an infant in that county died in April while a DSS staffer searched for the baby's family. She's sending in back-up workers to help deal with case loads and is taking steps to improve communication between the office and law enforcement. Similar problems have been reported in the Lowcountry and other parts of the state, but Haley has not announced any policy changes addressing issues outside of Richland County. In an email, state Rep. Peter McCoy, R-Charleston, said that as a former prosecutor and a father of three children, he's been "extremely concerned" with the string of child deaths that have occurred under DSS supervision. "When children are placed in their care, there has to be a series of checks and balances to ensure the safety of these children at all times. It's time for the Legislature to take a hard look at DSS and their day-to-day operations and safety checks for children," McCoy said. "Anytime there is a fatality of a child, especially if the safety of that child has been placed in the hands of an agency like DSS, there should be absolute accountability to that agency," he said. "I'm hopeful we can get to the root of the problem at DSS and do all we can to ensure the safety of our children." After months of rebuffing calls for her resignation, Koller stepped down from her post as the agency's chief last week, the same day the wrongful-death complaint was filed in Aiden's case. A life cut short Questions about possible abuse arose shortly after Aiden's birth, prompting DSS to take an interest in the baby. The infant had been left in his father's care while doctors treated his mother for an infection that had developed following a Caesarean section. The father checked into Trident Medical Center days later, on July 20, after a neighbor advised that he should be evaluated for possible mental health issues, a North Charleston police report said. Hospital staff who examined Aiden during his father's visit called authorities to report signs of what was thought to be malnutrition, sepsis, pinkeye and bruising to his abdomen and knee, Babb said. The baby was transported to Medical University Hospital for a more thorough exam. That hospital's staff could not immediately tell whether a pair of bruises to the child were signs of an assault or if they were caused by something else, a police report said. Babb said Aiden was deemed to be in good health but he was placed with a foster mother anyway. "He was not malnourished and no signs of sepsis were found. He didn't have pinkeye, his tear ducts were just clogged," Babb said. "He was a healthy child when he left that hospital and was released to the foster mother." Aiden was placed with Downard on Aug. 2 and died roughly two weeks later. Downard could not be reached for comment. 'Another tragic tale' While in the foster parent's North Charleston home, Babb said, Aiden was left unattended in a sweater box that was filled with towels and blankets. He rolled onto his side on Aug. 14, 2011, and fought in vain against cloth and plastic as he gasped for air, she said. By the time Downard returned, the baby was unresponsive. Downard did not have CPR training and was unable to provide the care that Aiden needed to save his life, the complaint alleges. He lingered on life support for three days before he died. A crib in Downard's home had been filled with boxes during Aiden's stay. According to Babb, Downard reported during a deposition that social workers were aware that she kept the child in a sweater box perched atop a stool instead of the crib. At least three social workers had visited the home, Babb said, yet no one intervened. "The first time you go into a home as a caseworker and you see a child is kept in a sweater box, you should alert someone," Babb said. "It's a broken agency, and to be honest with you, it was broken long before Lillian Koller took over. She just made things worse," Babb said. "Caseworkers have too many cases and people aren't following up with what those caseworkers are doing." A Post and Courier story last month revealed that nearly a third of DSS workers were shouldering larger than recommended case loads for the month of May, according to internal preliminary reports. In Charleston County, 39 percent of the office's 33 workers had 20 cases or more, while 60 percent of workers had to see 21 children or more in a month. The numbers differed from a reported statewide case load average of six per worker, a number frequently repeated by agency leaders. Matheus said the department's caseworkers saw nothing in Downard's home that was cause for alarm. The sweater box that Aiden slept in, Matheus said, was a makeshift bassinet. "If you go into any hospital or NICU (neonatal intensive care unit), you would see similar situations where newborns are kept in an open container," Matheus said. "That wouldn't be an immediate cause for concern." A history of service Matheus said DSS caseworkers are trained to look for all safety concerns in addition to noting a child's condition during their visits. DSS is "dedicated to protecting South Carolina children" in partnership with foster parents and group homes that provide care when others cannot, she said. Downard said during a deposition that she had served as a foster parent for more than three decades and cared for more than 100 infants, Babb said. She reported watching over at least five other children in the wake of Aiden's death. Wooten, the coroner, said Downard had "a great track record," considering the number of infant children the woman had cared for over the years. "A lot of foster parents don't take children that young." Source: <http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20140607/PC16/140609417/1005>

Washington trip gives chance to address foster care concerns Washington trip gives chance to address foster care concerns Saved Save Article [My Saved Items](#) [Print](#) [Email](#) « » 2014-06-09T09:00:00Z Washington trip gives chance to address foster care concernsDUSTIN DUNCAN THE SOUTHERN The

Southern June 09, 2014 9:00 am • By [Dustin Duncan](#) [Dustin Duncan](#) dustin.duncan@thesouthern.com Follow @zd2000 Loading... CARBONDALE -- A former foster child in Illinois now is fighting for changes in the foster care system. Yemisi Pleasant-Sloan, 25, formerly of Chicago, is now a Carbondale resident and SIU graduate. She spent her childhood as a foster child in Chicago. On May 21, she went to Washington D.C. to participate in the third annual Congressional Foster Youth Shadow Day where individuals affected by foster care can talk with their local congressman. "The whole purpose of the event is for current youth and former youth that have spent time in the foster care system to have the opportunity to go and meet with their local congressman," Pleasant-Sloan said. "We got the chance to talk with them and share our experiences in care, whether it was good or bad." Pleasant-Sloan said the idea was to talk to congressmen about procedures that were not so helpful in hopes they would take suggestions into consideration and make changes. Individuals at the event had the opportunity to see the day-to-day activities of members of congress by job shadowing certain members. Every participant could have a meeting with the members of Congress, during which they shared their personal experience and recommendations for the system. Pleasant-Sloan said the event allowed her to voice her concerns. "It was interesting for me because it was motivating," Pleasant-Sloan said. "There is definitely some work that needs to be done" she said "But things have gotten a lot better since the '90s when I was in the system." Pleasant-Sloan now works at Rainbow's End, a daycare center through SIU. She works with children from birth to age 1. "I love it," she said "I always knew I wanted to work with kids." The SIU grad said she is happy to be there for children in the early stages of their lives. **It is important for children to have a loving environment," she said. "Somewhere where they are safe and an adult is paying attention to them and letting them know they are important."** dustin.duncan@thesouthern.com Source: http://thesouthern.com/news/local/washington-trip-gives-chance-to-address-foster-care-concerns/article_f0b8b589-b5e1-150be-b560-f12a00953cdc.html

Number of children in foster care hits record high Agencies see more 'families in crises' as public assistance drops 2 | Children, DCF, Mental Health **E-mail Print Share This Facebook Twitter Delicious LinkedIn Digg MySpace** The number of children in foster care in Kansas is up, but the reasons why vary. By [Dave Ranney](#) KHI News Service June 9, 2014 TOPEKA — The number of Kansas children in foster care has reached an all-time high. The explanations why vary. In April, there were 6,156 children in the system. That's 356 more children than in April 2013, and 872 more than two years earlier. Cathy Mores/Special to KHI News Service The number of Kansas children in foster care is at an all-time high. [View larger photo](#) Dona Booe, chief executive of the Kansas Children's Service League, sees the escalating numbers as evidence of a building crisis. "This is a primary indicator that we're not reaching families before tragedies happen," Booe said. "These are families in crises, and we're not reaching them because the resources for reaching them have been exhausted." Officials in the administration of Gov. Sam Brownback don't view the growing numbers with alarm. They attribute the increase to better awareness and reporting of child abuse and neglect. "We are seeing an increasing number of reports being made," Theresa Freed, a spokesperson for the Kansas Department for Children and Families, wrote in an email to KHI News Service. "The increase in foster care cases is consistent with that. We attribute the increase in reports to greater public awareness of the issues of child abuse and neglect." In 2010, according to DCF reports, the agency logged about 55,500 reports of suspected abuse or neglect. It expects to field more than 74,000 reports in 2014. "We have done a tremendous job of working with community organizations to promote the reporting of child abuse and neglect," Freed said. "Our rate of removal, based on the reports, is constant." But Booe and other children's advocates suspect that increased public awareness is only one of the factors driving the foster care numbers upward. They noted that the increases have coincided with changes in DCF policies since 2011 that led to thousands of families being dropped from state and other public assistance programs. In the past four years, according to DCF reports, the number of children in households receiving public assistance fell from 24,567 in April 2011 to 11,867 in April 2014. "What we're seeing is that access to community supports and to government-funded supports have diminished in the last couple years," Booe said. "That takes a toll on families. It adds to the stress that they're under, and it increases the risk factors that lead to kids entering the system." At the same time, Booe said, state-funded support for services for at-risk families has been reduced. In the last four years, she said, state funding for KCSL's family support programs has been cut 10 percent. "That may not sound like a lot, but when you don't have a lot to begin with it is," she said. "I hate saying this, but we've lost a lot of our funding sources that went toward helping our highest-risk families. The assumption has always been that the private sector would step in and make up the difference — and people have stepped up, they've been very generous — but they've not been able to keep pace with the loss of government funding." According to DCF records, the agency spent \$2.8 million on the grants in Fiscal Year 2012 and \$2.6 million in fiscal 2013. It expects to spend \$1.3 million in fiscal 2014, which ends June 30. The reductions, Booe said, mean programs like those administered by KCSL have fewer workers available to help families on the brink of having their children taken from them. "There are people, case managers, who know how to help these families get through crises, get things stabilized and then plan for a better future," Booe said. "But if a family has had its phone disconnected, the utilities have been turned off and they don't have a car that works, they're not going to know how to find someone who can help them get those resources. They need someone who can step in and help. "But it's these case-management kinds of services that there isn't as much state-funded support for," Booe said. "The services are there, but they're incredibly stressed right now. And if your kids are not already in the system, your access to these services is going to be very, very limited." Dana Cox, operations director at Ashby House, a family shelter in Salina, said she's also seeing demand for services outstrip supply. "Increased public awareness may be playing a role," she said. "But the far more serious issues have to do with the lack of services and the difficulty in gaining access to the services that are available. Mental health is a huge issue. Substance abuse is too, definitely." Cox and Booe said they assume that many of these families' crises have been heightened by the [policy changes that cut thousands](#) of low-income families from the state's public assistance rolls. Most of the changes involved increased work requirements. DCF has not done an analysis to see how many children now in foster care came from families that lost their welfare benefits, Freed said. But department officials, she said, "have not seen any evidence" of a correlation between fewer families receiving public assistance and more children being in foster care. The stiffer eligibility requirements, she said, were meant to encourage parents to find work instead of depending on government programs. But Ashley Thorne, who runs the Court Appointed Special Advocates office of Sedgwick County, said there's little doubt that poverty is driving significant numbers of children into foster care. "If you're a child in a family that's going through a cycle of violence or substance abuse and you're removed from your home, the court is going to give your parents a list of things they're going to have to do before you'll be allowed to return," Thorne said. "But these things — parenting classes, drug and alcohol testing, getting a psychological evaluation — all cost money," she said. "So if your parents can't afford to complete the court order or if they don't have someone who can show them how to complete it, their rights will eventually be terminated." Children are placed in foster care after a judge rules their safety or welfare is in jeopardy, usually due to parental abuse or neglect. They remain in foster care until a judge decides their parents are able to care for them in a safe environment. Reduced resources In Kansas, several juvenile court judges are participating in a pair of review panels designed to keep tabs on the state's foster care system. "Everybody is concerned about the number of kids coming into care," said Melissa Ness, a longtime children's advocate who coordinates the review panels. Salina and Ottawa County Magistrate Judge Mary Thrower serves on one of the panels. "I can tell you that in my district, inpatient drug and alcohol treatment for someone who's uninsured — and a lot of the people we're talking about here are uninsured — is very hard to come by," Thrower said. "I'm not saying it's not available, I'm saying it will be a while before you can get in. There simply aren't enough beds." Thrower said she's becoming increasingly frustrated with the system. "On one hand, we're dealing with cases that are much more complicated than they used to be," she said. "It's not that Mom or Dad has a drug problem, it's that they have a drug problem, and they need mental health services, and there are disability issues to deal with. "But then on the other hand, when we get these people motivated and they turn to the system for help, that help is difficult for them to access," Thrower said. "I hear that from parents all the time, and I hear it from social workers, too." Magistrate Judge Ann Dixon, who presides over most of the foster care caseload in Dodge City, said she's noticed an increase in the number of criminal drug-possession charges filed against adults whose children were present at the time of their arrest. "That is a grave concern, to know that children are in a house where needles and drugs are present," Dixon said. "It is neglect for these kids to grow up having no concept of what a normal healthy family is, thinking that drugs being out on the table is just the way it is." Dixon said her courtroom observations mirror Thrower's. "The severity of cases is up," she said. "The resources for responding to that severity are down." Admissions spike in 2013 Kansas privatized most of its foster care services in 1996, after the system failed several court-ordered reviews. Between 1997 and 2013, the state paid as many as six nonprofit organizations to oversee its foster care, adoption and family preservation efforts. Last year, DCF decided to contract with just two organizations: St. Francis Community Services of Salina and KVC Behavioral Healthcare of Olathe. The decision caused United Methodist Youthville of Wichita, TFI Family Services of Topeka and DCCCA of Lawrence to [lose their contracts](#). At that time, Freed said the bids for the contract from KVC and St. Francis were lower than those from Youthville and TFI Family Services. DCF expects to pay St. Francis and KVC \$135.3 million in fiscal 2014, about \$12.7 million less than it spent in fiscal 2013. The contracts are projected to cost \$142.7 million in fiscal 2015. Marilyn Jacobson, program analyst at KVC, said the agency noticed a spike in foster care admissions in spring 2013 that added more than 300 children to the system. Jacobson said KVC officials still don't understand what prompted the bubble. "We're not in a position to know because law

enforcement and the courts control the (system's) front door, and this a front-door issue," she said. "Children get referred to us after they've been removed (from their families)." The numbers of children exiting the system, Jacobson said, have remained steady. "But we have this significant bubble of kids who came in all at once and are still working their way toward permanency," Jacobson said. "So when that gets added to everything else that's going on, we find ourselves at an all-time high. The problem isn't so much the back door as it is the front door." The federal review panels also aren't sure why the system saw a big increase in spring 2013. "These are volunteer panels," said Ness, who's also a lobbyist for St. Francis. "We do not have the research capacity to really get to the bottom of this. But it's clear that whatever is happening is happening on the front end of the system. It's not that kids aren't moving through the system, it's that more kids are entering the system." Fewer foster homes Though the number of Kansas children in foster care has increased, the number of licensed foster homes has remained flat. Records show that in April 2013 there were 2,486 licensed foster homes in Kansas; between 2009 and 2013, the state had access to an average of 2,491 homes. "A lot of homes are taking in multiple kids, more than they have in the past," said Jeff Piepho, president of the Kansas Foster and Adoptive Parent Association. "Turnover is an issue," he said. "A lot of times, foster parents will adopt the children they've been caring for and decide they're not in a position to keep being foster parents, so they quit. Another reason is they do it for a year or two and come away feeling like they don't have a loud enough voice. They don't feel like anybody listens to what they have to say." The association and DCF, he said, are trying to change that. "The other thing that's happening is people don't want to be foster parents because they think it would be so heartbreaking. They say, 'Oh, I could never do that,'" Piepho said. "We need to address that, too. We need to show people how they can be a positive, interruptive force in a child's life." Piepho, a Salina pastor, and his wife, Meadow, have cared for about 45 foster children in the past five years. The couple have adopted two children and are legal guardians for three others. Additional mental health funding At a Statehouse news conference last month, Brownback announced that his administration [would spend an additional \\$9.5 million](#) on mental health services in fiscal 2015. Most of the money – up to \$7 million – will come from the state's federally funded Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant, which is administered by DCF. It's not yet clear how much of the \$7 million will be spent on services for families at-risk of having their children placed in foster care. During the press conference, DCF Secretary Phyllis Gilmore noted that more than 3,000 children had been removed from their homes since July 2013. "Mental health issues," she said, "are often at the root of the problems in these homes. That is a serious concern for me." Gilmore later released a list of seven programs – a mix of job training, substance abuse treatment, early childhood development, and in-home visitation services – that are likely to receive a portion of the \$7 million. The governor's plan also would spend \$500,000 on 81 additional beds in drug treatment programs across the state. "We're especially excited about the \$500,000 that's being set aside for inpatient (substance abuse) treatment," said Dulcinea Rakestraw, vice president of treatment service at Preferred Family Healthcare, Wichita, and chair of the Kansas Association of Addiction Professionals. "But that's only a drop in the bucket when you compare it to the \$10 million in cuts we've had to deal with" since FY 2009, she said, referring to reductions in both state and federal support. "The funding that used to be there just isn't there anymore," Rakestraw said. "And a lot of that has to do with changes in policies for determining who's eligible for Medicaid and who's not. That's been tightened up to a point where a lot of people who used to be eligible aren't anymore. So a lot of us are in this situation where we have beds available, we just don't have – and can't get – the money to pay for them." At-risk families, too, Rakestraw said, are being harmed by the governor's decision [to not expand eligibility for Medicaid](#). "Medicaid expansion would greatly assist families that are struggling and could reach out and access service before things reach the point of being unsafe," she said. Source: <http://www.khi.org/news/2014/jun/09/number-children-foster-care-climbs/>

Vineland employee allegedly assaulted foster child, police say Enrique Rivera (Submitted Photo) [Print By Don E. Woods/South Jersey Times](#) The News of Cumberland County [Follow on Twitter](#) on June 09, 2014 at 4:20 PM Reddit Email [VINELAND](#) — A city employee was arrested last week for allegedly sexually assaulting a 14-year-old girl in foster care, according to authorities. Enrique Rivera, 40, of McClain Drive, was charged with aggravated sexual assault and endangering the welfare of a child. The Vineland Police Department was first contacted on June 6 by the Department of Child Protection and Permanency about a possible assault of a 14-year-old foster child in the Vineland area. After an investigation, Rivera was arrested on the charges and held in the Cumberland County Jail in lieu of \$250,000 bail. According to police, Rivera is an employee in the city's Department of Public Works. The investigation is ongoing and anyone with information is instructed to contact Crime Stoppers at 856-691-0345, Vineland Police Department's Criminal Division at 856-691-4111 ext. 4180 of the Cumberland County Prosecutor's Office at 856-453-0486. Crime Stoppers is offering a \$1,000 reward for information about the incident. Contact staff writer [Don E. Woods](#) at [856-451-1000](tel:856-451-1000), ext. 518 or dwoods@southjerseymedia.com Source: http://www.nj.com/cumberland/index.ssf/2014/06/vineland_employee_allegedly_assaulted_foster_child_police_say.html

Bill to Decriminalize Foster Youth Goes to California Senate By [Brian Rinker](#), June 9, 2014 [Share on Tumblr](#) **PRINTER FRIENDLY** A new bill that child advocacy groups are hoping will curb arrests of foster youth in group homes will likely be introduced today in the State Senate. The new legislation in its current form will trigger an investigation into group homes that call the police frequently on the criminal conduct of foster youth, limit out-of-pocket restitution demanded of foster youth and reduce time spent in juvenile detention centers. "The purpose of this bill is to prevent foster youth from being arrested and charged for misbehavior that wouldn't happen to anyone other than a foster youth," said Martha Matthews, an attorney for the advocacy group Public Counsel, who is helping author the bill. "We don't want foster care to be a pipeline to prison." Matthews said that normal teenage misbehaviors become serious, life-altering events for foster youth living in group homes. Instead of handling youth in-house, the homes frequently call the police for the slightest impropriety, exposing youths to the criminal justice system. Several years ago, Matthews represented a foster youth who had been charged with a felony assault with a deadly weapon. The deadly weapon: an avocado. The foster youth, who lived in a group home, had gotten angry and thrown the gnarled dark green fruit, known for its high fat and creamy texture, at someone. The group home called the police. Under the bill, an investigation by the state agency [Community Care Licensing](#) is initiated if a group home calls the police on its foster youth for criminal misconduct more than once a month on average over six months. The state requires group homes to have behavior management plans for the youth. "You don't want the cops to be your behavioral management plan," said Matthews. "The bill creates a threshold by separating the normal, well-managed group homes from the more chaotic ones that call the police all the time." The bill can only trigger an investigation; it lacks teeth when it comes to corrective action. The result and consequence, if any, are left completely up to the investigators. The County Welfare Directors Association, a nonprofit group of welfare workers, has tracked the bill and offered amendments. The association hasn't had a chance to read over the latest draft and therefore takes no position on the bill, according to their communication coordinator Sarah Jimenez. Sometimes a foster youth will get mad and smash something, often resulting in restitution. Matthews said most of the damage is covered by the group home's insurances, but the courts still makes the youth pay the full amount. The new bill will limit the restitution to only what isn't covered by insurance. If a foster youth is arrested, they can be held for long periods in detention, because, unlike kids with parents, they don't have anyone to pick them up and can spend weeks in jail, according to child advocates. AB 388 aims to reduce the time foster youth spend in detention by requiring immediate notification of the child welfare services and attorney to find alternative placement. There is a paucity of data to support the bill's assertion that foster youth in group homes are disproportionately thrust into the criminal justice system without good cause. AB 388, in part, is meant to collect this data. A [2011 study in Los Angeles](#) does demonstrate that youth involved in both foster care and the juvenile justice systems fare much worse than those in just one of the systems. Los Angeles youths who exit both foster care and juvenile justice earn less as young adults and cost the public more than youths who only exit foster care, and are more than twice as likely to have been treated for a serious mental illness "We didn't realize crossover youth would have such striking distance," said Dennis Culhane, one of the study's six authors, [speaking with The Chronicle's John Kelly](#) in 2011. "We knew it would find they'd be troubled, but didn't expect this difference of degree to show up." Assemblymember Wesley Chesbro (D) introduced the bill, which will be endorsed by Public Counsel, California Youth Connection, Youth Law Center and East Bay Children's Law Offices. Brian Rinker is a Journalism for Social Change Fellow and a recent graduate from San Francisco State University's journalism program. Source: <https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/news/bill-to-decriminalize-foster-youth-goes-to-california-senate/6924>

Become a Foster Parent Open Your Heart & Home to a Child with Special Needs As a licensed provider of foster care placement services, Rocky Mountain Human Services (RMHS) is seeking individuals and families who can provide a stable and nurturing family environment to children, ages 0-21, many of whom have intellectual, physical or emotional special needs. Training, support and compensation is provided for foster parents. Foster Care Homes: *Provide 24/7 living arrangements, with access to on-call services *Provide warm, supportive, person-centered, family settings *Help children connect with community resources and attend medical appointments, school or day programs and recreational activities *Are monitored and trained to promote a safety-first atmosphere Rocky Mountain Human Services: Screens applicants, including background checks and fingerprinting *Provides access to behavioral therapies for children *Offers ongoing workshops and support for foster care families/homes *Recognizes the need for caregivers to receive respite *Provides monitoring

of foster homes by highly trained and certified employees ----- How to Become a Foster Care Provider with RMHS Foster care provider applicants must: *Be age 21 or older *Have reliable transportation *Have an extra room in the home *Exhibit stability in their lives *Submit a complete application *Provide fingerprint cards and health evaluations for all individuals living at the home *Complete first aid/CPR and other classes *Participate in home study (interviews and home visits by certified employees) Source: <http://www.rmhumanservices.org/become-foster-parent>

Classroom to Courtroom Helping teens in New Hanover County by BRIDGETTE WAGNER | photo by KATHERINE CLARK Sheila Evans has helped keep troubled teens from landing in district court for almost a decade, and she absolutely loves doing it. "I have the best job in New Hanover County," Evans says. Evans helps local teens through her dual positions as a teen court coordinator and district court coordinator at the Alternative Dispute Resolution Services and Training Center (ADR). She has helped expand teen court to include a youth court since taking the position in 2005, doubling the program under her direction. When she isn't working with teens in the courtroom, she's volunteering to help them in the classroom. Her volunteerism paid off at this year's YWCA Lower Cape Fear Centennial Gala, where among the group's picks of accomplished women in the community and one of the ten 2014 YWCA Lower Cape Fear Legends. "I was shocked to win. I don't even remember half of my speech. I just know that I said it is amazing to get recognized for stuff that you love to do," Evans says. It all started with volunteering in her children's schools for Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, and as band mom. Her presence in local schools led to her working in child advocacy for seven years, and then as a regular substitute teacher in New Hanover County. She was soon offered a position hosting a television show, The Forum with Sheila Evans, on The Learning Network of the Cape Fear (TLN) station. The half-hour program, which she continues to host, features school board members, principals, and organizations relevant to students and their graduation projects. Evans hosted an episode about the local teen court and the next day received an email with a job offer. She has been working as coordinator ever since. Evans works with the Teen & Youth Court for the 5th District, which covers New Hanover and Pender counties. The program addresses first-time juvenile offenders in New Hanover and Pender, attempting to intervene early and keep them out of the court system. Student offenders who plead guilty for misdemeanors and certain school violations are sentenced by peers with punishments including community service or restitution, according to the program's guidelines. The alternate court also exposes students to the other side of the legal system. Volunteering students serve as clerks, bailiffs, and jurors. Evans says she owes a lot of Teen Court's success to her relationships with local attorneys and judges such as Chief District Court Judge J.H. Corpening II. "One time he said to me that it is not what it means to your kids when you volunteer on a regular basis, it's what it means to other kids," Evans said. "That is absolutely fundamental in what I do. I hope that it is something that I pass down to my kids." While rewarding, dealing with teens at war with one another can be tricky. Evans pairs teens who got into a fight as co-defendants, which is a different system from most teen courts. She does this not only to save time, but also because the teens will have to go back to school together. "Nobody said you had to be friends, but you have to go back to school the next day and get along," Evans says. Although nothing seems to stop Evans, being diagnosed with breast cancer in 2010 slowed her down. "I am thankful I didn't really have that difficult of a time. I purposely did chemo days on Tuesdays because I love my district court job so much I wanted to be there on Mondays," Evans says. Evans had a double mastectomy and has been in the clear since 2012. While she currently runs both teen court programs in New Hanover and Pender counties, she hopes to give up the Pender County program soon so that it can be loved a little better, and she can better focus on the New Hanover County program. While she reminds them of the courtroom dress code, most teens continue to show up in jeans, sneakers, and T-shirts. She's always pleasantly surprised with the teens who go out of their way to meet her expectations. "One kid had no dress pants, only shorts. He sent me a picture the day before court of khakis he bought at a thrift shop and a collared shirt. I love that I projected onto him, this is what I expect," Evans says. The tough love approach seems to pay off. "If you lay what you expect out there," Evans says, "they will meet your expectations." (Special Note: HEAL does not support "tough love". We do support justice and the right of all defendants to trial by jury of their peers.)

Justina Pelletier Begs for Release By Shannon McMahon Boston.com Staff June 9, 2014 3:51 PM [Share Comment](#) [Share 46 Comment](#) Justina Pelletier, the Connecticut teenager at the center of a lengthy custody battle between hospitals and her family, will reportedly be released. Pelletier, who has been living in foster care and a residential treatment center in Connecticut, appeared in a YouTube video today pleading for Massachusetts officials to send her home. The video shows Pelletier begging to be released. "All I really want to be with is with my family and friends," she said. "Please let me go home right now." The [Boston Globe](#) reported that state officials have taken steps to return Pelletier to her parents: "Late Friday, Massachusetts Health and Human Services filed a motion for reconsideration and dismissal agreeing that Justina should be returned home and the case should be closed," said Mathew Staver, a lawyer with Liberty Counsel, which is representing Pelletier's parents, Lou and Linda Pelletier. Reverend Patrick Mahoney, the Pelletier family's spokesperson, told the Globe: "Through the entire 16 months of this tragedy, the one person we've not heard from publicly is Justina herself. Now we can see her in her own words asking Judge Jonston and Governor Patrick for her release." Pelletier was placed under state care after doctors at Boston Children's Hospital concluded her condition resulted from psychological issues, rather than the rare mitochondrial disorder her parents say she suffers from. In February 2013 doctors alleged Pelletier was the victim of child abuse and custody was granted to the Department of Children and Families. Read the full Globe story [here](#).

Source: <http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/2014/06/09/justina-pelletier-begs-for-release/KAIkIbknzA9ztpx1kxyL/story.html#>

Most local juvenile justice homes exclude girls By [Jordan Gribble](#) Staff Writer Published: Monday, June 9, 2014 at 9:10 p.m. Last Modified: Monday, June 9, 2014 at 9:10 p.m. Local juvenile justice group homes are far more likely to accept boys than girls since 2010 law changes that provided for a set amount of residents. Group homes were under a contract system in which facilities were reimbursed by the state for each child they had per day. Then the state put into place a system under Medicaid that allows such facilities in Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes to house only 16 kids at a time. That led local group homes to decide to house only boys in their facilities. "Girls are harder to treat," said Bob Licalzi, director of the Lafourche Parish Juvenile Justice Center. "We have a saying that two girls together are fine, but put three together and it's volatile. They fight each other and they fight the boys. We've even had girls assault our staff before." Some group homes made the decision to allow only boys for financial reasons, officials said. Kevin Champagne, executive director of MacDonell Children's Services in Houma, said his facility is one of those places. "The way our facility is set up, we've got two cottages that each have 12 beds. One used to have boys in it and the other one had girls in it," Champagne said. "When the state changed the licensure requirements for group homes it made it so we could only have 16 kids at a time. Trying to maintain each cottage with eight boys and eight girls would be financially difficult to fully staff. So we made a decision in 2010 to just keep one of our cottages open just for boys." The Louis Infant Crisis Center in Houma also provides beds for only pre-teen boys, officials said. Source: <http://www.dailycomet.com/article/20140609/ARTICLES/140609565?Title=2010-law-pushed-girls-out-of-facilities>

Wisconsin: Outstanding Child Abuse & Foster Care Professionals to go Along with the Great Food Posted: 06/09/2014 2:07 pm EDT Updated: 06/09/2014 8:59 pm EDT [Print Article](#) [Share 12](#) [Tweet 4](#) [5 Email](#) [0 tumblr reddit](#) I had never seen the [Mississippi River](#) up close, with its picture-perfect views until I arrived in Wisconsin, but the beautiful city of La Crosse will also stand out to me for some of the best food in AMERICA. Having traveled the country covering Presidential elections or speaking on the subjects of Child Abuse and Foster Care, it's fair to say I have acquired a taste for good food. In La Crosse, with its population of about 50,000, there was the local tradition of "Fazyze's" restaurant. The first thing you notice when you walk up is the huge Blue outside awning. Of course [Fazyze's](#) was recommended, and I was told about its on-premise bakery. In Wisconsin, I just had to have some cheese curds, and it was some of the best food I had ever tasted. Light batter, and it was so good, the curds almost melted in your mouth. Then I ordered the Strawberry French toast. You know when a meal is so tasty that you never want the last bite to come. Yes, the food in New Orleans Louisiana is good, (Especially the Shrimp and Grits at Surrey's Café - a [Brunch Spot](#) in the Lower Garden District) but La Crosse can even compete with that. For Dinner, I went to a place called ["Buzzard Billy's,"](#) which is known for its New Orleans style Cuisine. I ordered a Cajun steak, and it made you want to bite your fingers. That's how delicious it was. But that brings me to the reason why I was in La Crosse Wisconsin. There, like many communities across America, they do such admirable work on the issue of Child Abuse. The Mayo Clinic there was holding its annual Child Maltreatment [conference](#). You may not have noticed it, but all across America "multidisciplinary" teams are now being used to intervene when child maltreatment is reported. Basically, the [Multidisciplinary teams](#) are exactly what they sound like. A collaboration with many different local agencies, from law enforcement to assisting the child on an emotional level, to protect children and ensure justice for Child Victims. I will [never forget](#) the professionals in La Crosse, like the lead organizer of the conference, social worker Philip Nielson. It's very clear how I feel about the great and positive work of Social Workers from a previous piece I did titled, ["We should all hug a social worker."](#) Some of the other speakers just from the morning session alone of day one, were Robert Hugh Farley, a world renowned expert on Child Abuse. His session was titled, "Undercover as a Pedophile: Six Years in their Shoes" and Jennifer Lee, from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children Even the Medical Director of the La

Crosse Mayo Clinic attended, Dr. David Rushlow, opened the conference. At 8:00 AM in the morning, they had hundreds of Child Welfare professionals, eager to improve on their expertise. The topics they were taking on are commendable to deal with the current day reality of abused children: Reconstruction Techniques for Child Abuse Injuries, Identifying adolescent victims of Sexual Exploitation and Gang Rape, the role of the medical exam in child abuse cases, Fractures and Head Trauma Review, how to assess abuse disclosures by children under 6 and of course Parenting Is Best Prevention . Perhaps the most compelling part of the day were the medical doctors that came up and talked to me, and they were down to earth individuals that just want to make the world a better place. But think about this for a moment, such doctors are on the front line with the Child Abuse battle. They are the first ones to see, and document horrendous child abuse. Burn-out for them, like the professionals, can be an issue. Just two weeks before the Mayo Clinic event, I was in Wisconsin again, this time for the Wisconsin Foster and Adoptive Parent Association annual conference that was held in scenic Wisconsin Dells. (In all likelihood, your community has such a Foster Parent organization) The [Wisconsin Foster and Adoptive Parent Association](http://www.wisconsinfosterandadoptiveparent.org/) took on relevant issues like Foster Kids aging out of the system. Imagine, your 18 years old, and thrown into society, on your own, with no support system. Pat O'Brien, a nice man and [dedicated professional](#), also out of New York took on that issue. There are everyday heroes in every local American community. I will never forget the great work and kindness of the President of the Wisconsin Foster and Adoptive Parents Association, Sherry Benson, or her Vice Presidents Tina Christopherson, and Manda Wirth. All three ladies have several children in their homes as foster parents, and all three are the type of Americans that would give you the shirt off their back. Of course a commendable list starts with those that are a voice for the voiceless, people that stand up for those that can't defend themselves, and that is the Foster Parents throughout the world. Perhaps the next time you see a foster Parent, or a Child Abuse Professional, you should say thank you, for all that you do for others. Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dominic-carter/wisconsin-outstanding-chi_b_5474409.html?utm_hp_ref=impact&i=Impact

June 9, 2014 at 11:50 pm **State suspends adult foster facility in Detroit where resident was allegedly beaten** Detroit News staff and wire reports [2 Comments](#) The state suspended the license of a Detroit adult foster care facility where a worker was videotaped beating a special-needs resident. The Michigan Department of Human Services Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing issued an order for Strathmoor Manor after an investigation "found violations of the Adult Foster Care Facility Licensing Act and administrative rules regarding the care of residents," officials said in a statement Monday. "BCAL took emergency action to protect the health, welfare and safety of vulnerable adults." A worker at the adult foster care small group home is accused of physically and psychologically abusing resident Vera Gossett, 24. "Vera Gossett was physically restrained without justification, man-handled, screamed at (often times with profanity), whipped with electrical cords and doused with water, when her behavior was not conforming," according to a complaint the Sam Bernstein Law Firm filed last month on behalf of Gossett's mother. Investigators were alerted to the beating after WJBK-TV (Channel 2) aired a story May 15 featuring footage, filmed by an employee, in which the worker is seen assaulting Gossett, who sustained injuries. The worker, identified as Kadia Konate-Dennard, 49, was arrested by Detroit police. Last week, 36th District Judge Ruth Carter ruled there was enough evidence to try her on felony assault, torture and vulnerable adult abuse charges. Konate-Dennard faces a Wayne County Circuit Court arraignment Thursday. Defense lawyer Suzan Gabbara said her client "was excessively overcharged," and nothing presented in court supports the charges. Strathmoor Manor had held a license to operate an adult foster care small group home since October 2006, the state said. The license was for six adults. The summary suspension order prohibits Strathmoor from operating its adult foster care home on Strathmoor Street or accepting individuals with physical or developmental disabilities, mental illnesses or aged adults, effective June 2. The order also requires Strathmoor to inform all guardians of adults in its care that its license has been suspended and that it can no longer provide adult foster care. From The Detroit News: <http://www.detroitnews.com/article/20140609/METRO01/306090106#ixzz34kxLRHvw>

DCF to close several group homes By Mark DavisPublished: June 13, 2014, 8:50 pm TORRINGTON, Conn. (WTNH) — The state Department of Children and Families is looking to save \$10 million by closing several group homes. Some of the parents of the mentally-challenged kids in those homes say this is not a smart move. DCF says the number of kids in group homes has been reduced by 40 percent. They add that child welfare and foster care system is improving. Fifteen-year-old Ben Schuler has multiple mental health issues but he's been doing very well. He lives during the week in a group home in Torrington — one of the homes DCF has decided to close along with five other similar facilities. It's a decision that is giving him and his adoptive parents who he visits on the weekends a great deal of anxiety. "In the last year that he's been there he has made progress that he has not made anywhere else," says Ben's mother, Cindy Schuler. "His social skills have improved, his ability to communicate with us has improved." "We get to go camping, go-carting, a whole bunch of fun stuff, activities," Ben says. "It's a great place, I like to stay there ... I would not want them to close it." In a statement, DCF says Ben will still get individual treatment somewhere else. Adjustments to how we serve children and families are both warranted and necessary ... The department is making adjustments to its service array so that children can more readily get the help they need while living with a family in the community. "He would go into a home where supposedly someone was trained and live with their family," Cindy says. "So, it's a foster home." Cindy is certain this will not work and will cause confusion. "Ben already has a family, a very highly-functional, loving family whose unable to care for him, so to put him into a situation like that would be not successful." "I don't want to go anywhere else," Ben says. "I want to stay there." DCF says they have no choice but to close the homes because they are partially empty with just 19 kids in homes designed for a capacity of over 30. Source: <http://wtnh.com/2014/06/13/DCF-to-close-several-group-homes/>

Omaha sex offender facing life in prison (GOOD!) Updated 12:45 pm, Saturday, June 14, 2014 0 [Larger](#) | [Smaller](#) [Printable Version](#) [Email This](#) Georgia (default) Verdana Times New Roman Arial [Font](#) Page 1 of 1 OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — An Omaha man who spent less than three years in prison for participating in the gang-rape of teenager in 2000 now faces life in prison for allegedly sexually assaulting two young girls within months of leaving prison in 2004. [Kelvin Smith](#), 35, was convicted this week by a Sarpy County jury of 11 sex-related crimes against the young girls, including first-degree sexual assault of a child and third-degree sexual assault of a child, The Omaha World-Herald reported (<http://bit.ly/SISMR8>). He faces up to life in prison when he's sentenced on Aug. 11. The girls were 9 and 10 years old when Smith began abusing them in 2004, months after he had been released from prison, prosecutors said. Smith was charged with first-degree sexual assault and false imprisonment in a 2000 attack on a 19-year-old woman. Prosecutors say several men dragged her into an abandoned north Omaha house and took turns raping her. She managed to escape after stabbing Smith with a knife. As part of a plea deal, Smith pleaded no contest to attempted sexual assault in that case. The victim in that case told the World-Herald on Friday that she had been angry over Smith's sentence in her case, which she felt was too lenient. But she said she's happy he faces decades in prison for his latest convictions. [The Associated Press](#) generally does not name victims of sexual assault. "I was really happy," she said, "but I was sorry it had to happen again." Source: <http://www.sfgate.com/news/crime/article/Omaha-sex-offender-facing-life-in-prison-5552821.php>

DeWitt nurse's lawyer on new charges stemming from resident's death: 'This is a political witch hunt' Tanya Lemon leaves court with her lawyer, Jeff DeRoberts. (Douglass Dowty | ddowty@syracuse.com) [Print](#) By Douglass Dowty | ddowty@syracuse.com The Post-Standard Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#) on June 16, 2014 at 1:03 PM, updated June 16, 2014 at 5:05 PM Reddit Email Patient dies in nurse's care [State: DeWitt nurse routinely slept on the job, allowing man to die and endangering others](#) [DeWitt nurse's lawyer on new charges stemming from resident's death: 'This is a political witch hunt'](#) [DeWitt group home patient's death investigated by new state agency created to protect disabled DeWitt patient who died in nurse's care identified in court papers](#) For 8 hours, 8 minutes 25-year-old man didn't receive needed oxygen at DeWitt group home [All Stories](#) | Tanya LemonProvided Photo DeWitt, NY -- A DeWitt nurse was accused in March of falling asleep on the job, allowing a group home resident to die. [Tanya Lemon](#) was charged with felony endangering the welfare of an incompetent or physically disabled person in the September 2013 death of [Dennis Dattolo](#) at the state-run 4918 Briarwood Lane group home. Lemon is accused of not getting the man oxygen for eight hours and eight minutes. He died 14 days later from a brain injury due to lack of oxygen. Lemon is facing two crimes in connection with his death. But an indictment revealed today also charges Lemon with a dozen additional crimes relating to six group home residents, including Dattolo. She's now accused of endangering all of them between June 1, 2013 and Sept. 6, 2013. The state's year-old Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs [is prosecuting the case](#). The new agency covers abuse allegations within the myriad of caregivers run by the state. All told, Lemon now faces 14 charges -- seven felonies and seven misdemeanors, the center said. Lemon's lawyer, Jeffrey DeRoberts, lambasted the new charges as a political ploy. "It's a political witch hunt," DeRoberts said after court. He criticized the state for taking the case from the Onondaga County District Attorney's Office. "We have a qualified district attorney in this county," DeRoberts said. "We don't need a new governmental organization to come in and try to make work for itself." Lemon faces a much tougher possible sentence given the new charges. She's due back in court July 3. A spokeswoman for the Justice Center declined to respond to DeRoberts's comments. Source: http://www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2014/06/dewitt_nurses_lawyer_on_new_charges_stemming_from_residents_death_this_is_a_poli.html

Foster mom sues group home operator over alleged sex abuse Foster mom sues group home operator over alleged sex abuse (Tribune Illustration) By Mitch Smith Tribune reporter 7:14 a.m. CDT, June 17, 2014 A foster mother is suing a north suburban group home operator, alleging that the Allendale Association negligently allowed one of its employees to sexually abuse her foster daughter for nearly two years. Kelvin Perry, 51, was arrested in February and charged with sexually abusing a ward of the state whom prosecutors said he met in his role as an Allendale counselor. The girl was 16 at the time he was charged. The lawsuit filed Monday in Cook County court appears to reference the same incident, though it names the Allendale employee as Calvin Parry, with both his first and last names spelled slightly differently than those of the man arrested earlier this year. Asked about the discrepancy by the Tribune, officials at the Deratany Firm, which filed the suit, said Monday evening they were referring to Perry and would be filing an amended lawsuit. Perry, of Waukegan, met a girl at Allendale's North Chicago facility and stayed in touch with her after she was placed in a foster home, authorities said in February. Prosecutors said he abused her in the foster home and in a car outside a Schaumburg mall. Cook County jail records show that Perry is being held on \$250,000 bail and is due back in court July 1. In Monday's lawsuit, a girl's foster mother alleges that a man named Perry sexually assaulted a child while she lived at the Allendale home from June 2012 through January 2014 and after she left the facility. The foster mother filed the lawsuit, which seeks more than \$100,000 in damages, on behalf of the girl. The Tribune is not naming the plaintiff in order to protect the identity of the alleged abuse victim. A voice mail and email left Monday evening for an Allendale spokeswoman weren't immediately returned. mitsmith@tribune.com Copyright © 2014 Chicago Tribune Company, LLC Source: http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/suburbs/schaumburg_hoffman_estates/chi-foster-mom-sues-group-home-operator-over-alleged-sex-abuse-20140616.0.822682.story

Teen missing from youth home in Auburn Authorities are searching for 17-year-old Jacob Cabrera, who ran away from a youth home in Auburn on Friday. (Provided Photo) [Print](#) By [Julie McMahan](#) | jmcmahan@syracuse.com The Post-Standard Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#) on June 17, 2014 at 4:11 PM, updated June 17, 2014 at 4:15 PM Reddit Email Auburn, N.Y. -- Auburn police are searching for 17-year-old boy who ran away from the Cayuga Centers group home early Friday morning. Jacob Cabrera ran away from 101 Hamilton Ave. at around 2 a.m., police said. The boy has a few contacts in the Auburn area, police said, but they believe he may have returned to Rochester, where he is originally from. Cabrera, who is 5'5" tall weighing 153 pounds, was staying at the residence, which provides treatment programs for troubled youths, according to the Cayuga Centers website. Cabrera's right ear is pierced, police said. Police are asking the public to call 253-3231 with any information on Cabrera's whereabouts. Source: http://www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2014/06/teen_missing_from_youth_home_in_auburn.html

Extended foster care bill helps older teens further their education [Story Comments Image \(3\)](#) [Print](#) [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) [11](#) [Previous](#) [Next](#) Theresa Campbell / Daily Commercial Lakesha and Stacy Foster child Lakesha Griffin, 17, left joins her mentor, Stacy Morgan, director of Healthy Start at Kids Central, Inc. in posing for a selfie photo. Theresa Campbell / Daily Commercial Posing for selfie Foster child Lakesha Griffin, 17, left poses for a photo with her mentor, Stacy Morgan, director of Healthy Start at Kids Central, Inc. Theresa Campbell / Daily Commercial In gazebo Stacy Morgan, left, and Lakesha Griffin mingle inside the gazebo located across the street from Healthy Start at Kid Central, Inc., in Leesburg. Did You Know? Kid's Central, Inc. is the nonprofit, accredited lead agency selected by the State of Florida to coordinate child protection services in Florida's 5th Judicial Circuit, which includes Lake and Sumter counties. Kids Central focuses on the prevention and diversion of families from the child welfare system, the care of children in foster care, and strengthening families in communities. Posted: Tuesday, June 17, 2014 6:00 am [Extended foster care bill helps older teens further their education](#) Theresa Campbell | Staff Writer theresacampbell@dailycommercial.com [dailycommercial.com](#) | [0 comments](#) Lakesha Griffin is smiling with a sense of relief these days. The 17-year-old Leesburg High school student will benefit from a bill signed in May 2013 by Gov. Rick Scott that will allow young adults living in the child welfare system to have the option to remain in foster care until age 21 in order to accomplish their educational goals. "This gives Lakesha more support. She is going to turn 18 in the middle of the school year, and in previous years, she would have had to move out on her own upon turning 18," said Nicole Pulcini Mason, director of community affairs for Kids Central Inc., who believes Senate Bill 103 6, sponsored by Sen. Nancy Detert — and renamed the Nancy C. Detert Common Sense and Compassion Independent Living Act — was the right legislation to sign into law. Griffin thinks so, too. "I would have been really scared," the teen said of the stress of moving out on her own on the middle of a senior year at LHS. "How would I live on my own? If I was out in the real world, I would have to focus on school and bills and that would be too much while still in high school." Griffin will turn 18 on Dec. 11. After she graduates from Leesburg High School, she plans to attend Lake-Sumter State College and then further her education in Tallahassee at Florida A&M University. "In five or 10 years, I see myself working with the mentally disabled, because I really like working with them," she said. "I can bond with them." The teen has been in foster care since infancy. "The Department of Children and Families has been in my life since I was 2 days old," she said, recalling she lived in the home of a family friend until age 14, followed by a stay at a Marion County foster home for two years. June 30 will mark her one-year anniversary of being back in foster care in Lake County. "It feels better to me," she said of living in Lake County. "Foster care is not as bad as people may think that it is. My mother was not able to take care of me, and I feel that I am in a better place. I used to be mad at her for letting me go into foster care, but now I am actually thankful for it. I have a better life being in care." Mason praises the teen's attitude and outlook on her life. "She is so motivated, smart, caring and a hard worker," Mason said. "Her grades are great (As and Bs) and she was recognized as a leader recently." "I find Lakesha to be a vibrant and bright young woman," added Stacy Morgan, director of Healthy Start at Kids Central Inc. "I've truly enjoyed being a mentor to her and hope that I have helped guide and shape her in a positive manner. I know she is destined for great success and will truly make an impact wherever she choose to focus. I've tried to be a strong role model and hope that one day she too will return the favor to another." Morgan also touts the extended foster care bill as needed legislation. "This will give our young adults leaving the foster care system more security and a smoother transition into adulthood," Morgan said. "Most 18-year-olds who didn't grow up with abuse or neglect aren't ready to go out on their own at 18, and these youths aren't either. Extended foster care gives them the safety net they need for a few more years. "I can't imagine Lakesha setting out on her own the day that she turns 18 while still in high school. I feel better knowing that she will have a host family to help launch her." However, under the new law, most of the young adults 18 and older, cannot live in a traditional foster home. Kids Central Inc. is currently seeking host families and apartment-style housing for these youths. "The need is critical," John Cooper, CEO of Kids Central Inc. said in a statement. "For these youth to be successful and for them to avoid more disruptions and setbacks, we need local housing for them." Kids Central Inc. wants to find suitable and safe housing options for these young adults, and the agency noted by placing older teens like Griffin into semi-independent style housing will help them become independent gradually. Also, it will keep them in their communities and avoid another change of schools. Residents interested in learning more about how to become a host family can visit KidsCentralinc.org and click on the Request for Proposals link, or call Independent Living Supervisor Hannah Rios at 352-387-3551. Source: http://www.dailycommercial.com/news/article_7a5f0343-88f8-547c-8071-dffb7eb8ee5c.html

New state rules for group homes a first step in neighborhood communication | The Columbus Dispatch New state rules for group homes a first step in neighborhood communication Jane E. Juergens Related Items By [Rita Price](#) The Columbus Dispatch • Wednesday June 18, 2014 6:28 AM [Comments: 1](#) 34 2 61 Before Jane Juergens was stabbed to death, there was no law that spelled out a way for neighbors to communicate with the operators of the Blendon Township group home where her killer lived. That changed this week with the signing of Gov. John Kasich's mid-biennial review. It includes new requirements for group homes and other children's residential centers to create community-engagement plans and file them with the state. Supporters say they hope to consider even more reforms in coming months. "The bulk of this legislation was focused on child placement and community communication," said state Rep. Anne Gonzales, who introduced the legislation in February. "Now, we're going to start taking a harder look at the function of the home," said the Republican from Westerville. "This is far from over." The legislation also mandates a 10-county pilot program to standardize the assessments used to determine the needs of children entering the foster system. Franklin County Children Services has acknowledged that the teen who attacked Juergens last fall, Jordan T. Stewart, was more deeply disturbed than anyone knew. He was living in a group home for foster youth operated by Consumer Support Services and had gone on an outing to a nearby park on Oct. 20. That's where Stewart encountered Juergens, 55, a Blendon Township resident who had gone for a run. He stabbed her more than two dozen times. Stewart pleaded guilty last month in adult court to charges of murder and tampering with evidence and was sentenced to life in prison with no chance of parole for 18 years. Juergens' friends and family have told legislation proponents "that Jane would be pleased that something positive is coming from this, so that these kids get better care," said Blendon Township resident John McGuire. Outcry over the case also led to a community summit on at-risk youth and a Children Services review of all group-home placements. McGuire said neighbors had long complained about problems at the Copenhagen Drive home where Stewart lived but never received responses. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services said 105 group homes and residential centers

for minors will be affected by the new communication requirements. The department has 90 days from the legislation's passage to write the new rules, which will require operators to provide addresses, contact information and a copy of the community-engagement plan to area first-responders. The plan must include protocols for neighbors to communicate concerns. The Ohio Association of Child Caring Agencies supported the legislation. Most members, Executive Director Mark Mecum said, already are meeting the requirements or would find it relatively easy to do so. Ben McDay, Ohio operations director for the Pennsylvania-based agency New Story, said its new center on the North Side works hard to be a good neighbor. The agency has held cookouts, and teens regularly perform chores in the community such as raking leaves and shoveling snow. "I think that's a fault that we've had for a long time — we've always been 'that house down the street,' and nobody really knew who we were and what we do," McDay said of the industry. "We're open to conversation and communication." Source: <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2014/06/17/New-state-rules-group-homes-youths.html>

Two more reported missing from Auburn youth home; may be together Amiya Ince and Kendra Dexter [Print](#) By [Jacob Pucci](#) | jpucci@syracuse.com The Post-Standard Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#) on June 18, 2014 at 12:44 PM, updated June 18, 2014 at 2:42 PM Reddit Email Auburn, N.Y. -- Two teenage girls are missing from Cayuga Centers, marking the second and third teen to run away from the group home in one week. Amiya Ince, 14, and Kendra Dexter, 16, went missing on June 8 and may currently be together, Auburn police Detective Jeffrey Mead said. The two went missing from 101 Hamilton Ave., the same location that another youth at the home, 17-year-old Jacob Cabrera, [went missing from early Friday morning](#). [View full size](#) Amiya Ince Courtesy of Auburn Police Department Ince is described as a 5-foot-4-inch, biracial girl weighing 130 pounds. She has brown hair, brown eyes and a small scar on the back on her right hand. She was last seen wearing blue denim shorts, a white Tommy Hilfiger shirt and brown moccasins. Dexter is described as 5 feet 4 inches tall and weighing 145 pounds. She is biracial and has brown hair and eyes. She has a lower lip piercing. she was last seen wearing a pink shirt, gray sweatpants, brown moccasins and a head scarf. Source: http://www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2014/06/two_more_reported_missing_from_auburn_youth_home_may_be_together.html

NY legislators want better foster care background NY legislators want better foster care background [1](#) Saved Save Article [My Saved Items](#) [Print](#) [Email](#) 2014-06-18T03:01:56Z 2014-06-18T07:02:00Z NY legislators want better foster care background The Associated Press The Associated Press June 18, 2014 3:01 am [\(0\) Comments](#) ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — New York legislators have approved amending state law to require agencies placing children in foster care first check whether prospective parents have done it before and provided poor or questionable care. Sponsors say caseworkers sometimes remove children from homes suspected of being unsafe without either revoking the parents' certificate to provide foster care or reporting them to the state's child abuse hotline. Those parents may simply apply to another agency for foster children and get money for their care. The amendment, if signed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo, would require all foster care agencies check with the Office of Children and Family Services to determine whether prospective parents ever had foster a child removed from their home, evaluate the reasons why and determine if the foster home should be reopened. Source: http://poststar.com/news/state-and-regional/ny-legislators-want-better-foster-care-background/article_32a5a29b-360f-504e-84f9-38b1fd4c3cbf.html

Sunset area residents opposing addiction treatment center Attorney: Location not suited for 50 persons BOBBY ARDOIN Special to The Advocate June 21, 2014 [0 Comments](#) OPELOUSAS — Residents of a secluded area south of Sunset packed the St. Landry Parish Council meeting Wednesday as their attorney argued that a proposed addiction treatment center in the community lacks sufficient drainage and land area. Jack Burson, a Eunice attorney representing residents in the Choctaw Drive area the Interstate 49 service road, said the proposed Acadiana Addiction Center is "an ill-conceived project that has been misrepresented" from its inception. Burson said the facility, which will accommodate patients undergoing treatment for substance abuse, will be housed in a former residence that is unsuitable for the 50 persons the center intends to treat. He said that number of patients would require a level of water, drainage and sewage that the residence currently is unable to provide. Burson also said a 3-acre pond on the property is insufficient for the proposed facility's drainage needs. No representatives from the Acadiana Addiction Center spoke at Wednesday's meeting. St. Landry Parish currently has no zoning ordinance for unincorporated areas of the parish. However, Burson noted that state law allows parish governments to create zoning commissions to handle issues similar to the one faced by the Choctaw Drive residents, who packed the meeting held at the Old City Market building on the courthouse square. "Is it fair to permit something that is totally incompatible with the type of residential neighborhood that exists there?" Burson said. Sheriff Bobby Guidroz told the council his office has not been notified of an occupational license permit application from the Acadiana Addiction Center. Burson said the center will also need to undergo a lengthy permit application and screening process from the State Department of Health and Hospitals before it begins operation. The DHH, Burson said, has reported no activity concerning the treatment center. Council member Wayne Ardoin said he was told by the former owner of the property, whom he did not name, that the facility would operate as a health care business with its offices elsewhere. "This (center) is going to be located on a beautiful home site that is not designed for what it's supposed to be," Ardoin said. "I would like to see this stopped any way (the council) can, so it doesn't hurt these people." The council took no action on the matter Wednesday. Source: <http://theadvocate.com/news/acadiana/9496701-123/sunset-area-residents-opposing-addiction>

Bring Paris Jackson Home and Rescue Her from Utah! Comment on this story to take action! <http://www.kpopstarz.com/articles/96190/20140619/paris-jackson-boarding-school-suicide-michael-jackson.htm>

San Clemente to join Newport Beach in seeking controls for group homes By [FRED SWEGLER](#) / STAFF WRITER Published: June 18, 2014 Updated: 3:07 p.m. San Clemente is prepared to file a "friend of the court" brief in support of Newport Beach's efforts to apply zoning controls to group homes in residential neighborhoods. On a 5-0 vote Tuesday night, the San Clemente City Council agreed to file a court paper and contribute \$5,000 to Newport's request for the U.S. Supreme Court to hear its case. Like Newport, San Clemente has group homes, often known as "sober living" homes, sprouting up all over town. Council members said they continually get complaints about what residents see as a business moving onto a residential street and disrupting neighbors' quality of life. Mayor Tim Brown described the homes as an "ongoing challenge in our city," saying there is little the city can do because federal laws such as the Fair Housing Act and Americans With Disabilities Act preclude local control. City Attorney Jeff Oderman said Newport Beach adopted an ordinance that applied what that city felt were reasonable standards for group homes with seven or more people, but a three-judge panel of the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals overturned it. Oderman said Newport Beach requested a hearing by the full court, and the full court declined to hear it. But five judges expressed support for Newport's position, which led the city to look to the Supreme Court. Several San Clemente residents asked the City Council for help Tuesday night, saying there needs to be a balance between the rights of group homes and those of neighbors. Speakers described drug activity, street fights, threats, thefts, people crawling through windows and a danger to children. "It's just destroying our neighborhood," Pat Wernet said. "This industry is out of control," Sherman Fowler told the council. A report to the council cited one neighborhood where the Sheriff's Department and city code enforcement have stepped up their presence and the city organized a community meeting and tried for a mediation agreement with the owner of a group home, without success. City staff said one option for residents is to file multiple small-claims actions against a property owner for creating a public nuisance. Council members also suggested an ordinance to deal with homes that spur a lot of police calls, making the property owner responsible to pay for excessive calls. Oderman said a nuisance ordinance is possible as long as the calls involve bad behavior. "Running a drug house is not a permitted use, regardless of the Americans With Disabilities Act," he said. Contact the writer: fswegles@ocregister.com or 949-492-5127 Source: <http://www.ocregister.com/articles/city-618722-homes-court.html>

More foster parents needed in Iowa, nationwide Iowa KidsNet also hopes to increase diversity By Hayley Bruce, The Gazette Published: June 21 2014 | 11:01 am in [News](#), 244 8 0 [Photos](#) Liz Martin/The Gazette Josh Phams has adopted a teenage son and has two foster children. Liz Martin/The Gazette Josh Phams has adopted a teenage son and has two foster children. 1 1 Joshua Phams always knew he wanted to have kids. It was just a matter of how he would go about it. Now, after being a foster parent for a year and a half, Phams — who is 33, gay and single — has adopted a 15-year-old boy and continues to serve as a foster parent for other children. The Cedar Rapids native said he always had considered being a foster parent, but had the benefit of watching some of his friends in gay couples caring for foster children. After hearing their experiences, Phams went to an information session, started filling out the paperwork and became a foster parent in January 2013. Now, he's also going back to school to become a social worker. Since he became a foster parent, Phams has had five children in his home. And though being a parent can, at times, be challenging, the Kirkwood Community College instructor said the experience has been incredibly fulfilling. "What's really unique and most rewarding is watching them bond and adapt to a new family," Phams said. "My youngest, it might have taken him three to six months, but even crossing the street holding your hand, feeling safe to call you Dad, them feeling comfortable to tell you their terrors — a lot of times when kids come into care, there's a lot of things that have happened to them so they don't know that it's a safe place." FOSTER CARE IN IOWA

Between 4,000 and 5,000 children are in Iowa's foster care system, consistently, year after year. And [Iowa KidsNet](#) — a collaboration of not-for-profit agencies that recruits, licenses, trains and supports foster and adoptive parents in the state through a contract assignment with the Iowa Department of Human Services — wants more foster parents like Phams. Penny McGee, statewide recruitment supervisor for Iowa KidsNet, said there's always a gap between the number of kids who need foster homes and the number of homes the organization has. But the gap becomes more apparent when one realizes that not all foster families are willing or able to care for children of every age. "We may have a foster family in Cedar Rapids who is willing to parent a kid age zero to five but not willing to parent a teenager, so, just because the homes match up doesn't mean there isn't a need," McGee said. For example, Linn County had 236 referrals in foster care in 2013 — meaning Iowa KidsNet received referrals from DHS for 236 individual children who needed a foster home. Of those referrals, 79 were 13 or older. Though Iowa KidsNet has 89 families available to take foster children in Linn County, only 23 accept children ages 13 or older. But Iowa KidsNet is seeking to increase more than the number of foster parents. The organization wants to improve diversity among foster parents, too. A NEED FOR DIVERSITY "There is a saying that culture is to people as water is to fish — in other words, culture influences us constantly, all the time," McGee said. "I think it's important to have a diverse pool of families to pick from for kids coming into foster care." Of the 236 referrals of children into foster care in Linn County last year, 45 were black-identified youths, one identified as Hispanic/Latino and 48 identified as multiracial. Of the 89 families available for a match, six identified as black and five identified as multiracial. McGee said a child could experience additional trauma if the foster family is not dedicated to and skilled in supporting their cultural identity. "They experience abuse or neglect or some other traumatic experience and it's traumatic to go into foster care," McGee said. "So if they are going into a home that's completely unfamiliar to them that just adds to the trauma the child has already experienced." Training regarding parenting diverse youths is available before and after families become licensed. SUPPORT AND AFFIRMATION McGee said diversity also needs to extend to support children in their sexual orientation and gender identity. "I think, as a society, we fail to recognize LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Questioning) families as a culture that needs to be supported or affirmed," McGee said. "We think of race or ethnicity, but we often don't think of sexual orientation or gender identity." Though there is no Iowa-specific data on the number of LGBTQ youths in the foster care system, McGee said LGBTQ-identifying youths are similar to youths of color in that they are overrepresented in the foster care system. Of the roughly 175,000 youths ages 10 to 18 in foster care in the United States, an estimated 5 percent to 10 percent — likely more — are LGBTQ, according to 2013 estimates from the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#). Phams said he has received nothing but support as a single, gay foster parent, and he encourages anyone on the fence to learn more about the process and its rewards. "I think a lot of barriers are there because people aren't in a traditional role of having a husband or having a wife — either they're a lesbian couple or a single gay man or woman or a mixed minority, and they think they don't have a chance, or that people might not be open to accepting them as a foster parent. But the need is so great," Phams said. "The kids just need someone to love, and I think a lot of times what deters people that might be interested in my age group is that they're not educated about foster parenting enough or they haven't made those connections with people who have done it before." Phams, whose adoptive son identifies as bisexual, said he realized the gravity of his decision during a recent conversation with his son. "He wasn't able to come out (in his previous home), and he has said he thought he was going to have to wait until he was an adult to be himself — and now he's calling me Dad," Phams said. "It almost made me cry that he is now able to be himself at a younger age and really accept who he is so he can come to terms with that." - See more at: <http://thegazette.com/subject/news/more-foster-parents-needed-in-iowa-nationwide-20140605#sthash.cQbDhnt6.dpuf>

Griffo Foster Care Bill Heading To The Governor By [Jim Rondenelli](#) June 19, 2014 3:07 PM [Share on Facebook](#) [Share on Twitter](#) Senator Griffo's Office A bill sponsored by [Senator Joseph Griffo](#) to protect foster children from being placed in unsuitable homes has been passed by the state Senate and Assembly. Griffo says currently, there is no formal system in place that would require an agency to review and evaluate an applicant's history if the applicant were to apply to another agency to take in foster children. The legislation would require agencies to consult with the Office of Children and Family Services whether a foster parent's application has been certified or revoked, or if a child was removed from the home. "The state is responsible for the safety and security of every child placed in their care," said Senator Griffo. The bill was sponsored in the Assembly by Nily Rozic of Queens. It now goes to the Governor to be signed into law. [Cuomo, Legislative Leaders Agree On Heroin Bills](#) Read More: [Griffo Foster Care Bill Heading To The Governor](#) | <http://wibx950.com/griffo-foster-care-bill-heading-to-the-governor/?trackback=tsmclip>

GBI Raids Group Home, Charges Workers With Assault And Exploitation By: [Winnie Wright](#) - [Email](#) Posted: Thu 6:08 PM, Jun 19, 2014 By: [Winnie Wright](#) - [Email](#) [Winnie Wright](#) Multimedia Journalist Connect With Me: [winnie.wright@wctv.tv](#) [Home](#) / [News](#) / [Georgia](#) / [Headlines List](#) / Article Winnie Wright June 19, 2014 Morven, GA - GBI agents raid a group home, after residents report people breaking in their homes to steal food. Six people are under arrest. "It's terrible out there. They beat people, hurt people, everything." Strong words from William Wethersby who claims he used to be a resident of a group home formally known as Uplift Inc. He says he is glad he left the home when he did. On Thursday morning, agents from the Georgia Bureau of Investigations raided the facility and arrested the owner, Tyrone Terrell, and five other people. "We have reports of physical abuse. We have assault charges and battery charges as well on the people that were working there. As well as exploitation" using the finances of the clients for themselves to actually personally profit", says Special Agent, Steve Turner, with the GBI. According to Agent Turner, the facility was unlivable. Terrell was accepting money for patients to stay here and in turn, was taking their food stamps and making them fend for themselves. He says they didn't even provide air conditioning. The raid came after a two-month investigation into this facility in Morven and another in Hahira. "Morven PD has had multiple complaints about clients that were living there who were breaking out and breaking into people's homes because they weren't being adequately fed", says Turner. Wethersby says people were just doing what they had to do to survive. "Half the time they didn't feed nobody. The food's nasty, bugs, bed bugs, everywhere." Agent Turner says the suspects face charges ranging from Exploitation to Aggravated Assault. The GBI also says this is an ongoing investigation and additional charges are pending. All of the residents have been placed in other facilities. Source: <http://www.wctv.tv/news/georgianews/headlines/GBI-Raids-Group-Home-Charges-Workers-With-Assault-And-Ex-263893731.html>

Clark County sued by mother whose children suffered harm in foster care Paula Hammack, assistant director of Clark County Department of Family Services, left, and Lisa Ruiz-Lee, director of Family Services, are accused of failing to establish appropriate procedures for training employees and supervising foster parents. (Jerry Henkel/Las Vegas Review-Journal) [Buy Photo](#) By YESENIA AMARO LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL The mother of a 17-month-old toddler and a 2-month-old baby who suffered neglect under the care of their foster parents is suing Clark County, several Clark County Department of Family Services' employees and the foster parents. Former foster parents Andrea Hernandez, 38, and her husband, Waldo Hernandez, 40, were sentenced in March to five years of probation for failing to properly care for the two foster children last year. "Clark County (Department of Family Services) had guidelines for determining the appropriate priority of hotline calls, but failed to adequately train its hotline staff workers as to those guidelines," The complaint alleges. It accuses Lisa Ruiz-Lee, director of Family Services, and Paula Hammack, assistant director of Family Services, of failing to establish appropriate procedures for training employees and supervising foster parents. Attorney Marjorie Hauf filed the lawsuit last month in Clark County District Court on behalf of Jessica Hargrove, biological mother of the boys. The plaintiffs seek damages in excess of \$10,000 for physical and psychological harm the children suffered in foster care. The claim alleges civil rights violations and negligence. Hargrove regained custody of her sons in April, Hauf said. They had been removed because of domestic violence between the parents and because of drug and alcohol use in the home, she said. Hauf and attorney Michael Kane, who is assisting, said once the children were in custody, the county had "the duty to keep them protected." "They put them off in situations that are worse than where they started," Hauf said. "Far worse than in their parents' home." Family Services spokeswoman Kristi Jourdan said she would not comment on the pending litigation. Hargrove visited the Family Services permanency worker handling her case numerous times and called the county child abuse hotline twice, first on Sept. 4 and again on Sept. 17. Nothing happened until Sept. 19, when Family Services finally tracked down the foster parents and Hargrove's children at an unapproved location, a trailer in Sandy Valley, 50 miles southwest of Las Vegas. The 17-month-old boy had a 3-inch burn scar on his arm and another large scar on his buttocks, while the 2-month-old baby had infections in every skin fold. The injury to the 17-month-old boy happened when the foster parents' 13-year-old son changed the toddler's diaper outside on a hot day, using a plastic bag as a diaper and a black mini-fridge as a changing table, according to records. The foster parents in December each pleaded guilty to one count of child neglect or endangerment with substantial bodily harm. The lawsuit names the foster parents; Anita Moody, who was assigned to investigate an allegation of neglect involving Hargrove's sons; Lisa Brochu, who was the case manager assigned to oversee the placement and care of the children; Kim Kallas, the social work supervisor supervising Brochu; Lisa Ruiz-Lee, director of Family Services; Paula Hammack, assistant director of Family Services, and other unnamed employees. The complaint alleges Family Services failed to supervise and conduct monthly meetings with the

boys to ensure their safety. They also failed to properly investigate the couple and improperly licensed them, according to the lawsuit. It also claims Family Services' administrators failed to train social workers and supervisors on how to investigate prospective foster parents, how to select proper foster parents for children, how to supervise foster children, how to report suspicions of abuse to Child Protective Services, and how to prepare accurate reports for the county and state. For example, Brochu, who was the assigned case manager, "did not visit the children or the home of (the Hernandezes) as required by applicable policies, which allowed (the foster parents) to violate statutes and administrative codes controlling their licensure as foster parents," the lawsuit states. If Brochu "had followed Clark County's stated procedures, she could have discovered evidence of abuse and violations, and removed (the boys) from this foster home before they could be subjected to continued abuse and neglect." Any financial compensation from the case would be placed in a blocked account, and the children wouldn't have access to the money until they turn 18, said Hauf, who has been involved in other Family Services' litigation. Contact Yesenia Amaro at yamaro@reviewjournal.com or 702-383-0440. Find her on Twitter: @YeseniaAmaro. Source: <http://www.reviewjournal.com/news/las-vegas/clark-county-sued-mother-whose-children-suffered-harm-foster-care>

Private foster care troubles in California lead to new scrutiny Foster agency troubles Irfan Khan / Los Angeles Times One agency was found to have disputed spending of \$50,000 in 2009, part of which went to lease this Hesperia house from the agency's executive director for more than \$1,000 over the market rate. One agency was found to have disputed spending of \$50,000 in 2009, part of which went to lease this Hesperia house from the agency's executive director for more than \$1,000 over the market rate. (Irfan Khan / Los Angeles Times) [Garrett Therolf contact the reporter CrimeAccounting and AuditingCompensation and BenefitsSocial IssuesPrivatization](#) Private foster agency was cited for sexual and physical abuses, substandard housing and spending violations Of \$11 million in bad expenditures at foster care charities from 2000-2010, about a tenth has been recovered County auditors looking into one of Los Angeles' biggest foster care agencies in 2003 uncovered \$445,000 in ineligible or unsupported spending. Auditors found \$234,000 in wages with no supporting documents to verify the hours worked, up to \$29,000 in unsupported vehicle expenses and \$47,000 that the agency paid to purchase one building and lease another from its top executives, according to the audit report. The county Department of Children and Family Services demanded that the private agency, Homes of Hope, return \$440,000. Five years later, the county agreed to settle the matter for \$36,000, to be paid in installments without interest. Homes of Hope is still paying off the debt today — at \$600 per month. I can't explain it. I would have asked for more information before making the decision to give up on all that money. — Philip Browning, director of Children and Family Services, on the agreement to settle a dispute over \$440,000 with Homes of Hope for \$36,000 "I can't explain it," said Philip Browning, who took over as director of Children and Family Services two years ago. "I would have asked for more information before making the decision to give up on all that money." Homes of Hope is emblematic of the decades-long failure to adequately monitor California's \$400-million-a-year private foster care industry. The agency, which receives about \$3.6 million a year to care for neglected children, has become the focus of a renewed government effort to impose stricter controls on private groups that recruit and supervise foster families. Sukhwinder "Suki" Singh, the agency's founder and executive director, said in a brief interview: "We work very, very hard to provide care and supervision to our children." She declined to comment further. California began an experiment nearly 27 years ago that took a portion of foster care away from county bureaucrats and placed it in the hands of private agencies that legislators believed would be cheaper, more efficient and better for children who found their way into the system. [Related Local L.A. County supervisors vote to hire 'child protection czar' See all related 8](#) In Los Angeles County, the 46 foster family charities typically undergo financial audits once a decade. Of more than \$11 million in inappropriate expenditures identified by auditors at foster care charities from 2000 to 2010, only about one-tenth has been recovered, county records show. And no effort has been made to get back millions more potentially owed the state, according to other county records and interviews. "We have not done nearly as well as we need to be doing," Browning said. Auditors found that one agency, Teens Happy Homes in Los Angeles, spent liberally on cigarettes and beer — 30 cases in one instance. At another Los Angeles County contractor, America Care, taxpayer dollars were spent on alcohol, clothing from Nordstrom, tobacco, jewelry boxes, fine china, perfume and a martini set, according to county auditors. [Related story: Private foster care system, intended to save children, endangers some Garrett Therolf Those living in private agencies; homes are a third more likely to endure physical, emotional or sexual abuse, a Times analysis found, div.clear { clear:both; } .trb_article_page_right { float:right; margin: 0px; } .full-image img { width:100%; } #bannerbox p.date { margin:auto; font-size:... Those living in private agencies; homes are a third more likely to endure physical, emotional or sexual abuse, a Times analysis found, div.clear { clear:both; } .trb_article_page_right { float:right; margin: 0px; } .full-image img { width:100%; } #bannerbox p.date { margin:auto; font-size:... \(Garrett Therolf \)](#) The two agencies, which are no longer caring for foster children, later reimbursed the county for some of the expenses but never reached an agreement on all the expenses flagged by auditors. Salaries at some charities are high as well. ChildNet Youth & Family Services' former Chief Executive Robert Di Stefano, for example, received a compensation package worth \$522,000 in 2010, according to the agency's tax returns. The agency said in a statement that a compensation survey had been used to ensure Di Stefano's compensation was at "market level" and sufficient to attract "the highest-quality executive talent." :: Singh, of Homes of Hope, opened her first foster care agency in 1994 — then another and another. By 2009, Singh was working full time as chief executive of Homes of Hope in West Covina and Interim Care in Rancho Cucamonga. She also worked a third full-time job that year as board president of Specialized Care in Rancho Cucamonga, according to the agencies' tax returns. [cComments](#) CPSdocumentary (facebook and youtube) has been covering LA's privatization of CPS and the huge increases the numbers of children taken to keep the profit margins and money flowing. When you create an industry built around profits for 'the more you take, the more you make' the more children will... LAsylum at 4:16 PM June 22, 2014 [Add a comment See all comments 35](#) Between 2008 and 2011, 2,300 children lived in foster homes supervised by the agencies, according to state records. In their federal tax returns for 2009, the agencies reported that Singh worked a total of 120 hours a week at the three nonprofit corporations, receiving \$311,000 in pay. In 2012 she collected \$195,000, working 80 hours a week at two agencies, according to tax returns. She also charged almost \$1.8 million in rent from 2007 to 2011 for properties she owned and leased back to her foster care agencies, according to financial statements filed with the state. "On the face of it, this does not appear to be the best use of funds," said Armand Montiel, spokesman for the Department of Children and Family Services. The privatization of foster care poured hundreds of millions of dollars into a system that had been dominated by government-run facilities. The private system now cares for over 80% of foster children placed with strangers in Los Angeles County. [Related story: Jada's case highlights problems in foster care system Jada bears the scars of being scalded by a woman who is serving 15 years in prison for her abuse and got a waiver as a foster mother despite several convictions and abuse complaints. Jada bears the scars of being scalded by a woman who is serving 15 years in prison for her abuse and got a waiver as a foster mother despite several convictions and abuse complaints. Read the story](#) The state pays the private agencies about \$2,000 per child each month. As much as 60% of that money can be retained by the agency to pay for rent, supplies and salaries for administrators and social workers, who make weekly visits to foster homes to ensure children are properly cared for. The more children the charities place in homes, the more income. Monitoring the finances of the 46 private foster care agencies in Los Angeles County is the responsibility of the auditor controller. Five staff members are assigned to the task. Robert Fellmeth, director of the Children's Advocacy Institute at the University of San Diego School of Law, said: "When there are incentives to gather large numbers of foster homes without contributing very much to the kids' care, you need to check properly. Are they doing it? No." :: Questions about Homes of Hope's finances date to a county audit of the group's 2000-2001 expenditures. Auditors identified \$445,000 in unsupported spending, including a \$28,750 full-time salary paid to a relative of Singh's who was employed elsewhere. The agency's lawyer told auditors that the relative worked nights and weekends at Homes of Hope. In a rebuttal letter, Homes of Hope also said the supporting records for his hours and those of other employees were destroyed in an accidental fire. The agency declined the county's request to provide signed declarations with the employees' names, titles and typical hours. Auditors also learned that Singh and her then-husband were landlords at three Homes of Hope locations. At one, the charity was charged for more space than it was using, resulting in more than \$14,000 in unallowable payments, the auditors concluded. Homes of Hope also failed to obtain required county approval in 2001 when it purchased residential property for \$238,000 from Singh and her husband for a group home, the auditors reported. Singh had purchased the property in 1997 for \$135,000. In her rebuttal letter, Singh said she was unaware that prior approval was required, and she argued that the purchase price reflected the fair market value. In 2003, auditors forwarded their findings to the Department of Children and Family Services, recommending that it get the money back. After initial letters were sent to Homes of Hope, four years passed without any written communication, according to county files. In 2009, six years after the audit, new fiscal workers took charge of the case and the county dropped its claims in return for a \$36,000 settlement without obtaining the requested documentation to support the expenditures detailed by auditors. [Related story: Tennessee uses incentives to change a troubled foster care system Garrett Therolf Tennessee instituted large monetary rewards and severe financial penalties to spur reforms among care providers. Tennessee instituted large monetary rewards and severe financial penalties to spur reforms among care providers. \(Garrett Therolf \)](#) "From everything I've seen, I don't believe we handled this very well," Browning said. Amid Homes of Hope's financial troubles, state and county officials

cited the agency for varied deficiencies. State regulators found that an adult male had been convicted of sexually abusing a foster child in her foster home. They also said that a foster father made sexual advances to with a foster child and had been certified despite similar allegations at another agency. In recent years, some of its foster homes lacked hot water, according to state licensing records. Others had no food in the refrigerator and cabinets. One had a bathroom with a crumbling tub and a sink with no faucet handles, according to state records of substantiated licensing violations. In 2008, a baby living with a Homes of Hope foster mother was taken to the hospital and was placed on life support. Doctors believed the baby suffered from shaken baby syndrome, and the foster mother was later banned from foster care for life for the "nonaccidental injury," according to state licensing records and county correspondence. [Related Local L.A. County supervisors vote to hire 'child protection czar'](#) See all related [8](#) Homes of Hope was cited for poor screening that allowed the woman to become the foster parent of five children under the age of 5 when she was already running a day-care center. In a written response, Singh said her social worker had properly monitored the home and the incident was unforeseen. State auditors also examined the 2009 finances of San Bernardino County-based Interim Care, where Singh also served as executive director, and found weak fiscal controls and \$50,000 in spending that was disallowed. The disputed expenditures included \$21,912 in lease payments to Singh above the appraised fair market value for two properties, the state auditors found. One — a house with a dirt yard in Hesperia — cost Interim Care \$2,400 per month. The state determined that the fair market rental was \$1,036. :: In Los Angeles County, Singh's case has sparked efforts to improve financial oversight of foster care agencies. Officials are working with state regulators to rewrite the rules on real estate transactions to ensure that contractors do not pay more than market value. [Comments](#) CPSdocumentary (facebook and youtube) has been covering LA's privatization of CPS and the huge increases the numbers of children taken to keep the profit margins and money flowing. When you create an industry built around profits for 'the more you take, the more you make' the more children will... LAsylum at 4:16 PM June 22, 2014 [Add a comment](#) See all comments [35](#) The officials said that new real estate contracts would have to be approved in advance, and existing contracts for inappropriately high levels of rent will be renegotiated. Despite the focus on Homes of Hope, the county continues to fund Singh's group and send children there. Officials say they can't afford to drop the agency because of the overload of foster children, whose numbers are increasing for the first time since the 1990s. "We just don't have enough homes," Browning said. garrett.therolf@latimes.com Times data editor Doug Smith contributed to this report. Source: <http://www.latimes.com/local/countygovernment/la-me-foster-financial-20140621-story.html#page=2>

Calif. Governor Signs off on Kinship Equity, Support for Exploitation Victims By [Victor Valle](#), June 20, 2014 [Share on Tumblr](#) [PRINTER FRIENDLY](#)
Photo Credit: Courtesy of [401KCalculator](#) Note: This story was updated on June 20 Calif. Gov. Jerry Brown has signed a budget that includes new funding for kinship foster caregivers and more assistance to victims of commercial sexual exploitation (CSEC). The Relative Caregiver Funding Option Program brings \$30 million dollars in funding to a county-option program that will make payments to kinship caregivers commensurate with payments made to other foster parents. Kinship caregivers in counties that opt in will see their monthly support from the state rise from a \$370 welfare benefit to more than \$800. Counties must decide on participation by October, and the program begins in January 2015. The state will fully pay for the increase for existing kinship caregivers, and counties will have to share the cost of new caregivers. If the \$30 million proves not to be enough, then the amount will be increased appropriately, according to Reed Connell, who has been working with the Alliance for Children's Rights on this issue. "The legislature will provide enough money to cover if all counties opt in to the program," Connell said. "We're really focused on making sure we urge counties to opt in when the time comes." The other proposal that survived, which is focused on commercially exploited children, will cost \$5 million in funding for 2014-2015, and \$14 million for 2015-2016. The proposal will help fund training for child welfare workers in prevention, intervention skills to work with child victims of commercial sexual exploitation, as well as provide services that would directly meet immediate needs and care for the victims. Counties must opt in to this program as well. If counties opt in to these programs, they will commence on January 1, 2015. Four other child welfare-related proposals did not make the final package sent to the governor: A pilot program to improve permanency outcomes for foster youth Increased funding for child welfare courts, as The Chronicle [reported on](#) earlier this week A pay raise for social workers who work at Foster Family Agencies An initiative focused on foster and kinship care recruitment, retention and support "I'm deeply disappointed that the youth languishing in foster care were denied the right to permanent families," said Gail Johnson-Vaughan, executive director at Mission Focused Solutions, who led the push for the permanency pilot project. "The loss was to them and to the fiscal bottom line of the counties and state." Victor Valle is a reporter at the Chronicle of Social Change. Source: <https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/news/funding-for-kinship-equity-support-for-exploitation-victims-makes-way-to-governor/7241>

Pine Bluff Foster Father Accused of Raping A Teen Boy [Melissa Schroeder](#) 7/06/2014 10:20 PM 06/20/2014 10:22 PM Jefferson County Sheriff's Department investigating a rape case. PINE BLUFF, AR -- A man who surrounded himself with children is now being accused of raping one. Jefferson County Sheriff's investigators say a foster father -- who also works with Pine Bluff Schools -- is behind bars tonight. 52-year-old Samuel Evans appeared in court today and a judge set his bond at \$25,000. According to the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department, Evans is still sitting in a jail cell as they continue to sort out what led up to this crime. Major Lafayette Woods said, "We actually investigate these things very seriously." Major Woods says Evans raped a teen boy last week. His mother called State Police after it happened and deputies arrested Evans on Thursday. Woods said, "So, when you're seeing things like this, it's very heartbreaking." Major Woods says Evans was a foster parent and he also worked -- in the Transportation Department -- at Pine Bluff City School District for 18 years. Woods said, "And their job is to provide those essential elements to a child, not to abuse them in any physical or mental way." While the Department of Human Services couldn't comment on the case, Director of Communications Amy Webb explained the process of becoming a foster parent, calling it rigorous. Webb said, "So we want to make sure people who are foster parents are capable of taking care of children and providing them everything they need." After a foster parent application is filled out, there are state and federal criminal background checks. Then, there's 30 hours of training, also interviews and home checks. It's a process that could take six months or longer, unfortunately it's not always enough. Webb said, "When that happens we want to make sure we respond swiftly and make sure no other kids get into that home." Major Woods says it's possible there are other victims out there. According to the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department they're waiting on DNA evidence as they continue the investigation. There's no word on when Evans' next court appearance will be. If you would like to follow Melissa Schroeder's reports on Facebook, [you can click here and like her page](#). Source: http://www.arkansasmatters.com/story/d/story/pine-bluff-foster-father-accused-of-rape-a-teen/19385/-bHY0FUZukatsMJH_o57MA

H.R.4016 — 113th Congress (2013-2014): Introduced in House by Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro (D-CT-3rd) (02/06/2014) Quality Foster Care Services Act of 2014 - Amends title XIX (Medicaid) of the Social Security Act (SSA) to extend medical assistance coverage to therapeutic foster care services. Requires a qualified therapeutic foster care program to be state-licensed and provide: (1) foster care children under 21 with structured daily activities, including the development of age-appropriate social, communication and behavioral skills, trauma-informed and gender-responsive services, crisis intervention and crisis support services, medication monitoring, counseling, and case management; and (2) foster care parents with specialized training and consultation in the management of children with mental illness, trauma, other emotional or behavioral disorders, medically fragile conditions, or developmental disabilities, and specific additional training on the needs of each child provided such services. Please ask your legislators to oppose this legislation. It seeks to fund residential treatment and wilderness programs for Foster Kids. S. 1992 (introduced to Senate by Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI). To find your legislators, visit <http://votesmart.org/> and enter in your address and/or full zip (9 digits) code and click "search".

Ohio A-G applauds new state legislation Attorney General's information COLUMBUS — Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine applauded the signing of legislation strengthening background check and human trafficking laws, as well as legislation signed earlier this week updating aspects of Ohio's foster care laws. "I thank Governor Kasich and the legislature for enacting these important laws," said DeWine. "Because of these bills, employers will receive more complete background checks, prosecutors will have more tools to go after underage sex trafficking, and foster youth will have more opportunities for normalcy while in foster care." Governor Kasich this week signed the following bills that DeWine supported and advocated: Senate Bill 143 (sponsored by Sen. Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati), signed June 20): authorizes the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) to disclose in background checks certain arrests that still have criminal proceedings pending. (Effective 90 days from enrollment with Secretary of State) House Bill 130 (sponsored by Rep. Teresa Fedor (D-Toledo), signed June 20): makes multiple changes regarding human trafficking offenses, including removing the need for prosecutors to prove a victim under 16 or with a developmental disability was compelled to engage in commercial sexual activity, and increasing the penalties for soliciting minors or persons with developmental disabilities. (Effective immediately) House Bill 213 (sponsored by Rep. Dorothy Pelanda (R-Marysville) and Rep. Nicholas J. Celebrezze (D-Parma), signed June 17): makes several changes to Ohio's foster care laws, including enhancing the ability of foster youth to participate in extra-curricular

activities, and allowing a court to terminate parental rights if the child has been abused or neglected three or more times (effective 90 days from enrollment with Secretary of State). Source: <http://www.thevw-independent.com/news/2014/06/ohio-a-g-applauds-new-state-legislation/>

'Boot-camp style' education on agenda: School board to consider alternative model for students with discipline issues School board to consider alternative model for students with discipline issues Jun. 23, 2014 The Rapides Parish School Board will consider major changes to the way it educates students with major disciplinary issues. Deputy Assistant Superintendent of Administration Clyde Washington presented a plan to the board's Education Committee for a new alternative program called RAPPs — Rapides Alternative Positive Program for Students. RAPPs would be a highly structured program for habitual rules violators or students who commit major infractions. The Education Committee passed the proposal on to the full board for consideration. "I'm excited to learn more about it," said board President Janet Dixon. The proposed location for the program is the J.S. Slocum Learning Center in Pineville. Washington described it as a "boot-camp style" experience for students in grades 6-12 who habitually violate rules at their home school or commit major offenses such as battery or possession of drugs or weapons. Currently, those students are assigned to Aiken Virtual School, with the option of completing their online work at the school campus in Alexandria, at a public library or at home. During the time last school year when the most students were enrolled in the alternative program due to suspension or expulsion, nearly 80 percent of them did not attend school on the Aiken campus. That contradicts what successful alternative programs have done, Washington said, which is provide structure. Under the proposed RAPPs model, attendance will be mandatory. The regimen will be strict. Students will adhere to dress code, will be supervised at all times and will participate in physical training unless medically cleared to miss it. Students can exit the program by complying with all rules and showing progress in subjects taken. The program would have a staff of 18 people. Transportation would be through the City of Alexandria's transit system or the school district, at an estimated cost of \$80,000-90,000 to the district. Education Committee chair Darrell Rodriguez noted that response from local law enforcement and other support agencies to the RAPPs model has been positive. "We have support from all the agencies in the parish for us to work on this," he said. Source: http://www.thetowntalk.com/article/20140623/NEWS01/306230008/-Boot-camp-style-education-agenda-School-board-consider-alternative-model-students-discipline-issues?nclink_check=1

Will Anyone Stop Charter School Corruption? When politicians and pundits take to the barricades to defend "wonderful charter schools," is this what they're thinking of? A recent article in a [Minnesota newspaper](#) reported about a change in state law that could imperil the existence of a charter school that serves a student body sorely in need of heroic efforts. According to the reporter, "Nine out of 10 of the school's 275 high schoolers meet the legal definition of 'highly mobile,' meaning they do not have stable housing; 109 are flat-out homeless. Some couch-surf. Some sleep in cars, some in bus stations. Often they spend the night in small groups, for safety. Poverty — a given — is usually the least of their worries. To teens forced to support themselves, a diploma is a life raft." The schools founder and chief operator is quoted: "We have kids who are one credit away from graduating ... We are one of the first consistent things in their lives." A compelling story for sure and likely one example, among others, that was in the minds of most in Congress when the US House of Representatives recently passed [controversial legislation](#) to expand federal funds for more charter schools without placing any substantial new regulations on those schools. What lawmakers in Washington, DC had been told, of course, was that starting up lots and lots of charter schools was going to create a "marketplace of education," where the problem of "quality" would take care of itself as "bad" charters "go out of business," and the wonderful ones that do such great things for the most unfortunate children get picked up and replicated all over the world. For sure, there were those on "the outside" who advocated against expanding charter schools without taking into account steps toward stricter regulation. As The Nation's [Zoe Carpenter](#) pointed out, the bill's emergence in the House coincided with publication of a [report](#) by the Center for Popular Democracy and Integrity in Education that documented "shocking misuses of the federal funds being funneled into the poorly regulated charter industry." Nevertheless the charter sector won the Hill that day and has continued to ascend in state capitals around the country since. Meanwhile, real evidence of "the good charters" remains mostly anecdotal, as financial corruption and poor education results from "bad ones" continue to mount with every passing month. Just look at Ohio. Buckeye State Boondoggle The Buckeye State, where charter schools have operated for well over a decade, has had loose regulations, business-minded state governance, and a Beltway-based conservative think tank serving as a charter sponsor. According to a recent report in the [Akron Beacon](#), "Enrollment in Ohio charter schools now stands at more than 120,000 in nearly 400 schools, with seven more schools expected to open next year. These quasi-public schools enroll less than 7 percent of Ohio's students and receive \$912 million in state tax dollars, about 11 percent of all state funds set aside for primary and secondary education." According to charter school enthusiasts at the [Center for Education Reform](#), Ohio is a "Top Ten" state — number 3, in fact — on its rating scale for states that provide "parent power" — something that is, apparently, in abundance when lots of charter and virtual schools and just about anything else but good traditional public schools are prevalent. (Vermont, one of the top performing school systems in the country, based on the National Assessment of Education Progress, is number 47 in "parent power.") Contributing significantly to Ohio's top rating no doubt is the state's citation for "providing even more growth" in the charter school sector. But nowhere on the CER site is there a hint of how all this choice and growth have actually benefited Ohio students and taxpayers. For that information, you have to turn to the progressive state group [Innovation Ohio](#) who earlier this year found that, in the 2011-2012 school year, the state's enthusiastic support of charter schools had resulted in a transference of \$774 million from the public school system to charter schools that tend to perform worse on the state's school performance rating system. Since that report, very little to any improvements seem to have occurred. As a recent series of reports appearing in the Akron Beacon revealed, one of the states' most popular charter school chains, run by White Hat Management, has enjoyed such carte blanche operation that [Ohio lawmakers approved additional funding](#) for about 77 of those schools and exempted them from "full accountability until at least 2017." The legislation passed despite the fact that dropouts are so prevalent at these schools that many of them report "single-digit graduation rates." The [Beacon reporter](#) found that during last school year, more students dropped out of these schools than attended on the average day. Another Ohio newspaper, the [Cleveland Plain Dealer](#), carried a recent editorial explaining that the primary beneficiary of the loophole legislation favoring White Hat run charter schools is not the state's students nor its taxpayers but the charter school operator, Akron businessman David Brennan who "has poured more than \$4 million into the coffers of Republican candidates in Ohio during the last decade." In the face of lagging academic results, higher dropout rates, and the aroma of crony corruption, what do Ohio charter promoters do to improve their performance? Amp up their marketing. As another recent [Beacon](#) report found, "State audits suggest that some Ohio charter schools spend more than \$400 in public money per student to attract them away from public schools." Using keywords such as "free, flexible, one-on-one and find your future," Ohio charter school companies are "advertising on television, radio, billboards, handbills and even automated telephone messages to entice students away from public schools." You have to wonder if this is how the taxpayers in Ohio like to see their hard earned money spent. In the meantime, one state over in Pennsylvania, the situation with charter schools doesn't look any better. Quaker State Cash Cow In the Quaker State, charter schools have long competed for funds with traditional public schools on an uneven playing field that exempts them from serving the full range of student abilities and revealing financial details of their operations to the public. Despite all this freedom from regulation, according to the [Pennsylvania School Board Association](#), "Charter schools continue to academically underperform traditional public schools, with less than half of the brick and mortar charter schools meeting acceptable benchmark scores ... None of the cyber charter schools met the mark. Nearly three-quarters of traditional public schools, however, earned passing scores in the first year of the new measuring system." Despite poor academic results, Pennsylvania scores a 12 on the reform index contrived by CER. But what CER calls "parent power" in Pennsylvania is actually "no real oversight" according to the Keystone State Coalition, a "non-partisan public education advocacy group of several hundred locally elected, volunteer school board members and administrators from school districts throughout Pennsylvania." That organization's recent [report](#) tallied exorbitant costs associated with charter school operations and lavish CEO salaries and bonuses for charter school operators despite vastly underperforming the state's traditional public schools. A more recent [KSC report](#) revealed how Pennsylvania charters have gamed the system for special education funding, resulting in annual profits of \$200 million to the schools. As [one local Pennsylvania blogger](#) explained, "Charter schools collected \$350,562,878 last year for special education funding and spent \$156,003,034 for special education! Where did the other \$200 million go? The fact of the matter is that charter schools are not obligated to spend special education funding for special education purposes. That money can be spent for numerous miscellaneous reasons." (emphasis original) A KSC video that education historian Diane Ravitch linked to on her [blog](#) explained how Pennsylvania charters also game the special education financial process by luring away students from public schools who are classified special education in the least expensive disability categories, which would include relatively mild disabilities such as speech impairment, and neglect to educate students in more expensive disability categories that would include more severe disabilities such as autism. This is especially devastating to school districts such as Philadelphia where budgets are in perennial crisis. As the local news outlet [The Notebook](#) reported, "Philadelphia charter schools received more than \$175 million last year to educate special education students, but spent only about \$77 million for that purpose

... nearly \$100 million gap at a time when city education leaders are considering raising some class sizes to 41 students and laying off 800 more teachers.” To fix a funding system that rewards charter schools for services they do not provide, Pennsylvania lawmakers from both parties introduced a bill ([HB 2138 and SB 1316](#)) to fund each district based on the actual number of students with disabilities it has and on each child’s needs. Charter advocates responded to this proposed legislation by [opposing it](#). As bad as the situation is with charter schools in Ohio and Pennsylvania, it may be even worse in Michigan. The Great Lakes Robbery In the Great Lakes State, a [series by the Detroit Free Press](#) this month reported, “Michigan taxpayers pour nearly \$1 billion a year into charter schools – but state laws regulating charters are among the nation’s weakest, and the state demands little accountability in how taxpayer dollars are spent and how well children are educated.” The yearlong investigation found, “Wasteful spending and double-dipping. Board members, school founders and employees steering lucrative deals to themselves or insiders. Schools allowed to operate for years despite poor academic records. No state standards for who operates charter schools or how to oversee them.” Meanwhile, “38 percent of charter schools that received state academic rankings during the 2012-13 school year fell below the 25th percentile, meaning at least 75 percent of all schools in the state performed better. Only 23 percent of traditional public schools fell below the 25th percentile.” For-profit corporations are permitted to run 61 percent of charter schools in Michigan even though over a third of those schools are in the bottom 25 percentile for academic performance. The variety of scams at work in the Michigan charter sector make your head spin. In [one example](#), a real estate/investment firm bought property for \$375,000 that it sold six days later to a charter school, for \$425,000. The quick \$50,000 profit went to founders of the firm – one the president of school’s management company, the other married to the school’s top administrator. At another charter school, members of the founder’s family were paid to provide meals and maintenance to the school,” and “family members still rent the building to the school or collect a management fee for running it.” How does the charter industry respond to such damning evidence of failure and corruption? With a marketing campaign of course. As the local Michigan blog [Eclectablog](#) noted, just as the Detroit Free Press series was unfolding, the state’s largest for-profit charter chain National Heritage Academies sprung into action and proceeded to purchase nearly all of the available ad space on the newspaper’s website. And by the way, the “parent power” ranking CER gives Michigan is 11, commending the state for its “robust charter law.” The unchecked charter school chicanery is not limited to the Northern Mid West. Sunshine State Scam A new investigation by the [Orlando Sun Sentinel](#) found, “Unchecked charter-school operators are exploiting South Florida’s public school system, collecting taxpayer dollars for schools that quickly shut down ... virtually anyone can open or run a charter school and spend public education money with near impunity.” Examples cited in the series include a man who received \$450,000 in tax dollars to open two new charter schools just months after his first collapsed. The schools closed in seven weeks. Another example: A man with “a history of foreclosures, court-ordered payments, and bankruptcy received \$100,000 to start a charter school.” It closed in two months. Sun Sentinel reporters found an elementary charter school that “sometimes had no toilet paper, soap or paper towels in the student bathrooms ... Students sometimes ate hours after their designated lunchtimes, often from fast-food restaurants.” School districts have little to no recourse when charters fail to submit financial reports – “some don’t file them or turn in unreliable paperwork.” And management companies that run two-thirds of South Florida’s charter schools add to the problems of transparency and financial disclosure. Despite these problems, charter schools continue to “pop up within blocks of each other – or in the same building – offering similar programs as neighboring schools. With such wild growth, district officials say, many new charters no longer fill a niche or offer innovation. Yet Florida lawmakers repeatedly have declined to tighten charter-school regulations.” Florida’s score in the CER ranking: 2. Someone Please Say, “Stop!” Despite this cavalcade of corruption – most of which has been published in just the past two months, mind you – must we now pay homage to the “wonderful” charter schools? Take that charter program for homeless children cited above. Do we demand more of those schools to be replicated? Do we ask whether we need an outside, unregulated vendor to reveal the unsurprising conclusion that it’s important to pay attention to the special needs of children? Do we ask why these children aren’t being accommodated in local schools and take the necessary steps to ensure they are? Or do we ask, why the hell do we have [record numbers of homeless school children](#) in this country to begin with? Good questions for sure. Yet in the meantime, at the urging of charter school advocates and others promoting “school choice,” lawmakers around the country are [proposing](#) and [enacting](#) new policies to feed more children into an increasingly corrupt charter chain pipeline. And in Washington, DC, that house legislation that would expand federal funding to these sorts of schools has been joined by a [Senate version](#) that is now steaming toward bipartisan consideration. Certainly, faced with such a growing calamity, it’s not being “negative” or “oppositional” or a “status quo defender” to stand in the pathway and yell, “Stop!” Source: <http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/will-anyone-stop-charter-school-corruption/>

‘Scream Rooms’ in Schools Are Being Taken to a Frightening New Level You won’t believe the tactic some educators are using to address misbehavior despite multiple student injuries and deaths. June 19, 2014 By [Holly Eagleson](#) Regular TakePart contributor Holly Eagleson writes about social issues, culture, lifestyle, and food for Redbook, Marie Claire, Glamour, and others. [full bio](#) Remember when acting out in school got you time with the principal or detention? Those are dream scenarios compared with the handcuffs, pepper spray, Tasers, and isolation rooms that unruly kids in Washington state could face for breaking school rules. Washington’s Bellevue School District [recently came under fire](#) for a policy that intended to sanction the use of [isolation rooms](#)—cell-like spaces that students are confined to involuntarily—for spontaneous misbehavior. The disciplinary policy was at odds with state guidelines, which only allow the use of seclusion when students are in imminent danger of physically harming themselves or others. Parents were further distressed by the vague language in the district’s policy that would OK the use of restraints such as handcuffs and deterrents such as Tasers and pepper spray. Local TV affiliate Q13Fox reported that one parent told the school board, “Putting in language like this will only give permission to some staff members to just do what’s convenient and not right.” Bellevue School Board President Steve McConnell responded by [telling Yahoo Shine](#), “No teachers in our school district use Tasers or chemical sprays on special needs students.” [Op-Ed: Schools Must Stop Ostracizing Kids With Special Needs](#) The dustup renewed a fierce debate over the use of seclusion time-outs and restraints in public and private schools. In recent years, they’ve stoked [outrage among parents, educators, and legislators](#) owing to multiple resulting injuries and deaths. Still, their prevalence is shockingly widespread. According to a report from the U.S. Department of Education for Civil Rights, more than 110,000 students experienced restraint or seclusion [from 2011 to 2012](#). With seclusion practices, children are routinely locked in padded isolation rooms for hours without bathroom breaks or monitoring. Given the nickname that sounds right at home in an Eli Roth film, it’s no wonder these so-called scream rooms have been host to their fair share of tragic incidents. In 2004, 13-year-old Jonathan King hanged himself in a concrete isolation room in his Georgia school using a cord he’d been given as a belt. It was not his first time in the “time-out” space; he had repeatedly asked not to be confined there and had threatened suicide to teachers weeks earlier. Restraint practices aren’t any less appalling. [A 2012 ABC News investigation](#) reported students being sat on by school employees, held down in a prone position, and stuffed into drawstring “sensory bags”—essentially glorified duffel bags. Many special education experts say these practices are especially deleterious to students with autism and disabilities who may require special monitoring and have underlying health issues. A 15-year-old Michigan teenager with autism who was pinned down for more than an hour by school employees became the second child in his state to die from restraint techniques, according to the [National Disability Rights Network](#). In another horrifying incident, a seven-year-old girl diagnosed with emotional problems and ADHD was suffocated to death after being restrained by multiple staffers at a mental health day treatment facility. Her crime? Blowing bubbles in her milk during a time-out. The barbarism of seclusion and restraint policies isn’t the only cause for concern. There’s also a high probability that these practices will be used for the wrong reasons. [A 2007 study published in the Journal of At-Risk Issues](#) found that seclusion of at-risk students was initiated more frequently for nonviolent behaviors (leaving an assigned area or disrupting class) than for the intended purpose of curbing physical aggression. Despite the myriad issues with physical restraint and unsupervised seclusion, no research has found any therapeutic and educational benefit to either one. “It’s shown no efficacy in reducing maladaptive behavior, and it’s a crisis-based intervention only,” said Joseph B. Ryan, professor in the School of Education at Clemson University. Even in a crisis, employing restraints and seclusion are bad moves. “You’re aggravating a student that you’re trying to pacify, so it violates a lot of the evidence-based procedures on how you should respond to a child,” Ryan said. “And if you use it as a disciplinary method it can actually escalate aggression.” The U.S. Department of Education has [set guidelines](#) restricting the use of these methods in classrooms to instances when students are in imminent physical danger. Even with DOE oversight, no federal law is on the books to enforce the rules. Only 30 states have any laws on the practices, and 18 states require parental notification of their use. [A report](#) by the office of Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, found that existing laws and regulations impede families’ ability to bring cases to court. Rather, they force families to remove children from school to stop the practices of restraint or seclusion. This year Harkin proposed the Keeping All Students Safe Act, which would outlaw dangerous seclusion and restraint practices and limit restraints to emergency situations. It would also require extensive training of school employees and parental notification within 24 hours of the use of restraints or seclusion. For what it’s worth, McConnell, the Bellevue School Board president, told Yahoo Shine that parents of students who are placed in an isolation room receive verbal notification within 24 hours and a written account within five days. After a June 24 congressional briefing on restraint and seclusion in schools, the Bellevue School Board will do its own

deliberating on July 1. That's when it'll conduct a hearing to pass a [revised version of its seclusion and restraint policy](#) that contains protections against inappropriate isolation and restraint of students and bans their use as forms of discipline or punishment. Source:

<http://www.takepart.com/article/2014/06/19/scream-rooms-schools-are-being-taken-frightening-new-level?cmpid=tpedu-eml-2014-06-27-screamrooms>



The Dr. Peter Breggin Hour

The Dr. Peter Breggin Hour



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The Dark, Deadly Side of China's Internet Addiction Camps Jun 24, 2014, 4:37 PM ET By [RHEANA MURRAY](#) Rheana Murray Teenagers assemble at the Internet Addiction Treatment Centre in the southeastern suburb of Daxing, near Beijing, China on March 1, 2007. AFP/Getty Images Chinese teens glued to their smartphones and video games have been treated in military-style boot camps since the country made Internet addiction an official disorder in 2008. But the strict camps haven't been entirely successful, according to experts who question controversial tactics like strenuous physical activity, and sometimes, abuse. Several young people have reportedly died at the camps, according to state-sanctioned media in China. [Hospital First in US to Treat Internet Addiction Chinese Teen Dies at Internet Addiction Rehab Camp](#) [Teen Internet Addicts More Likely to Self-Harm: Study](#) This week, supervisors at a camp in China's Henan province reportedly beat a 19-year-old girl to death when she failed to ask permission to use the bathroom, [The Beijing News reported](#). Other reported deaths at Internet addiction camps across the country include a 14-year-old boy struck with [a baton and pipe](#) for being unable to do push-ups, according to the Los Angeles Times, and a 15-year-old [beaten less than a day](#) after arriving at camp. Some American experts don't think the answer to treating Internet addiction lies in boot camps. "For a treatment to work, it needs to last," Jenny Taitz, a clinical psychologist at the American Institute for Cognitive Therapy in New York, told ABC News. "And the very nature of a camp is that you can only stay there temporarily." AFP/Getty Images PHOTO: Teenagers make their way into the Internet Addiction Treatment Centre in the southeastern suburb of Daxing, near Beijing, China on March 1, 2007. For an addict to change, motivation has to come from within, Taitz added. "At a camp, people are telling you what to do. A more humanistic approach is much more likely to lead to long-standing change," she said. Taitz teaches Internet addicts mindfulness, meditation and emotion regulation tools to control their urges to reach for their smartphones or tablets. "I'm a clinician who bases my entire practice on evidence-based treatment, and I've never heard of a boot camp treatment in my scouring of evidence-based research," Taitz said. Internet addiction camps have been known to use forced physical activity and controversial tactics like electroshock therapy, which China's Ministry of Health banned in 2009. China has an estimated 24 million Internet addicts, [China Daily](#) reported. Source: <http://abcnews.go.com/Lifestyle/dark-deadly-side-chinas-internet-addiction-camps/story?id=24282781> (HEAL Comment: <http://youtu.be/vgeczZy6IDQ> (Meaning it happens here too.))

Report finds abuse at group home where disabled man found bruised, paralyzed Posted: Jun 23, 2014 3:23 PM PDT Updated: Jun 23, 2014 4:04 PM PDT (FOX25 / MyFoxBoston) Kevin Rothstein, Producer - [email](#) Mike Beaudet Producer Kevin Rothstein BOSTON ([MyFoxBoston.com](#))--The family of a disabled man found bruised and paralyzed on the bedroom floor of his group home is still fighting for answers after a new investigation found suspicious behavior from a worker at the home but still doesn't say how he came to be so badly hurt. The family of Paul Stanizzi, who has never been able to talk, believes he was abused at the group home in Bedford but the Middlesex District Attorney's office declined to press charges, saying no criminal acts could be proven. But newly-released Disabled Persons Protection Commission investigative report fuels the family's suspicion by substantiating that abuse occurred but still leaving unanswered the question of how he got his injuries. The report was finished in March but first obtained by the advocacy group COFAR – the Massachusetts Coalition of Families and Advocates. "Some of the findings of the report are very, very concerning," said attorney Ben Novotny, who represents the Stanizzi family. "The bruising all over the face, on the arms, the legs, the footprint on the back of the legs are probably most concerning piece of evidence that's come to light." In addition to detailing the injuries, the DPPC report substantiated abuse in so far as the sole group home worker on duty admitted that he found Stanizzi apparently paralyzed on the floor but moved him to his bed anyway, and then waited approximately 25 minutes before calling 911. Once at the hospital, an MRI found damage to the vertebrae around Paul's neck. While the report does not say how Stanizzi was injured, it's clear the overnight worker was suspected. He couldn't explain how he had gotten a fresh scratch on his face, a statement that a Bedford police detective found "suspicious". The worker admitted making several false statements to investigators, for example saying Stanizzi may have gotten a black eye because he sometimes hits himself in the face. He later admitted Stanizzi doesn't hit himself in the face. The worker denied assaulting Paul, but investigators were skeptical. "The truthfulness of (the alleged abuser's) denial is called into question by the false statements he provided during this investigation", the report says. A spokesperson for the Edinburg Center, which runs the group home where the incident occurred, said in a statement, "The Edinburg Center cannot comment given pending legal action but we stand behind the quality care we provide for all of our clients." While the criminal investigation is over, the family's investigation is far from it – and they hope the DA will at some point consider re-opening the case. "Obviously we and the family are disappointed by the fact that no criminal charges have issued. At the same time that's not going to change, inhibit or redirect anything that we are doing," said Novotny. Source: <http://www.myfoxboston.com/story/25849828/report-finds-abuse-at-group-home-where-disabled-man-found-bruised-paralyzed> (HEAL Note: Institutional abuse affects people of all ages.)

Longmeadow Residents Concerned Over Possible Group Home Placement June 23rd, 2014 LONGMEADOW, Mass. (WGGB) – There were several concerns in Longmeadow at the Select Board meeting Monday night as the discussion of a group home being placed in a residential area picked up again. The property, on 222 Redfern Drive, would be home to four people who suffered brain damage, along with staff members coming and going to help them with their needs. The home is being rented by a company called "Servicenet" and that company has yet to submit and paperwork stating the actual intentions of the property. Some residents are concerned about the affects it will have on the neighborhood. "The concern is that it will, number one, place a commercial entity into a one-family residential zone. It will change the overall aesthetics of the building, it will increase parking, traffic and we're not sure that the use is the proper use, again, a commercial entity going into a residential zone of single family zoned homes," said Athene Zaleski, who lives nearby the home. The Select Board has directed the Town Council to look at new information regarding the intended use of the property and come back with a recommendation on whether Servicenet will be issued a certificate of occupancy for that home. They intend to have a special meeting next week to discuss the issue. Source: <http://www.wggb.com/2014/06/23/longmeadow-residents-concerned-over-possible-group-home-placement/>

Iowa Organization Wants to Establish Group Home, Near Beatrice Published Tuesday, June 24, 2014 11:59 am by Doug Kennedy, KWBE An Iowa faith-based organization that operates alcohol and drug abuse group homes, says it wants to forge ahead with establishing a group home for a dozen women in the former Carriage House Bed and Breakfast, a mile east of Beatrice. To do so, Teen Challenge of the Midlands will have to go through a lengthy process of amending Beatrice City zoning rules, which currently don't allow such homes in areas zoned for agriculture. :18 "to drug treatment" Pastor Warren Hunsberger is one of the leaders of Teen Challenge of the Midlands, which acquired the former bed and breakfast and has had two female employees living at the home, establishing relations in the community. Group home participants would stay voluntarily and are free to leave the program. The project did not receive an endorsement before a Beatrice City Council work session, Monday night. Councilman Rich Kerr recalls problems the city had with a former group home for youth with developmental and behavioral problems. :39 "the community's mouth" Teen Challenge Board member David Russell, of Urbandale, Iowa.....says the organization acquired the property from the owner at half price....with the remaining value donated. The organization has homes in Colfax, Iowa.... in Omaha...and has acquired a boys ranch near Alliance. The facilities are not required to be licensed by Nebraska Health and Human Services. Hunsberger talks about the Colfax home, acquired in 1986. :32 "that community now" Some neighboring land owners east of Beatrice are concerned about the group home. John Riha says those concerns include security, the potential effect on property values, and availability of water. :29 "any of them" Rhonda Zarybnicky resides south of the proposed group home. :26 "in the future" Mayor Dennis Schuster said a proposed amendment to the zoning ordinance would have to go before the city's planning and zoning commission and the city council. City Attorney Greg

Butcher says a series of public hearings would likely be needed to answer all questions from the public and city officials. Source:

<http://www.kwbe.com/news/2014/06/24/kutt-local-news/iowa-organization-wants-to-establish-group-home-near-beatrice/>

House Bill Would Open Eligibility, Restrict Use of Federal Foster Care Dollars By [John Kelly](#), June 24, 2014 [Share on Tumblr](#) [PRINTER FRIENDLY](#)
Rep. Jim Langevin (D-R.I.) introduced a bill late last week that would implement a number of the major foster care financing reforms proposed by two influential foundations last year. Chief among them: making all foster youth eligible for federal funding under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, but limiting federal funds to three years of foster care for each youth. "Too many children live in limbo in foster care, and we need to support a system that prioritizes permanent home placements," said Langevin, in a statement about the bill. The aim of the Permanent Families for All Children Act is to push states into quicker moves to permanency – reunification, adoption or guardianship – for children. This is accomplished through two principal actions: 1) Allowing states to claim reimbursements for all foster youths. Currently, federal reimbursement is only available for youths whose parents earned below income thresholds set in 1996. This, alongside dramatically reduced overall numbers, has led to a decline in the number of IV-E eligible children. While child welfare finance reform remains a hotly debated issue, there is [virtually unanimous support for elimination of the current income test](#). 2) Stopping federal reimbursements for any foster youth after three years in care. Currently, there is no limit to how long IV-E funds can be drawn for a youth. "When abuse or neglect happens, our responsibility is to act quickly and thoughtfully to give kids their best chance to grow up in a loving and supportive permanent home," said First Focus Campaign for Children President Bruce Lesley, whose organization endorsed the bill. "This bill gives states an incentive to do just that and the supports they need to get the job done." Credit: Office of Jim Langevin Rep. Langevin with foster care alumna Victoria Flanagan during the 2014 Foster Youth Shadow day held in May. Langevin's bill would further limit the federal contribution to congregate care for foster youth. States would only receive half as much from the federal government for placements in residential care, and they could only use federal dollars for one year of placement in an institution. The bill would also use some savings from the limitations on foster care spending to sweeten loan forgiveness incentive programs for child welfare workers. Langevin would drop from ten to five the number of years a social worker needed to be on the job to qualify for student loan forgiveness. Most of the concepts espoused in the bill are identical or at least similar to the key parts of a [plan published in October](#) by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. Langevin's bill was referred to two committees: Ways and Means and Education and the Workforce. It does not yet have a companion in the Senate. States would have three years to comply with the legislation. [Click here](#) to read the legislation. John Kelly is the editor-in-chief of The Chronicle of Social Change. Source: <https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/news/house-bill-would-open-eligibility-restrict-use-of-federal-foster-care-dollars/7284>

St. Jude's worker accused, returned to work before new sex charges Aldrin Antonio West was hired as a child specialist at St. Jude's on Sept. 12, 2011. On April 6, 2012, he was cleared by Family Services to become a house parent at St. Jude's Ranch, according to Kristi Jourdan, Family Services spokeswoman. (Las Vegas Review-Journal) By YESENIA AMARO ©2014 LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL A former employee of a Boulder City foster home faces sexual assault charges after he was investigated and cleared to return to work with minors, the Review-Journal has learned. A criminal complaint against Aldrin Antonio West was filed May 21 at the Boulder City Justice Court. He faces one count of open or gross lewdness over allegations of masturbating in the presence of another employee, former child specialist Jodi Lynn Fennell. West also faces one count of open or gross lewdness in connection with allegations of touching Fennell's breast, according to a copy of the criminal complaint. A warrant for West's arrest was issued May 22, but he is not yet in custody. He didn't return calls seeking comment Monday. Fennell has told the Review-Journal that she isn't the only victim. She said West was investigated by the Clark County Department of Family Services after two teenage girls made reports involving him in summer 2012. The Review-Journal does not normally name victims of sexual assaults, but Fennell said she wanted to be named in this article. "I want them to be accountable," Fennell said last week of Family Services and St. Jude's Ranch for Children, where she worked with West. St. Jude's Ranch is a county-licensed therapeutic foster care agency, and all employees must remain in good standing with Family Services at the ranch, which has several foster homes on campus, St. Jude's Ranch officials said. West was hired as a child specialist at St. Jude's on Sept. 12, 2011. On April 6, 2012, he was cleared by Family Services to become a house parent at St. Jude's Ranch, according to Kristi Jourdan, Family Services spokeswoman. A house parent lives at the home, runs the daily operations, ensures a child's needs are met and is the main contact at all times, Jourdan said. "House parents are not licensed foster parents, but they go through the same federal and local background checks and training as foster parents do," Jourdan said last week. West's employment was terminated on Dec. 20, days after Fennell filed a complaint with the Boulder City Police Department. She said she was not allowed to have any contact with the children at St. Jude's Ranch after her reports to police, Family Services and St. Jude's Ranch. In February, she found out she was placed on unpaid administrative leave. Christine J. Spadafor, chief executive officer at St. Jude's Ranch for Children, wouldn't say when and why Fennell was placed on administrative leave and said Family Services was reviewing the matter. The number of children that West supervised fluctuated but did not exceed six, Spadafor said. Before April 2012, when he was cleared to become a house parent, West had been "provisionally cleared" after a background check to work at St. Jude's Ranch under supervision, Jourdan said. Family Services won't confirm or deny that it's investigating or that it investigated inappropriate behavior involving West at St. Jude's Ranch. "While DFS investigates complaints thoroughly, the department does not confirm the existence of or comment upon the results of its investigations because of confidentiality laws that protect the safety, permanency and well-being of children," Jourdan said in May. But officials at St. Jude's Ranch earlier this month said Family Services was reviewing the matter. St. Jude's Ranch has checks and balances in place to ensure the safety of the children and employees, Spadafor said. Allegations are reported to Family Services, which determines whether an investigation is required. "As soon as St. Jude's Ranch for Children is informed about allegations, it takes immediate action," Spadafor said in a statement. "The children's safety is always our number one priority, which is why we aggressively and proactively investigated any hint of impropriety here." Fennell said that Family Services investigated the reports made by two teenage girls assigned West to attend "boundaries classes" and cleared him to return to work. Family Services wouldn't confirm or deny the reports made by the teenage girls and declined to say whether it took any disciplinary action against West. Jourdan did say that Family Services can and has referred people to boundaries classes conducted by outside counseling agencies. But she wouldn't say when people are referred to those classes and what the classes consist of. Jourdan also wouldn't say whether West was referred to boundaries classes. While Jourdan wouldn't say whether West had been investigated in the past, Fennell provided copies of two audiotapes she made with the permission of Family Services investigator Teresa Cragon, who was investigating her case for the department earlier this year. During one of the interviews, Cragon is heard confirming a prior investigation but tells Fennell, "I had no part in that investigation." She tells Fennell that "things would've ended up differently" if she had been involved in the first investigation. "I walked in the dark ... with someone who had been a sexual predator," Fennell tells Cragon during the interview. Cragon wouldn't comment for the story and referred questions to Jourdan. The Boulder City Police Department declined several records request for the Review-Journal to obtain a copy of the police report made by Fennell. The Clark County district attorney's office also declined a records request because documents are sealed until an arrest is made. The U.S. Department of Labor also confirmed that the department's Wage and Hour Division in Las Vegas has received some information with regards to St. Jude's Ranch that might or might not involve labor violations. "That information is currently under evaluation to determine an appropriate course of action, which may include an investigation by the division and or a referral to appropriate agencies," spokesman Jose Carnevali said Monday. Contact Yesenia Amaro at yamara@reviewjournal.com or 702-383-0440. Find her on Twitter: @YeseniaAmaro. Source: <http://www.reviewjournal.com/news/st-jude-s-worker-accused-returned-work-new-sex-charges>

Residential treatment center to close in Cape Girardeau Posted: Jun 24, 2014 12:33 PM PDT Updated: Jun 25, 2014 3:52 PM PDT Amber Ruch - [email](#)
(Source: John Broeckling/KFVS) Heartland News CAPE GIRARDEAU, MO (KFVS) - **The Cottonwood Residential Treatment Center in Cape Girardeau, Missouri will close.** By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) - Gov. Jay Nixon has vetoed or frozen more than \$1.1 billion of spending in Missouri's next budget, citing concerns about declining revenues and the potential for new tax breaks. Nixon's budget cuts announced Tuesday include nearly \$276 million of line-item vetoes and \$846 million of spending restrictions affecting everything from public education to Medicaid. The Democratic governor said his actions were necessary because the budget passed by the Republican-led Legislature was "dangerously out of balance." Nixon's actions mean there will be no funding increase for education when the new school year begins. But Nixon said he could release the additional school money if legislators in September sustain his vetoes of bills granting various tax breaks. Senate Appropriations Chairman Kurt Schaefer said Nixon is "holding school kids hostage." Copyright 2014 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. [Continue reading >>](#) The closure is a result of Missouri Governor Jay Nixon vetoing a \$144.6 million general revenue spending and restricted \$641.6 million in general revenue expenditures on Tuesday, June 24 in an effort to put the Fiscal Year 2015 budget back into balance. Debra Walker with the Missouri Department of

Mental Health said there are 23 children and youth currently being treated at the Cape Girardeau location. She said they will continue to care for their current clients until they are ready for discharge or provide ongoing care in another residential setting. Walker said current employees will receive layoff notices effective at the end of the calendar year with rights as afforded under the state merit system. Gov. Nixon cited several reasons for why the budget was more than \$786 million out of balance. "As governor, it's my responsibility under the Missouri Constitution to keep the budget in balance by ensuring the spending authorized by the General Assembly does not exceed available revenue," Gov. Nixon said. "These actions are not easy, but they are absolutely essential to putting the budget back in balance and keeping the state on a fiscally responsible path." According to Walker, Cottonwood first admitted children in 1987. The treatment center is a residential program designed to meet the emotional and mental health needs of children and adolescents (ages 6-17) who meet the criteria for severe emotional disturbance. "It's actually pretty crushing," said Brittney Patrick. Patrick's 7-year-old son Blake is getting treatment at Cottonwood, and said it really bothers her that the facility is scheduled to shut down. "My son's been through a lot, so he's been in and out of facilities, hospitals all that, and we finally found somewhere that's close to home," said Patrick. Patrick said about a year ago, her son started throwing tantrums, banging his head, tossing chairs, and got out of control. At that point, he was hospitalized. "They kept upping his medicines every time, Blake was up to almost 27 hundred mg as a 6-year-old a day, he was like a walking zombie," said Patrick. Finally, they were able to get him into Cottonwood. "Cottonwood is not about upping his medicine, they're really working with him trying new things, and that's what Blake needs," said Patrick. "He was having really bad behavior and ever since he got here he's been really good," said Katessa Simmons, Blake's godmother. "They need their parents to be close to them when they're in their treatment." "I was just wondering where the kids would go you know most of the parents of the kids that are here are in the area, if cottonwood closed down, they would have to go north," said Jeff Beeson Jr, Beeson's mother has worked at the facility for more than 15 years and he said she was heartbroken to hear the news. "That would put employees out of business and they would have to search for other places to work," said Beeson. Brian Biri works at Cottonwood and said he's surprised and disappointed to see the facility close. "I think the kids that go there that get treatment that really does them some good, and I personally know a few of the kids that went there and got treatment and it really made a difference," said Biri. It's a difference that will now have to come from somewhere else. Patrick said she doesn't know where that somewhere else will be. "I don't know what a lot of parents will do, a lot of them would do without Cottonwood," said Patrick. There is a group petitioning the shutdown. They're asking Gov. Nixon to keep the facility open. You can join their online petition here, and check out their Facebook here. A petition has been started to save the facility. Copyright 2014 [KFVS](http://www.kfvs.com). All rights reserved. Source: <http://www.kfvs12.com/story/25859030/residential-treatment-center-to-close-in-cape-girardeau-mo>

Jacksonville group home worker arrested after disabled man choked By [Dan Scanlan](#) Tue, Jun 24, 2014 @ 5:13 pm [Share on facebook](#) [Share on twitter](#) [Share on email](#) A 44-year-old Jacksonville group home employee was arrested Tuesday in the abuse of a disabled adult, according to the Attorney General's Office. Mark Keith Griffin of Dunn Avenue was arrested by the state's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office after receiving a referral from the Florida Department of Children and Family's Adult Protective Services, the Attorney General's Office said. The arrest warrant said a disabled adult resident was choked at the Shady Pine Group Home at 5496 Shady Pine St. off Ortega Park Boulevard. Two employees told investigators that Griffin became angry at a client who repeatedly turned off a television during a Nov. 23 football game and yelled at him to turn it back on. Witnesses said he put his hands on the victim's neck and started squeezing despite co-workers yelling at him to stop, the warrant said. After being released about a minute later, the victim had "turned red and was coughing," the warrant stated. Griffin was put on administrative leave after the incident, then fired from the facility, which is a state-licensed group home. Source: <http://members.jacksonville.com/news/crime/2014-06-24/story/jacksonville-group-home-worker-arrested-after-disabled-man-choked>

Bend adult foster care home inquiry leads to 72 charges Home's owner, granddaughter accused of defrauding state By [Scott Hammers](#) / The Bulletin Published Jun 25, 2014 at 12:01AM An investigation into theft reported by a resident of a Bend adult foster care home has resulted in 72 charges for defrauding the state and has led to the arrest of the home's owner and her granddaughter. Charging documents filed in Deschutes County Circuit Court in late May outline the allegations against Constance Marie Herrera-Firkus, 66, Loris Firkus, 24, and Michael James Gardner, 27, Loris Firkus' husband. A probable cause affidavit filed in the case indicates it began with an investigation by Adult Protective Services into a complaint that money had been stolen from a resident of one of two Holden Homes facilities owned and operated by Herrera-Firkus. Instead, investigators discovered Herrera-Firkus had been employing her granddaughter, Loris Firkus, a convicted felon legally barred by the state from working in such facilities. Firkus, who was still on probation for a conviction for first-degree theft in 2009, has been held at the Deschutes County Jail since June 3. Investigators discovered Firkus had been using her cousin's name to elude detection by authorities, and that Firkus and Herrera-Firkus both submitted official documents to authorities using the assumed identity. On a November 2013 visit to one of the facilities, licensers with the state Department of Human Services observed someone they later learned was Firkus running out the back door. The resident manager later told the licensers Firkus had been working full time using her cousin's identity with her grandmother's knowledge, and that employees had been instructed to call her by the cousin's name if anyone from the state visited. In January, the licensers visited again, and Firkus introduced herself using her cousin's name and presented a CPR certification card bearing the cousin's name. Firkus eventually admitted in February to the investigators that she worked at the facility, though Herrera-Firkus continued to insist she did not, the affidavit states. Because state law requires a criminal background check that would disqualify Firkus from working at an adult foster care facility, prosecutors contend it was a criminal act for the facility to accept state payments while she was working there. Herrera-Firkus received more than \$300,000 in Medicaid payments from the state Department of Human Services between October 2010 and May 2014. Firkus was paid more than \$47,000 over four years working for her grandmother, the affidavit states, while collecting \$185 a week in unemployment and \$200 to \$443 per month in food stamps during much of that time. Firkus did not report her income or pay taxes and would have been disqualified from receiving unemployment and food stamps benefits had she done so. In late May, a grand jury indicted Firkus, Herrera-Firkus and Gardner on a total of 72 charges. Several of the charges apply to more than one defendant; Herrera-Firkus faces charges of making a false claim for health care payment and aggravated theft by deception, Firkus for identity theft, unlawfully obtaining public assistance and tax evasion, and Gardner for tax evasion and unlawfully obtaining supplemental nutrition. No charges have been filed in connection with the original theft claim that started the state's investigation. Firkus is scheduled to enter a plea to the charges July 10, Herrera-Firkus on Thursday and Gardner on Friday. — Reporter: 541-383-0387, shammers@bendbulletin.com Source: <http://www.bendbulletin.com/localstate/2188182-151/bend-adult-foster-care-home-inquiry-leads-to-72-entryType=0>

Lawsuit: DSS negligent in assault of 6-year-old MEG KINNAR, Associated Press By MEG KINNARD, Associated Press Updated 4:57 pm, Wednesday, June 25, 2014 0 [Larger](#) | [Smaller](#) [Printable Version](#) [Email This](#) Georgia (default) Verdana Times New Roman Arial [Font](#) Page 1 of 1 COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — South Carolina's [social services](#) agency failed to protect a 6-year-old girl from a teenage foster child with known behavioral problems who was HIV-positive and admitted to sexually assaulting the girl, according to a lawsuit. The lawsuit currently pending in Richland County was filed last month by the girl's mother, who accuses the Department of Social Services of negligence. According to the lawsuit, a 14-year-old boy who had been placed in a foster home sexually assaulted the girl in June 2013 after he was left unsupervised by his foster parent. The boy had been removed from his mother's home in 2012 and placed in the foster care system. Officials at DSS knew that the boy had severe behavioral problems, had been sexually abused and was HIV-positive, according to the lawsuit. But during his stay in foster care, according to court papers, DSS officials didn't ensure that the teen was properly monitored or received appropriate counseling or other therapies for his behavioral problems. The lawsuit says that negligence ultimately resulted in the girl's abuse and exposure to HIV. Because the agency knew of the teen's history of abuse and his HIV-positive status, "DSS knew or should have known that he presented a heightened threat to others, especially young children, with whom he might come into contact," according to the suit, filed by Columbia attorney [Dick Harpootlian](#). The boy ultimately admitted that he had assaulted the girl and was charged with criminal sexual conduct, according to the lawsuit. Court papers do not indicate if the girl is also now HIV-positive. In a statement provided to [The Associated Press](#), a DSS spokeswoman said the agency investigated the situation, determined that treatment plans had not been followed and had subsequently disallowed the foster parent involved from having future foster children. The statement also said the foster child was regularly monitored and was in a "therapeutic" foster care home designed to meet his needs. "Like everyone involved in this situation, the staff at the Department of Social Services is deeply saddened at what took place here," [Marilyn Matheus](#) said. "The agency is committed, and always will be, to finding the best and most appropriate foster parents possible for our at-risk children and will never stop working to make our communities safer places." Source: <http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Lawsuit-DSS-negligent-in-assault-of-6-year-old-5578581.php>

Franklinville man accused of sexually assaulting teen at group home [Print](#) By [Jessica Beym/South Jersey Times](#) Gloucester County Times Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#) on June 27, 2014 at 4:14 PM Reddit Email Express-Times photo A 35-year-old Franklinville man has been charged with sexually assaulting a 17-year-old female resident of a group home in Clayton, operated by the New Jersey Mentor Program, for youth with "complex medical and behavioral challenges," according to police. Thomas Gillett Spio, of 7 Christopher Court, Franklinville, was arrested by the Clayton Police Department on Thursday. Police said Gillett-Spio was a direct support professional at the home and had "supervisory or disciplinary power over the victim," according to the criminal complaint. He is charged with second-degree sexual assault and endangering the welfare of a child. Authorities allege the incident happened on June 10. He is being held in default of \$50,000 bail. The New Jersey State Police assisted in the investigation. Source: http://www.nj.com/gloucester-county/index.ssf/2014/06/franklinville_man_accused_of_sexually_assaulting_teen_at_group_home.html

Minnesota surgeon suspected of choking foster child By Sarah Smith Forum News Service Posted: 06/29/2014 12:01:00 AM CDT Updated: 06/29/2014 01:32:04 PM CDT PARK RAPIDS, Minn. -- A special-needs child allegedly abused by a Benedict surgeon has been removed from the home. "The county reacted very, very quickly and worked to put him in a safe environment," said Martha Weaver, spokeswoman for Anoka County Social Services. Dennis James Sullivan, 50, was charged this month in Hubbard County with attempted murder and two counts of assault for allegedly trying to choke his 10-year-old foster son by stuffing a surgical glove down his throat June 17. Hubbard County authorities added a fourth count of assault Monday for Sullivan allegedly tying a shoelace around the 10-year-old boy's scrotum in May, as allegedly admitted by Sullivan's wife, Rebecca, who has not been charged in the case. As a result, the attempted second-degree murder charge was upgraded to first-degree murder, "while committing domestic abuse with a past pattern of domestic abuse," the complaint states. Weaver said she couldn't comment on any other aspect of the case, but said the boy was placed with the Sullivans through a private adoption/foster care agency, not the county. "The county moved very quickly when it learned the boy was potentially in jeopardy," she said, declining to comment further. Sullivan's attorney has requested a mental evaluation in the case. Source: http://www.twincities.com/localnews/ci_26057663/minnesota-surgeon-suspected-choking-foster-child

Increasing Foster Children Prompts Focus on Reuniting Families Increasing Foster Children Prompts Focus on Reuniting Families ANCHORAGE - **Increasing reports of abuse and neglect in Alaska's foster care homes is starting to have a strong impact on the state's adoption system.** More from KTUU --According to the Office of Children's Services, there are more than 2,000 children in the state's care so far this year. Officials say despite the challenges, the goal is to find all of these children a safe home. For three-year-old Ashley, Barb Krafft is like her second mom. For a period of time, Krafft and her husband were Ashley's foster parents. Over the past two years, the Kraffts along with their three biological children have had nine kids sharing their home. "You just see the need of all these kids who are hurting and are struggling with what's happening in their life," Krafft said. It's a passion to help that can be tough, especially when it can mean dealing with the children's biologic parents. "The kids are the easy part," Krafft said. "Having to convey the positive and some of the negative to the parents and to the system, it's hard as a parent to watch some of these struggles even if they are not your own children." It's choices that the Office of Children's Services says makes the reunification process a challenge. "You offend, you use drugs again and you go back to treatment," said Kim Guay, child welfare administrator for OCS. "There are a lot of drugs and a lot of alcohol in our state, a lot of domestic violence." With more than 6,800 reports of harm last year, the agency says its focus is to lower those numbers by getting families back on a positive track while their kids are in foster care. "There is so much that needs to be done," Guay said. "There is so much success that can happen in Alaska and helping children out." A journey that through tears of sadness and joy is very much part of this foster mom's life. Officials from the Office of Children's Services say the public can help in a variety of ways, including calling immediately if you see any child abused or neglected. "If you have the love, and if you have the space and you want to share that, take the step forward," Krafft said. "Even if it's through texting, talking, meeting up for dinner." For more information click here <http://www.acrf.org/>. Copyright © 2014, KTUU-TV Source: <http://www.ktuu.com/news/news/increasing-foster-children-prompts-focus-on-reuniting-families/26736732>

Former group home manager accused of stealing food stamps Posted: Jul 01, 2014 8:31 AM PDT Updated: Jul 01, 2014 8:32 AM PDT By 19 Action News Digital Team - [email](#) Warrant issued of Shawuan M. Telfair. (Source: Westlake Police) WESTLAKE, OH (WOIO) - [Westlake Police](#) have issued an arrest warrant for Shawuan M. Telfair, 28. The Cleveland woman was a manager at a Westlake group home and used the Ohio Direction cards of three developmentally disabled male residents to make purchases totaling \$749 that were not for those residents. Telfair was let go in Nov. 2013. Police say the thefts occurred during and after her employment and were discovered by the home's staff in May 2014. Westlake PD is seeking information on her whereabouts. Call 440-871-3311 if you know where she can be found. Source: <http://www.19actionnews.com/story/25915555/former-group-home-manager-accused-of-stealing-food-stamps>

Ex-doctor dies in prison after conviction for illegally distributing drugs Former doctor Nolan Crisp LEXINGTON, Ky. - A former physician at a health clinic in Bolivar died at a federal prison in Lexington, Ken., on Monday, one day after his 77th birthday. Nolan Crisp of Halfway was serving a two-year sentence for illegally distributing prescription drugs. He was sentenced to prison last October after pleading guilty on April 8, 2013, and was also ordered to pay a \$10,000 fine. The U.S. Bureau of Prisons hasn't released information about Crisp's death, which is noted in the Bureau's Inmate Locator Service. Before he was sentenced, a physician gave the judge a review of Crisp's medical problems, at Crisp's request. That physician noted Crisp had a "significant hiatal hernia," chronic allergies, Parkinson's disease since 2006, coronary artery disease (after a heart attack in 2005), and a torn tendon in a hip that hampered ability to walk. The physician wrote to the judge that Crisp's "continued survival thus, in my opinion, requires care and very careful management of the medical problems." Crisp worked at Pomme de Terre Wellness Center (also known as the Bolivar Family Wellness Clinic and Northwoods Psychiatric Services) in Bolivar from June 2009 through Nov. 10, 2010, to provide pain management and other services to patients. Crisp admitted he wrote prescriptions for OxyContin, Oxycodone Hydrochloride, and Oxycodone-Aspirin for a purported patient with whom he was involved in a sexual relationship. The prescriptions were illegal because they were not in the usual course of professional practice and for a person who had no legitimate medical need for the prescriptions. Current and former clinic employees expressed concerns about Crisp's prescription-writing practices. For example, clinic staff noticed Crisp meeting people in the parking lot and giving them prescriptions, even though they were not being seen in the clinic. The clinic was getting so many patients claiming that their prescriptions were lost or stolen that they began requiring a police report. A nurse practitioner said word got out that Crisp was generous with narcotics prescriptions, and she would see patients parked across the street in a church parking lot waiting for him so they could get prescriptions. She also said that sometimes the clinic nurses would run a drug screen that revealed the patient was not taking the drugs being prescribed; they informed Crisp, but he continued writing prescriptions for the patient. The federal investigation included reviewing overdose reports from Citizens Memorial Hospital, Crisp's appointment schedule for the clinic, Crisp's Medicaid billing records while he was at the clinic, information regarding prescriptions written by Crisp and filled at six major pharmacies in Bolivar, and information from the Polk County coroner. During the period that Crisp worked at the clinic, there were 96 overdose incidents at the hospital, 29 of whom were connected to his care. During that same period, six of the patients who died from overdoses were connected to his care. The government retained an internal medicine physician specializing in pain management to review patient files. The physician was provided with charts for certain patients who were known to be drug abusers or who had overdosed. In the physician's report, he provided background regarding the standard of care for the use of controlled substances in the treatment of pain. He also provided a detailed analysis of Crisp's treatment of 20 patients. For the 20 patients, his opinion was that Crisp's treatment was reckless, dangerous, life-threatening, and inconsistent with sound medical practice. ---- Some information in this report came from a news release from the U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Missouri in October 2013. Copyright Schurz Communications 2014 Source: http://www.kspr.com/news/local/exdoctor-dies-in-prison-after-conviction-for-illegally-distributing-drugs/21051620_26750206

New group home opens amid concerns Kristen Cates, kcates@greatfalltribune.com 1:59 a.m. MDT July 2, 2014 Richard Hamilton of Youth Dynamics shows off one of the double bedrooms in the new group home in the Skyline neighborhood. (Photo: TRIBUNE PHOTO/RION SANDERS) 83 [CONNECT](#) [TWEET](#) [LINKEDIN](#) [COMMENT](#) [EMAIL](#) [MORE](#) A new group home for children who are predominantly victims of neglect and abuse opened in the Skyline neighborhood this week, stirring up complaints from some within the neighborhood about whether zoning and covenants allow for such a place. Youth Dynamics operates nine other community homes across the state that cater predominantly to emotionally disturbed youths and teenagers and decided to open a

group home in Great Falls after an analysis a few years ago determined between 50 and 60 Great Falls youths in need of extensive counseling and therapy were being sent to group homes in all corners of the state, Executive Director Peter Degel said. "The majority of the kids we work with are removed from their homes because of abuse and neglect," Degel said. Kathleen Gessaman, chairwoman of Neighborhood Council No. 3, said she can't address concerns neighbors might have with the group home but said neighbors are upset that a zoning issue didn't come to the neighborhood council for review first. Covenants in the neighborhood where the home is located specify it is for single-family dwelling, and she and others aren't sure if a group home qualifies as a single-family dwelling. She said the city doesn't help neighborhoods enforce covenants, either. "To me it's frustrating," Gessaman said. "It's a point that should be clarified. It's hard to enforce covenants when the city won't tell you what is happening. If the covenants say no, then the city should respect that." However, the city hasn't been involved in the purchase of the property and opening of the group home as it is not a zoning issue, said Craig Raymond, planning and community development director for the city of Great Falls. Over the years he said the courts have ruled in favor of group homes being considered single-family dwellings. Raymond said this is not a zoning issue but it's up to the neighborhood to determine whether it violates covenants. And it would have to determine if civil action is necessary. "The city does not enforce covenants," Raymond said. But even then, he thinks federal rulings regarding housing and what constitutes a single-family home would supersede any covenants. Carrie Galvez, executive director of the Great Falls Children's Receiving Home, said she doesn't care what the covenants say, more group homes like Youth Dynamics' North Skyline home for children who are victims of abuse and neglect are needed in Great Falls. The Receiving Home can only care for younger children and can only house up to 14 kids at a time. Group homes operated by AWARE and Kairos Youth Services are also trying to respond to different kinds of children in need. "That home is filling a void. Most of these kids are our kids," Galvez said. "We owe these kids in the community something greater than 'We don't want you here.'" She said neighbors of the Receiving Home have never had a problem with the kids living next door in the 20-plus years it's been in the same location. She also knows, much like her employees, those working in the Youth Dynamics group home go through extensive background checks and must be licensed by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services to be in operation. "I would not hesitate as a homeowner to have these kids right next door to me," Galvez said. "These are not bad kids; they come from bad situations." Degel said Youth Dynamics is licensed to treat and work with a maximum of eight children in the home at a time, ranging in age from 11 to 18. There are a home manager and different supervisors working in the house at all times along with a licensed therapist. Though most of the children they serve come from homes of abuse or neglect, they do occasionally work with youths who are working through the juvenile court system, but Degel said that's usually triggered by other familial issues. Children who are in need of a lock-down facility are not going to come to the Skyline North home, he said. "I think people will find that we're good neighbors," he said. Reach Tribune Staff Writer Kristen Cates at 791-1463 or kcates@greatfalltribune.com. Follow her on Twitter @GFTtrib_KCates. 83 CONNECT [TWEET](#) [LINKEDIN](#) [COMMENT](#) [EMAIL](#) [MORE](#) Read or Share this story: <http://www.greatfalltribune.com/story/news/local/2014/07/01/new-group-home-opens-amid-concerns/11936413/>

Police charge rape at state group home Posted: Wednesday, July 2, 2014 12:14 pm | Updated: 12:15 pm, Wed Jul 2, 2014. [Police charge rape at state group home](#) By Justin Kloczko Journal Inquirer Journal Inquirer | [0 comments](#) SOUTH WINDSOR — A former resident at a state-contracted Woodland Drive group home is facing sexual-assault charges after, police say, he raped a 13-year-old resident on at least one occasion. According to an arrest warrant affidavit, the man, Kevin W. Vargas, 18, of Hartford, is facing a charge of first-degree sexual assault stemming from an October arrest. Police say he had forced intercourse on another boy at a home run by Community Residences Inc. Vargas is free on a \$50,000 surety bond and is due back in Manchester Superior Court on Aug. 1. Source: http://www.journalinquirer.com/towns/south_windsor/police-charge-rape-at-state-group-home/article_f9baa45c-0203-11e4-a3d0-0019b2963f4.html

Innovative new fostering service helps Bristol children avoid residential care By [Hilda1](#) | Posted: July 02, 2014 [Comments \(0\)](#) A new fostering service which aims to prevent children in Bristol from going into [residential](#) care has just been launched. The new service, called Multi-dimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC), pairs foster carers with a clinical team of coaches, social workers, education workers and a therapist. Together, they help vulnerable children and young people to make positive changes in their lives, from behaviour at school to their relationship with their birth family. The aim is to prevent children with complex behaviour from going into residential care by giving them the skills needed to stay in a [home](#) setting. MTFC is run by Bristol City Council in partnership with charity Action for Children. The council [funds](#) the service as well as employing the clinical team, whilst Action for Children has responsibility for recruiting, training and supporting foster carers. Brenda Massey, the council's Assistant Mayor for Education, said: "Every child deserves the chance to fulfil their full potential. This new service in Bristol will offer children with serious emotional and behavioural issues a structured and nurturing family setting that reinforces positive behaviour. Studies have shown that MTFC has led to fewer foster care placements breaking down in the future." Mark Kingston, children's placement manager at Action for Children, said: "We have long provided fostering and adoption services across the South West, but our new Multi-dimensional Treatment Foster Care service is the first of its kind in Bristol. "The programme teaches good behaviour by encouragement, introducing clear boundaries and targeting patterns of problem behaviour. It also helps develop positive academic and living skills, allowing children the chance to stay in a home environment and avoid being placed in residential care." Action for Children is recruiting new foster carers in Bristol to help make the service a success. Carers will become integral members of the MTFC team, supported and guided by the clinical team of professionals who will help carers to provide highly structured placements for children who have previously struggled in residential children's units or foster placements. Each carer will have full support and training from the charity to be able to carry out their role to the best of their ability. Read more: <http://www.bristolpost.co.uk/Innovative-new-fostering-service-helps-Bristol/story-21316910-detail/story.html#ixzz36cdtSpBR> Read more at <http://www.bristolpost.co.uk/Innovative-new-fostering-service-helps-Bristol/story-21316910-detail/story.html#W5gxLW1XL506mLX1.99>

CASA launches initiative to treat traumatized children in foster care Ashley Goudeau, KVUE 6:43 p.m. CDT July 2, 2014 CONNECT [18 T](#) CASA launches initiative to treat traumatized children in foster care KVUE AUSTIN -- At 27-years-old, [Ereka Howard](#) is an entrepreneur and motivational speaker, dedicated to helping people around her. But she wasn't always this put together. "I was dropped from a standing position by my biological mother and made no attempt to pick me up. I know that I was, my mother was on heroine and cocaine up until the day of my birth," said Howard. At five months, she was abandoned and put into foster care. Though she was too young to remember her past, the trauma stayed with her and was reflected in her behavior. "I acted out," she laughed. "I stole things. I was very rebellious," added Howard. "Wanting that comfort. That comfort in saying this is where I come from. I look like them." Helping people who serve foster children identify, address and treat trauma is the goal of a new initiative by CASA or Court Appointed Special Advocates. Thanks to a total of \$120,000 from Impact Austin and the Texas Bar Foundation, staff and volunteers will be trained to do Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI), techniques developed and studied by professors at Texas Christian University that focus on healing a child's pain. "How can we treat the trauma and not punish the child for their bad behavior," explained CASA of Travis County Executive Director Laura Wolf. "The key is about understanding what's at the root of whatever it is you're seeing." Wrapping them in a weighted blanket is one way to help kids feel safe. Another is surrounding them with comforting scents and giving them the basics. "Sometimes they will come up, you know as foster mom is cooking dinner and say I need something to eat," said Wolf. "And what TBRI teaches us is instead of saying, which any of us would, instead of saying 'okay, dinner is going to be on the table in ten minutes, don't worry I'm cooking it right now,' you stop, you get down on their level, you look them in the eye and you say 'okay, I'm going to give you this powerbar and you can either put it in your pocket or you can put it by your place at the table and I'm going to finish dinner but you can have this powerbar. Dr. Pervis has taught us that when she's done this before with traumatized children a lot of times, they don't go ahead and eat that power bar they hold on to it because the comfort of knowing 'I'm not going to starve.' When I say I need food, I get it. That enables them to feel safe." Wolf says creating a feeling of safety is the first step to healing. CASA is hoping to have more success stories like Howard's, who serves as a CASA volunteer. Source: <http://www.kvue.com/story/news/local/2014/07/02/casa-launches-initiative-to-treat-traumatized-children-in-foster-care/12113469/>

THE HEAL REPORT PREMIERES ON YOUTUBE: JULY 4TH, 2014

Arizona heightens oversight of medications for foster children Arizona heightens oversight of medications for foster children S2014-07-06T00:00:00Z 2014-07-06T10:25:32Z Arizona heightens oversight of medications for foster children By Emily Bregel Arizona Daily Star Arizona Daily Star 18 hours ago • By [Emily Bregel](#) [Emily Bregel](#) ebregel@azstarnet.com Follow [@emilybregel](#) Related Documents [Arizona psychotropic study](#) [GAO psychotropic study](#) [State won't share data about psychotropic drugs](#) State will only release data if the Star pays \$175 per hour commercial fee Foster kids on psychotropic drugs A study based on 2008 prescription claims found that 11 percent of Arizona foster kids — 1,681 children — took at least one psychotropic drug, like anti-depressants, anti-psychotics and stimulants such as Ritalin for attention-deficit disorders. More than 1 in 4 children ages 6 to 12 were taking the drugs, compared with one in 20 non-foster children that age. Still, Arizona's overall rate was lower than rates in five U.S. states studied in a U.S. Government Accountability Office report, where 19 percent to nearly 40 percent of foster youth in 2008 were on at least one psychotropic drug. "It is indeed concerning," said Dr. Kathy Smith. Kathy Smith, director of child and adolescent psychiatry at the University of Arizona. "What's causing that, is the question. Is it because we have people who don't have enough expertise prescribing medication? Is it because of changes in caregivers? Is it because these kids are really complicated?" Raised on Tucson's east side by an abusive parent, Angela Luna entered foster care at age 14. After being diagnosed with bipolar disorder, she was put on antidepressants and anti-anxiety medications and stayed on them for seven years. But she says her emotional problems were related to her childhood trauma, not mental illness. The medications numbed her pain and anger, she says, and prevented her from learning how to deal with her emotions — or even knowing how she felt. "I constantly felt stoned and high," says Luna, now 28, who has since been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. "You're never given the chance to properly grow. ... Therapists ask, 'How's your medication?' Not 'How are you?'" Arizona foster children were 4.4 times more likely than nonfoster children on Medicaid to be prescribed powerful psychotropic drugs, a report based on 2008 data found. Arizona hasn't updated that report, but the number of foster kids on psychotropic drugs likely has grown along with the state's foster-care population: Between March 2008 and March 2014, the number of Arizona children in foster care soared by 62 percent from 9,721 to 15,750. Child-welfare advocates attribute the growth to deepening poverty leading to more cases of neglect. When used appropriately, psychotropic drugs — which affect mood, thought or behavior — can be lifesaving, experts say. But some child-welfare advocates say the drugs can be prescribed more for the convenience of overwhelmed caregivers than for the benefit of the child. "I see youth that are so overly medicated that they're literally drooling," said Christa Drake, former executive director of In My Shoes, a mentorship program for foster youth. "Sometimes it's like, 'Let's just medicate him and subdue him so we don't have to deal with the behavior.'" This year the state implemented new oversight and heightened reporting requirements regarding prescriptions for foster kids, said Steven Dingle, chief medical officer of the Arizona Division of Behavioral Health. As of January, "regional behavioral health authorities" — organizations that coordinate behavioral health care for foster kids — must regularly submit data on medication utilization rates among foster kids. The behavioral health authorities will also monitor the prescribing habits of doctors in their region and identify outliers. In addition, doctors must now get authorization — attesting they first tried psychosocial interventions like therapy — before prescribing the following: antipsychotic or ADHD medications for children under age 6; any psychotropic drug at a dosage level exceeding FDA recommendations; more than one antipsychotic or antidepressant simultaneously. The state has also formed the Arizona Psychotropic Monitoring Oversight Team, a partnership between the Department of Child Safety, AHCCCS and the Division of Behavioral Health Services focused on ensuring appropriate prescribing, Dingle said. The team plans to replicate the study on psychotropic prescriptions among 2008 foster children with more recent data, likely within the next six months, he said. Normal behaviors Despite the new reporting requirements, some worry medication use could increase as Arizona's child welfare system is stretched. Last November, the Arizona Department of Economic Security admitted that its Child Protective Service division failed to investigate more than 6,500 reports of abuse or neglect, in part due to sky-high caseloads for CPS caseworkers. CPS oversight was taken from DES and given to the newly created Department of Child Safety in May. Heavy caseloads leave caseworkers, caregivers and doctors with less time to concentrate on each child's medication regimen. A foster family shortage also means more children are in group homes, with less individualized attention, increasing the risk of fragmented oversight of their care. "The system remains ripe for medication misuse or overuse," says Sen. David Bradley, D-Tucson, who worked in child welfare for 20 years. Finding solutions other than medication takes resources, time and patience, said Drake, formerly of In My Shoes. Foster children need stability and a safe space to explore and express their emotions, she said. Instead, lots of kids get a diagnosis of conditions like "oppositional defiance disorder" when they act out, she said. That diagnosis can sometimes medicalize normal behavior, she said. "Most people would be upset if they were ripped away from their families and sent to live in a group home," she said. "A lot of our youth are acting appropriately in their surroundings." Foster kids with complex needs are often bounced between therapeutic and regular foster homes as their behavior stabilizes, then deteriorates again, said Sarah Huntoon, foster program director for Intermountain Centers for Human Development, which trains and licenses therapeutic foster homes. The more transitions, the more instability for the foster child — and the less likely he is to have a familiar caregiver who will notice and report concerns about medications. "Consistency of care is an issue," she said. Trauma is a given Experts say it makes sense that kids in foster care have a higher rate of psychotropic-drug use than other kids. Between 60 and 80 percent of foster youth have at least one psychiatric diagnosis or developmental disability, compared with 15 to 20 percent of the general population, said Dr. Sandy Stein, associate medical director of Community Partnership of Southern Arizona, the Regional Behavioral Health Authority for Pima County. The authority coordinates and manages behavioral health care for children in the child welfare system. Some of those diagnoses in foster children are related to lack of prenatal care, to parental substance abuse or to a family history of mental illness, Stein said. Lengthy stays in foster care, or transitions between foster families and group homes, can add to a child's sense of instability. "These kids have been traumatized," says Susie Huhn, executive director of Casa de los Niños, a social-service and foster-care agency in Tucson. "The very fact that they're in the foster care system means they've been exposed to toxic stress and traumatic events — so why wouldn't we expect they'll have more social or emotional issues?" But some worry about questionable prescribing practices. Among the 2008 psychotropic drug report's findings: Foster kids were nine times more likely than nonfoster children to be prescribed five psychotropic medications at one time. Almost 800 children, or 5.4 percent of the foster population, were taking two or more drugs. Only limited evidence supports the use of even two psychotropic drug in children, and no evidence supports children — or even adults — taking five at once, according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office. Arizona foster children ages 5 and younger were 5.5 times more likely than nonfoster children to be prescribed at least one psychotropic medication. That year, 225 Arizona foster children 5 and younger were prescribed the drugs. The state's foster kids were 7.4 times as likely to be prescribed the drugs in doses exceeding the maximum recommendation for their age group. Fifty-five foster children ages 1 and younger got a psychotropic prescription in 2008, though the report notes some drugs could have been prescribed to treat other conditions. The drugs can have serious side effects for infants, and the GAO points out that there is no established use for these drugs to treat mental-

health conditions in infants. Long-term harm Even if kids improve with medication, powerful psychotropics may do a lifetime of harm. Common side effects include paranoia, weight gain, extreme fatigue and reduced bone density. Little research has been done on long-term impacts on brain development in children. And unlike in adults, side effects like weight gain can become permanent for children, even after they're taken off the medication. Proper diagnosis is often a challenge. Post-traumatic stress disorder can look a lot like ADHD, and the treatments for each are different, said Laurel Rettle, critical-care coordination administrator for Cenpatico, one of four Regional Behavioral Health Authorities in Arizona. Although medications can help those who suffer from PTSD in the short term, long-term use of stimulants — like ADHD treatments — will not. PTSD "is not, in and of itself, a serious mental illness," she said. "These children are dealing with things they never should have to deal with. You can compare it to children of war." Gera Patten has been a therapeutic foster mom since 1998. Most of her foster children came to her already on medications, she said, and many stayed on them until they aged out of the system. She believes psychotropic medications were used generally only when necessary and helped many of her foster kids get through a difficult time. Still, most of her foster kids ended up stopping their meds as soon as they gained independence, she said, and they seemed to thrive without the drugs. "They're at a calmer place," she said. "I imagine 90 to 95 percent of them take themselves off the medicine." "Assent" sought Bouncing between foster homes, group homes and behavioral-health facilities for foster youth, Luna learned to accept that the drugs were a necessary part of her life. "You take the meds and shut up and deal with it, or you get in trouble," she recalled of her time in a group home. "No one's there to tell you that we all struggle. It makes you hopeless." A foster-care mentor was the first person to suggest her emotions and anger were understandable, and that she wasn't destined to always need medication. Drake, of In My Shoes, encouraged Luna to question her medication protocol. "Christa saved my life," she said. "Christa told me, 'You have a right to know about your medicine.'" Starting this month, CPSA is formalizing an "assent" process for foster children under 18 to sign off on their treatment plan, said Stein of Community Partnership of Southern Arizona. "Assent" is not legally binding, as the child's caregiver has the final say on treatment, but the process will ensure children understand their diagnosis, treatment options and the goals of their medications, she said. "It's absolutely essential to engage kids in their overall health-care treatments," she said. Luna got off her medications at age 21 and earned her GED. She put herself through cosmetology school and as a hairstylist, client after client praised strengths she never realized she possessed: her compassion and listening skills. Now in her work as a mentor to foster youth, Luna says she sees children on four or five different psychotropic medications at a time. Some may have serious mental illnesses and require medication, but she thinks many of them just need understanding. Giving foster kids the emotional tools to cope with their trauma will have a far more positive effect on their lives, she said. "You have to cherish all your broken pieces," she says, "because it makes a beautiful mural." Source: http://azstarnet.com/news/local/arizona-heightens-oversight-of-medications-for-foster-children/article_d4ee1bb3-a7d3-55ac-b7a6-ddc410f3064a.html

State Halts Foster Care Placements With Contractor [Alexa Ura, The Texas Tribune](#) 1 07/07/2014 02:39 PM 07/07/2014 02:41 PM Following the drowning of two foster children on Sunday, the Department of Family and Protective Services has halted placements by a state contractor that was responsible for overseeing the children's care. Following the drowning of two foster children in Lake Georgetown on Sunday, the Department of Family and Protective Services has placed a temporary hold on foster care placements by a state contractor that was responsible for overseeing the children's care. DFPS said on Monday that placements of foster care children with Providence Service Corporation have been temporarily suspended pending an investigation into the death of a 4-year-old boy and his 6-year-old sister, who had been placed in a Cedar Park foster home. Officials with Providence could not immediately be reached for comment. The incident is likely to be met with scrutiny from child advocates who have suggested that the state's "foster care redesign" initiative, which Providence is spearheading through a pilot program, could be problematic. "This is an unspeakable tragedy," DFPS Commissioner John Specia said in a statement. "We will find out exactly what happened and whether or not it could have been prevented. Foster children must be kept safe." The state has tasked Providence, which oversees 29 foster children in eight homes in Central Texas, with leading the redesign of the state's foster care program, which pivots on increasing partnerships with private contractors to streamline the foster care placement process and keep children closer to home when they're placed with a foster care family. The redesign process formally began in 2010, though its first contract with Providence took effect in February 2013, according to DFPS. Through its contract, Providence has received \$8.3 million from the state for foster care services, according to DFPS spokesman Patrick Crimmins. Its contract for 2014 alone is estimated to be worth \$30.4 million, and the corporation has a five-year contract with the state. Opponents of foster care redesign have raised concerns about the oversight of the private contractors, and they have called for the state to examine the program's outcomes before expanding. The redesign has already been gradually rolled out in North Texas and West Texas, and the state is gearing up for a wider implementation. Ashley Harris, a child welfare policy associate with Texans Care for Children, said the state "shouldn't push further privatization" under the redesign initiative until it establishes better safety standards for children. "We're still learning the details of this heartbreaking case, but we know that Texas needs stronger statewide standards for screening and training foster parents," Harris said. In its [review](#) of the department, staffers at the Sunset Advisory Commission, which is charged with identifying inefficiencies at state agencies, also recommended that DFPS further evaluate performance data from its current contractors to better assess the foster care redesign model before implementing it more broadly across the state. DFPS said it agreed with the directive and was currently evaluating its contractors. This article originally appeared in [The Texas Tribune](#) at <http://www.texastribune.org/2014/07/07/cps-halts-foster-care-placements-state-contractor/>. Source: <http://www.myhighplains.com/story/d/story/state-halts-foster-care-placements-with-contractor/26100/KTM9fawjUWF0cU-blyL3g>

Pastor, Church Members Plead Guilty To Beating and Abusing 13-Year-Old Boy Updated: Tuesday, July 8 2014, 08:32 AM CDT A pastor and two members of a Corona church pleaded guilty Monday to state charges of beating and threatening the life of a 13-year-old boy, who was forced to dig his own grave, authorities said. **Lonny Lee Remmers, 56, Nicholas James Craig, 24, and Darryll Duane Jeter Jr., 30, tortured the boy in the church-run group home** where he lived, according to a witness report in affidavits for search warrants. Remmers was then the pastor of Heart of Worship Community Church and ran the group home where Craig, Jeter and the victim lived. It was unclear Monday whether Remmers was still the pastor. The March 2012 incidents included Craig and Jeter driving the victim to the desert and forcing him to dig his own grave. They then made him get in and threw dirt on him. They were responding to Remmers' instruction to "scare" the boy, according to the affidavits. While the boy was showering, one of the men rubbed salt into the cuts on his back, according to Steven Larkey, who lived in the group home and provided the witness report in the affidavit. He told investigators he could hear the boy screaming and saw blood all over the shower the next day. The victim was later tied to a chair with zip ties and placed in the shower. Mace was sprayed on his face, causing it to bleed, and he was not allowed to rinse off for about 30 minutes, according to the victim's account in the affidavit. At a Bible study later that evening at Remmers' home, Remmers asked the boy to sit in the middle of the group and then squeezed his nipple with pliers. The boy, his mother and sister were members of Remmers' church. His mother and sister lived in a women's group home, but the boy said he had been moved to the men's home as a disciplinary action. Remmers entered guilty pleas to inflicting bodily injury on a child and assault with a deadly weapon. He will receive a sentence of up to two years in state prison. At a minimum, he will receive the same sentence as Craig and Jeter, who each were placed on three years of formal probation and must complete a year in custody. They each pleaded guilty to charges of child abuse and making criminal threats, according to the Riverside County district attorney's office. "There were new developments, which we will not be discussing, that caused us to believe this was the best disposition for all those involved," said John Hall, spokesman for the Riverside County district attorney. Remmers' sentencing date is scheduled for Sept. 26. Source: <http://www.fox17.com/news/features/top-stories/stories/pastor-church-members-plead-guilty-beating-abusing-13yearold-boy-22212.shtml>

California pastor, 2 others admit they tortured 13-year-old, forced him to dig own grave Lonny Remmers, the pastor of a small church in Corona, sicced two of his goons on a 13-year-old boy in order to 'scare' him straight. The men beat the boy, forced him to dig his own grave, rubbed salt in his wounds and maced him in the face until he bled, documents show. BY [Philip Caulfield](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Tuesday, July 8, 2014, 10:44 AM A A A 13 Share this URL cbs los angeles Pastor Lonny Lee Remmers, 56, pleaded guilty Monday to torturing a teen who lived at his Corona, Calif., church group home in March 2012. The thuggish pastor of a small Southern California church and two of his parishioners tortured a 13-year-old boy who lived at a church-run group home, savagely beating him, grinding salt into his raw wounds and forcing him to dig his own grave. The pastor, Lonny Remmers, 56, and his two goons even tortured the teen during a group Bible study session, forcing him to sit in front of the others while they twisted his nipples with pliers, court documents show, [according to the Los Angeles Times](#). The assaults were part of a brutal campaign to "scare" the boy straight after he was moved from one home, where his mother and sister lived, to another allegedly for acting out, [the Times reported](#). Remmers, Nicholas Craig, 24, and Darryll Jeter Jr., 30, pleaded guilty Monday to charges including inflicting corporal injury on a child, assault with a deadly weapon and making criminal threats. Remmers, who runs the Hart of Worship Community Church in Corona, was expected to be sentenced to two years in prison. The other two were given a year in home confinement, plus three years of

probation. "It was a harebrained idea that got out of control and should've never gone that far," Jeter's attorney Rodney Nosratabadi [told the Riverside Press-Enterprise](#) after Monday's hearing. The brutal attacks occurred in March 2012, court document showed. cbs los angeles Darryll Jeter Jr., 30, Nicholas Craig, 24, and Remmers appear in a California court. Remmers sent the two younger men to scare the boy after he was allegedly acting up, court documents showed. After getting orders from Remmers to "scare" the boy, Craig and Jeter drove him to a remote area, where they lashed him with a belt and forced him to dig his own grave. The twisted pair then forced the boy to get in the hole as they tossed dirt on him from above, as though they were burying him alive, the documents said. Later, they returned to the home and the boy took a shower, while Craig and Jeter rubbed salt into the cuts on his back, authorities said. They also tied him down and sprayed mace in his face, causing his nose to bleed, the documents said. The boy later told police he thrashed so violently, he left the shower spattered with blood, the Times reported. Other members of the home reported seeing the blood the next day. The torment continued later that night at the Bible study session at Remmers' home, where the men clamped his nipples with pliers in front of about a dozen other men. Authorities said the sicko pastor claimed the boy needed to be disciplined for "not accepting responsibility for his actions." Corona Police Department Remmers is facing two years in prison. The other men were sentenced to a year in home confinement and three years of probation. The boy's mother had brought him to Remmers' church, which has 15 to 20 members. Corona is in Riverside County, about an hour east of Los Angeles. The teen hasn't been identified. By pleading guilty, the men avoided a kidnapping charge, which would have been the most serious against them. Remmers is scheduled to be sentenced Sept. 26. Source: <http://www.nvdailynews.com/news/national/calif-pastor-2-plead-guilty-savage-torture-13-year-old-boy-article-1.1858546>

Proposed East Waco treatment center meets unanimous opposition [Story Comments Image \(12\)](#) Print [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default](#) [font size](#) [Larger font size](#) [Previous](#) [Next](#) Staff photo— Rod Aydelotte open house ra3 Linda Wilkerson-Long told Snugg Harbor officials the neighborhood around the site for a proposed residential treatment facility at 1916 Seley Ave. in East Waco had its share of problems already, and wasn't prepared to handle any more. She was one of about 60 community members who attended a midday meeting to show opposition to the proposed plan. [Buy this photo](#) Staff photo— Rod Aydelotte open house ra10 Concerned residents, including Waco city manager Dale Fisseler, ask questions during the public hearing for a proposed 90-bed residential treatment center at 1916 Seley Ave. Tuesday. [Buy this photo](#) Staff photo— Rod Aydelotte open house ra9 [Buy this photo](#) Staff photo— Rod Aydelotte open house ra11 La Vega superintendent Dr. Sharon M. Shields told Snuff Harbor officials her district was not prepared to handle an additional 90 students with special needs. Students at the proposed residential treatment center would attend La Vega schools. [Buy this photo](#) open house ra15 [Buy this photo](#) Staff photo— Rod Aydelotte open house ra6 Inside the former nursing home in East Waco. [Buy this photo](#) Staff photo— Rod Aydelotte open house ra1 Elwayne Gilbert was one of about 60 community residents who attended Tuesday's public hearing. Like the others who attended, she did not support plans to put a residential treatment center in the former Pecan Ridge Assisted Living Center. [Buy this photo](#) Staff photo— Rod Aydelotte open house ra14 Outside the former Pecan Ridge Assisted Living Center, a home for disabled adults located at 1916 Seley Ave. The facility was purchased for \$275,000 and the new owners have filed for a license to open a 90-bed residential treatment facility for emotionally or mentally disturbed boys. [Buy this photo](#) Staff photo— Rod Aydelotte open house ra4 Concerned residents were not satisfied with the answers they received to questions about how the residential treatment facility on Seley Avenue would be managed. [Buy this photo](#) open house ra13 Staff photo— Rod Aydelotte Inside the former nursing home, which once housed disabled adults. [Buy this photo](#) [View all 12 images in gallery](#). Location 1916 Seley Ave. Waco TX Posted: Wednesday, July 9, 2014 12:01 am [Proposed East Waco treatment center meets unanimous opposition](#) By TOMMY WITHERSPOON twitherspoon@wacotrib.com Waco Tribune-Herald A proposed 90-bed residential treatment center in East Waco could cost La Vega schools an additional \$1 million a year, plus force a building program to accommodate the extra students in the filled-to-capacity district. About 60 people who attended a four-hour public hearing Tuesday were unanimous in their opposition to an application filed by Snugg Harbor to operate a center for boys with severe mental, emotional or behavioral disorders. The public hearing, which took a negative tone toward Snugg Harbor owner Rosalyn Ruffin from the beginning, was required as part of the licensing process by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Ruffin, a psychologist and marriage and family therapist from Katy, took a defensive posture from the opening minutes when members of the audience questioned the 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. hearing time, accusing Ruffin of selecting a day meeting when many are at work to discourage a larger dissenting crowd. The crowd, which consisted of area residents, Waco and La Vega school officials and Waco and Bellmead city and police officials, met in the cafeteria at the center at 1916 Seley Ave., which most recently was Pecan Ridge Assisted Living Center, a home for disabled adults. Ruffin hopes to turn the 27,148-square-foot facility into a residential treatment center for boys ages 8 to 17 that would be placed there through contracts with Child Protective Services. While the center is in East Waco, its potential clients would attend La Vega schools. As the hearing grew more contentious and audience members grew more frustrated with what many called Ruffin's "vague" answers, La Vega Superintendent Sharon Shields and Bellmead City Council member Kevin Wilson both asked Ruffin to have a second public hearing in the evening so those who had to work Tuesday can attend. Ruffin said only that she would "take the matter under advisement," drawing groans from the audience. After Shields asked Ruffin a second time to agree to another hearing, Shields invited Ruffin and Lea Long, a DFPS licensing inspector, to attend the La Vega school board meeting at 7 p.m. Tuesday to provide school officials with more detailed plans for the center and how it will affect the district. Ruffin said she also would take that invitation under advisement. Shields and Waco City Manager Dale Fisseler told Ruffin that they both were a little frustrated in their attempts to contact her to find out more information about her plans. Ruffin denied that she was dodging their calls, saying she had nothing to gain by alienating leaders from the community to which she plans to move. More students Shields said Ruffin's lack of specificity about her plans for her clients make it difficult for administrators to plan for the possible infusion of 90 more prospective students. She said most every school is over or approaching the state-mandated student-per-teacher ratio, and Snugg Harbor students, especially those with special needs, could force building projects, strain budgets and challenge the district to find specialized teachers for the troubled children. She said the school district currently has 11 students with some type of disorder and that adding dozens more would be "daunting." "We have difficulty dealing with students with these types of disorders," Shields said. "If they are our students, we will deal with them, but it will be a tremendous challenge for us and we are not getting the type of communication we need to prepare for these students." Ruffin, who dodged many of the most direct questions, allowed Catherine Wells, Snugg Harbor administrator, to answer most questions dealing with specific treatment and educational programs for the boys. Wells said the center will not accept sex offenders or those prone to violence or running away. Ruffin grew defensive and accused the crowd of cutting her off and not allowing her to answer their questions. At one point, she charged that the audience, filled with at least a dozen educators, does not care about children. "The problem is you are being vague," said Phil Bancale, a 39-year member of the La Vega school board. "You have lost our trust. Don't tell us we don't care about kids. We care about kids. We don't trust you." Randy Devorsky, La Vega school board president, said he lives 500 yards from the facility, which Ruffin bought in 2012 for \$275,000. He complained that the grounds, which are surrounded on three sides by wooded areas, and the interior have not been kept up properly and likely are in violation of several codes. "This just ain't right, people," Devorsky said. "Somebody from the state of Texas should shut this down now. It should have never gotten this far." Waco City Council member Wilbert Austin pledged to see that the city deny Ruffin any special permits she may need from the city to operate the center. "I live 10 blocks from here and I don't want this here," Austin said. "You haven't done your homework. You won't answer our questions. You say you want us to work with you but you don't want to work with us. There is going to be a picket line around this place because you are not being fair to the people." Licensing process Long, who attended the hearing, said the DFPS licensing process could take two to three months longer. She said the overwhelming opposition to the center expressed at the hearing and the impact the center could have on the school system and the community will play significant roles in whether DFPS grants Snugg Harbor a license. Lacy Hollingsworth, a diagnostician at La Vega schools, and other educators challenged Ruffin's knowledge of state and federal guidelines regarding the education of students with special needs. "We are not attacking you, Ms. Ruffin," Hollingsworth said. "We are attacking your lack of a plan. Your plan does not have much depth. Your students are our students, and we will love them and care for them. But even a hypothetical plan is better than no plan at all." Ruffin applied for a state license for a smaller facility in Liberty County in southeast Texas two years ago. She said she withdrew her application after her proposal was met with hostility from the community. She said she is not getting the same kind of response in McLennan County. "The reaction in Liberty County was a slap in the face when it comes to humanity," she said. "I think this population here is more knowledgeable, more educated, more with it. They are able to express themselves better." After the hearing, Ruffin said she remains optimistic despite the opposition. "If the community would give us a chance, I think they will see that there is a need for this type of facility in this area and that we can become an asset to this community." Source: http://www.wacotrib.com/news/business/proposed-treatment-center-meets-unanimous-opposition/article_5e059ebe-a7ad-59cf-9733-fd4a7b6e9880.html

New study examines the foster care system in Arkansas Posted: Jul 08, 2014 4:53 PM PDT Updated: Jul 08, 2014 4:55 PM PDT By Julie Parr - [bio](#) | [email](#)
 TEXARKANA, Ark. - For a young child entering the foster care system can be a traumatic experience. Leaving their home, school, and familiar environment can cause a lot of stress for the child and [new study exposes an alarming trend](#) in the foster care system in Arkansas. Advocates now want to find better alternatives to meeting their needs. Mandy McLelland is not only new mom planning to one day foster children in Arkansas, she's also a county coordinator with "The Call," a statewide group that helps meet the needs of local children in foster care. "Anything that could cut down the time that children are going to spend in foster care, of course, we want to do that," said McLelland. According to the Arkansas Department of Human Services, at any given time there are roughly 4,000 children in the state's foster care system. Of those, between 500-700 have had parental rights terminated and are in need of adoption. But according to a recent study, there's a high rate of children entering foster care who may be better served in their own home. "We were surprised at how short of a time period the children stayed in the foster care system," said Jennifer Ferguson, Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families. In her report, statistics showed that nearly a third of the children who entered the system during a five year period left within 30 days. "More than likely if they're in there that short of a time period, they're not receiving a lot of services because it's hard to get services in place that quickly," said Ferguson. Half of all children entering foster care in Arkansas are under the age of six. State advocates want to come up with alternatives to keep short-term foster kids out of the system. Ferguson says the first step involves getting a waiver from the federal government to shift foster-care spending. "Currently, the way federal money is set up it really only helps pay for services when a child is in foster care," said Ferguson. Area four, which includes nine counties in the Texarkana region, recorded 23 percent of children exiting foster care within a week. It's the second largest percentage in the state. To help reduce the number of children entering foster care, the state is implementing new programs to identify needs of the child and families sooner. "So especially for some place like, area four, that has kids coming in for a very short period of time, that may be able to put more services in the home, so those kids are coming in and there will be funding for those services," said Ferguson. While the most common reason for removing a child from a home in Arkansas is neglect, the study showed the Texarkana region had a higher rate of children removed from the home due to physical or sexual abuse. McLelland says while there are cases where a child needs to be removed from home many children could benefit from staying at home with more services that meet their needs. "Parents could just need a little help, parenting classes, things like that. Get the wake up call they need, so they can have a nurturing home for their little ones," said McLelland. The Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families will soon release two more studies that'll look at reducing time spent in foster care and increasing stability of a child's placement in foster care. Source: <http://www.ktbs.com/story/25970718/new-study-examines-the-foster-care-system-in-arkansas>

Care provider charged with \$164K in Medicare fraud By [Tom Olsen](#) on Jul 8, 2014 at 8:58 p.m. [Email](#) A Duluth adult foster care provider is accused of defrauding Medicaid of more than \$164,000 by billing the state for professional services that were not performed or properly supervised. A Lisa Marie Huffman, 42, was charged recently by summons in State District Court in Duluth with seven counts of felony theft by false representation. The criminal complaint states that an investigation by the Minnesota Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit determined that Huffman billed the state for services through two adult foster care companies she owned: Proactive Caring Accommodating Services (PCA North) and Peace of Mind Health Services. The companies provided in-home personal care services. Under state law, a "qualified professional," such as a registered nurse, licensed social worker, mental health professional or developmental disabilities specialist, must supervise all personal care assistant services in order for the services to be reimbursable by the state. State investigators began looking into the businesses in October 2011 after receiving a signed statement from a client stating that she had not received any supervisor visits from the company. A former personal care assistant also reported that she never had qualified professional supervision during three years with the agency. During the course of the investigation, several other clients and their families reported that they never received the necessary qualified professional visits, and complained about the level of care they received from the personal care assistants. Huffman spoke with investigators, telling them that she billed the state based on what her personal care assistants and qualified professionals documented on their timesheets, according to the criminal complaint. Investigators reviewed 3½ years' worth of timesheets and receipts, finding that documentation of the visits were lacking. Huffman claimed to investigators that most of her clients were not subject to qualified professional visits, according to the complaint. She stated that all required visits were made by two other employees. Investigators calculated what they determined to be overpayments for undocumented qualified professional visits from January 2012 to December 2012. The total amount is estimated at \$164,234.46. A phone number listed for Huffman's home address was not in service Tuesday, and she could not be reached for comment. Court records indicate that she has not yet retained an attorney. Huffman is scheduled for an initial court appearance on Aug. 7. Source: <http://www.duluthnewstribune.com/content/care-provider-charged-164k-medicare-fraud>

Federal Monitor Raps State On Underfunding Community Services For DCF Kids Malloy's Budget Chief Defends Program [Comments](#) 0 Email Share 33
 By JOSH KOVNER, jkovner@courant.com The Hartford Courant 4:05 p.m. EDT, July 9, 2014 The latest federal oversight report on the Department of Children and Families criticizes the state for underfunding community programs at a time when large numbers of needy children are being diverted from institutions. As a result, "thousands of children and families" are lacking some essential services, including medical, behavioral, drug-abuse, educational and foster-care programs, according to the federal-court monitor's report for the first quarter of the year. DCF Commissioner Joette Katz has said she wants to rapidly reduce institutionalization from 21 percent of the children in the department's care, to 10 percent. [Topics Medical Research Courts and the Judiciary Finance See more topics »](#) [X Justice System Conservation Budgets and Budgeting New York City](#) The monitor, Raymond Mancuso, said he supports DCF's shift away from institutional care, but says the department may have to scale-back the initiative until the state increases funding for a range of smaller, neighborhood-based programs, foster care, and services in the family home. [Purchase your Officially Licensed UConn National Championship Gear HERE!](#) The court oversight stems from a class-action lawsuit on behalf of children who suffered neglect while in DCF care in the late 1980s. Mancuso notes that DCF's budget has been reduced by more than \$75 million over the last three years, and said those cuts should have been reinvested. "A sizable portion of this funding is desperately needed to provide services" for the children diverted from group care, the report states. Benjamin Barnes, budget chief for Gov. Dannel P. Malloy, took issue with Mancuso's analysis. Barnes said that since 2009, "spending per case on community-based services ... has risen from \$19,627 to \$23,422, an increase of over 19 percent." Barnes said there have also been "significant increases in Medicaid funding for behavioral health services, which are not included in DCF's budget but are a key part of the community supports offered to the clients of that agency." "It is clear from our view of the budgets over the last few years that a sizeable portion of the savings from reduced institutional care has and continues to be used to augment community supports," Barnes said. Ira Lustbader, one of the lawyers representing the children in the class-action case, said the monitor's report "starkly shows that key resource problems threaten to overwhelm (DCF) and erode the progress that's been made with (Katz) at the helm." Lustbader, associate director of Children's Rights in [New York City](#), said the federal court order requires that the state "provide the funding and resources necessary to fully implement the reform plan." In his report to the federal court, Mancuso said the availability of services in the community "has not kept pace" with the number of children being diverted or released from the residential campuses. "Consideration of tempering further reductions in (institutional) care should be considered until sufficient levels of community-based services are available," he said. Internally, Mancuso said Katz has made significant reforms, but the department's social workers are struggling with caseloads that are too high – even as the number of new abuse reports coming into the agency's hotline "have spiked considerably" since October 2013. The Courant reported on June 29 that child maltreatment deaths have surged in the last 18 months. At least 22 children died of abuse or neglect from Jan. 1, 2013, through June, and DCF had open cases with 16 of those families. Mancuso said that Katz's emphasis on keeping kids out of institutions and in foster care or at home with their biological parents should be praised. But this approach takes a lot of effort and oversight by DCF social workers and supervisors, who are strapped. As a result, the quality of abuse and neglect investigations, the management of cases involving needy families, and the coordination of care among multiple agencies has "regressed," Mancuso said. He noted that DCF has been authorized to hire 81 new employees, but he said more are needed given the complex caseloads. "At the time of the drafting of this report, over 200 social workers have caseloads that are 100 to 150 percent over existing standards, and 77 of those workers have exceeded 100 percent for over 30 days," Mancuso reported. Mancuso sampled 54 case files for the first-quarter 2014 report and found that only 51.9 percent of them had adequate case plans for the children and families receiving services. He said the standard is 90 percent. Mancuso said that in those 54 cases, DCF met "all of the needs" of the children and families involved 57.4 percent of the time -- but the standard is 80 percent. "Insufficient staffing resources and a failure to sufficiently reinvest money saved by the reduction in (institutional care) are a major impediment to improving the department's efforts on these critical measures," Mancuso said. He said that while more relatives are becoming foster parents to needy children, there still exists a severe shortage of foster families overall in Connecticut. Source: http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-dcf-community-funding-0710-20140709.0.6310873_story

Work to keep children safely at home Robert Luce 12:08 a.m. EDT July 9, 2014 Tom and Betty Halpin of Essex Junction speak as a committee of state legislators takes testimony on the Department of Children and Families in Winooski on June 5 in the wake of the death of two children under DCF supervision. The Halpins made the point that child welfare, rather than reunification with a biological parent, should be the DCF's primary concern. (Photo: GLENN RUSSELL/FREE PRESS) CONNECT [TWEETLINKEDINCOMMENTEMAILMORE](#) The recent deaths of two child abuse victims sadden and anger all of us. Importantly, it must move us to take action to protect other children from a similar tragic fate. Unfortunately, there is a risk that misdirected action could cause more harm than help for Vermont children. Vermont families, especially families in poverty, face enormous challenges. Untreated substance abuse, homelessness, lack of affordable housing and day care, lack of job training and economic opportunity, and mental health challenges leave many children "on the margin of care." The vast majority of these children are not at risk of physical abuse, but live in challenged families where the risk is child neglect. Recent research from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology provides powerful evidence that children on the margin of care have better long-term outcomes if they are left in their families rather than removed. Identifying and removing children who are being physically abused is critical. While removing children whose care is considered "neglectful" may be well-intended, the evidence shows that it is often more harmful than helpful to the long term interest of the children (and wastes precious public resources). Vermont already removes children from their families at a much higher rate than any of our neighboring states. Four out of five of these children are removed for "neglect" not "physical abuse." We must remember what we removing them to. The New York Times recently provided a sobering description of our nation's foster care system in its review of Cris Beam's new book "To the End of June." As Beam shows, the current foster care system by and large does not help the children who experience it. The MIT research and the current state of our foster care system support that children at risk of neglect are not best served by removal. How can our system account for this reality while protecting those children who are a risk of physical abuse? An effective solution must involve better identification of children at risk of abuse as distinguished from neglect. For children at risk of neglect we must increase our efforts to strengthen their families, not take them apart. A recent national review of children in foster care recommended that Vermont find new front-end strategies for strengthening families to keep children safely at home. There is no silver bullet, but one evidence-based solution is to increase the engagement with families in a sincere effort to keep them intact. Families who trust that there are people who are trying to help them stay together rather than break them up are more likely to be candid about their circumstances — which may also help identify those children who may be at risk of abuse. Creating this kind of trust is best addressed not by DCF workers in isolation and with powers to remove the children, but by family advocacy and integration of other community based public and private services that meet the needs of the families. Vermont will only become a better place for children if we help families be successful so children can safely live at home. There is a growing cadre of community based approaches that are showing positive outcomes. Experience has shown that removing legal barriers, trusting engagement with parents and old fashion social work are a successful formula to reduce the risk of neglect. To keep our children physically and emotionally safe we must first make a clear distinction between child abuse and child neglect. Let the recent deaths be a call to action; however let us act effectively, not counter-productively. Robert Luce, of Colchester, is a trial lawyer at Downs Rachlin Martin and an advisor to Vermont Parent Representation Center Inc. Source: <http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/opinion/comment-debate/2014/07/09/work-keep-children-safely-home/12384641/>

Democratic Party's Divide On Education Policy Gets Worse Political pundits who try to [tamp down talk of divisions](#) within the Democratic Party must not be paying any attention to education policy. For [quite some time](#), close observers of the nation's education policy have been calling attention to the fault lines between education progressives in the Democratic Party and Third Way-style centrists, such as Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Democrats for Education Reform, who lean toward a market-based, econometric philosophy for public education governance. As Furman University education professor Paul Thomas recently wrote for [Alternet](#), "While the Obama administration has cultivated the appearance of hope and change, its education policies are essentially slightly revised or greatly intensified versions of [accountability reform begun under Ronald Reagan](#)." But the Democratic Party's divergence from real progressive values for governing our schools mostly went unnoticed in major media outlets until recently when a few light bulbs went off among political observers. Writing for [Slate](#), Matt Yglesias noticed, "Education reform, not 'populism' divides Democrats." Then, Connor Williams of the New America Foundation saw the light and explained for [The New Republic](#), "In 2016, Democrats have good reason to run against Obama's education record." Now, Jonathan Chait has penned a piece for [New York Magazine](#), "Teachers Unions Turn Against Democrats," in which he postulates that a "backlash" to President Obama's education policies, energized by education historian Diane Ravitch, could lead to an alliance between teachers unions and, gulp, Republicans. For sure, the divide on education policy within the Democratic Party has grown into a Rubicon, and now Democratic candidates and their operatives and supporters need to decide which side makes the most sense to ally with. The President's Great Day Goes Sour The divisions over education policy were all too apparent recently when President Obama joined Secretary Duncan to introduce an ambitious new plan to place more highly qualified teachers in front of students who need those teachers the most. As education reporter Lyndsey Layton of [The Washington Post](#) wrote, "The Education Department is directing every state and the District to devise a plan by April 2015 to get more good teachers into their high-poverty schools." "This is a really important exercise for the nation to undertake," Secretary Duncan said. The White House had already lined up Beltway groups such as [The Education Trust](#) to ballyhoo the effort. There would be a press gathering, of course. And to highlight the initiative, Duncan and the president had scheduled lunch with a group of teachers. A grand day for sure. But at the photo-op luncheon, it seemed the teachers hadn't gotten the memo. Instead of gabbing about the new teacher equity plan, they apparently talked mostly about "frustration at the lack of resources at their schools and the regularly changing demands of their jobs," according to Layton. [McClatchy](#) reported the conversation similarly, referring to a North Carolina teacher in attendance who, "Told Duncan that teachers are frustrated because they're being asked 'to do something great with minimal resources.'" And when reporters gathered, the question that was top of mind was not about the President's new initiative at all. Instead, journalists wanted to know how the administration felt about the nation's largest teachers' union calling for Secretary Duncan's resignation. Delegates of the National Education Association, meeting in Denver at their annual convention, had just [passed a resolution](#) citing the teachers' objections to the "department's failed education agenda" and calling for Duncan to resign. Duncan had initially "brushed off," according to a report from [Politico](#), the NEA resolution. But the issue is undoubtedly nagging him. As education journalist [Valerie Strauss](#) of The Washington Post wrote, "Duncan can try to downplay the vote ... But the NEA vote is a new sign of growing disenchantment with Duncan's policies from the unions and well beyond them, as parents, principals, superintendents and others protest the Duncan agenda." How did the frustrations felt by everyday teachers and the growing resentment their organizations have with Secretary Duncan rule the day? Frustration Rules The Day The President's desire to see the nation's more experienced and educated teachers distributed in schools is a important for sure. Schools that serve poor, minority kids tend not to get the ones with the deepest resumes. As a recent article from [The Huffington Post](#) explained The more affluent the district, the more likely teachers are to have received a master's degree or higher. Affluent districts tend to employ teachers with more experience. The more white the school, the more likely teachers are to be certified in the subjects they teach. That news outlet's education reporter [Joy Resmovits](#) wrote in her report on the Obama initiative, "Students in high-poverty schools, a [national survey](#) has shown, are twice as likely to have their most important classes taught by teachers without proper certification. And federal data [shows that](#) minority students' teachers on average have less experience than the teachers of their wealthier peers." What's interesting though is that, as The Post's Layton pointed out, the President's initiative "doesn't address the thorny problem of how to identify an effective teacher." That challenge has been relegated to new teacher evaluation systems that Secretary Duncan has advocated for but [teachers abhor](#). Those evaluations rely, to varying extents, on how students score on standardized tests. As education historian [Diane Ravitch](#) asked when looking over the President's new teacher equity plan, "Will the Obama administration ever figure out that test scores reflect socioeconomic conditions more than teachers? They might look at research or even the recent [report](#) of the American Statistical Association, which attributed 1-14% of score variation to teachers." Further, although the new teacher equity plan enforces requirements for states to put experienced and highly qualified teachers in schools serving high numbers of poor and minority students, the Obama administration has steered [millions of federal dollars](#) to Teach For America. TFA is an organization that places new teacher recruits from elite colleges and universities into some of the poorest schools in America — after only five weeks of training. And Secretary Duncan and his supporters claim they want to see more experienced, better educated teachers serving in schools serving poor, black and brown kids. Yet [they hail actions](#), like the recent legal ruling in the [Vergara v California](#) case, that undermine the job security of more experienced teachers. If the President and his supporters really wanted to do more to help ensure more of the nation's best teachers ended up in front of students who need them the most, they would have embraced guidelines put forth by the Opportunity to Learn campaign last year. OTL's plan, [Excellent Teachers For Each And Every Child: A Guide for State Policy](#), addressed the many factors that influence teaching quality and equitable distribution, such as learning conditions, school environment, and instructional resources. [Disclosure: OTL is a partner of the Education Opportunity Network and the Campaign for America's Future.] Yet instead, Duncan

has continued to blaze an education policy path that talks out of both sides of its mouth – pronouncing great beliefs in the value of experienced teachers but doing everything possible to undermine them with unfair evaluations, competition from less-credentialed recruits, and attacks on their job protections. The frustrations teachers feel from these policies – while they grapple with the budget cuts imposed by conservative state governments – have been building for some time. And now they're boiling over. Should Democrats care? Democrats Will Have To Choose The [list of education related legislation](#) pending in Congress is not extensive and may not make any headway in a blocked up, unproductive House and Senate. So now the White House is relying on executive actions, such as its teacher equity initiative, to circumvent congressional gridlock. But it's hard to believe that executive actions will have much effect on the ground when the people on the ground, in this case classroom teachers, are not at all supportive. The fact of the matter is that this presidential administration and some of its most ardent backers have never really gotten education at all. [Amy Dean](#) asked in a recent piece for Truth Out, "Why does the Obama administration keep getting it wrong on education policy?" In her interview with Leo Casey of the American Federation of Teachers, she asked, "The priorities of the Obama administration's Department of Education seem little changed from the failures of the Bush administration ... What sort of policies should we be pushing for?" In response, Casey outlined a more positive, more progressive way forward, "We need to look at a different way to do accountability that would not be focused on standardized tests, but that would really look at good measures of learning. It would focus not on punishing and negative sanctions, but on improving what's going on in schools and classrooms. All of that is eminently doable on a national level and with a Democratic administration that is not so enthralled to the market model of reform." As my colleague [Robert Borosage](#) has argued, the divisions on economic policy among Democrats are "fundamental ... grounded on very different perspectives that lead in significantly different directions." In the education arena, those fundamental differences have been stewing in the pot for a long time. What teachers and their unions have done now is to finally serve them up to the table. Now, it's mostly a matter of seeing who will be the first Democrats to understand those differences and use them as wedge issues to influence the increasingly angry electorate. And when the November election looms on the horizon, and you're a candidate looking for volunteers to knock on doors and make phone calls, organizations like The Education Trust are nowhere to be found. Your local teachers on the other hand? Source: <http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/democratic-partys-divide-on-education-policy-gets-worse/>

Waking Up To Our Broken Education Policies Who could ever forget comedian [Jon Stewart's commentary](#) in early 2009 on how financial reporters totally botched reporting of the Great Recession. Stewart mocked journalists at CNBC for missing all the warning signs of the over-valued housing market and their failure to question wild speculation on sub-prime mortgage debt. In one famous clip, Stewart said financial reporters' astonished reaction to the economic calamity was like a journalist from The Weather Channel reporting at the scene of a tropical storm and wondering why he was getting rained on. Stewart's commentary about financial reporting back then would ring true today in describing how journalists are responding to recent fights over American education policy. Indeed, those in prominent news outlets tempted to jump into the fray of the nation's education debate should be aware they are late to the scene and way behind the narrative proceeding recent events. Trying To Catching Up Opinionators have been sleeping through a veritable rock concert of dissent over current education policies and are now suddenly awakening to declare the band just started and, "Boy, is it loud." "Teachers Turn On Obama," the headline blared from Beltway news source [The Hill](#). "Teachers unions have turned on Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and the Obama administration," the story went, "creating a major divide in the Democratic Party coalition." The reporter, Peter Sullivan, seemed to believe that the Obama administration and public school advocates had been copacetic until the nation's largest teachers' union, the National Education Association, recently voted in favor of demanding that Secretary Duncan resign. As proof, he quoted laudatory comments from former District of Columbia education Chancellor Michelle Rhee praising "the work Duncan and Obama have done," and hailing a report from the National Council on Teacher Quality that found that because of federal pressures, 20 states now "require student growth to be the main factor in teacher evaluations, up from just four states in 2009." All these changes "progressed with little fanfare," Sullivan declared. But suddenly now, teachers unions and Democrats are "fiercest sparring partners." Another headline, "Teachers Unions Turn Against Democrats," came from New York Magazine. [Jonathan Chait](#) warned that teachers "are growing increasingly obstinate in their opposition of the sorts of accountability and pressure that Obama has helped bring upon them." The inspiration for their growing disenchantment: education historian Diane Ravitch. Ravitch, Chait insisted, "Has depicted education reform as a plot by corporate elites to privatize schools and destroy unions." Her "militance" is turning leaders of the nation's largest teachers' unions – the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers – into vehement opponents of what Chait appeared to endorse: opening more charter schools, extending school days, curtailing teachers' job protections, and evaluating teachers by students' test scores. Of course Chait didn't bother to explain why these policies are supposedly so good for education – just that anyone disagreeing with them is a "militant." An article in [The New York Times](#) on the recent NEA vote for Duncan's resignation quoted a representative of Democrats for Education Reform who contended "the Duncan vote" made the teachers look "like the lunatic fringe." One wonders where these people have been. Dissatisfaction with Duncan and the President's education policies isn't anything "new" at all. The conflict didn't start with Diane Ravitch, although she is certainly a prominent voice. And recent actions by teachers' unions are not as much a sudden lurch toward a more radical position as they are a reflection of frustration and resentment that's been building in communities, in the teaching ranks, and beyond, around the country. Welcome To The Education Spring For years, collectivist actions in protest of public school policy have been scaling up from isolated protests to a [nationwide movement of unified resistance](#). The movement is widespread among teachers, students, and parents. From the beginning, the movement was grassroots driven and demanding of changes in the way our schools are being run. From boycotts against standardized testing among [teachers in Seattle](#), to ongoing protests among [principals in New York state](#) against new teacher evaluations, to objections to over-testing of students [in Texas](#), the movement is diverse and outspoken. From all corners of the country, [students as young as eight years old](#) are organizing and taking part in a variety of actions including [zombie marches](#), [prominent, headline-earning protests](#) to school closures, and [social media actions](#) to whip up student resentment to the budget cuts and unfair policies slamming teachers and harming education programs. Students in [Denver](#), [Philadelphia](#), Providence, [Rhode Island](#), [Portland, Oregon](#), and elsewhere have formed student unions that have developed attention-getting tactics, which have spread to a [national scale](#). Disenchantment with education policies has pushed protestors into the streets of [Newark](#), [Philadelphia](#), and [Bridgeport, Connecticut](#). And discontent isn't limited to communities of the urban poor and people of color, as evidenced by [news reports](#) from towns and cities in Western New York – populated with mostly white, middle-class parents. In Pennsylvania, teachers, parents, and public school activists have staged multiple actions ([here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)) to protest severe budget cuts that have eliminated programs and laid off teachers. At the state capital of North Carolina, boisterous "[Moral Monday](#)" demonstrations against the state's conservative government have made public education funding part of a rallying cry for a more progressive agenda in that state. Over-reliance on standardized tests, a fetish of the Obama administration, continues to roil opposition across the nation. In [Connecticut](#), resistance to the state tests is growing so rapidly that "the state Department of Education released guidelines telling school districts just how to deal with parents who want to opt out." In [Pittsburgh](#), hundreds of Pennsylvania parents who had opted their children out of state tests caught the attention of a local news outlet that interviewed one of the mothers leading the fight. In [Colorado](#), "a growing cacophony of assessment protests" has prompted public school officials to release new guidelines for opting out of tests because of so many "[teachers, parents, school leaders and school boards](#) have increasingly raised questions over the merit and amount of testing." On the west coast, anticipating the rising test rebellion in Washington, the [state's largest teachers' union](#) just "passed a motion to support parents and students who opt out of statewide standardized tests." And somehow journalists have missed all this? Why Now? The more interesting question for sure is not whether there is widespread discontent with the Obama administration's education policies but why is it reaching a crescendo now. Commenting on the recent [moves by both unions](#), NEA and the American Federation of Teachers, to openly censure Arne Duncan, AFT President Randi Weingarten told reporters and bloggers at the recent AFT annual convention that the Secretary's positive response to a recent court case overturning teachers' long-standing job protections in California had been "the straw that broke the camel's back." The language of that judicial ruling, *Vergara v California*, was "so shocking ... and extreme," Weingarten stated, that when Duncan reacted positively to the decision, "it caused people to question what the issues are." Among those "issues," are recent "50 year anniversary recognitions of past court decisions that were about righting the wrongs of inequity," Weingarten elaborated, referring to the recent commemoration of the *Brown v Board* decision and other actions that enforced civil rights and racial integration of public schools. "But now federal policies have gone so far afield of that," Weingarten stated. Instead, current policies emphasize "accountability" of teachers and schools to such an extent they ignore the issues of "adequate and equitable supports for our schools." That's the story journalists who haven't been following education don't get. Behind nearly every protest to the status quo education policies are common grievances about resource deprivation, inequity, and widespread feeling that ordinary Americans no longer control their children's and community's education destinies. Despite how the particulars of the debate pivot to issues about content standards, to assessment results, to school choice, to teacher tenure, grievances with inadequate and inequitable funding and lack of democratic control

are what's driving the debate – not teachers' unions, Diane Ravitch, or the inner dynamics of the Democratic Party. Reporters and pundits who would prefer not to see their write-ups about the education debate parodied in public had better get that. Source: <http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/waking-up-to-our-broken-education-policies/>

Education 'Reform' Loses The Netroots Every year [Netroots Nation](#) is arguably the most important annual event in the progressive community and a telling barometer of what is on the minds of, as Howard Dean put it, "the Democratic wing of the Democratic Party." Last week's meeting was no exception. Mainstream coverage of that event has been focused exclusively on [the reception Senator Elizabeth Warren got](#), and it was ecstatic for sure. The "clarity" of her message, as [Esquire's Charles Pierce](#) put it, that the economic trajectory of most Americans "is rigged" – and not in our favor – rang true with the attendees and they shouted their approvals. When she urged the crowd, "We can whimper. We can whine. Or we can fight back," it was clear those in attendance preferred door number three. But despite the enthusiasm for Warren's message, the inevitability of a Hillary Clinton presidential nomination permeated the air. As my friend and colleague [Richard Eskow](#) wrote, "A more appropriate slogan for the event, at least for some attendees, might have been 'I'm resigned to Hillary.'" While acknowledging that Warren's presence "had an extraordinary impact on the convention," Eskow pointed to "other opportunities" where progressives are finding political space and exploiting it for real, positive change. "These seem like promising alternative channels for progressive energy," he stated. For those whose white-hot enthusiasm for presidential politics may be dampened by the inevitability of a Hillary candidacy, there may be no more promising alternative channel than the raging fight for public education. The education related conversations at the meeting were numerous and animated – from demands for early childhood education, to anger at President Obama's K-12 policies, to outcries against the exorbitant costs of higher education and ballooning college debt levels. This hasn't always been the case at Netroots Nation. We've Come A Long Way The first Netroots Nation I attended, Pittsburgh in 2009, was mostly a celebration of the Obama victory the previous year. But as events rolled out the rest of that year and into 2010, it became painfully obvious that the new White House would maintain – actually even increase – a disastrous policy agenda carried over from the George W. Bush administration for the nation's public schools. Public schools activists looked to Netroots Nation as a venue where progressives could push back. We had our work cut out for us. As I wrote on the blogsite [OpenLeft](#) back in 2010, the Netroots Nation event seemed "generally in denial about issues of race and class that are at the heart of" problems in public schools. Instead, all the conversation was about "reform." And teachers' unions fought for attention on the agenda by addressing the worsening conditions for the nation's public school teachers as a "labor issue." "Lots of lip service was paid to 'saving teachers' jobs,'" I recalled. But "not much of anything on the agenda addressed the destructive education policies of the Obama administration." News that [Michelle Rhee](#), the public school chancellor in Washington, DC that year, had fired another 241 teachers was completely overlooked in any of the panels and speeches. Instead, as I reported, "As the news broke, an attendee I was having coffee with was absolutely gleeful. 'There are too many bad teachers,' she explained to me while coolly scrolling through the headlines on her BlackBerry, 'And they're never made accountable for anything.'" Those around nodded in agreement. Certainly no one of any prominence at the meeting pointed out the [blatant unfairness](#) of the Obama administration's push to evaluate teachers on the basis of students' scores on standardized tests. And during the conference's education caucus, when National Education Association vice president Lilly Eskelsen warned of the rapidly expanding charter school industry that was spreading corporate influence and privatization of public schools, attendees defended "wonderful charter schools." A Turning Point At Netroots The following year, at Netroots Nation 2011 in Las Vegas, [I led a panel](#) that included Eskelsen, [U.S. Representative Judy Chu](#) (D-Calif.), Sabrina Stevens (who now leads [Integrity in Education](#)), and Kevin Welner, an education professor from the [University of Colorado, Boulder](#) and co-director of the [National Education Policy Center](#). The title of that panel was "Engaging Progressives in the Fight for Public Education," and we warned attendees of the dangers of current education policies and urged attendees to get involved in the growing movement to take back our public schools. Both Eskelsen and Chu cited [a Stanford study of charter schools nationwide](#) that found most charter schools fail to outperform comparable neighborhood schools. And they decried the application of business models to education because business is designed to create winners and losers and stratify opportunities. Stevens spoke eloquently and passionately of her experience teaching in a Denver public school where a reform agenda imposed by the state had stifled teachers' practice, turned teaching into rote test-prep, and sapped the joy of learning from the students. At one point during the session, Welner asked if there was anyone in the audience from the Center for American Progress. Two attendees raised their hands, which prompted Welner to chide, "Your organization is as bad as the American Enterprise Institute on education," noting the groups that generally represent the range of the political spectrum – from left-leaning CAP to ardent right wing AEI – [actively colluded](#) in the campaign for corporate education reform. Both CAP staffers promptly walked out. Based on what transpired in 2014, it's now clear they – and the agenda masquerading as "education reform" – never really came back. A High Mark For Dissent In the ensuing two years, those fighting against corporate take-over of public education kept their cause on the Netroots Nation agenda, building to a crescendo in 2014. This year, the opening keynote included a speech from now president of the NEA (and remarried) Lily Eskelsen Garcia who warned of the growing dangers of privatizing the nation's public schools and the harmful education malpractice that arises from current obsessions with standardized tests. Then Rev. William Barber III, leader of the Forward Together movement in North Carolina, [electrified the crowd with an address](#) that included support for public education in a moral vision for America. Six panels on education topics – ranging from curriculum standards, to student suspensions, to student loan debt, to reclaiming the promise of public schools – presented a unified front against current "reform" policies and for a vision of equity and excellence in public education. Indeed, the dialogue at the meeting made clear the term "education reform" has become a pejorative in the progressive community. Getting Education Policy Above The "Snake Line" As Eskow wrote, "the emotional high point" of this year's conference was unquestionably Barber's speech exhorting the crowd to "get our policies above the snake line." The "snake line," Barber explained, marked a line in mountainous territory above which dangerous reptiles cannot live and where the "cold-blooded" can't survive. Indeed, America's cold-blooded education policies can no longer survive above the bright line of progressive values. Netroots Nation showed we're taking education policy to higher ground. As Barber urged us to do, we've turned to each other and declared, "We're on our way." Source: <http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/education-reform-loses-the-netroots/>

South Euclid group home resident charged with sexually assaulting fellow resident A resident of Grand Manner group home on Cedar Road in South Euclid is accused of sexually assaulting a fellow resident. (Adam Ferrise, NEOMG) [Print](#) By [Adam Ferrise, Northeast Ohio Media Group](#) The Plain Dealer Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#) on July 09, 2014 at 4:28 PM, updated July 09, 2014 at 6:33 PM SOUTH EUCLID, Ohio — A resident of a group home for people with developmental disabilities is accused of sexually assaulting a fellow resident. Anthony D. Anderson, 25, is jailed on \$50,000 bond after being charged with first-degree felony rape in South Euclid Municipal Court. He entered no plea Monday at his initial court appearance. Anderson is scheduled for a preliminary hearing July 17. Anderson's attorney, Tyresha Brown-O'Neal, did not immediately return a message seeking comment. The Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities is also conducting an independent investigation of the incident, a spokeswoman said. A police report describes Anderson as a higher-functioning resident of Grand Manner, a group home located in a nondescript duplex on Cedar Road near South Belvoir Boulevard. A 25-year-old male resident told investigators that he was using the bathroom on July 1 when Anderson entered the room. Anderson turned off the light and sexually assaulted the man, according to police reports. The man told Anderson to stop several times, but Anderson persisted in the assault, police reports say. Anderson then stopped and went to his bedroom. The man told police he went to his bedroom and tried to sleep. The next day he notified a group home employee who took him to Hillcrest Hospital where a rape kit was taken, according to reports. The man told investigators that he never consented to sexual contact. The employee told police they already made plans to relocate the man to a different group home. The man is unable to read or write, according to police. The sexual assault nurse examiner told police the rape kit revealed no evidence, but that was not uncommon or inconsistent with the man's account of the attack, police said. Grand Manner operates at least one Cuyahoga County-contracted group homes. Lula Holt Robertson, the spokesperson for the county's Board of Developmental Disabilities, said the South Euclid home is not a county-affiliated group home. Holt Robertson said the county does investigate all complaints of incidents involving group homes housing the developmentally disabled, including the reported South Euclid sexual assault. Two county investigators are assisting police in their investigation, Holt Robertson said. If investigators substantiate the claims they will mandate a "plan of correction" for the Grand Manner aimed to prevent a similar incident. Holt Robertson said cases like this are rare. "People with developmental disabilities are just like everyone else," Holt Robertson said. "They can have the same problems as everyone else and have the same difficulties as everyone else. I wouldn't want anyone to think that a person with developmental disabilities is more prone to be in a difficult situation, though." Gary Toth, executive of Grand Manner and building owner, did not immediately respond to a message. Source: http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2014/07/south_euclid_group_home_reside.html

EDITORIAL: East Waco community rates answers, not attitude, on treatment center idea [Story Comments](#) [Print](#) [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) Posted: Thursday, July 10, 2014 12:01 am | Updated: 1:08 am, Thu Jul 10, 2014. **EDITORIAL: East Waco community rates answers, not attitude, on treatment center idea** Anybody trying to open a residential treatment center for boys with severe mental, emotional and behavioral problems probably has a heart of gold, but psychologist and family therapist Rosalyn Ruffin, who's trying to do just that in East Waco, sure didn't show much of it during Tuesday's four-hour public hearing. In the face of unanimous concern about the idea from residents and community leaders, she displayed what we'd call "the best defense is a good offense" approach. And, boy, did many of the 60 folks attending the hearing get offended. We'd hoped for more transparency about the project when Trib staffer Tommy Witherspoon interviewed Ruffin a week ago by phone, inquiring about her Houston-area company, Snugg Harbor, and its proposal to turn a vacant, 27,148-square-foot nursing home at 1916 Seley Ave. into a 90-bed residential treatment center for disturbed boys. Her assurance of answers at a public hearing instead yielded something else confrontational in tone. Residents witnessed evasive answers, an obvious lack of preparation, even haughtiness. The mood turned hostile and stayed so for all four hours. Even city and school officials voiced frustration, including La Vega ISD Superintendent Sharon Shields, who only learned of the company's application for a state license days earlier. The facility reportedly could cost La Vega ISD an additional \$1 million a year and force a building program to house extra students in the already filled-to-capacity district. Far be it from us to advise a psychologist, but a project of this scope would seem to warrant a more conciliatory and forthcoming approach. Let's hope Ruffin tries a new tack, assuming she even meets with La Vega ISD leaders Tuesday. Source: http://www.wacotrib.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-east-waco-community-rates-answers-not-attitude-on-treatment/article_c1a5e179-7c5d-5b27-9c63-093866c7aa4a.html

Foster mom bonds out of jail after child left in car at Publix | www.wftv.com Foster mom bonds out of jail after child left in car at Publix 9 748 20 973 Related [Raw: Foster mom says leaving child was a 'mistake' View Larger](#) Monique Williams Sponsored Links [FL Resident Special \\$9.99 @ Gatorland!](#) [Price/Payment in 10 mins @ David Maus Toyota!](#) [Bathroom Emergencies Stink! Call Brownies.com!](#) APOPKA, Fla. — A foster care parent bonded out of the [Orange County](#) Jail Friday morning after police said she left a young child in a car at a Publix grocery store on Thursday. Apopka police said Monique Williams, 53, left the 15-month-old boy unattended in her vehicle for approximately 20 minutes in the parking lot of the Publix on Rock Springs Road. "A passerby noticed the child in the car," said Capt. Randy Fernandez with Apopka police. Investigators said the car was not running and the windows were up. Williams was taken to the [Orange County](#) Jail after being questioned at Apopka police headquarters. "Why did you leave a child in the car?" Channel 9 reporter Julie Salomone asked. "It was a mistake," Williams said as she was being taken to a waiting patrol car. "He was very sick and just a mistake was made that's all." The foster mother told police the child had an eye infection. Investigators believe it was about 90 degrees inside the car. "The kid was wet from sweat and the medics were called to check on the child," said Fernandez. Williams was charged with child neglect and fulfilled a \$1,000 bond Friday morning. Officials said the boy has been returned to the care of the Florida Department of Children and Families. Source: <http://www.wftv.com/news/news/local/foster-care-mom-arrested-charged-leaving-child-car/ngc5d/>

Source: www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/politics/bs-md-fosterdeath-reaction-20140711.0.7481508_story baltimoresun.com **State lawmakers call for committee probe of group home death 'My first reaction is heartbreak,' state senator says** By [Jeff Barker](#) and Erin Cox, The Baltimore Sun 9:03 PM EDT, July 11, 2014 Advertisement Two Maryland lawmakers said Friday they will ask a state Senate committee to explore the death of a 10-year-old disabled foster child who was in the care of a group home. Another state senator who advocates for people with disabilities said the boy's death at the Laurel-area group home pointed to a shortage of funding and resources to serve vulnerable people in Maryland. The Baltimore Sun reported Thursday that the boy died as the state was in the process of shutting down the home amid concern about staffing problems at the center. "My first reaction is heartbreak," said state Sen. Ed Reilly, an Anne Arundel County Republican who sits on the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee, which oversees foster care. "We entrust the most vulnerable children to these facilities, and we have high expectations that they will do no harm." Reilly said he would review the facts of the case but plans to ask his committee to do a full investigation into what went wrong. Another committee member, Democratic Sen. Karen Montgomery of Montgomery County, said, "I would call for hearings, but it would be conditional on a follow-up that whatever is discovered is acted upon." Sen. Joan Carter Conway, a Baltimore Democrat who chairs the committee, said the issues surrounding the death appear to be significant enough for her panel to conduct a review. The boy, Damaud Martin, died July 2 at the home operated by LifeLine Inc., a state contractor that provides care for disabled children. It recently had been warned it would lose its license for having inadequate staff to meet the "health and safety needs of each child" and other issues, according to state Health Secretary Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein. State Sen. Thomas M. Middleton, who is known for his advocacy for people with disabilities, defended state officials for trying to close the center. He said it is challenging to move swiftly when so few providers are available to serve the disability community. "The state was on the right track. They cited this company for failure to perform," said Middleton, a Charles County Democrat. "But if you're going to shut that place down, you need somewhere to put the kids." And although Middleton was not familiar with the specific circumstances at LifeLine, he said that in general the state has had a series of problems managing the needs of the disabled. "There's myriad problems that could have gone into this: insufficient funding, insufficient foster homes, not paying providers enough." LifeLine's chief executive, Theresa Martin, wrote to state officials June 5 that she intended to close her company's program for children Sept. 30 because state payments did not cover the costs of care. "The care provided the children cannot be simply dollars and cents, yet without adequate funding it is impossible to provide the quality level of service they deserve," she wrote. She could not be reached Friday for further comment. In September, the Board of Public Works approved the state's contract with LifeLine without discussion. A spokeswoman for Gov. Martin O'Malley said Friday she did not have any comment while the investigation continues, and referred questions to the two state agencies that oversaw the home where the boy died. Montgomery said she has an autistic, adult son in a group home and is attuned to the critical need for adequate staffing not only at the homes, but at the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene so that it can perform oversight. "We need to provide DHMH with enough money to have frequent inspections," she said. jebarker@baltsun.com ecox@baltsun.com Copyright © 2014, [The Baltimore Sun](#)

12-year-old kept prisoner in basement said stepmom threatened to make him 'disappear' [Print](#) By [Jack Sherzer](#) | [Special to PennLive](#) The Patriot-News on July 12, 2014 at 8:00 PM, updated July 12, 2014 at 8:04 PM Reddit Email A 12-year-old boy who was the subject of an intense 11-day manhunt by authorities — and who was found in basement of the family's Detroit home as his father was on national TV — says his stepmom kept him trapped and warned him to stay quiet, according to a court filing. A recent petition filed in juvenile court details abuse accusations made by the boy against his father, Charlie Bothuell IV, and his stepmother, Monique Dillard-Bothuell, ABC News reports. According to the ABC report: This photo provided by the Detroit Police Department shows Charlie Bothuell V, 12, of Detroit, who has been missing since June 14. Bothuell has been found alive in his father's basement. Detroit police spokesman Sgt. Mike Woody says officers were serving a search warrant at the home near downtown, on Wednesday, June 25, 2014, when they stumbled upon Bothuell. AP Photo/Courtesy Detroit Police Department Charlie Bothuell V, 12, told the court that he had been disciplined with a PVC pipe, sometime to the point that he was too sore to sit or walk, and has been abused by his father "for the entire two years he has resided" with him, the document states. It also said Charlie was found "shivering and hungry." Police found the boy in the family's basement June 25 — as his father was appearing on HLN's "Nancy Grace Show" to plead for help, [reports sister news site MLive.com](#). MLive.com also reports the court petition [describes punishing workouts](#) the boy was forced to do: Charlie was forced to wake up at 5 a.m. each morning and complete an intense workout that included 100 pushups, 200 situps, 100 jumping jacks, 25 curls per arm and 5,000 revolutions on an elliptical machine. He was forced to repeat the workout each evening, though with 1000 less elliptical machine rotations, the petition says. Authorities say Charlie told them his stepmom put him in the basement after she accused him of lying about completing his evening workout, MLive.com reports. No charges have been filed against either the father or stepmother, but authorities say the investigation is continuing. Officials have since placed Charlie with his mother and removed two of his half-siblings from the home, according to MLive.com. Source: http://www.pennlive.com/midstate/index.ssf/2014/07/12-year-old_kept_prisoner_in_b.html

Police, State Probe Maryland Foster Care Death « CBS DC You are using Internet Explorer 6. Internet Explorer 6 is unsupported by this site and you may experience layout and functionality issues. It is recommended that you upgrade to a newer version of Internet Explorer or switch to another browser. | [Download Internet Explorer](#) | [Download Firefox](#) | [Download Chrome](#) Police, State Probe Maryland Foster Care Death July 12, 2014 10:56 AM [View Comments](#) Related Tags: [Anne Arundel County Police](#), [Baltimore police](#), [Damaud Martin](#), [foster care](#), [LifeLine Inc](#), [Rosita Martin](#) Latest News [D.C.'s Food Court Guilty of Deliciousness](#) [Cute Animal Alert](#) [Cheerleader Roundup](#) [College Hoops Edition](#) Get Breaking News First Receive News, Politics, and Entertainment Headlines Each Morning. [Sign Up](#) BALTIMORE — The Baltimore Police Department homicide unit has taken over an investigation of the

death of a 10-year-old boy at a home for medically fragile children because of the possibility that abuse he suffered six years ago played a role in his death. Damaud Martin died July 2 after suffering cardiac arrest at a home run by LifeLine Inc. in Laurel, Maryland, where state inspectors had found significant problems with staffing, documents show. The state has removed the other 10 children living there, said the Maryland health secretary, Dr. Joshua Sharfstein. The Anne Arundel County police began investigating Damaud's death, but brought in Baltimore police after determining that there had been a "prior trauma abuse incident in Baltimore city." That incident occurred in January of 2008, when Damaud was hospitalized with severe brain trauma. Damaud's mother, Tamekia Martin, was convicted of child abuse in May of 2009 after accepting an Alford plea, according to Damaud's grandmother, Rosita Martin. That's when a defendant maintains her innocence, but acknowledges that the prosecution has enough evidence to convict her. Rosita Martin said after Damaud was hospitalized, his 7-year-old sister, Sandoria, was placed in foster care. The children were first taken into state custody in 2006, then placed in Rosita Martin's home. The Department of Social Services returned the children to Tamekia Martin in November 2007, two months before Damaud's hospitalization. Baltimore Police spokesman Jeremy Silbert said Friday that the direction of the investigation into Damaud's death will depend on the findings of the state medical examiner's autopsy. "If they do rule the death was the result of the incident that happened in Baltimore city, this will become a homicide," Silbert said. Rosita Martin said Friday that her daughter never abused her children. "This is the most disgusting thing I've ever experienced. These were two sweet, innocent children and they robbed us," Rosita Martin said of the Department of Social Services. "They robbed us of our happiness with them." She said the Department of Social Services notified the family Friday that Damaud had died. Brian Schleter, a spokesman for the Department of Human Resources, said the agency had been trying to contact Tamekia Martin since Damaud's death, but could not immediately reach her. Rosita Martin on Friday said she is devastated by her grandson's death. She had become a licensed foster care provider after the children were first taken into state custody in 2006, and said she had been fighting ever since to keep the children in her care. She said she was never told where Damaud was living, and still does not know where her granddaughter lives. Rosita Martin said she has not seen her granddaughter since 2009. "They stole them from us and wanted us to believe that they had a right to do this," Rosita Martin said, tears streaming down her face. "I've been fighting diligently all day every day. Those children didn't deserve any of this. He was such a sweet little one, a sweet little boy. And nobody got a chance to see his beauty." According to the Anne Arundel County Police report, Tamekia Martin's parental rights had been terminated at the time of Damaud's death. The Baltimore City Department of Social Services is listed as the boy's legal guardian. Damaud had been in LifeLine's care since Dec. 4, 2013. Sharfstein said Damaud's group home was inspected regularly by the state, and reviews this year indicated more significant problems than in the past. A survey by the state in February found that four of eight employees did not have documents to support the successful completion of training for the special needs of the children at the facility. A complaint was filed in May alleging neglect at the facility because of a youth's bed sore. In June, the state noted inadequate staffing at the facility. "In 2014, they began to have more significant violations, and those included problems with the care that they were providing and that led us to No. 1, intensify our oversight, No. 2, start a process of closing them and transitioning the youth," Sharfstein said. The facility indicated it would give up its license in September, and the remaining children were moved over the July 4 weekend. LifeLine did not immediately return messages seeking comment. The Baltimore Sun first reported the boy's death and previous problems with the facility. Source: <http://washington.cbslocal.com/2014/07/12/police-state-probe-maryland-foster-care-death/>

NY legislators want better foster care background [Media Sources](#) // Sunday, 13 July 2014 01:10 // font size [decrease font size](#) [increase font size](#) ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — New York legislators have approved amending state law to require agencies placing children in foster care first check whether prospective parents have done it before and provided poor or questionable care. Sponsors say caseworkers sometimes remove children from homes suspected of being unsafe without either revoking the parents' certificate to provide foster care or reporting them to the state's child abuse hotline. Those parents may simply apply to another agency for foster children and get money for their care. The amendment, if signed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo, would require all foster care agencies check with the Office of Children and Family Services to determine whether prospective parents ever had foster a child removed from their home, evaluate the reasons why and determine if the foster home should be reopened. Copyright (2014) Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. Source: <http://www.bayoubuzz.com/us-news/item/704676-ny-legislators-want-better-foster-care-background>

Bethel residents file complaints about group home issues By LORETTA RODGERS, Times Correspondent Posted: 07/13/14, 11:18 PM EDT | Updated: 1 week, 5 days ago [# Comments](#) BETHEL — For the second time in three years, residents of Arbor Drive filed complaints about the management and residents of a group home operated by Elwyn Inc. From foul language used by residents, staff and visitors to blaring car radios at all hours of the night, one resident said he has had enough. "To the management of the home on Arbor Drive, I say shame on you for failing the occupants of this group home, shame on you for failing the families, shame on you for failing the donors, and shame on you for failing Bethel Township and our residents," said the neighbor. "We expect you to manage a safe and wholesome environment for those who reside on that property." Supervisor Ed Miles said there are five group homes currently operating in the township and the one on Arbor Drive is the only one that is troublesome. Miles said for as much grief as this one home has given the community, the others are operating very well. "We have compassionate residents in our community, but we need this fixed." Police Chief Tom Worrirow verified that in the past three years there have been more than 40 calls of complaints about the Arbor Drive home. One resident said he has personally witnessed unacceptable outbursts, occupants causing damage to trash cans, mail boxes, signs smashed, shaken, and attempts made to remove the signage from its foundations. He added that he has also witnessed scuffles with police. A recent incident raised the ire of the residents and the board of supervisors. An approximately four-minute video exists of a group home resident dressed in nothing but a soiled adult diaper entering a neighboring property. "This woman was stripping her clothes off in the presence of my children as well as other children," said the resident. "We are sympathetic to the group home, and trying to be a good neighbor, but the problem is that this is unacceptable behavior." In 2011, this very same group home came under fire from residents who spent 45 minutes detailing problems to supervisors. Miles told the residents Tuesday night that the board of supervisors has been made aware of what has been happening and Worrirow has been keeping the board apprised of the incidents. Miles said he, Supervisor Jean Stoyer and Solicitor Mike Maddren met with Elwyn officials on June 3 about the matter and were assured that changes were going to be made. "The attorney representing Elwyn indicated they realized from that meeting and the described incidents, the program they were operating out of that home was not appropriate for the community," Maddren said. "They assured me they were going to cease that program at that house. They need to relocate the residents, which was supposed to be done by July 1, which obviously did not happen." Maddren said he has again spoken with the solicitor who assured him the residents of the home in question will be relocated within a week. One Arbor Drive resident said he is tired of living next door to the home, adding that he has concerns about employees having no identification. "Doors to that house are open all night and they are playing loud music," he said. "The employees do not wear badges or any sign of identification. This is ridiculous." Supervisors Chairman John Camero III said the board is working very hard to rectify the situation. "This does not end tonight and the board is working very hard with our solicitor to do everything we can," Camero said. "We will do everything in our power legally to make this right." Representatives from Elwyn Inc. would not comment due to the matter being a personnel issue and because of HIPAA regulations. Source: <http://www.delcotimes.com/government-and-politics/20140713/bethel-residents-file-complaints-about-group-home-issues#>

Mom: Son abused at Salem group home Report from Lynn woman with autistic child, 37, spurs probe [Story Print](#) [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) Posted: Monday, July 14, 2014 3:00 am [Mom: Son abused at Salem group home](#) By Kristin Bornstein / For The Item Itemlive.com | [0 comments](#) SALEM — Allegations of abuse made against a Salem residential group home have sparked an investigation by the Salem Police Department, the Essex County District Attorney's Office, and the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health. Teresa Carrington of Lynn believes that sometime in early March, her 37-year-old autistic son, Scott Crawford, was beaten so severely that traces of blood were found in his urine days after the incident allegedly took place. The facility, located on Green Street in Salem, is run by the May Institute, a nonprofit organization that provides services to individuals with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities. According to its website, the May Institute operates nearly 200 service locations across the country. Carrie Kimball-Monahan, a spokeswoman for Essex County District Attorney Jonathan Blodgett, confirmed the investigation but declined further comment. The investigation began shortly after Carrington discovered multiple bruises across Crawford's ribs and stomach as she helped her son out of the shower on March 22, 2014 during a visit home. Upon discovering the marks, Carrington said she took her son to the Salem Hospital emergency room. A medical report from Salem Hospital, provided by Carrington, listed two diagnoses for the injury: an abdominal wall contusion and microscopic hematuria, or stomach bruising with traces of blood in the urine. During that ER visit, Carrington said that medical personnel expressed heightened concern over Crawford's injuries because of his disability, and they immediately contacted the Salem Police Department. "The sergeants came, then detectives came,

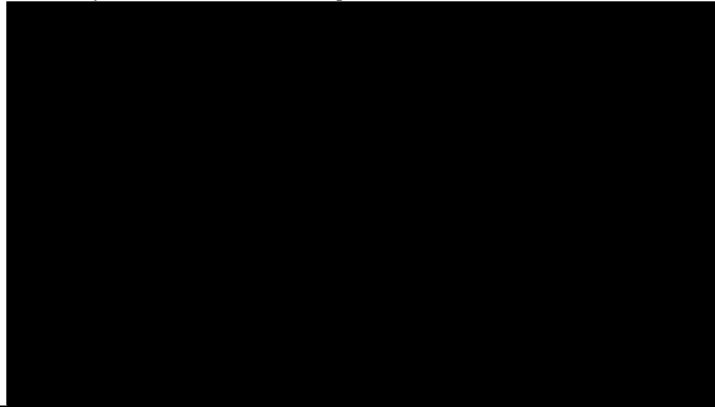
then a social worker. We were there for a long time," Carrington said. "First they asked me when the last time Scott was home. ... They wanted to be sure of where this happened, but he had been at Green Street all the time." A police report filed by the Salem Police Department cited alleged assault to a disabled party. The report stated that police officers asked Crawford how his injuries occurred and that Crawford responded with the name of a staff member from the residential facility. In the report, police wrote that "it appears that this staff member (name withheld) was the individual responsible for the bruising on Crawford's body," and also noted that although the attending physician was not able to specify the exact date of injury, the physician did say that "it could have been a few days ago." Carrington said she questioned how such a severe injury could have occurred at the group home if employees were following standard restraint procedures. In accordance with Massachusetts state general laws, all mental health facilities contracted or operated by the Department of Mental Health must adhere to Title 104 of the Code of Massachusetts Regulations, regarding "Restraint and Seclusion" procedures. The Department of Mental Health states a commitment to "eliminating the use of restraint and seclusion" as a means of behavior adjustment, and that such restraint should only be applied in emergency situations. Last updated in August 2010, the policy outlines the requirements of facilities to develop individual crisis prevention plans that identify potential risk factors for aggressive behavior and to maintain a plan for de-escalating such situations without the use of restraint and seclusion. In an event where restraint and seclusion methods are unavoidable, facility employees are required to document the use of restraint and seclusion using a two-part form and are also required to complete a patient debriefing form with the patient within 24 hours of the episode as an opportunity for the patient to comment on the incident. Carrington decided to contact the May Institute to retrieve copies of every incident report on file involving her son to determine how often and to what extent Crawford was being physically restrained. She alleges that the facility only provided her with one incident report filed around the time the alleged abuse occurred. That report described an incident that took place on March 16, when employees placed Crawford in two separate restraint holds, but it concluded that after the incident Crawford "only had a small scratch on his elbow." Carrington said that she is upset by the lack of documentation from the May Institute to explain her son's injuries because the March 16 incident report cites a vastly different conclusion from the hospital's medical report. She said she is familiar with physical restraint techniques and alleges that her son was handled with excessive force. Carrington is also afraid that the alleged abuser or abusers are still working with disabled persons. "I don't understand why things are not being done. This is wrong," she said. "What happens to people who do things to people that can't protect themselves? I believe this is a crime." Julia A. Burgess, the senior director of strategic and corporate communications at the May Institute, refused to comment on the investigation and said in a statement, "The May Institute is committed to providing the highest quality care to the individuals we serve. We consider their health and safety our primary responsibility. Privacy policies prevent us from commenting on the matter." Carrington said that although the incident left her son somewhat unstable, they are working to rebuild his daily routine. Crawford now resides at his mother's home in Lynn and recently returned to his job at the CLASS Inc., program in Lawrence. "They have turned my son's life upside down. He had been with the May Institute a very long time, and this has disrupted his entire life," she said. "I'm glad that physically now he is OK, but I'm pretty sure when this was happening to him, my son was hurt." Kristin Bornstein may be reached at kborn126@gmail.com. Source: http://www.itemlive.com/news/mom-son-abused-at-salem-group-home/article_bb137cce-0b09-11e4-9cc4-0019bb2963f4.html

What Millions Of Grandparents Want You To Know Posted: 07/14/2014 7:04 am EDT Updated: 07/14/2014 7:59 am EDT [Print Article](#) [Share 259](#) [Tweet 13](#) [Email 9](#) [Comment 8](#) There are nearly three million grandparents raising over five million grandchildren in the U.S. --officially. Those figures represent grandparents that have legal, physical, and financial responsibility for their grandchildren. But if you include grandparents who are head of households that include both birth parents and grandchildren, the figure climbs to seven million. And once you understand that all of those situations are vastly underreported, you begin to get a better picture of an enormous and growing sociological trend with serious implications for the future. From *Raising Our Children's Children: Room In The Heart*: Situations where grandparents have informal custody of grandchildren remain grossly underreported. Some grandparents conceal the fact that they have children in their care ... to avoid interference by social service agencies that may take the children from them. Some fear reprisals from drug-involved children and keep a low-profile while doing their best to keep grandchildren out of harm's way. Grandparents who don't want to rock the boat, don't tell. What are the reasons? The economy has a lot to do with the need for families to band together to make ends meet. Beyond that, reasons are varied. As you chip away at the smaller percentages of those caused by divorce, illness, death, and job-loss, one overwhelming reason grandparents most often need to step in and totally take over the responsibility of raising their grandchildren becomes frighteningly clear: substance abuse. Millions of grandparents are rescuing their grandchildren from a life of neglect, chaos, and abuse at the hands of addicted parents. These are families from every walk of life, of socio-economic strata, of size, shape, and color. Make no mistake, they are families like yours and mine. My book, *Raising Our Children's Children: Room In The Heart*, deals with the core group of caregiving grandparents -- the ones that are struggling to rescue and raise grandchildren on their own. Here is what they would like you to know. 1. Grandparents are often near or at retirement age, yet are starting over again with the huge financial responsibilities of raising young children, most of whom suffer from tragic and damaging effects due to addicted parents. They are children who may have been born addicted themselves, or have Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, failure to thrive, neurological issues, Reactive Attachment Disorder, ADD, ADHD, PTSD, developmental delays, abandonment issues, rage disorders... any or all of these problems plus many more. 2. After they have managed to save their grandchildren from harm, grandparents don't know where to turn for help. In fact, the little help available is scattered among agencies that differ from state to state, county to county, court to court, and can change with adjustments in local and federal funding. Each grandparent must frantically hunt and scratch and reinvent the wheel every single time. For many, if not most, there is no help at all. 3. The foster care industry will provide financial benefits and services to grandparents if they join "The System" and become licensed Foster Care providers. For many, financial struggles force them into that situation though the last thing they want is to be under the thumb of the very bureaucracy from which they fought to save their grandchildren! 4. Involvement of Child Protective Services and/or Departments of Social Services should be a blessing, but too often it's a curse for caregiving grandparents. There is an inherent lack of comfort with or outright distrust of those agencies among grandparents and kin. Although there are many good foster care homes, in general the whole system is fraught with problems. Most family caregivers want to keep clear of any involvement with untrustworthy bureaucracies they fear may result in loss of custody. There are many systemic reasons why the child welfare system/foster care industry provides a barrier to grandparents and so often fails to protect children. Currently those systems exist within an unworkable directive that drives them toward a narrow view of "family reunification." This mindset serves to undermine what is in the best interest of the child by unintentionally taking away stability, safety and security in the quest to drive the child first into, and then out of foster care, back to additive and/or failed parents and often back into foster care again. Grandparents and other kin are frequently used as merely a way-station rather than a "family reunification" destination. CPS will initially drop children off at grandma's doorstep, but after that, family members must fight to keep them, or become part of the system to do it. Foster care is a self-sustaining industry, the more children under their umbrella, the bigger their budget; for grandparents, it's join or lose. Director of Baltimore City Department of Social Services, Molly McGrath Tierney, had this to say - and much more - at [TedxBaltimore 2014 Rethinking Foster Care](#): I run a well-oiled machine that does an outstanding job of taking other people's children. It does it with absolute efficiency. I regret that this success does not also result in us actually helping people. Now the abuse and neglect is awful for children, it's terrible for children, absolutely! When we also then take them from their families, we're digging a wound so deep that I don't believe we have a way of measuring it. This dismantling of families, has enormous consequences... 5. If and when grandparents finally manage to maintain custody and eventually adopt grandchildren, they become the children's de facto parents. Usually, children quite naturally transition to calling them mom and dad. As in any adoptive situation, the roles override the biological connection or lack of biological connection. Grandparents want you to accept interfamily adoptions in the same way traditional adoptions are accepted. They want you to "get it." Finally, grandparents want to know some things too: Why isn't there a national policy that supports them in their efforts to keep their grandchildren safe and their families together? They would like to know why child welfare agencies are so married to the foster care industry -- a troubled, overburdened bureaucracy at best -- at the expense of keeping children permanently within their own family group. They want to know why these issues are barely on the national radar. They want to know why society neither acknowledges nor values what grandparents and other kin do. Even now, when we have a president who was raised by grandparents, they would like to know what it would take to raise awareness. From *Raising Our Children's Children: Room In The Heart*, When I began this book, my goal was to offer grandparents and grandchildren a look at what others have been through and survived... and I hoped to raise awareness in others who may not realize the depth and complexity of this growing trend while providing a common sense outlook onto the issues. We are all inexorably wound together as individuals, as families, as communities, and as a society. We must take care to value, accommodate, and, at times, assist the variety and diversity, each unique facet, in the noble work - the blessed art - of family. Millions of grandparents and millions more grandchildren want you to know. Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/deborah-doucette/grandparents-raising-grandchildren_b_5556815.html

Escapee from Northwestern boot camp apprehended By Mark Gilger (Staff Writermark_g@newsitem.com) Published: July 27, 2014 Article Tools Font size: [\[A\]](#) [\[A\]](#) [\[A\]](#) [Share on facebook](#) [Share on twitter](#) [Share on google](#) [Share on linkedin](#) [Share on email](#) [Share on print](#) [More Sharing Services](#) 4 Our Social Networks Facebook Sign Up [newsletter](#) COAL TOWNSHIP - A 17-year-old male housed in the boot camp at Northwestern Academy ran away from the juvenile detention facility Saturday afternoon, but was apprehended in a wooded area 90 minutes later in Mount Carmel Township. Coal Township police said the teen ran away from a group of other students shortly before 4:30 p.m. while on a nature walk in the woods with an academy employee. It was initially reported the teen was heading in a southeasterly direction from the academy. Police from Coal Township, Kulpmont and Mount Carmel Township, along with academy personnel, searched for the teen before locating him at about 6 p.m. A request was made for a state police helicopter to assist in the search, but was canceled when the teen was found and returned to the academy. The incident remains under investigation by Coal Township police. Source: <http://newsitem.com/news/escapee-from-northwestern-boot-camp-apprehended-1.1725538> (HEAL NOTE: What goes on at this boot camp?)

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July 24th, 2014: The HEAL Report: Jill Vanderwater Tribute Part 1



Vocal opposition might not keep boys' rehab facility out of East Waco [Story Comments Image \(4\)](#) Print [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default](#) [font size](#) [Larger font size](#) 1 [Previous](#) [Next](#) Staff photo— Rod Aydelotte lavega ra1 People file in to attend La Vega ISD's meeting Tuesday, where they discussed the proposed rehab facility for emotionally disturbed boys. [Buy this photo](#) Staff photo— Rod Aydelotte lavega ra4 Superintendent Sharon Shields presents her view on the proposed 90-bed rehab facility for emotionally disturbed boys during Tuesday's La Vega ISD school board meeting. [Buy this photo](#) Staff photo— Rod Aydelotte lavega ra3 Bryan Waterhouse sits down after speaking at the La Vega Independent School District meeting Tuesday night about the proposed 90-bed rehab facility for emotionally disturbed boys. Nobody at the meeting voiced support for the facility. [Buy this photo](#) Staff photo— Rod Aydelotte lavega ra2 School board member Phil Bancale talks with people attending La Vega Independent School District's board meeting Tuesday, where they discussed the proposed 90-bed rehab facility for emotionally disturbed boys. [Buy this photo](#) Posted: Wednesday, July 16, 2014 12:01 am [Vocal opposition might not keep boys' rehab facility out of East Waco](#) By STEPHANIE BUTTS sbutts@wacotrib.com Waco Tribune-Herald Bellmead residents and La Vega Independent School District officials Tuesday night expressed strong opposition to Snugg Harbor, a proposed 90-bed residential treatment center for boys. But state licensing officials said those opinions, along with opposition from Bellmead and Waco-area residents voiced at another recent meeting, will not by themselves keep the center from opening in the area. "Residential Child Care Licensing will take into consideration all comments and concerns of the community," the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services said in a statement. "Snugg Harbor is still in the application phase, and opposition from the community alone won't exclude Snugg Harbor from receiving an initial license to operate." Julie Moody, Region 7 media specialist for DFPS, said no deficiencies were discovered in the license application for Snugg Harbor and the only reason it wasn't issued a temporary license to open was because the requirement for a public hearing in counties with a population of 300,000 people or fewer delayed it. Lea Long, a licensing representative from DFPS, attended Tuesday's meeting and said more consideration would be given to Snugg Harbor's license application because of the vocal opposition. About 50 people attended the La Vega Independent District board of trustees meeting Tuesday. No one spoke to support Snugg Harbor, a treatment center for boys ages 8 through 17 with severe mental, emotional or behavioral disorders. Most who spoke in opposition were either parents or teachers in the La Vega school district and were concerned about the financial strain it would put on the schools and the threat unstable students could pose to their children. "A disciplined and well-managed classroom is essential to the learning of all students," said Melanie Morgan, a La Vega ISD teacher. Local officials estimate it would cost the district an additional \$1 million a year, plus force a building program to accommodate the extra students in the filled-to-capacity campuses. Amanda Russ, a resident who lives down the street from the proposed facility, said the neighborhood is filled with young children and retirees. The community doesn't have the resources to protect its residents from potentially violent students who could roam the neighborhood, Russ said. "I am totally, 100 percent against having that facility here because we're committed to making the area better. I hope that they do not give them a license," Russ said. Snugg Harbor, proposed by owner Rosalyn Ruffin, would be in East Waco at 1916 Seley Ave., which most recently was a home for disabled adults called Pecan Ridge Assisted Living Center. Ruffin held a public meeting on July 8 where La Vega ISD Superintendent Sharon Shields invited Ruffin to Tuesday's board meeting to present her plans for the center. Ruffin did not attend Tuesday's meeting. Shields said Tuesday she called Ruffin prior to the meeting and couldn't reach her. The Tribune-Herald was also unable to contact Ruffin. Shields encouraged the group of concerned residents to contact the licensing office to express their concerns. "We are reaching out to everyone we can to ensure our citizens' voices are heard," Shields said. The school district will do its best to accommodate the facility's students if it is approved, but the cost will eventually fall back upon the taxpayers, she said. "I don't think we've gotten our minds around the impact this kind of program would have on our community, the impact it would have on our classrooms," Shields said. "We're already maxed out on our funding." Source: http://www.wacotrib.com/news/education/vocal-opposition-might-not-keep-boys-rehab-facility-out-of/article_1fbd4a0a-a8b2-512b-af0d-313f38779372.html

458 children rescued from group home in Mexico AP 11:24 p.m. EDT July 15, 2014 The flag of Mexico hangs at a racetrack in Mexico City, Mexico, March 5, 2006. (Photo: Gregory Bull, AP) 109 [CONNECT](#) [55 TWEET](#) [2 LINKEDIN](#) 6 [COMMENT](#) [EMAIL](#) [MORE](#) MEXICO CITY (AP) — Federal and state police officers raided a group home Tuesday in the western state of Michoacan and rescued 458 children who were forced to beg for money and suffered sexual abuse while being against their will in filthy conditions, Mexico's top prosecutor said. Attorney General Jesus Murillo Karam said police also rescued 138 adults from the Great Family group home in the city of Zamora. The group home residents were kept in deplorable conditions, fed rotten food and made to sleep on the floor among rats, ticks and fleas and many of them were never allowed to leave the premises, Murillo Karam said at a news conference attended by top federal investigators and Michoacan Gov. Salvador Jara. "I'm in utter dismay because we weren't expecting the conditions we found at the group home," Jara said. Police detained the home's owner, Rosa del Carmen Verduzco, and eight workers for questioning, Murillo Karam said. The investigation began after five parents filed complaints last year with authorities because they weren't allowed to see their children at the home, Jara said. One of the parents was a woman who grew up and gave birth to two children at the home, which has been open for 40 years. She was allowed to leave when she was 31-years-old but Verduzco kept her two children, said Tomas Ceron, head of the Criminal Research Agency at the Attorney General's Office. Copyright 2014 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Source: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2014/07/15/children-group-home-mexico/12716985/>

Death at Stroud Township group home leads to investigation Pa. regulators found violations during Feb. inspection By [Beth Brelje](#) Pocono Record Writer July 16, 2014 12:00 AM The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare is investigating a Stroud Township group home following the death last week of one of its residents. The Salisbury Behavioral Health Personal Care Home has had a number of inspection violations in the past — some serious, according to state regulators. Darlene Bancey, 62, was pronounced dead at 6:30 a.m. Thursday by Monroe County Coroner Bob Allen after she was found in a lake about 40 feet from the shoreline. The lake is behind the group home at 1482 Cherry Lane. Bancey died as a result of drowning, Allen reported. She went missing Wednesday night and was considered an endangered person because she had medical and psychiatric conditions. A search-and-rescue team looked for her overnight. On Friday, the Department of Public Welfare conducted an on-site investigation of the home, said department spokeswoman Kait Gillis. DPW is trying to determine if the home violated any regulations. Any action taken by the DPW will be guided by the investigation, Gillis said. Incident of abuse Salisbury Behavioral Health Personal Care Home is a nonprofit organization based in Baltimore, under the nonprofit Growth Horizons, which reported on its 2012 nonprofit tax form gross receipts of more than \$16 million, largely earned through contracts with counties or the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare. The organization provides day programs, outpatient service and housing for developmentally disabled people for the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and Mental Health Retardation Programs. The Monroe County home is licensed for up to 28 residents. Neither the Monroe County nor Baltimore offices responded to a request for comment Tuesday. Regulators noted during a Feb. 21, 2014, inspection that there were 19 residents, all with a mental illness. Of those, 11 were over 60 years old, according to an inspection report. The report describes an incident of abuse that happened Jan. 21, but was not reported until Feb. 24, a month after the incident and a few days after the inspection. Pennsylvania Act 13 Mandatory Abuse Report procedure requires verbal reports of abuse be completed within 24 hours of an incident and written reports be completed within 48 hours. During the incident, two residents had a verbal argument that escalated into a physical altercation. One resident struck the other several times, knocking that resident to the ground, and then kicked the resident on the ground several times. The victim was taken to the hospital and was found to have a closed head injury and multiple abrasions and bruises, according to state records. The victim soon moved out of the facility. The aggressor was hospitalized in a behavioral unit, given a change of medication and returned to the facility, the report said. The facility failed to notify the Area Agency on Aging of the abuse under the Older Adult Protective Services Act, the report said. When the incident occurred, the administrator did not complete the mandatory Act 13 abuse report but did complete a DPW incident report. Prior violations A check of previous inspection reports show some mundane and some more serious violations. January 2013: The facility had a hard time getting a resident to comply with a fire drill. July 2013: The freezer temperature was set too high. An inspection in December 2012 showed the home had no posted activities calendar for residents and also had no activities designed to promote an active involvement of residents with families and the community. An inspection in June 2012 found the home had not been maintaining quarterly account reports for residents who received assistance with their personal spending. During that same inspection, it was found that an employee hired Jan. 30, 2012, did not receive the required training to be completed within the first 40 hours of work scheduled. The training was not complete until Feb. 21, 2012. An inspection in July 2010 found black mold on two sides of a bath tub used by residents. Dead bugs, food particles and a pill were found on the floor of the activity room. In each case, DPW worked with the facility to define corrective action and renewed the facility's license each year. Source: <http://www.poconorecord.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20140716/NEWS/407160331>

Three DJJ employees suspended after teen inmate's suicide July 15, 2014 by [South Carolina Radio Network](#) Three South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) employees have now been suspended after an inmate's suicide over the weekend. Agency spokeswoman Loretta Neal said in an email that the inmate [died the night before while detained](#) at DJJ's detention center. The Richland County Coroner's Office said the teen died from asphyxiation due to hanging himself. While the coroner's office did provide the 16-year-old's name, South Carolina Radio Network usually does not identify minors who commit suicide. The teen was being held on an adult charge of first degree burglary at the time of his death. Neal said the three employees were placed on suspension while the matter is fully investigated. "Any time a young person dies it is a tragedy, especially under circumstances like this," she wrote. "DJJ extends its deepest sympathy and condolences to the family of the young man." Neal did not say why the three employees were suspended. SLED does not comment on ongoing investigations. Source: <http://www.southcarolinaradionetwork.com/2014/07/15/three-djj-employees-suspended-after-teen-inmates-suicide/>

Patient dumping, foster homes among possible topics for referral to Legislature Commissioners cut pay for constables in Henderson and North Las Vegas By [Conor Shine](#) (contact) Tuesday, July 15, 2014 | 6:48 p.m. Bills to toughen checks on foster homes and to crack down on patient dumping at University Medical Center were among a slate of proposals the Clark County Commission will consider forwarding to the Legislature next year. Commissioners got a first look at 10 proposed bills during their meeting Tuesday. They'll have to shrink that list to four bills by Sept. 1, the deadline for submitting bill draft requests for the legislative session that starts in February. Under state law, the county is allowed to request only four bills to be drafted per session. County manager Don Burnette said it's possible some of the bills presented Tuesday could be sponsored by legislators, freeing up the county's limited slots for other requests. Commissioners will vote to approve a final list of bill draft requests next month. Here's a look at the bill requests proposed by the county, which came from four departments: University Medical Center UMC put forward two bills. One is an attempt to curb patient dumping from other hospitals to UMC's emergency room. The bill would force those hospitals to share an increased portion of the costs of patients transferred to UMC's emergency room. A second bill would allow UMC's newly formed governing board to go into closed meetings and bypass the state's Open Meeting Law in order to discuss "trade secrets." Department of Family Services The county's foster care and child protection agency has requested four bills. One would strengthen the agency's ability to investigate child welfare claims against entities and organizations. A second proposed bill would allow the agency to do more extensive background checks on people who are regularly in foster homes. The other two bills would clarify language in a pair of statutes to make the laws more consistent. Las Vegas Justice Court The Las Vegas Justice Court, which handles minor crimes and traffic incidents, is requesting a bill that would allow a portion of bail forfeitures and misdemeanor fines to be diverted into a special fund. The fund would receive 10 percent of the court's revenues — about \$1.8 million — and would be used to pay for specialty courts. The remaining revenue would go into the county's general fund. The court's other bill request involves allowing temporary judges to replace sitting justices of the peace who are on medical leave. Real Property Management The county's real estate department is requesting two bills. Both would tweak statute to allow the department to perform repairs and maintenance to county buildings more quickly and at a lower cost. • • • Constables take pay cut Clark County Commissioners instituted a new pay scale for constables in Henderson and North Las Vegas in an attempt to boost transparency. The move also means a serious pay cut for the two constables, who will now make a fixed salary of \$103,000 per year after the commission's unanimous decision Tuesday. The constables previously drew their salaries from a fund generated from commissions their offices earned for delivering legal papers and evictions. The amount each constable made in a given year varied depending on how much their office brought in. North Las Vegas Township Constable Herb Brown earned a salary of more than \$250,000 last year with his offices bringing in \$600,000 in revenue, according to the county staff. Henderson Township Constable Earl Mitchell made a salary of about \$180,000 with his office bringing in about \$800,000 in revenue. Keeping track of budgets and salaries for the 11 constable's offices has been a challenge for the county staff because each constable is responsible for keeping their own financial records. Commissioners concerned about a lack of financial transparency moved to put two of the largest offices — Henderson and North Las Vegas — onto a fixed salary system. The salary Mitchell and Brown will receive is equal to the pay of Las Vegas Township Constable John Bonaventura, who was already on a fixed salary. Commissioners voted last year to abolish Bonaventura's office when his term ends in January. Source: <http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2014/jul/15/clark-county-commission/>

New charge filed against former foster-care worker New charge filed against former foster-care worker Aldrin West, 42, appears at Boulder City Justice Court on Tuesday. (Yesenia Amaro/Las Vegas Review-Journal) By YESENIA AMARO LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL A former foster-care worker will face a third charge of open and gross lewdness in a sexual assault case referred to Clark County District Court by a Boulder City justice of the peace on Tuesday. Aldrin West, 42, faced one count for open or gross lewdness over allegations of masturbating in front of former child specialist Jodi Lynn Fennell while working at St. Jude's Ranch for Children, and a second count of open or gross lewdness because he is alleged to have touched Fennell's breast, according to the criminal complaint. The complaint will be amended to add a third count of open or gross lewdness in a separate incident where West is alleged to have masturbated in front of Fennell. Justice of the Peace Victor Miller found there was probable cause to send West's case to District Court, where he is scheduled to appear July 31. West, who also uses the name Adrian, plans to plead not guilty, and a trial date then will be set. R. Roger Hillman, an attorney with the Clark County public defender's office, said, "He denies everything," Hillman said. Binu Palal, deputy district attorney with the Clark County district attorney's office, said West has not yet posted bail, which is \$4,000. St. Jude's Ranch for Children is a county-licensed therapeutic foster care agency, and all employees must

remain in good standing with the Clark County Department of Family Services. Fennell said prior to her case, Family Services investigated reports of inappropriate behavior made by two teenage girls involving West. After investigating the reports, the agency assigned West to attend "boundaries classes" and cleared him to return to work. Family Services wouldn't say whether West had been investigated in the past, but Fennell provided copies of two audiotapes she made with the permission of Family Services investigator Teresa Cragon, who was assigned to investigate her case earlier this year. During one of the interviews, Cragon is heard confirming a prior investigation but tells Fennell she had no part in that investigation. Contact Yesenia Amaro at yamara@reviewjournal.com or 702-383-0440. Find her on Twitter: @YeseniaAmaro. Source: <http://www.reviewjournal.com/news/las-vegas/new-charge-filed-against-former-foster-care-worker>

Adult Foster Care Home Forced to Close - Northern Michigan's News Leader Adult Foster Care Home Forced to Close Posted: Jul 16, 2014 2:54 PM PDT Updated: Jul 23, 2014 2:54 PM PDT By Meredith Barack, Reporter - [email](#) Six people forced to find new homes. The adult foster care facility where they lived shut down for failing to renew their license. Residents say it has been a wonderful place to live, and they are upset they were given little time to move. The Department of Human Services says the Cedar Crest Adult Foster Care home in Remus had a license in the past, but failed to renew it, forcing them to shut it down. Operating an adult foster care in Michigan without a license is illegal, and the owners said they are well-aware of that despite operating for a year without one. "I think coming in here with people in their 80's and 90's and telling them they've got to move by night is pretty low." Mary Cowles is one of six people forced to move out of Cedar Crest. "I think it's stinky. I got other words for it too. I just don't think this is right." But this is what the Department of Human Services says in a statement to 9 & 10 News: "Michigan law requires all adult foster care homes to be licensed in order to operate. Cedar Crest has been operating an unlicensed facility, so that is not allowed." "I've had licenses for almost 13 years, would have been, but I applied for my license on my proper time, said they didn't get it, I reapplied, said they didn't get it, 3 times I did that." Owner Donna Walch says she eventually hand delivered an application, the \$25 fee, and a compliance letter to a DHS office. "They got the compliance letter, but they didn't get the check or the application. I know I don't have a license, I know that's illegal but I've tried to do my part. Why would I jeopardize? This is my only income." DHS says they have no record of the filings or fee payments. And residents and families are obviously frustrated. Including Mary, "I'm not moving out. If they move me, they're going to pick me up and take me. I think I have a right to be where I wanna be." And Donna isn't giving up. "I'm going to reapply. I'm going to open back up if it takes all I can do. I'm going to open back up and do what I've been doing for many years." Four caregivers are also now out of a job. DHS did work with residents who needed it to find them other places to stay. Source: <http://www.9and10news.com/story/26037339/adult-foster-care-home-forced-to-close>

Unaccompanied Immigrant Minors to Be Placed in Florida Foster Homes Print article [Send a Tip](#) by [Kerry Pickett](#) 16 Jul 2014 [post a comment](#) The Children's Home Society of Florida confirmed with Breitbart News on Monday that some unaccompanied minors crossing the southern border of the U.S. will be sent to local foster homes in the state next month. "As you're aware, this is an incredible humanitarian issue. Children's Home Society of Florida is assisting the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to provide safe shelter and care for children who enter the United States without their families," spokeswoman for Children's Home Society of Florida Heather Morgan wrote in an email statement. "In Brevard County, we will be working with local families that will serve as transitional homes for 12 children. In Broward County, we will provide temporary shelter and care for 24 children in a group-home setting." [Florida Today](#) recently reported federal authorities contacted the private not-for-profit social agency around two months ago to aid the federal government with providing humanitarian services for the migrant children. This would include finding short-term, transitional housing and other care. According to FT, another 45 are expected in Fort Lauderdale and may end up in Brevard County. "We're going to start with about 12 children," Teresa Miles, the executive director of the Brevard division of the Children's Home Society of Florida, told FT. "Our goal is to keep them safe and to get them together with an appropriate family." Miles added that the agency is looking for willing families that can speak both Spanish and English to take the children in for at least 30 to 45 days, and families will receive stipends of \$20 a day to care for the children along with educational support offered by the agency. However, questions remain as to how secure such living environments may be—not only for the community but also for the young people who are brought are placed into homes. Individuals trafficked into the United States may be most at risk when placed in less restrictive environments, Breitbart News learned recently from Brenda Zurita, a research fellow of the Washington, D.C.-based [Concerned Women For America's](#) Beverly LaHaye Institute: In the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) of 2013 (Section 1261, which is an anti-trafficking provision), another layer was added to the care of UACs. If a UAC turns 18 while in the care of HHS and is then transferred to the custody of the Secretary of Homeland Security (DHS), the alien may be placed in an alternative to detention such as "with an individual or an organizational sponsor, or in a supervised group home." How easy would it be for traffickers to snatch this young adult from these situations and put them into debt bondage, forced labor or sex trafficking? However, Jesse Zermeno, founder and president of Operation Hope of Brevard, a Fellsmere-based organization that gives food, clothes, books, and other services to children and families with roots in Latin America, sees it differently, telling FT, "At the end of the day, it will be a good thing for someone in our community to touch these children's lives." "These children, for sure, need to be with their parents. But now their future is unknown," Zermeno said, adding, "Even with that, you just can't put children in the street or expose them to danger again. We have to open our hearts and take care of the children and the system." Source: <http://www.breitbart.com/Big-Government/2014/07/16/Unaccompanied-Immigrant-Minors-To-Be-Placed-In-Florida-Foster-Homes>

The Failures of America's Foster Care System By [Joachim Hagopian](#) Global Research, July 19, 2014 Region: [USA](#) Theme: [Poverty & Social Inequality](#) I worked with the largest county children's welfare services in America for more than a quarter century. For several decades as a licensed therapist in Los Angeles County, I provided mandated therapy to both children as well as young adults were aging out of the child welfare system. Over the years I made countless trips to LA County Children's Court representing dozens of children and families as my clients. My decades of firsthand mental health experience saw the destructive inside machinations of a corrupt, overloaded, thoroughly broken foster care system do more damage than good to children and families with whom I closely worked. Like all institutions in America, the child welfare system is just another corrosive, morally bankrupt, oppressive mechanism by which to control the poorest people in this country, acting as a national conduit pipeline to prison, substance abuse, human trafficking, homelessness, mental illness and early death. Though each county child protective services department in the United States operates under a separate budget funded by individual county, state and federal mental health source dollars, the child welfare system in this country is so overburdened and systemically flawed, it has been failing our kids miserably for a long time now. We all hear about the horror stories of murdered children in the foster care system who fell through the cracks. High profile cases exposing the tragic fate of young people trapped in a system that fails to protect them are far too common. They are written about extensively in newspapers all the time. But the American public rarely is privy to the inner workings of a system gone bad from the firsthand perspective of an insider who worked within that failed system for decades. This is my account of the child welfare system as a therapist who worked out in the community with young people on either probation or within foster care as well as in residential group homes. I observed the broken system from the inside out. Universal human rights are routinely violated every minute and hour of every single day, bringing with each passing year even more atrocities of neglect and abuse from the system designed to protect children. Instead it is literally destroying them. The shocking, gaping problems of the largest child welfare department in America that is the LA County Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS) that I interfaced with for many years epitomizes what has gone so terribly wrong with the national system operating in every state and county throughout the United States. To illustrate the blatant flaws inherent in the child welfare system, I shall present the stories of two families that as a therapist I strongly advocated for children as my clients to reunify with their biological families in LA County Children's Court. The first case was an eight year-old boy I shall call Pablo who when two months old was placed by DCFS to live with the boy's aunt due to the his mother being an alleged drug addict unable to properly care for the child. Pablo also had a sister six years older also placed with the biological mother's sister. Prior to my being assigned as Pablo's therapist, the fifteen year old sister had grown increasingly rebellious and defiant, clashing with her aunt and after running away from home, DCFS decided to place her in the foster care system. Because of the volatile relationship the sister had with the aunt as her primary caregiver, the DCFS social worker assigned to the case became suspicious of the aunt's capacity as primary caregiver to Pablo. DCFS normally contracts with local mental health agencies in the community to provide mental health services to minors with open cases in the child welfare system. I was working as clinical manager to one of the DCFS mental health providers overseeing community service operations in both biological and foster care family homes as well as group homes in the Pasadena area. I also directly supervised approximately eight to ten therapists including Pablo's therapist. When DCFS grew concerned about the aunt's capacity to provide a healthy home environment for Pablo, based on DCFS' recommendation, the Children's Court judge stipulated that a licensed therapist be assigned Pablo's case. At that point I became directly involved in Pablo's care as both his weekly individual therapist as well as his and his

aunt's weekly family therapist. My assessment of Pablo and his aunt's relationship after providing therapy services in their home for about two months was that Pablo was responding well to treatment and already beginning to make considerable progress with his treatment plan goals that I had collaboratively formulated with both Pablo and his aunt. They had to do with learning to stay on task with such daily activities as picking up toys after play and following his aunt's prompts for redirection. As a child given the mild case diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), a way over-diagnosed mental health classification conveniently used to label high energy children who simply have minds of their own and pose as management problems in an educational system designed to stamp out children's spirited creativity in favor of docile compliance. Pablo experienced some difficulty focusing both in the classroom and at home and engaged in hyperkinetic motor movement and behavior that would often get him into trouble in both settings when he failed to comply with adult imposed rules. Under the psychiatric care of one of my agency's staff psychiatrists, Pablo was taking daily medication prescribed for his ADHD. After I completed and presented to DCFS my written assessment and clinical findings noting early progress in treatment per protocol under my service agency contract with county Children's Services, against my recommendation and based on approval from the DCFS social worker's supervisor, unbeknownst to me, one afternoon the social worker abruptly entered the family home and forcibly removed Pablo from the only family home he had ever known in all his nine years, severely traumatizing and terrorizing the little boy. Neither he nor the aunt nor I ever saw what seemed like an ambushed assault and violation of the worst order coming. In one fell swoop they were not only interfering and undermining the family's progress in treatment, they were also destroying this family. The social worker created such extreme havoc in the home, Pablo was crying hysterically and uncontrollably as the social worker literally ripped him from his aunt's arms and physically coerced him out the door. In all the turmoil, chaos and family drama he had created, the highly unprofessional DCFS social worker forgot to even take any of Pablo's clothes or medication with him prior to placing the highly distraught boy against his will and choice into foster care, a task that was left for me to follow up with the next day. After receiving the brokenhearted aunt's horrifying account, I took Pablo's clothes and meds over to the nearby foster home where Pablo was now living, consoled a still very traumatized Pablo and spoke briefly with the foster parents who had worked with DCFS for a number of years. Children's Services had completely gone against the family's therapist's recommendations, but most importantly against the family's best interest to stay together as an intact family, suddenly and violently uprooting this fragile young child with absolutely no justifiable reason at all. Clearly Pablo was severely traumatized by the system's cruel and unusual decision to suddenly break up this family. There was no question that the aunt loved her nephew as her own son and the little nephew most definitely loved and needed his aunt as every child needs his mother. Seeing the irreparable damage and harm the system willfully inflicted on my clients, I immediately contacted the social worker and his supervisor and arranged an emergency meeting a couple days later. When pressed for an explanation, neither the social worker nor his supervisor could supply a remotely legitimate reason for separating the boy from his only family. The most they could come up with was feebly mumbling something about the boy's teacher remarking that one day Pablo had come to school wearing dirty clothes. No consideration apparently was ever made to think that every chance this little guy got he was on his knees playing in the dirt because that is what healthy, energetic, lively little boys do. For unknown reasons, it was clear that DCFS was on a witch hunt to demonize the aunt in their false accusations to break apart the family. I saw firsthand the criminal misuse of a totalitarian system run amok operating under the sinister guise of protecting children from harm but by its own vindictively blind and destructive actions was doing grave harm to my vulnerable innocent client who never knew what hit him. I started seeing my client for his individual therapy sessions at his new foster home. But used to seeing me within the safe and familiar confines of the only home he ever knew, I quickly realized he was not comfortable in the foster home setting, so I began bringing him to a nearby park a couple times a week to help the child cope with the trauma the system had senselessly caused. Every time I would show up, the first thing out of this poor little kid's mouth was, "When can I go home to my aunt?" It was heartbreaking. As a professional, I could never express my true feelings about the Nazi-like tactics responsible for his current trauma, anxiety and pain. In a matter of weeks the boy had gone from living his entire life with his aunt and sister, then to just living with his aunt and every other week hour-long visits with his sister, to now not living with any family at all. To his never ending question, I finally told him, "Pablo, I'm doing everything possible to get you home with your aunt." Because the child system had absolutely no basis for removing Pablo from his family home and knew it, they got caught in a compromising position of having to save face, notoriously unable to ever admit mistakes. In the meantime, they were constantly challenged and confronted by this therapist strongly recommending immediate reunification with the aunt. Just prior to the next scheduled Children's Court hearing, on the holiday weekend the social worker and foster mother met with Pablo at the foster home and actually manipulated the nine year old child into allegedly agreeing that his aunt had used a belt to punish him. Without any visible sign as evidence other than their little boy's "forced confession," at the last minute they were able to bring fabricated evidence to court that would assure the judge to back their decision to keep the child locked in foster care indefinitely. When I spoke to the aunt, I completely believed her when she told me she never touched Pablo with a belt. And in my next session with Pablo, he himself even denied such an event ever took place. Clearly the social worker and foster parent falsely twisted and put words in the boy's mouth to maliciously trick him into keeping him from living with his aunt. After showing up at Children's Court a number of times in person and writing numerous letters and reports to both DCFS and the court judge expressing my serious concerns that the move to foster care was clearly not in the child's best interest and was doing irreparable harm to the young boy, the Children's Court judge suddenly ordered me off the case. After developing a close supportive relationship with the child helping the boy cope with the sudden traumatic loss of his aunt, now the system was removing his therapist as his only advocate in a position to get him back living with his aunt. Because the system viewed me as both a threat and a thorn in its side, an unpleasant reminder of its own wrongdoing, the corrupt and devious system eliminated me from ending the prolonged damage being inflicted on both this boy and his aunt. The system had no qualms about committing the despicable crime of repeatedly afflicting traumatic harm whereby this nine year old's support system would one by one abruptly be eliminated from him. His sense of abandonment at that young age must have been so profound that the damaging effects are likely to leave permanent scars, never knowing he could trust those he felt closest to because they could all of a sudden disappear from his life at any time. This is the kind of diabolical harm I witnessed time and time again by an appallingly ugly system exercising life and death power and control over a half million foster kids in this country. Another case came to me when an upset father arrived at my clinic after his son and daughter had been taken away from him and placed in foster care. I was in my office when the secretary called me to the lobby to deal with the distraught parent desperate to get his two kids back. I brought him back to my office and learned the circumstances that had befallen him as a struggling, low income, single parent. Ultimately I told him to contact his children's DCFS social workers and request that they contact my agency for services and sent him home wishing I could do more. Two or three months later I was contacted by one of his kid's social workers and I became the therapist of his 14-year old son and 6-year old daughter. It turns out that earlier in the year the son I shall call Jim ended up with an abscess tooth infection that was swelling up and his father Bill rushed him to Children's Hospital Emergency Room. Jim was admitted overnight but hospital staff contacted DCFS suspecting that possible physical abuse had caused Jim's facial swelling. Two DCFS investigators interviewed Jim in the hospital and then unannounced the following evening showed up at the family residence with police officers in tow. After finding empty prescription bottles in the bathroom medicine cabinet, on the spot they made the snap decision to remove the six year old girl named Lisa from the only home she ever knew. They woke her up from a deep sleep and once again stole another traumatized, hysterical small child from her understandably agitated biological father. The DCFS investigators placed Lisa and Jim into a foster care home, again without any solid evidence of either abuse or neglect, minus the customary criteria for children services to remove kids from their biological family home. The trauma for a six year old girl to be awakened and grabbed up by a police officer and carried away into the night from the only parent she had ever known and loved is both life altering and embeds such deep fears that most likely will haunt her the rest of her life. I can bear witness that for several years afterwards the trauma of that fateful night caused her to go into panic attacks cowering in anxiety and fear every time she saw a police officer in blue uniform. That is how deep-seeded the damage done to this defenseless little girl by the malevolent system that failed to protect her. Though the damaging trauma had already been done, during the ensuing months LA Children's Services ultimately found no evidence of parental abuse and after four months, Jim was reunified with his father at the same time that I was assigned as therapist. But Lisa remained in foster care. I began seeing Jim weekly for his individual therapy at the local high school where he was a freshman and family therapy at his home with his father. I went to Lisa's foster home weekly for her therapy where I discovered the elderly foster mother smoking cigarettes inside her home, obviously posing physical health danger to my client. There is a very sad and sickening irony when the system sworn to protect children was placing and knowingly keeping a child in harm's way after causing irreparable harm in originally taking her away from the only family who loved her. Though no evidence of child abuse was ever uncovered by Children's Services, the father Bill had only one-hour supervised visits with his daughter Lisa each week at the DCFS office. Throughout their entire lives both Jim and Lisa had lived under their father's care despite each having different mothers. The boy's mother was schizophrenic and the girl's mother was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. Jim as Lisa's older brother had a very caring and protective relationship with his little sister. Both the father and brother's sense of loss with Lisa no longer living with

them made them both feel depressed as their family was not complete without her. Lisa's biological mother currently lived in San Bernardino County and after learning Lisa had been taken away from her father, she opportunistically contacted LA County DCFS to seek custody of Lisa. However, six years earlier when Lisa was only two months old the mother showed up for a visit with the father toting Lisa having visible facial scratches and abrasions. Once the father contacted DCFS, he received full custody. The mother was out of Lisa's life after that. Therefore, the only family life Lisa ever knew was the love from her father and brother. It turned out Lisa's intellectually challenged six year older half-sister had aggressively hit and scratched two month old Lisa just prior to that fateful visit six years earlier. Lisa's half dozen years older half-sister at that time was also being sexually molested by adult males the mother allowed into their home though the abuse was discovered a couple years later. Though Lisa's mother could not keep either Lisa or her mentally challenged, sexually abused daughter safe, years later because LA County Children's Services had removed Jim and Lisa from their father that year, under DCFS recommendation the Children's Court judge began authorizing every other weekend visits to the mother's home in San Bernardino County where that same sexually abused, still physically abusive older sister also lived, except now that older sister was twice Lisa's age and size at 12-years old. Over the next several months six-year old Lisa would disclose in her individual therapy sessions with me how her older sister would be constantly aggressively hitting and picking on her. The mentally impaired older sister did not like suddenly having a cute little sister competing for her mother's attention after having the mother to herself her entire life. As a legally mandated reporter of suspected child abuse, I contacted Children Services abuse hotline and submitted a written child abuse report to DCFS that was then passed onto San Bernardino County Child Protective Services (CPS) to initiate a follow up investigation of suspected child abuse. Several weeks later I learned that Lisa's mother had caught the older sister and Lisa observing pornography on the internet. Within that same month while the older sister had a friend staying with them on a sleepover it was learned that the older sister who slept in the same room with Lisa woke Lisa up and insisted that she watch the older sister and her friend lay naked on top of each other simulating having sex. The severely sexually damaged 12-year old was clearly acting out both sexually and aggressively, a classic symptom of early sexual abuse. Overwhelmed, my six year old client was confused and disturbed by her bizarre sister's behavior. A couple months later in yet another incident the older sister physically forced Lisa to place a wad of Vicks Vapo-Rub up inside her vagina. When Lisa began screaming in pain, the mother quickly doused and washed Lisa's burning private parts. But throughout Lisa's time with her mother, Lisa began to regularly suffer from vaginal infections due to the ongoing abuse. Fixated with touching and sticking foreign objects into the vagina is also classic evidence of sexual abuse. When the father took Lisa to the family physician, the doctor expressed concern that Lisa's reproductive organs were at risk of permanent damage. Yet despite my constant series of abuse reports and subsequent San Bernardino County CPS' investigations, apparently not enough substantiated evidence was ever found to warrant suspending all contact or changing the every other weekend arrangement at the mother's. It became my client's word versus her mother's and other daughter's. Clearly Lisa was being physically, emotionally and sexually abused by her older sister on a consistent and regular basis yet despite my countless phone calls, writing abuse reports every month, numerous letters and quarterly reports all bringing red alert full attention to Children's Services in both counties as well as the LA Children's Court judge presiding over the case, along with my showing up at Children's Court repeatedly warning all authorities of the incessant overt abuse going on, nothing ever changed. The judge refused to even allow me into her courtroom. I would walk in and she would ask, "Who is this person?" Upon learning I was the child's therapist, more than once the judge ordered me out of her courtroom with me asking her loudly, "Did you get all my abuse reports?" Not only were all authorities that included DCFS social workers, the child's attorney, the father's attorney and the judge all fully aware of the ongoing abuse occurring every other weekend in San Bernardino County, the judge actually decided to completely wash her hands clean of the case, closing Lisa's LA County file and transferring it to San Bernardino. But far worse, knowing she was being abused, the judge willfully sent Lisa to permanently live with her mother in the same home where the older sister was regularly abusing Lisa. At the final LA Children's Court hearing with the judge having already made up her mind, she finally permitted me inside her courtroom to testify on record presenting the overwhelming evidence. But at that point it was too late, Lisa was being sent to live permanently with her mother and abusive older sister, like it or not. The LA County judge obviously knew the child would only be further harmed by her decision. To me, that clearly constitutes criminal disregard and malfeasance betraying the very oath she had sworn to protect children from abuse. From day one of Lisa's sad life never was her mother able to adequately protect Lisa from her other daughter's abuse. It is all on record. Jim missed his sister badly and only became more depressed while Lisa's father Bill became extremely upset and agitated over this unacceptable, unjust and inhumane court ruling. Based on petty reactions to the father's anger, all players in the Children's Court system complicit in this crime even included the father's own attorney recommending Lisa be sent away to another county knowing full well Lisa would only be further abused. Even Lisa's own DCFS social worker secretly knew it was wrong, apologizing to me after admitting it was his supervisor who was pushing permanent placement with the mother. The judge arranged the exact reverse of the prior schedule. Lisa would now live fulltime at her mother's and only be allowed to spend every other weekend with her father and brother. I would continue seeing her every other weekend for both individual and family therapy. I also continued conducting individual and family therapy with Jim and his father. Such outrageous unfairness, gross injustice and system's complicit abuse were excruciating for Lisa who missed her brother and father so much, she would cry uncontrollably and throw fits every other Sunday when she knew she had to return to her mother's abusive home, dreading she would continue to be victimized. Yet no one was protecting her, despite my over-the-top advocacy and the emotional pleas of both her father and brother. Lisa felt we were failing her in our impotence to change anything. The poor little girl thought her father and brother no longer loved her enough. It was an intolerable situation thanks to the child lack-of-welfare system. Finally with more child abuse reports after Lisa told me her sister pushed her down the stairs at her home, Lisa's social worker from San Bernardino County Children's Protective Services finally began paying attention to me and ultimately recommended Lisa return under her father's care. Driving two hours each way on numerous occasions out to San Bernardino County Children's Court, I continued advocating for Lisa to be protected from her older sister's nonstop abuse and her mother's proven, longstanding incapacity to protect Lisa. After two years of fighting the system as their family therapist, all my efforts to seek justice for Lisa and her family finally paid off as the Children's Court judge in San Bernardino at long last ultimately ordered Lisa's reunification with her father and brother. But the severe damage had already been done to Lisa. The system had criminally failed her and in my clinical opinion, Lisa was traumatized for life. Such protracted mental and emotional anguish most likely impaired her mental stability for life. She was not the same little girl I met when I first became her therapist. Her capacity to focus was completely shattered. Her capacity to trust was totally destroyed. As I see it, the mother's neglect and inability to protect Lisa, her father's, brother's and my inability to protect her from the system's horrific criminal abuse as well as her sister's abuse that lasted nearly two straight years, has permanently crippled this little girl for life. These cases presented here are just two examples of how the child welfare system in America destroys families and individuals. With god-like powers the criminal system makes such far reaching life and death decisions with millions of families that hurt the lives of so many innocent, defenseless children. Children's services and the foster care system whose sole purposes are to protect children from abuse do just the opposite. They betray our children every single day, inflicting irreparable harm on generation after generation of America's youth. The Orwellian Big Brother police state is currently a living nightmare oppressively ruining people's lives by running roughshod over citizens' and families' rights in America. Local county children services agencies work hand in hand with law enforcement to usurp their authority by daily invading our homes and arbitrarily plucking our children from our biological families when no abuse or neglect is even present. The fact that abuse goes on regardless of socioeconomic level is belied by the fact that children in the child welfare system virtually all come from poor, impoverished families. Similar to the inequality of the prison population and broken justice system, the broken child welfare system also appears to prey exclusively on those living in poverty. This apartheid tyranny and betrayal is criminal injustice of the highest magnitude. In thousands of cases the only abuse is once again the punitive, megalomaniacal, thoroughly destructive arm of big government destroying private citizens' lives and the sanctity of the family unit as a scared institution. This pervasive damage is currently being done to the American family. The majority of children living in the foster care system truly are victims of some form of child abuse, often at the hands of biological adult family members that are most often the children's parents. I have worked with countless youth and adolescents who were sexually, mentally and emotionally damaged by chronic abuse and neglect from adult family members and adult family friends. The demand for adequate care and treatment for these emotionally impaired children overwhelmingly exceeds available services. In situations where serious neglect and abuse are occurring, in the interests of protecting the child from further abuse, obviously it becomes necessary on both ethical and legal grounds to remove the child from the home immediately as a last resort (although the traumatic effects of removal of children may be lessened if the abuser(s) was instead removed). But prior to tearing so many families apart, clear-cut evidence of abuse needs to be present. Far too often in my extensive experience, it is not. Efforts to keep the family intact by providing monitored support, therapy and training is far more effective and humane than constantly yanking children from their family homes. It is common even after prolonged severe abuse for kids to want to return home to their biological families and their abusers over remaining with foster care families. Then of course there is an extremely high incidence of abuse coming at the hands

of abusive foster parents. More times than I can recall I learned of another abusive situation caused by a foster parent. Barely half of all foster parents hold a high school diploma. Many are low income households that need and use the foster care money as their main source of income. Fiduciary abuse of mispending dollars that should be utilized for the care and maintenance of foster children is all too common. In the turnover shuffle from one foster home or group home to the next, many sent to ten or more in the course of their placement in the system, children quickly see through the transparent motivations of foster parents who value their monthly paycheck more than the kids they are entrusted to care for. A very revealing fact is that a sizeable [22%](#) of kids in foster care repeatedly run away or end up aging out of the system staying with friends rather than remain in the foster care setting. In one study during the year prior, [one third](#) of teenage runaways were in foster care. Nearly 40% of youth that arrive in runaway shelters nationally were in foster care during the preceding year. 11% arriving in shelters were homeless. Another alarming finding estimates that up to [45%](#) of those leaving the foster care system end up homeless within their first year. These astounding numbers clearly show that the current system is failing these young people. Young adolescent girls from abusive, impoverished backgrounds placed in the foster care system prone to drug abuse and being runaways are especially easy targets for adults pimps and human traffickers to exploit them as prostitutes and sex slaves. Children in the system come to see themselves as mere cash commodities to their surrounding adults, which when internalized manifests as self-worth debased into a mere monetary value. That makes children in the system especially vulnerable and prone to being exploited by adult human traffickers, pimps and predators. 60% of female minors rescued in the United States from human [sex trafficking](#) operations in 2013 were already former victims of the broken foster care system. In LA County in 2012 56% of the girls participating in a support program for commercially sexually exploited females were previously in the child welfare system. In New York City in 2007 of the 2250 victims of human trafficking, 75% were involved in the child system. In Florida an estimated 70% of trafficking victims were from the system. These numbers prove how the foster care system is but a direct pipeline to human trafficking. Only 50% of foster care children graduate nationally from high school and only 2% go on to college. Clearly the outcomes for system aged out young adults are atrocious. Remarkably high percentage of them become statistics suffering from substance abuse, homelessness, prostitution, human trafficking and crime. [Karl Dennis](#), executive director of the Illinois based Kaleidoscope, states: "80 percent of the adults in in all the California correctional facilities are graduates of the state juvenile justice, child welfare, mental health and/or the special education systems." Recognizing the enormity of poor outcomes befalling young adults who are aging out of the child welfare system, several years ago California smartly extended continuing support services funding up through age 23. The crucial importance of providing ongoing assistance into young adulthood with additional educational, vocational/job, therapeutic and housing resources has been a huge step in the right direction though still more needs to be done. Just as there are good, well meaning, compassionate children's court judges, county social workers, child and family therapists and children's attorneys, there are also plenty of good caring foster parents. But because the system is so overloaded and overstretched beyond humane capacity, too many of these all-important players in the child welfare system act as dysfunctional cogs in a highly dysfunctional, uncaring bureaucratic system. The number of children removed from families of origin in the last fifteen years has doubled while the number of foster parents has steadily decreased. When a county social worker has 100 or more kids on his or her caseload, and is mandated to make monthly visits to dozens of placements all over the county and then complete monthly reports on each child, it becomes virtually impossible to offer quality monitoring care and accurately managed services. Hence, so many young people fall through the ever widening cracks into the black hole abyss of mismanaged negligence and endangerment. The current system is reactive and crisis driven, frantically patching up all the gaping, dam-breaking holes and cracks while too many others always open up in their wake. In its current structure and operation, the flood of high profile deaths and permanent injuries to America's most vulnerable population is beyond the faulty, broken system's means to manage, protect and correct the current abominable conditions. A sorely needed overhaul of the system becomes imperative. Of the five billion dollars federally allocated to annually fund child foster care in this country, 90% of that money spent on the child welfare system is reactive, after-the-fact interventions instead of proactive, preventative measures that would minimize the incidence of child abuse from ever taking place. Investing in programs that provide support to prospective parents and families can go a long ways to strengthening parenting skills and building a social support network of community resources vital to child abuse prevention. Monies allocated for addressing the root cause of child abuse prior to the actual abuse serve as a far more prudent and wise long term investment. More families would be able to stay together while the current exorbitant costs of outsourcing biological parents with hired hands too often in it to collect monthly paychecks from an overtaxed system clearly has not worked. Whether unintended consequences of a thoroughly broken and shattered system or by pre-calculated, sinister design, the present foster care system merely serves as a human trafficking and prison pipeline to death and destruction. Foster care was originally intended to be a temporary placement until children could be adopted. Emphasis needs to be placed on reunifying with healthy and willing biological family members as well as finding suitable adoptive parents. But most of all prevention programs need to be instituted in every community throughout the nation. The present failed system is an enormous burden, grand theft automatically to both countless children's lives stolen and destroyed as well as an American taxpayer rip-off. As a nation, we can and should do better. We owe it to our children, and that includes all our children. Joachim Hagopian is a West Point graduate and former US Army officer. He has written a manuscript based on his unique military experience entitled "[Don't Let The Bastards Getcha Down](#)." It examines and focuses on US international relations, leadership and national security issues. After the military, Joachim earned a masters degree in Clinical Psychology and worked as a licensed therapist in the mental health field for more than a quarter century. He has worked extensively with child abuse victims within the child welfare system. He now concentrates on his writing. Source: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-failures-of-americas-foster-care-system/5392130>

Legislatively Speaking – Foster Care 19 July 2014 By Senator, Lena C. Taylor State Senator Lena C. Taylor The Department of Children and Families' mandate is to protect, care for, and oversee the well-being of foster children in Wisconsin. Unfortunately, due to bureaucratic issues and misguided policy, many children – and the public – are getting the short end of the stick. This is unacceptable as it prevents all Wisconsin residents from receiving the opportunities they need in order to pursue a successful future. We need to hold Wisconsin, as well as the rest of the nation, to a higher standard when protecting our children, as it is falls to all of us; the larger community, to help those who need it most. A recent incident involving a mistreated, malnourished 1-year-old speaks volumes to the needed reform for child care services in Wisconsin. This baby – known only by her initials, B.Y. – had suffered broken ribs, bruises and internal bleeding, and hadn't gained weight since she was seven months old. The mother was quickly arrested and charged, but the most troubling detail was that she had been the target of numerous allegations of neglect previously. Over a span of five years the mother was named in five complaints. During that time, she was also caring for six other children. How many of those allegations panned out to real results to intervene and change the negative cycle? Zero. It is not only the children who are at risk. The Department of Children and Families must, under law, file a public summary of the case within 90 days. However, in the case of B.Y., the department insisted on a delay, citing an opinion from law enforcement that the summary would interfere with the investigation. However, no one from law enforcement ever asked to withhold the information, according to a Journal Sentinel investigation. After this was brought to light, the offending wording was removed and a spokesman for the department cited "evolving policy" for the delay. "The public is ill served if information within the report compromises the criminal proceedings," they said. My colleague Senator Bob Jauch (D-Poplar) hit the nail on the head when he noted that "Either they don't understand the law, or they are on the border of ignoring it." If the delay was indeed part of a new department policy, it sacrifices the public's right to know in a timely manner and their safety. Is this trade-off reasonable? I believe it isn't. B.Y.'s tragic oversight comes notwithstanding recent efforts to double down on preventing foster care abuse. In February of this year, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare launched the Care4Kids program, which "creates a medical home for children in foster and other types of out-of-home care". Care4Kids established a permanent team of specialists and primary care providers whose duty is to provide foster children with healthcare. Unfortunately, the program only serves about half of Wisconsin foster children – and only if their health issues are reported. This leaves room for unwilling or purposefully neglectful parents, for whom the status quo doesn't change. Senator Tammy Baldwin recently worked to improve medical coverage for foster children by introducing the Quality Foster Care Services Act. The proposed bill would look to extend Title XIX (Medicaid) of the Social Security Act to encompass medical assistance for therapeutic Foster Care Services. Unfortunately, the bill does not have much hope of passing. As long as our Federal Congress remains unable to act effectively, it is up to Wisconsin to take action and address this problem ourselves. As Wisconsinites, we have shown that we are not willing to stand idle to our own issues. The Program Care4Kids was recently implemented for five counties in Southeastern Wisconsin, creating a medical facility and establishing medical testing requirements for individuals participating in out-of-home Foster Care. Although this initiative is a step in the right direction, it will not completely curtail our current foster care issues. We need to do more to improve communities across our state, and that includes implementing these programs in all counties. Currently, Care4Kids only applies to roughly 2,600 foster care participants, which only accounts for roughly 33% of all children in the Wisconsin foster care system. The lack of complete coverage for all children participating in out-of-home foster care elicits the potential for more children to remain neglected, or without complete and comprehensive medical care. The question remains, how

many more "B.Y.s" have to suffer because of our inaction? Almost 8,000 foster children call Wisconsin their home, and it's time for us to make sure that home treats them right. We need to ensure that all Wisconsin children are brought up right and with the opportunity to succeed in the future. We need to start seeing reforms because we can no longer afford to see our children suffer. It is in their best interest, and ours, to ensure that they live healthy, fulfilling childhoods, guaranteeing that their futures remain bright. - See more at: <http://milwaukeecourieronline.com/index.php/2014/07/19/legislatively-speaking-foster-care/#sthash.S04mH5JB.dpuf> Source: <http://milwaukeecourieronline.com/index.php/2014/07/19/legislatively-speaking-foster-care/>

Baby dies while in foster care at East Texas home - KFDA - NewsChannel 10 / Amarillo News, Weather, Sports Baby dies while in foster care at East Texas home Posted: Jul 21, 2014 6:22 AM PDT Updated: Jul 21, 2014 2:55 PM PDT HUNTINGTON, Texas (AP) - Officials say a 2-month-old girl has died at an East Texas home as the woman with whom she was living ran an errand and left several other adults to watch the baby. The Angelina County Sheriff's Department says an autopsy was scheduled Monday on the infant, whose name wasn't immediately released. Sheriff Greg Sanches says an initial review indicates the baby apparently died of natural causes. Sanches says the woman in whose care the child was entrusted had to pick someone up Saturday and left the sleeping child in the care of several family friends at a home near Huntington. One of the adults checked on the girl, noticed she wasn't breathing and called 911. Child Protective Services has been notified. Huntington is about 120 miles northeast of Houston. Copyright 2014 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. Source: <http://www.newschannel10.com/story/26068940/baby-dies-while-in-foster-care-at-east-texas-home>

13th Judicial District seminar spotlights benefits of child permanency Register for free presentation by Aug. 8 By Journal-Advocate staff Posted: 07/21/2014 01:34:22 PM MDT A seminar in Fort Morgan on Aug. 15 will focus on the benefits of permanent child placement. The seminar is offered to residents of Colorado's 13th Judicial District who have an interest in the state's foster-care system or dependency and neglect cases. Children who "age out" of the foster-care system lose benefits and, without a family or other support to turn to, may not know how to live independently, an announcement from the District Court says. "Children placed outside their homes face many challenges during their formative years. The lack of permanency is one of those challenges," said 13th Judicial District Chief Judge Michael K. Singer. "The courts, the child welfare system, the legal profession, and the community all benefit when we focus together on the goal of finding permanent homes for these young people. The goal of this seminar is to hear from professionals, community organizations, and other interested persons concerning the best methods of achieving permanency for vulnerable children." The idea of the seminar sprang from a Colorado Judicial Branch workshop for experts in dependency and neglect cases in the fall of 2013. During the workshop, two youths spoke about their experiences in the state's foster-care system, and an idea to bring them to the 13th Judicial District to speak grew to a district-wide seminar on permanency. Those two youths will be among the speakers during the seminar, scheduled from 7:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 15, at the Fort Morgan High School Auditorium, 709 E. Riverview Avenue in Fort Morgan. Attorneys who attend will receive continuing legal education credits, and all attendees will be offered breakfast, a snack and lunch. There is no cost to attend the seminar. Other speakers include people involved with permanency roundtables, which consist of members involved in a child's case who get together and help guide permanency decisions for the specific child; and members of the Office of the Child's Representative, Respondent Parents' Counsel, the Family Justice Information System and the Court Improvement Program. Organizers encourage attendees to bring something to take notes on as there is not a writing surface available in the auditorium. The 13th Judicial District includes Kit Carson, Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington and Yuma counties. For more information or to reserve a seat at the seminar, please contact Amanda Lindsey at amanda.lindsey@judicial.state.co.us by Aug. 8. There is also information on Facebook under the group 2014 13th Judicial District Permanency Seminar. Source: http://www.journal-advocate.com/sterling-local_news/ci_26185862/13th-judicial-district-seminar-spotlights-benefits-child-permanency

Court Orders State to Finish Foster Care Reforms Monday, July 21, 2014 Today, Judge Charles Snyder of the Whatcom County Superior Court ruled that the State must finish the job of reforming the foster care system as it promised to do in a 2011 settlement agreement in Braam v. State. Noting that the "essence" of the class-action lawsuit was about "inappropriate and insufficient levels of care and services", the court rejected the State's request to significantly weaken the settlement agreement. The Court also rejected attempts by the State to get out of required: Reductions in caseloads; Increases in monthly visits to children and visits between siblings; and Improvements to caregiver training and support of caregivers. "The Court affirmed today that the clear promises made to foster children to improve care must be kept," said Mary Van Cleve of Columbia Legal Services, who argued the motion on behalf of the foster children. "While the State has made some significant improvements under this case, key areas still need fixing. As a result of today's ruling, the State should redouble its efforts." While it recognized that the State had made "enormous" changes to the foster care system under the lawsuit, the Court found that the State had not shown that it was unable to comply with the rest of the agreement. Last December, the attorneys for the foster children sought enforcement of the Revised Settlement Agreement. In 2011, the State hailed the Revised Agreement, which followed an earlier 2004 agreement, as a "model" containing "realistic and achievable" reforms. Had the Plaintiffs not sought court enforcement, the case would have been dismissed. The State will be required to tell the Court how it plans to comply, and the Court will review progress in 12 to 14 months. The Court found the State was in compliance on services to medically fragile children, an outcome on which it had complied for 18 of the last 24 months. The Agreement covers all 10,000 children in foster care. More detailed data on the Braam case can be found at www.braamkids.org and http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/about/imp_settlement.asp. Source: <http://columbialegal.org/Court-Orders-State-Foster-Care-Reforms>

Former Bethel foster parent Peter Tony sentenced to 66 years for child sex abuse [Michelle Theriault Boots](#) July 22, 2014 Email [Print](#) Text Size-[A](#) +[A](#) The Bethel house where Marilyn and Peter Tony lived from the early 1990s to 2012, and where Peter Tony allegedly abused children in the couple's foster and daycare. Eli Martin photo A Fairbanks judge on Tuesday sentenced Peter Tony, a former foster parent in the Southwest Alaska community of Bethel, to 66 years in prison for sexually abusing children. "You will be in jail for the rest of your life," Superior Court Judge Douglas Blankenship told the 70-year-old defendant. Related: [Former Bethel foster father Peter Tony pleads guilty to child sex abuse charges Alaska Office of Children's Services under scrutiny in wake of Bethel sex-abuse allegations](#) Blankenship said Tony preyed on vulnerable children entrusted to his care for nearly 40 years. Tony admitted to molesting his stepdaughters, two of whom [later committed suicide](#), an unknown number of foster children in his care and a young girl his wife was babysitting, according to a court transcript of the hearing. The abuse happened between 1973 and 2012, the transcript said. One of Tony's victims, former stepdaughter Kimberley Bruesch, was in the courtroom. Bruesch has [spoken publicly](#) about the effect of Tony's abuse on her and her sisters. The judge found there was "likely a connection between (Tony's molestation) and (the sisters) taking their own lives." The sentencing came five months after Tony pleaded guilty to three counts of sexual abuse of a minor. The charges were linked to molestation of a 4-year-old girl in 2011 and a 12-year-old foster child in 1998, the only instances of abuse prosecutors said they had enough evidence to charge. Tony's case has attracted widespread attention in part because some of the abuse happened while he was a [state-licensed foster parent](#) in a region where child sex abuse is epidemic. Bethel district attorney June Stein has said her office prosecutes [more than 200 cases of sexual abuse of a minor](#) each year. From 1984 to 1998, Tony and his wife, Marilyn, took in seriously needy foster children, including teenagers who still needed help learning to clean themselves, children with fetal alcohol syndrome and kids who had already cycled through dozens of foster homes. After the couple's foster care license was abruptly revoked in 1998 due to what is described in state records as a "substantiated" report of sexual abuse, they began operating an informal, unlicensed daycare. Tony was arrested 15 years later on sex abuse charges. In court Tuesday, Tony made a statement in which he talked about his "blackout" drinking days and said he had "no guidance" growing up, according to an audio recording of the hearing from Bethel public radio station [KYUK](#). When asked whether he had anything to say to his victims, Tony apologized. "I am sorry those things happened," Tony said. The father of another victim was also present in the courtroom Tuesday, with the same victim's mother listening in by phone. The sister of a third victim listened by phone, too. Blankenship said he had considered factors, including the possibility of rehabilitation, in sentencing Tony. He concluded that Tony should not be eligible for discretionary parole because of a "lack of likelihood for rehabilitation." The 82-year sentence, with 16 suspended, handed down by the judge means there is no chance Tony will live long enough to be released on mandatory parole. "He will be long dead before he was eligible," Stein said. "Perhaps a sentence of this magnitude will deter other people." Contact Michelle Theriault Boots at mtheriault@adn.com. Source: <http://www.adn.com/article/20140722/former-bethel-foster-parent-peter-tony-sentenced-66-years-child-sex-abuse>

Tales of foster care abuse sound 'like prison' Posted: Jul 23, 2014 10:05 PM PDT Updated: Jul 24, 2014 1:09 PM PDT AUSTIN, Texas (AP) - A legislative committee looking to improve the state's foster care system is hearing from Texans who told lawmakers of abuse and trauma in the foster homes where they grew up. Some choked back tears Thursday during emotional testimony before the Texas House Select Committee on Child Protection. Committee

Chairwoman Dawnna Dukes even said what she heard sounded "like prison." The state's 17,000-child foster system has been under scrutiny since seven children died of abuse or neglect in fiscal year 2013. This year, only one such youngster has died. But officials are investigating the July 6 drowning in Lake Georgetown of two siblings in foster care, ages 4 and 6. A recent review found child protective caseworkers only spend 26 percent of their job meeting with youngsters and families. Copyright 2014 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed. Source: <http://www.newschannel10.com/story/26098879/house-committee-scrutinizing-texas-foster-care>

Maryland agencies need to improve oversight of group homes, officials say Signs of financial mismanagement can go unnoticed by regulators, they acknowledge [Comments](#) [1](#) [2](#) [next](#) | [single page](#) Health Secretary Dr. Joshua Sharfstein (right) and Department of Human Resources Secretary Ted Dallas at a legislative briefing on oversight of group homes. (Doug Donovan / Baltimore Sun / July 24, 2014) Related [Group home for disabled children struggled to provide adequate care](#) [Disabled foster child dies at Maryland group home](#) [Maryland group home where boy died had staffing shortage, nurse says](#) Doug Donovan, The Baltimore Sun 8:42 p.m. EDT, July 24, 2014 State officials said at a legislative briefing Thursday that their agencies must do more to flag financial mismanagement at group homes — problems similar to those that went unheeded at an Anne Arundel County facility where a 10-year-old disabled foster child died this month. Maryland's health and human resources secretaries appeared together before a joint committee of state lawmakers in Annapolis to answer questions about oversight of LifeLine, the operator of the group home where the boy died. They also recommended legislative action to enhance their oversight of contractors that care for such foster children. The hearing was triggered by a Baltimore Sun investigation revealing that the state awarded contracts worth millions of dollars to LifeLine despite numerous issues — problems with past care, an imprisoned founder, unpaid taxes, and allegations of abuse and neglect — that several lawmakers said should have prompted officials to act sooner. "How many chances do we give these providers?" said state Sen. [Joanne Benson](#), a Prince George's County Democrat. "Do we keep on giving them chances hoping and praying that it'll get better?" Maryland Health Secretary Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein shot back: "Absolutely not." He defended health inspectors, saying they acted quickly once serious issues with LifeLine's care were identified this year. But he and Ted Dallas, secretary of the Department of Human Resources, said both agencies need to do more when contractors display questionable management. "I think we probably give people too many chances on the administrative and financial side," Sharfstein said. "That's why we're here very clearly saying we can do better and that the way that we can do better is to pay more attention, have more tools and be able to be more aggressive around administrative and financial issues before they start to affect clinical care." Dallas, sitting next to Sharfstein before two dozen lawmakers, provided a similar message: "We think both agencies need to be more sophisticated and have better resources when we're looking at fiscal issues as opposed to quality of care." The state began the process of removing 11 children from LifeLine's Laurel-area apartments in early June, after confirming complaints of poor care in February and May, and after learning from The Sun that the company had failed to report numerous calls to Anne Arundel police and fire departments alleging abuse and neglect. But on July 2 — before all of the children were moved to a new facility — Damaud Martin died. His LifeLine nurse told The Sun that the apartment he was living in was understaffed that night. Officials are investigating his death and whether inadequate care might have played a part in it; they have said it is too early to draw conclusions. LifeLine officials did not respond to requests for comment Thursday. Lawmakers went out of their way not to blame state agencies for LifeLine's problems. But several took issue with the distinction Sharfstein and Dallas made between effective monitoring of care and ineffective monitoring of the company's financial problems. "It is my feeling that when you have administrative violations and you have fiscal problems that this is definitely going to impact the quality of care," said Sen. [Joan Carter Conway](#), the Baltimore Democrat who called for the briefing. She said a company facing substantial tax debt — LifeLine had an IRS lien of more than \$1 million — would start "cutting corners" and use its funds to pay down that debt. Sen. Edward Reilly, a Republican from Anne Arundel County, agreed: "If an organization is under financial pressure, the quality of care will suffer." The Sun's investigation found that state officials were not aware LifeLine had broken its lease on its Laurel headquarters office early this year. The company failed to tell state officials that it filed for bankruptcy protection in August 2012 — listing its founder, Randall Martin Jr., as the sole shareholder. Martin was sentenced to 50 years in prison in February 2013 after being convicted of setting fire to his former mistress' rowhouse. Despite a state audit that found LifeLine was insolvent, the state extended the company's contract in March 2013. Six months later, the state awarded LifeLine a nearly three-year contract worth \$4.9 million. Dallas told lawmakers Thursday that the six-month extension gave the company time to provide a plan to fix its financial problems and allowed his agency to start planning to remove LifeLine's children if necessary. "Doing that in less than a month was not something we thought was safe and prudent, and we wanted to give ourselves more time on both fronts," he said. That's not what his agency told the Board of Public Works, according to state records. Its remarks in the agenda said the extension was being requested "due to the limited competition received" for the contract to provide group home care to foster children who are severely disabled. Several lawmakers at Thursday's briefing questioned the 2011 decision by state officials to close LifeLine's facility for disabled adults while allowing the company to care for medically fragile children. In March 2011, the state suspended the company's license to care for disabled adults after finding poor care — including the care given to three residents who died. Sharfstein said the same inspectors who recommended closing the adult facility said LifeLine's care of disabled children was fine. Just a week after the suspension by Sharfstein's agency, Dallas' agency approved a \$15 million contract for LifeLine to care for more disabled children. Read more: http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/sun-investigates/bs-md-lifeline-hearing-20140723.0.4372501_story#ixzz38tuQamPL

DCF Commissioner Catches Heat Over New Policy 5 days ago by [Louisa Moller](#) Reporter [Comments \(0\)](#) Share Update Share Update: [3](#) [20](#) Share Update: [3](#) [20](#) DCF Commissioner Responds to Heat On New Mental Health... WTIC - Hartford, CT DCF Commissioner Responds to Heat On New Mental Health Policy [Share Video Link & Embed](#) DCF Commissioner Responds to Heat On New Mental Health Policy [Share on email](#) Linking and embedding are disabled for this video. Copy video embed code: Copy video link: [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#) This video player must be at least 300x170 pixels in order to operate. DCF Commissioner Responds to Heat On New Mental Health... DCF Commissioner Responds to Heat On New Mental Health Policy Previous Up Next [Share on email](#) Connecticut Department of Children and Families Commissioner Joette Katz is standing by a new policy to shut down agency group homes. Katz appeared on Thursday with several organizations before a group of lawmakers to deliver a progress report on a statewide overhaul of the mental health system for children. Katz said she wants to reduce the number of children in group homes of institutionalized care from 21 percent to 10 percent. But, some lawmakers worry that the move has sent more children with complex mental health needs to emergency rooms. "We've moved hundreds and hundreds of children into a different type of setting. It's having an impact on the system," State Senator Beth Bye (D-West Hartford) said. Katz countered that DCF children only make up roughly 25 percent of children served in ERs. "What I say is that children should be raised in homes, not in institutions. And any congregate facility, whether it's a group home, a safe home, a residential treatment facility, Should not be a placement. It is a treatment setting," Katz said. A concrete plan for the statewide overhaul of the mental health system is scheduled to be presented to lawmakers in October. Read more: <http://foxct.com/2014/07/24/DCF-commissioner-catches-heat-over-new-policy/#ixzz38tvUHZkp>

Tales of foster care abuse in Texas sound 'like prison' By Associated PressPublished: July 24, 2014, 6:28 amUpdated: July 24, 2014, 8:40 pm [20](#) [431](#) Related Coverage [Siblings drown in Lake Georgetown; foster home investigated](#) [Report: Texas not giving face time to foster kids](#) AUSTIN (AP/KXAN) — Young adults who grew up in Texas' foster care system recounted harrowing stories of abuse and emotional trauma Thursday for members of a legislative committee looking for ways to better protect such children. Some choked back tears during a hearing of the Texas House Select Committee on Child Protection, and chairwoman Dawnna Dukes said what she heard made foster care sometimes sound "like prison." The state's 17,000-child foster system has been under intense scrutiny since seven children died of abuse or neglect in fiscal year 2013. Another three died "in kinship care," after being assigned to live with relatives. This year, one foster child has died, but officials are still investigating two siblings in foster care, ages 4 and 6, who [drowned July 6 in Lake Georgetown](#), near Austin. An outside review found child protective caseworkers only spend 26 percent of their job meeting with youngsters and families. "If we expect them to come out and graduate college we need to make sure they're not being abused in care," said Tyrone Obaseki, a former foster care child. He now spends his time advocating for the children he says cannot fight for themselves. "I was body slammed at the age of 6. My teeth fell out... no one really cared." Lena Francis, now 20, testified that she was in foster care in Houston from birth until age 7 — then adopted. She said she was often locked in a dark room for hours and prohibited from eating or drinking. "These agencies, they don't know what happens. And how can you report that because, at the end of the day, you've still got to go home with that person?" Francis said, her voice cracking. Francis said Texas should mandate drug testing for potential foster and adoptive parents, as well as institute random visits to homes where children are placed. "For the most part, we're being abused," Francis said. "I want people to be held accountable." Roshaude Williams, 23, said he was in foster care until age 19 and lived in two-dozen homes around Texas. He said foster parents put him on medications he didn't need because state funding increased for youngsters with medical problems — and that he eventually attempted suicide by

walking into traffic. "I guess it's all right now, but I've had 20-something jobs," Williams said. "I can't hold one down." John Specia, commissioner of the Department of Family and Protective Services, said that the system fails when children are shuttled between so many homes. He said he's pushing for an agency "culture change" that would make foster care placements more permanent, saying no child should reach adulthood while still bouncing around the system. "I've met very, very few children that aged out of the foster care system, that were in the system for any length of time, that had a good experience," said Specia who has been in his post about 18 months. "If a child goes in at 2 and ages out at 18, we've failed miserably and the child is going to have very, very serious problems." Former caseworkers say the workload also hampered their efforts to help the children. "There were times where I had very high caseloads and I was not able to devote the time a child needed to them," former caseworker Ashley Harris said. "Caseworkers are just running round checking on kids but are not able to look for red flags and that ultimately puts the child in danger." Specia said that, today, 40 percent of Texas foster children have been placed with relatives, and that he'd like to see that increase. "We have problems in some foster homes I will not deny that," Specia said. "We have an awful lot of good providers out there doing a good job, and we have a lot of foster parents out there doing a good job." Dukes responded: "And we have a lot of folks that are not, and that's the reason we are having hearings." Copyright 2014 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. Source: <http://kxan.com/2014/07/24/house-committee-scrutinizing-texas-foster-care/>

Our Foster Care System Is Becoming A 'Pipeline' For Human Trafficking 60 percent of the children rescued in a recent FBI sting had been in foster care at some point Written by Elise Hilton | Friday, July 25, 2014 28 If we really look at this issue of child trafficking in America, it's another lens through which to understand how broken our foster care system is. Many of these girls, especially, have been put into multiple placements, and many of these girls in those different placements have been abused. So one survivor leader whom we work with who was trafficked from the age of 10 to 17 – all through California, Nevada, Washington state – she talks about how, for her, foster care was the training ground to being trafficked. She understood that she was attached to a check. And what she points out is that at least the pimp told her that he loved her, and she never heard that in any of her foster care placements. At any given time in the U.S., there are [about half a million children](#) in foster care. Many of these children are in crisis situations, and will be in foster care for only a short time, returning home or to live with a family member when the crisis has been resolved. Other children, however, remain in the system. The lucky ones will remain in one home, loved and nurtured, possibly even adopted (although for most that can take up to 4 years.) Unfortunately, most children in foster care will have to live in at least 3 different placements, and every year, 300,000 children "age out" of the system, meaning they turn 18 and no longer receive support services. Most foster parents try their best to provide stable, loving environments for the children in their care. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that the U.S. foster care system is becoming a "pipeline" for human trafficking. In [an interview with NPR](#), Malika Saada Saar of [Rights4Girls](#) discusses this issue: If we really look at this issue of child trafficking in America, it's another lens through which to understand how broken our foster care system is. Many of these girls, especially, have been put into multiple placements, and many of these girls in those different placements have been abused. So one survivor leader whom we work with who was trafficked from the age of 10 to 17 – all through California, Nevada, Washington state – she talks about how, for her, foster care was the training ground to being trafficked. She understood that she was attached to a check. And what she points out is that at least the pimp told her that he loved her, and she never heard that in any of her foster care placements. Further, Saada Saar cites 60 percent of the children rescued in a recent FBI sting had been in foster care at some point. One young woman, Withelma "T" Ortiz Walker Pettigrew, testifying before the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Ways and Means, told her story of foster care and being trafficked. The experience of foster care, she said, gave her the mindset that she was tied to a paycheck, that her worth and value were not intrinsic; she was worth only the money she brought in. This set her up as easy prey for traffickers. From my own experience and that of others, the money that is given by the state is supposed to be utilized to provide for the child's basic needs — however the money is often used for other things, specifically for special luxuries for the caretaker and their biological children and families, unrelated to the financial support of the child it was intended for. These caregivers will make statements like "you're not my child, I don't care what's going on with you, as long as you're not dead, I'll continue to get my paycheck." This "nothing but a paycheck" theory objectifies the youth and the youth begin to normalize the perception that their presence is to be used for financial gain. This creates a mind frame for the youth that their purpose is to bring income into a household. This mindset, she testified, sets many children in foster care up for the seduction and grooming of human traffickers. Craving attention and stability, a child who has been moved from one placement to another can easily find themselves lured into a world of promises made by the trafficker, only to find themselves used for financial gain. Many children in foster care have been previously abused, putting them at further risk. Another obstacle that must be overcome in order to prevent children from falling prey to traffickers is [treating victims as criminals](#). Many states continue to prosecute children who have been picked up for solicitation or prostitution, rather than providing mental health and other services that would keep them out of the hands of traffickers. [CAS Research & Safety](#) cites the need for emotionally stable care for these children: Foster care children are targeted by traffickers because of their need for love, affirmation, and protection. Victims are trained to call sex traffickers "daddies" and themselves "wifies" – a perverted reflection of the family unit that these children are seeking. These children long for a family...even if it means being subjected to extreme violence and abuse. There will always be children who require care outside of their biological families. Clearly, what we are doing now is not always working well. In fact, it seems as if foster care is often a precursor to becoming a victim of human trafficking. We must do better for our children, especially children who are most vulnerable. Source: http://theaquilareport.com/our-foster-care-system-is-becoming-a-pipeline-for-human-trafficking/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=our-foster-care-system-is-becoming-a-pipeline-for-human-trafficking

Woman accused of stealing from mentally disabled in group home: Best of the beat [Print](#) By [Barb Galbincea](#), [Northeast Ohio Media Group](#) Sun News Email the author on July 26, 2014 at 4:00 PM, updated July 26, 2014 at 4:24 PM Reddit Email A Cleveland woman is accused of stealing from residents of a Westlake group home. Here are some of the stories you may have missed in the last week from Bay Village, Rocky River and Westlake. [Accused:](#) A Cleveland woman is accused of stealing food stamp cards from three adults with mental disabilities who live in a Westlake group home. Police say that Shawuan Telfair bought hundreds of dollars worth of food using the cards. Source: http://www.cleveland.com/westlake/index.ssf/2014/07/woman_accused_of_stealing_from.html

Trial pending for woman accused of abuse Anthony Borrelli, Staff writer 1:03 p.m. EDT July 27, 2014 A woman accused of sexual abuse has pleaded not guilty to the charges and is awaiting trial. Broome County Court (Photo: ANTHONY BORRELLI / STAFF PHOTO) Story Highlights Joyce Prince is accused of sexually abusing a resident of a state-operated group home in the Town of Dickinson. A trial is expected to be held in Broome County Court. Prince pleaded not guilty after being indicted by a grand jury. [CONNECT](#) [TWEET](#) [LINKEDIN](#) [COMMENT](#) [EMAIL](#) [MORE](#) A Johnson City woman has pleaded not guilty in Broome County Court to charges she had inappropriate sexual contact in 2012 with a male resident of a state-operated alternative group home in the Town of Dickinson. Joyce D. Prince, 38, was indicted June 27 by a Broome County grand jury for a felony count of third-degree criminal sexual act and a misdemeanor count of endangering the welfare of a child. She pleaded not guilty June 30. The case is expected to go to trial before Judge Martin E. Smith, though no date has been set. State police said an investigation found Prince, while she was employed in the state-operated Prospect 1 SOIRA group home, engaged in inappropriate sexual contact with an unidentified developmentally disabled male resident. The alleged victim was 16 years old at the time of the incident, court papers said. The group home is operated by the State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). Prince, who was employed by the state for 13 years, is accused of committing the illegal sexual act in early September 2012, according to court papers. Prince's defense lawyer, Ronald Benjamin of Binghamton, said the allegations of the person being sexually abused by his client lack any merit. The case could go to trial sometime this fall, he said. "It's a totally ridiculous case," Benjamin said. "We would like to get her exonerated." In December 2013, an arbitration hearing regarding Prince's employment determined allegations were not credible enough to terminate her, according to court records. Prince remains on administrative leave until the criminal case is resolved, Benjamin said. Prince was released on her own recognizance after the arraignment in county court. Source: <http://www.pressconnects.com/story/news/crime/2014/07/27/woman-abuse-trial-pending/13221891/>

Michael Jackson's daughter advised by doctors to reconnect with her family Paris, 16, has reportedly become estranged from her relatives following her attempted suicide last June and medical professionals believe she'll find it beneficial if she re-establishes her relationship with them [Share on twitter](#) [Share on email](#) [Share on facebook](#) [Share on print](#) [More Sharing Services](#) 1 27 July 2014 A source told TMZ.com: "The doctors who have been treating Paris have told her she needs to create a family support system. She's become estranged from her entire family." The troubled star - who has grown close to her biological mother Debbie Rowe - has spent almost a year at therapeutic boarding school **Diamond Ranch Academy** in Utah, but doctors think her mental health will continue to improve if she rekindles her bond with her grandmother Katherine Jackson, her brother Prince, 17, and her half-brother Blanket, 12. The source

explained: "Doctors want her to mend fences with Katherine, her siblings and other immediate family ... they think it's important to her healing." The actress was given the all-clear from doctors in May and is reportedly adamant she won't return to the \$14,000-per-month private school in the Autumn. However, Katherine - who is a co-guardian to Michael's three children alongside T.J. Jackson - doesn't think that's a very good idea and thinks she should return. Source: <http://home.nzcity.co.nz/news/article.aspx?id=190800&fm=newsmain%2Cnrhl>

Marcus Fiesel: Horrific story of foster child's murder retold in TV documentary [WCPO Staff](#) 11:15 AM, Jul 27, 2014 7:41 AM, Jul 28, 2014 Marcus Fiesel Copyright 2014 Scripps Media, Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. Copyright 2014 Scripps Media, Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. Marcus Fiesel UNION TOWNSHIP, Ohio – Three-year-old Marcus Fiesel's gruesome murder by his foster parents shocked the community in August 2006. The story was retold in a TV documentary Sunday night. Liz and David Carroll wrapped Marcus in a blanket, bound him with duct tape and left him in a hot closet without food and water while they went out of town for a weekend family reunion, prosecutors said. After finding him dead, David Carroll and his live-in lover, Amy Baker, took Marcus' body to a rural area and burned it with gasoline. Then they threw the remains in the Ohio River. The Investigation Discovery channel looked back at Marcus' story late Sunday night. Marcus died of heat exhaustion between Aug. 4 and Aug. 6, authorities said. After that, the Carrolls and Baker spent nine days planning a cover-up. On Aug. 15, Liz Carroll reported Marcus missing. She told police she had taken Marcus and three other children to Juilfs Park in Anderson Township. She said she passed out because of low blood pressure and when she recovered, Marcus was gone. A week later, Carroll held a news conference at the park and made a televised plea for help in finding the boy. Thousands of people searched the area for days. Within a week, though, Baker told authorities that the Carrolls killed the child, and the foster parents were arrested. Liz Carroll was found guilty and was sentenced to 54 years to life. David Carroll took a plea deal and got 16 years to life. Baker got immunity. Liz Carroll told police the whole thing was Baker's idea and that Baker tied up Marcus, but prosecutors didn't believe her. Angry that Baker got off scot-free, a Kentucky prosecutor charged her with tampering with evidence for dumping the remains within Kentucky's jurisdiction. Those charges were dropped. Baker was convicted on a drug charge in Ohio and spent a few months in prison. Marcus' death put the spotlight on failings in the foster care system. The non-profit that placed Marcus with the Carrolls lost its license. New laws put tougher restrictions on foster parent eligibility and require closer screening of applicants and more training. They also require daily background checks on foster parents and regular checks on children. RELATED: [Marcus' murder drives foster-care system improvements](#) Source: <http://www.wcpo.com/news/local-news/marcus-fiesel-horrific-story-of-foster-childs-murder-retold-in-tv-documentary>

Ruling balances kids' safety and family rights Cedar Rapids Gazette 11:58 p.m. CDT July 26, 2014 Buy Photo Gavel(Photo: The Register)Buy Photo 3 CONNECT [TWEET](#) [LINKEDIN](#) COMMENT EMAIL MORE That the Iowa Department of Human Services has been able to remove minors from parents' custody and into foster care with little or no judicial oversight is disturbing at best. That the family's continued separation might be based on stipulations outlined in a loosely regulated "safety plan" is outright frightening. We applaud District Judge Ian Thornhill for finding it unconstitutional for DHS to use such voluntary agreements when they interfere with custodial rights of a parent or when they are initiated by a non-custodial parent or one without any established rights. The widespread use of these documents and lack of strict guidelines or adequate oversight has resulted in unacceptable, if unintended, consequences for too many families. In a recent Johnson County court case, a 5-year-old girl was placed in foster care after a non-custodial parent made unsubstantiated allegations of abuse, signing a "voluntary foster care placement agreement." The custodial parent was not notified and did not take part in the agreement. Even after the allegations were proved false and an attorney, hired by the custodial parent, petitioned for return of the child, Iowa DHS refused. Because of Thornhill's judgment, no more will such plans be used to remove or keep children from their home without the consent of a custodial parent. Further, they will not prevent a parent's contact with a child, or restrict access to a child by a parent who has not signed the agreement. Thornhill's decision puts in place some much-needed boundaries on the agency's use of voluntary removals. It is unconscionable that a child could be taken without his custodial parent's knowledge, consent or proper judicial review. Source: <http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/opinion/2014/07/27/ruling-balances-kids-safety-family-rights/13232151/>

Counselor charged with assaulting 16-year-old after disciplinary dispute [Story Comments \(15\)](#) [Image \(1\)](#) Print [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) [Previous](#) [Next](#) Andre Lamar Heard Andre Lamar Heard Posted: Monday, July 28, 2014 12:00 am [Counselor charged with assaulting 16-year-old after disciplinary dispute](#) By ANDREA SALAZAR andrea.salazar@theeagle.com The Eagle | [15 comments](#) An employee at a local children's residential treatment center recently was suspended after Brazos County authorities charged him with assaulting a 16-year-old at the facility. Andre Heard, 36, was arrested Friday in connection with a June 25 incident at **Everyday Life Residential Treatment Center** in the 6900 block of Broach Road near Bryan. Cedric Payton, co-founder and administrator of the 13-year-old center, described Heard as a good role model with extensive training and said he was defending himself against the teenager's attack from behind. The facility manager called authorities to report a physical altercation between Heard and the teen, which occurred as Heard tried to cut a lock off the boy's locker to take away his computer for disciplinary purposes, according to court documents. Heard, a counselor at the center for almost two years, told investigators that after the 16-year-old refused to comply with staff members' instructions, the two began "tussling" and ended up on the ground, according to authorities. The employee said he was holding the teenager down by the back side of the neck, but added that, because the boy was moving around, it was possible he was holding him down by the front of the neck, investigators said. The boy, who has since moved to a group home in Boerne, told police that after he pushed Heard, the counselor "went crazy," grabbed him by the throat and slammed him to the ground, according to the probable cause statement for Heard's arrest. Photos from the day of the incident show scratches and bruising to the teen's neck, as well as blood coming from his left ear, where an earring had been torn off, investigators said in the probable cause statement for Heard's arrest. The document didn't specify whether the teen was treated at a hospital. Heard was charged with Class A misdemeanor assault causing bodily injury, which is punishable by up to one year in jail. He was released from jail Friday after posting \$4,000 bail. Payton said no employees previously have been charged with such a crime at his facility. "We're on top of it," Payton said. "We're cooperating fully with CPS and the sheriff's department." Open since 2001, Everyday Life cares for 44 abused or neglected boys between the ages of 10 and 17. It has an A-plus rating from the Better Business Bureau and is a child protective services licensed child-care administrator. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services website lists 11 deficiencies, described as any failure to comply with child care licensing standards, at the facility during inspections in the last two years, including two reporting violations and the misapplication of a prone restraint on a child. The Brazos County Sheriff's Office reported receiving 36 calls for service from the treatment center between January 2013 and March 2014, mostly regarding runaways. "We're not known for being a facility that doesn't care for its kids," Payton said. "We do a lot for our kids and the community." Source: http://www.theeagle.com/news/crime/counselor-charged-with-assaulting--year-old-after-disciplinary-dispute/article_9599feac-3017-5355-b802-3059fe402832.html

Former mentor at NE Ohio children's treatment center gets 44 years in prison for sexual abuse THE ASSOCIATED PRESS July 28, 2014 - 7:13 pm EDT [AAA](#) CLEVELAND — A worker from a now-closed residential treatment center has been sentenced to 44 years in prison for sexually abusing two teenage girls who lived at the northeast Ohio facility where she was a strength coach and mentor. At a sentencing hearing Monday, the judge called 34-year-old Cassandra Goodson a predator. Goodson is from the Cleveland suburb of Shaker Heights. Prosecutors say she began having sex with two girls when the teens were 13 and 15. Goodson pleaded guilty last month to six counts of sexual battery and five counts of unlawful sexual conduct with a minor. Goodson's attorney did not return telephone calls. The Cleveland diocese's Catholic Charities converted the residential facility for troubled teens into an outpatient center earlier this year. Source: <http://www.therepublic.com/view/story/2726fde0f8ce4c75b827235da6b9ce0b/OH--Ex-Mentor-Sexual-Abuse>

Paris Jackson Leaves Boarding School For Family? Michael Jackson's Daughter Now Has A Boyfriend By Chill Harrison | July 28, 2014 09:15 PM EDT [More Sharing Services](#) [0 comments](#) (Photo : Instagram @parisjacksonn) Paris Jackson has left boarding school, at least for the meantime, so she could bond with her family. However, this time Michael Jackson's daughter might be bringing back her boyfriend. According to the report by TMZ, Paris Jackson left boarding school for family as she was spotted hanging out with her friends in Calabasas on Wednesday night. Her cousin and co-guardian, T.J. Jackson, was also seen accompanying them to make sure Michael Jackson's daughter is alright. Source: <http://www.kpopstarz.com/articles/101336/20140728/paris-jackson-boarding-school-michael-jackson-daughter.htm> (HEAL Note: Keep Paris Free and Free ALL The Children!)

Appeals court orders permit revoked in Clarkson Street group home battle By [Alan Prendergast](#) Tue., Jul. 29 2014 at 1:05 PM [Write Comment](#) Categories: [Follow That Story](#), [News](#) The Bennet-Field mansion at 740 Clarkson, bought in 2011 for \$700,000. The Colorado Court of Appeals has overruled a

Denver judge's decision to allow Open Door Ministries to operate a treatment program for recovering addicts in an historic mansion on Clarkson Street -- the latest twist in a long-running zoning battle in the neighborhood that was the subject of my 2011 feature "[Meet the Neighbors](#)." ODM now has only a few weeks to either appeal the decision to the Colorado Supreme Court or make drastic changes to its Lighthouse boarding home, which neighbors contend was started with an improperly issued permit, one that the appeals court now says must be revoked. See also: "[Judge's ruling further muddles group home flap](#)" ODM acquired the 6,700-square foot Bennett-Field house at a short sale for \$700,000 more than three years ago, planning to use it as a residential-treatment facility for recovering male addicts and alcoholics. Neighbors, however, complained that the area was already saturated with group homes, and ODM's bid for a "transitional housing" permit for the operation was twice denied by city officials. A city anti-clustering ordinance requires that large residential-care facilities be at least 2,000 feet from each other and that no more than two can exist within a 4,000-foot radius of any newcomer. There are already three such facilities less than 4,000 feet from 740 Clarkson. But ODM did obtain a room-and-board permit for the property, allowing it to move its clients into the house. (One judge subsequently ordered them to operate certain portions of their program off-premises.) That R&B permit was obtained before ODM even purchased the house, on December 30, 2010, the last day such a permit could be sought before the area was down-zoned in a manner that prohibited such uses. Next-door neighbor Jesse Lipschuetz took ODM to court, arguing that the city never should have issued the permit. Denver District Judge Ann B. Frick agreed; but she also gave weight to ODM executive director David Warren's argument that his organization had relied in good faith on the city's action and would suffer harm if the permit was revoked. Eighteen months ago, Judge Frick granted summary judgment to ODM. But the current appeals court ruling maintains that Frick's court didn't have authority to address the issue because ODM hadn't complied with the notification requirements involved in filing its cross-claim. That decision doesn't address the neighbors' ire over the city's confusing and often conflicting zoning actions, but the result is -- at least for now -- a victory for residents of the block who believe the area already hosts too many group homes. Whether there will be further rounds of legal argument is unclear. Lipschuetz and Warren could not be immediately reached for comment. Source:

http://blogs.westword.com/latestword/2014/07/appeals_court_orders_permit_revoked_in_clarkson_st_group_home_battle.php

Stanton adult foster care facility ordered to close By Joe LaFurgyPublished: July 28, 2014, 7:13 pmUpdated: July 28, 2014, 7:22 pm [2 43](#) STANTON, Mich. (WOOD) — The state has ordered a Montcalm County adult foster care facility to close because it isn't properly licensed, meaning nearly 40 residents will have to find a new home before the end of this week. Laura's Loving Acres, located on Colby Road near Stanton, was ordered shut down by an Ingham County Circuit Court judge last Wednesday. The order goes into effect Thursday, giving families little time to find new homes for their loved ones. "I do want some answers," said Julie Ross, who managed to find another home for her mother Marge Gamble this weekend after a Department of Human Services employee informed her of the court order last week. "I want to know if we're evicted, why weren't we given notice. And if they're closing this place down, I'd like to know exactly why. We have heard nothing. Not a word, except 'get out,'" she said. Last week's court order provides some of those answers. The suicide of a resident last November brought state investigators to the facility. They started asking questions about the agreement made between the owners and residents. It was a unique arrangement. Marcia and Marvin Zylstra are listed as owners of the three buildings that make up the facility. Their son Tim Zylstra ran a separate company that provided health care. Residents needing care could use Tim Zylstra's company or one of their choosing. Since one company owned the home and one or more companies provided care, Tim Zylstra told 24 Hour News 8 he didn't need an adult foster care license. But state investigators said the separate arrangement was only on paper. Interviews with residents, guardians and other information showed Zylstra's parents "... served as nothing but decoys for an operation completely directed by Timothy Zylstra," according to court documents. And the arrangement investigators found required a license, according to regulators. The judge agreed and issued the closure order. As to why there was such short notice to residents and their families, Department of Human Services spokesman Bob Wheaton says that in general, the department has to wait for a court's decision before closing down a home. "Providers have rights, and the completion of our investigation does not necessarily bring the matter to a close — particularly when the provider disagrees with our findings," Wheaton said. He says DHS tried sending workers to help residents find new homes, but employees at Laura's Loving Acres won't let them on site. Tim Zylstra told 24 Hour News 8 that's the first he's heard of that. Meanwhile, families are caught in the middle. — Source: <http://woodtv.com/2014/07/28/stanton-adult-foster-care-facility-ordered-to-close/>

The Truth About The New Orleans School Reform Model Anyone who saw the remarkable HBO series [The Wire](#) remembers the [scene](#) in the fourth season focused on Baltimore public schools where the term "joking the stats" defined how corporate-driven reengineering of the public sphere has distorted institutions so they no longer serve ordinary people. An anniversary post for [The Atlantic](#) described that memorable moment thus, "Historical pressures push teachers in season 4 as President George Bush's No Child Left Behind education plan casts a real-life shadow. When a new city teacher, formerly of the Baltimore police, hears how his school will teach test questions, the young man immediately recognizes the dilemma: 'Joking the stats ... Making robberies into larcenies. Making rapes disappear. You joke the stats, and majors become colonels. I've been here before.' Joking the stats is a practice now so ingrained in the way education solutions are posed to the public that examples are rampant. But anyone who wants to have a genuinely honest discussion about education policy based on the real facts of the matter — and not statistical distortions achieved through gross manipulation and "policy speak" that covers up realities on the ground — needs to constantly question what policy leaders and their scribes in the press are foisting off as "information." There are better sources to turn to, and the Internet makes that search remarkably easy. No Way To Talk About NOLA An especially egregious example of "joking the stats" is the way school administration in New Orleans — where, basically, the catastrophe of Hurricane Katrina was used as an opportunity to summarily fire school teachers and turn over the majority of schools to privately managed charter school operators from out of town — is now being marketed to the entire country as a "solution" for public education everywhere. As I pointed out in a recent piece for [Salon](#), "In the most recent presidential election, [both candidates](#) hailed the New Orleans charter-dominated system as a model for other states to follow. It has been touted by think tanks on the center left and the far right as ["what should come next"](#) for ["transforming"](#) the nation's schools." I went on to explain that although this model of "reform" was being touted by politicians and in the press, "There's no evidence anywhere that the NOLA model of school reform has 'improved education.'" This prompted a letter to my Salon editor from an official of the Recovery School District in New Orleans (RSD NO) — the administrative apparatus put in charge of most of New Orleans schools post Katrina — stating there were "several inaccuracies regarding the Recovery School District and the state of public schools in New Orleans." I post the exchange that ensued not just to take readers deep into the weeds of understanding why the NOLA model for running schools should be avoided at all costs, but also to exemplify why and how to contest the "solutions" for education policy constantly being marketed to us by a disingenuous campaign that distorts data to serve its generally hidden ends. Call "Jeffrey [sic] Bryant states 'There's no evidence anywhere that the NOLA model of school reform has 'improved education.''" The percentage of RSD students performing at grade level on state assessments has more than doubled from 2007-2013 from 23% to 57%. RSD has been first in the state of Louisiana in performance growth each year since 2007. Also, the percentage of all New Orleans public school students attending a failing school has decreased from 65% in 2005 to 5.7% in 2013. 67% of all public school students in New Orleans attend A, B, or C schools, up from 20% in 2005. "Jeffrey states 'Any comparisons of academic achievement of current NOLA students to achievement levels before Katrina should be discredited because the student population has been so transformed.'" The proportion of African-American students has decreased since Katrina, but only by 7 percentage points; and the proportion of free and reduced lunch students has actually increased by 6 percentage points. Pre-Katrina — 04-05 New Orleans public school students: 94% African-American; 3% White; 3% Other 77% eligible for Free and Reduced School Lunch Post-Katrina — 12-13 New Orleans public school students: 87% African-American; 7% White; 6% Other 83% eligible for Free and Reduced School Lunch "Jeffrey states 'despite reform efforts, the NOLA Recovery School District has many of the lowest performing schools in Louisiana.'" To say this, clearly indicates that Jeffrey does not have the context needed to explain what the RSD is and what we were created to do. The RSD is not a typical school district. Back in 2003, the Louisiana legislature created the RSD to transform the state's lowest performing schools. A school has to fail for four consecutive years to be RSD eligible. So, only the lowest performing schools are eligible to be in the RSD and as you can see from the growth data, we are improving these schools and will continue to make progress to ensure they are high performing. "Jeffrey states 'You're not allowed to choose the best performing schools in the city — those that make up the Orleans Parish School Board — because those are selective enrollment only. You're not going to get priority based on proximity, even if there is a school across the street from your home.'" "OneApp, New Orleans's central enrollment system, was created by the RSD and the Orleans Parish School Board to provide students and families with the opportunity to choose a school anywhere in the city that suits their interests and needs. Of the 85 public schools, 75 are part of the enrollment system. These 75 schools, are all RSD schools and the schools that Orleans Parish School Board directly operates. In 2012, OPSB passed a policy that states that the remaining ten OPSB schools will join when their charters

are up for renewal or they can volunteer to join now. RSD has been vocal about the need for all schools to join now voluntarily and some have chosen to do so already. "As far as the priority based on proximity comment, we do offer geographic priority for 50% of the available seats in a school. We did this in an effort to allow for families who want to send their children close to home, while also ensuring that students from outside of a school's neighborhood have access. "I am writing to request that accurate context and facts be sought prior to posting articles pertaining to our organization and public schools in New Orleans. I am also requesting that Jeffrey correct the article or allow us to publish a response to his piece. Thank you for your time and consideration." Zoey Reed Executive Director of Communications, External Affairs Recovery School District

Response Dear Ms. Reed, Thanks so much for reading my Salon piece "Look out, Chris Christie: The new war on public schools just might be defeated" and taking time to write a thoughtful reply. In your letter to my Salon editor, you contend that my article contained "several inaccuracies regarding the Recovery School District and the state of public schools in New Orleans." I want to respond specifically to each of your points and use this exchange as an opportunity to go into more depth about the record of achievement for RSD-NO. As I stated in my article, public school policies implemented in New Orleans following Katrina are being held up as a "reform" model for troubled school systems around the country, and it is important that we have clear understandings of what this model has actually accomplished. Your first point of difference with me was that I've misread the "evidence" of the NOLA model's school performance record. While I stated that evidence of improvement is practically nonexistent, you counter, "The percentage of RSD students performing at grade level on state assessments has more than doubled from 2007-2013 [and] the percentage of all New Orleans public school students attending a failing school has decreased from 65% in 2005 to 5.7% in 2013." Although these statistics certainly sound impressive, there is much more to the story behind these numbers. As Louisiana math teacher Mercedes Schneider has pointed out on her blog (<http://deutsch29.wordpress.com>), the main reason RSD has made such great strides in grade level performance is that from 2012 to 2013 the state changed the formula and scale for measuring school performance, which artificially inflated RSD's scores. Schneider, who also authored the book "A Chronicle of Echoes," wrote on her blog, "Of the 37 RSD-NO schools with complete 2012 and 2013 SPS/letter grade information, 26 increased a letter grade as an artifact of [state superintendent] John White's changes to the scoring system ... In other words, had the same rules applied in 2013 as were applied in 2012 to grading RSD schools, then 15 schools would have received a 'D' instead of a 'C,' five would have received an 'F' instead of a 'D,' and five would have received a 'C' instead of a 'B.' Had consistent criteria been used in grading RSD-NO from 2012 to 2013, its district letter grade would have remained a 'D.'" RSD-NO scores were further inflated due to the fact that of the 63 schools in the 2012-2013 ratings, only 49 have complete data for both years, and only 37 have letter grades other than "T" for both years. As you know, "T" schools have no letter grades because they are considered to be in "turnaround" state and are exempt for two years. Thus, of the 64 RSD-NO schools in the 2012-2013 ratings, only 37 have the data that any school outside of RSD is expected to have for a two-year period. Despite how state reports on RSD-NO performance have been able to "juke the stats" in the district's favor, those schools continue to show little if any academic gains. As Louisiana teacher Mike Deshotels recently reported on his blog (louisianaeducator.blogspot.com) the Louisiana Department of education has just released the results of the state accountability testing called LEAP and ILEAP for the Spring of 2014. The report [includes a percentile ranking](#) of each of the public school systems in the state according to the performance of their students in math, and English language arts. Deshotels, who taught Chemistry and Physics at Zachary High School near Baton Rouge and served as Research Director for the Louisiana Association of Educators, noted, "This official LDOE report now ranks the New Orleans Recovery District at the 17th percentile among all Louisiana public school districts in student performance ... this means that 83 percent of the state's school districts provide their students a better opportunity for learning than do the schools in New Orleans... This 17th percentile ranking places the New Orleans takeover schools just about where they were before the takeover." As Deshotels pointed out, "Dramatic improvements in the LEAP measure of grade level performance for math and ELA" has coincided with "very little improvement for Louisiana students" on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAPE). He concluded, "This discrepancy is a strong indication of score inflation for the state's accountability testing. Either the tests got easier or students learned how to perform better on the state tests without significantly improving their English and math skills." Your next point of contention is with my statement, "Any comparisons of academic achievement of current NOLA students to achievement levels before Katrina should be discredited because the student population has been so transformed." My statement merely echoes advice from respected education researchers. Independent, peer-reviewed studies generally agree – as research experts at the [National Education Policy Center](#) recently did, in comments regarding a study of RSD-NO charter schools – "Right after Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans experienced immediate and dramatic shifts in the school population, with a quick enrollment decline from about 68,000 to 32,000 students – slowly climbing back to 42,000 by 2011 ... making well-founded conclusions becomes exceptionally problematic in a city with such fundamental changes and such potentially strong selection effects." Your next complaint is with my finding that, "despite reform efforts, the NOLA Recovery School District has many of the lowest performing schools in Louisiana," which you contend, indicates I do "not have the context needed to explain what the RSD is and what we were created to do." As [Louisiana Weekly](#) recently reported, the whole intentions behind creation of RSD-NO have been murky from the beginning. As the analysis stated, "Before Hurricane Katrina, the RSD (created in 2003) could only take over a school with a performance score less than 60, and which had already gone through four years of corrective action. To legally justify taking the majority of New Orleans schools and then privatizing them, the state changed the failing benchmark from 60 to just under the state average of 87.4. The constant changing of grading scales and benchmarks has continued since, and has become an often scoffed at trademark of Superintendent John White's dissemination of annual data." In fact, the whole "context" for RSD's existence has changed since its inception. As the Louisiana Weekly article reported, "According to a study by Tulane University's Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives: 'Intended as a mechanism for restructuring and reform, the RSD was never meant to be a permanent part of the public school governance landscape in New Orleans. Instead, the RSD was meant to take control of and turn around chronically failing schools for an initial period of five years. After that time, and assuming adequate school improvement, schools would be released from the jurisdiction of the RSD and returned to their local school board.' But that didn't happen." As the article pointed out, the charters that constitute RSD-NO have been given the power to choose whether or not they want to return to the OPSB. But all those eligible thus far have said, "No," because they would then be subjected to a higher level of scrutiny that characterizes OPSB management. Your last point of contention is with how I've portrayed the OneApp process parents have to do go through to find placement for their children in NOLA schools. You state that the process was created "to provide students and families with the opportunity to choose a school anywhere in the city that suits their interests and needs." A recent article by Jessica Williams for [The Lens](#) described what the OneApp process means for most parents and how well they fare as they seek to find a school "that suits their interests and needs." Williams looked at the probable trajectory of students whose "failing" schools were being closed down by the district and found, "the vast majority ... are headed to other substandard schools next year." Williams reported that parents needed to relocate their students were given a list of choices by the district, and "of the 17 schools listed with grades C or better, nine had seats open in only one or two grades. Five others had no vacancies." As Williams reported in [another article](#), "Parents have few options when moving kids from failing public schools" in the RSD-NO system. She found, "More than seven years into the New Orleans choice experiment, documents and interviews reveal the schools are so academically anemic that the RSD fell short in its attempts to comply with [federal policy requiring school districts to offer higher quality alternatives to students in failing schools](#)." Mercedes Schneider has gone into greater depth on the messy, confusing nature of the OneApp process. [On her blog](#), she recently wrote, "enrollment is no longer based upon students residing in a given area and automatically attending a community school. Thus, the 'parental choice' of selecting a school by moving to the neighborhood is moot. That choice exists no more. Now, parents must apply to the schools they would have their children attend – even if they live right next to the school." Further complicating matters, the process "involves a detailed application process, with one application necessary per child within RSD and OPSB direct-run schools, and [a different consolidated application](#) (no guarantees here) for some (not all) OPSB charter schools. And even though the RSD/OPSB direct-run application notes that siblings are given priority for attending the same schools, there are no guarantees there, either." For years, parent activist Karran Harper Royal has struggled to place her children in schools she feels would be best for them and has concluded that what RSD-NO provides to parents isn't real "choice" at all. [She has written](#), that instead of providing real choice, "students only have the choice to apply to over 70 schools; many students end up in lotteries for the higher performing schools. Students not selected in the lottery don't have a choice; they have to attend schools where available seats remain." Even the higher performing charter schools, Harper Royal noted, are routinely "not offered as options for the lowest performing students in New Orleans." For these reasons and others, Harper Royal has joined with other civil rights activists in [filing a civil rights complaint](#) against RSD-NO. To conclude, one point we agree on is, "The RSD is not a typical school district." Let's also agree to keep it that way. Source: <http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/the-dishonest-case-for-the-new-orleans-school-reform-model/>

New Bill Calls for Religious Freedom in Foster Care By [Brian Rinker](#), July 30, 2014 [Share on Tumblr](#) [PRINTER FRIENDLY](#) Two Republican senators on July 30 introduced a bill that would allow faith-based child welfare providers the freedom to discriminate against foster parents based on religious beliefs. [The Child Welfare Provider Act 2014](#) co-sponsored by Sen. Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.) and Rep. Mike Kelly (R-Pa.) is meant to safeguard religious freedom among faith-based organizations that provide adoption and foster care services. Many private providers of adoption and foster care services are faith-based organizations, which contract with the state to recruit adoptive/foster parents. Some religious providers only recruit married men and women to be foster parents, refusing to serve same-sex or unmarried couples because of their religious beliefs. A handful of states have enacted civil union and same-sex marriage policies that strip the funding and contracts from faith-based organizations that refuse to incorporate those practices in their adoption and foster care services. The most notable case occurred in 2011, when Illinois severed ties with five faith-based child welfare providers since the state's civil union law took effect last month. The groups – five regional affiliates of Catholic Charities – object to licensing unmarried and gay couples as foster or adoptive parents. Similar actions have since been taken in Massachusetts and Washington, D.C. "Limiting their work because someone might disagree with what they believe only ends up hurting the families they could be bringing together," said Enzi in [a press release](#). "This legislation will help make sure faith-based providers and individuals can continue to work alongside other agencies and organizations, and that adoptive and foster parents have access to providers of their choice." The inclusion act follows on the coattails of the Supreme Court's recent decision that institutions have religious rights. "This bill is about fairness and inclusion," said Kelly in the same press release. "It is about ensuring that everyone who wants to help provide foster or adoptive care to children is able to have a seat at the table." The bill, if passed, would protect faith-based organizations' right to act in accordance with their beliefs, prevent the government from taking "adverse actions" against them and provide relief for those organizations that feel their rights have been violated. A bill to strip federal funds from any provider that would not consider any adoptive or foster couple was proposed in 2011 by former Rep. Pete Stark (D-Calif.). Though Stark drew 56 co-sponsors, the bill went nowhere. Brian Rinker is a Journalism for Social Change Fellow and a recent graduate from San Francisco State University's journalism program. Source: <https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/news/senate-bill-calls-for-religious-freedom-in-foster-care/7744>

ACLU to Highlight Lakota Child Foster Care Crisis to United Nations >PRWEB.COM Newswire > PRWEB.COM Newswire Rapid City, SD (PRWEB) July 30, 2014 The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has included South Dakota's persistent and alleged illegal seizure of Lakota children in a report it is scheduled to present to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland in August. The United Nations will convene the 85th session of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, at which the ACLU will present an update on the United States' compliance issues with human rights provisions as set forth by the UN. In a section of the report entitled "Lack of Due Process in American Indian Child Custody Proceedings in South Dakota", published on July 9, 2014, the ACLU details how statistics relating to the rate at which Lakota children are removed from their families when compared to non-Native counterparts "reflect intentional and unintentional racism, consistent with practices that have been condoned for decades in much of the United States." The report can be found here: <https://www.aclu.org/human-rights/american-civil-liberties-union-icerd-shadow-report-us-periodic-report>. The report further asserts that the Indian Child Welfare Act, passed in 1978 by Congress with the aim of stemming the problems of Indian children being removed from families and extended families within their tribes, has severe limitations. One of these limitations is the lack of a regular and comprehensive review by any federal agency to ensure state compliance with statutory requirements. "Individual states are already required to report on a variety of measures regarding children in their care, but not on issues specific to ICWA compliance or the Indigenous children under state care," the report states. Additionally, the funding apparatus for tribal child welfare programs and officers hired to ensure ICWA provisions are being followed are cobbled together from different federal agencies and child welfare programs, leading to oversight confusion, the report states. A lack of funding for oversight and implementation is also listed as a limitation to the law in its current form. The ACLU filed suit in the United States District Court for the District of South Dakota (Case No.: Civ - 135020JLV) in March 2013 against various South Dakota state officials involved in the removal of Indian children from their homes under state child custody laws. A copy of the complaint is available here: <https://www.aclu.org/racial-justice/ogala-sioux-tribe-v-van-hunnik-complaint>. The suit -- filed on behalf of the Oglala Sioux Tribe and the Rosebud Sioux Tribe -- alleges state officials violated the Due Process Clause of the United States Constitution along with ICWA provisions routinely, which routinely resulted in the wrongful removal of scores of Lakota children on an annual basis. Madonna Papan, a resident of Pennington County and member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, had her two children stripped from her custody in a hearing that lasted less than 60 seconds, according to the complaint. Court officials refused Madonna Papan and her husband access to the petition filed against them and continue to grapple with the psychological effects the trauma has had on her children. The Lakota People's Law Project (LPLP) has been working on foster care issues relative to the Native American children of South Dakota since 2005, partnering with tribes and leaders in South Dakota. An average of 742 Native American children are removed from their homes in South Dakota on an annual basis, according to the United States Children's Bureau's "Child Welfare Outcomes: Reports to Congress." When controlling for the factor of poverty, South Dakota still ranks third in the nation for the highest number of children taken into custody by the Department of Social Services, according to the National Coalition for Child Protection Reform's "2010 NCCPR Rate of Removal Index." While Native American children constitute 13.5 percent of the child population in South Dakota, they comprise 54 percent of the youth foster care population, according to the Child Welfare Outcomes compiled by the Children's Bureau. South Dakota has allegedly continued to ignore stipulations in ICWA that mandate placement of Native American children in Native American homes, placing about 87 percent of Native children in non-Native homes, according to data provided by the South Dakota DSS to LPLP in an email in 2011. The ACLU will present the child foster care issue as one of seven major issues that continue to confront the United States as it attempts to comply with the major human rights treaty monitored by the UN, according to the report. The other issues include Racial Profiling, Racial Disparities in Sentencing, Racial Discrimination in the U.S. Capital Punishment System, The Right to Vote, Discriminatory Treatment of Guestworkers and Undocumented Workers and Predatory Lending and the Foreclosure Crisis. "The fact that the ACLU saw fit to include the child foster care crisis affecting the Lakota Nation in South Dakota effectively demonstrates the importance of remedying this egregious situation by allowing the tribes to have authority over their children," said Chase Iron Eyes, an attorney with LPLP. "The United States can not continue to forward itself on the international stage as an authority on human rights and a bastion of freedom when it has such reprehensible racism festering in its own backyard." The United Nations definition of genocide as set forth in Article 2 of the General Assembly Resolution 269, includes the following provision: "forcibly transferring children of one group to another group." The Lakota People's Law Project is also funding several Lakota professionals to work on this campaign, and is launching an on-line petition campaign to pressure the Federal Departments to make the South Dakota tribes a priority for funding allocations. The Lakota People's Law Project's activities have included funding and supporting Native experts to provide technical assistance to the tribes on family and child welfare issues. The project combines public interest law, research, education, and organizing into a unique model for advocacy and social reform. The Lakota People's Law Project is sponsored by the non-profit Romero Institute based in Santa Cruz, CA. The Institute is named after slain human rights advocate Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador. The Institute seeks to identify and dismantle structural sources of injustice and threats to the survival of our human family. Read the full story at <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2014/07/prweb12053305.htm> Read more: <http://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/2090996#ixzz39JSqoN00>

Maplewood treatment center at fault after resident left in subzero cold By [Sarah Horner shorner@pioneerpress.com](#) Posted: 07/30/2014 12:01:00 AM CDT Updated: 07/31/2014 07:30:44 AM CDT The Minnesota Department of Health has found a Maplewood residential treatment center at fault for an incident that left a resident hospitalized after being left outside for several hours in subzero temperatures. The state agency issued its findings in an investigative report released this week that looked into conduct at Community Foundations, 1096 Gervais Avenue. The facility is operated by South Metro Human Services. According to the report, a resident diagnosed with a mental illness and chemical dependency issues was absent from the unlocked facility from about 10:30 p.m. to 6 a.m. during a night in March when temperatures fell as low as 15 degrees below zero. The resident's hands and feet suffered frostbite, and hospitalization was required. The resident also had a cut on the forehead. Staff members are expected to alert employees who arrive for the overnight shift when a resident isn't in the building. Bed checks to ensure residents' whereabouts also are supposed to be conducted during the night. The report pointed to neglect in both areas. "There were systems breakdowns related to communication between shifts as to the resident's absence from the facility in addition to how a room-bed check was conducted," the report stated. Terry Schneider, executive director of South Metro Human Services, said the facility regretted the incident and has since complied with the health department's recommendations to safeguard against it. "They asked us to do a staff training on how to conduct bed checks, and we expanded that protocol to make sure the location of individuals is known throughout the course of the day, not just during the bedtime hours," Schneider said. Schneider added that staff "feel really badly" about what happened. "It distressed the staff a great deal," he said. "We care a great deal about our clients'

welfare, so this was very difficult for everyone involved." Schneider said he could not comment on the resident's current condition because of client confidentiality policies. In addition to the Maplewood center, South Metro Human Services operates 15 smaller residential supportive services facilities throughout the state. Its staff also provide in-home treatment to clients living with mental illnesses. Source:

http://www.twincities.com/health/ci_26244348/maplewood-treatment-center-deemed-at-fault-after-resident

Unlicensed group home for mentally ill discovered [2](#) By Staff Reports news@rockdalenews.com A Conyers woman was charged with operating an unlicensed group home in Conyers for those with mental illnesses. Sharon Ann Seats, 46, was charged after an investigation by the Conyers Police Marshal along with Code Enforcement and the Department of Community Health, for operating an unlicensed home health facility out of her home on Creek Forest Court in Conyers. CPD Cpl. Chad Sims, the City of Conyers Marshal, was notified by police patrol of a residence in the Forest Villa subdivision that appeared to be operating as a personal care home business. Cpl. Sims contacted the Ga. Department of Community Health, the government organization charged with regulating personal care homes and issuing licenses for the same, who confirmed neither this address nor the resident is licensed with their agency. Sharon Seats told police she was formerly a certified nurse assistant at Serenity personal care home in Stone Mountain prior to it being shut down following several investigations by the Department of Community Health. Seats stated she then relocated to 1213 Creek Forest Court and "took some patients from Serenity with [her]". Seats was housing two adult males and one adult female, all suffering from various forms of mental illness, and collecting several hundred dollars payment each month from each patient. Source: <http://www.rockdalenews.com/section/24/article/20574/>

Contractor serving 1,100 foster children quits By Associated PressPublished: August 1, 2014, 2:44 pmUpdated: August 1, 2014, 9:07 pm [25 173](#) Related Coverage [Tales of foster care abuse in Texas sound 'like prison'](#) AUSTIN (AP) — The contractor leading a pilot program to overhaul Texas' troubled foster care system canceled its five-year contract with the state Friday, forcing the Department of Family and Protective Services to take over direct management of about 1,100 foster children. **Providence Service Corp.** last February signed a five-year, \$30 million deal that included managing 1,100 children in West Texas, the first region selected as part of a redesign of foster services statewide. But the firm is now pulling out. "The care and services for these foster children will not be affected in any way," John Specia, commissioner of the Department of Family and Protective Services, said in a statement. "This will be a smooth transition." The 17,000-child statewide foster care system has been under scrutiny since seven foster children died of abuse or neglect in fiscal year 2013. Only one such youngster died this year, but two siblings in foster care, ages 4 and 6, drowned last month in a lake near Austin and the case is still being investigated. Those children were placed in their foster home by **Providence Kids, the Arizona-based child-placing company for Providence Service.** In recent years, Texas has moved to privatize its foster care placement efforts. Under the redesign, Providence Service, rather than state officials, was managing other contractors charged with selecting foster homes and providing other services for children within the system. The Department of Family and Protective Services said the company exercised an opt-out clause after state officials notified it about "several issues" with contract performance, including missing targets on efforts to better place siblings together and keep children close to their existing homes. Ashley Harris, child welfare policy associate for the advocacy group Texans Care for Children, said, "It should now be clear to everyone that just barreling ahead with further privatization isn't going to work." "We can do some things on the cheap," Harris said in a statement, "but protecting a child after the state takes custody of her is not one of them." Source: <http://kxan.com/2014/08/01/contractor-serving-1100-foster-children-quits/>

State funds overhaul of child services Last updated: August 03, 2014 4:17PM - 98 Views By [Anthony Gonzalez - agonzalez@civitasmedia.com](mailto:agonzalez@civitasmedia.com) Representative Sarah Stevens (Wilkes, Surry), who is co-chair of the Legislative Research Commission's Committee on Omnibus Foster Care and Dependency, said she was pleased by the steps included in the budget relating to child protective services. Photo Representative Sarah Stevens (Wilkes, Surry), who is co-chair of the Legislative Research Commission's Committee on Omnibus Foster Care and Dependency, said she was pleased by the steps included in the budget relating to child protective services. Story Tools: Font Size: SRALEIGH — State lawmakers passed the Child Protective Services Improvement Initiative on Saturday, an act they hope will give the state Department of Social Services tools it needs to best protect children. The CPSII was ushered into legislators' hands after two high profile cases revealed significant DSS case mismanagement, a lack of background checks and a lack of communication between county Department of Social Services offices, while at the same time showing an increase in caseloads and a reduction of federal aid. One high profile case occurred in Wilkes County. After being molested by their father, two children allegedly were raped by two caretakers they were placed with by Wilkes County DSS. The children contracted a sexually-transmitted disease, according to the arrest warrant. One of the caretakers previously had been convicted of child abuse in Surry County. The two caretakers remain in police custody awaiting trial. Another high profile case occurred in Union County. A child under the care of a Union County Department of Social Services supervisor was found by police at the supervisor's home handcuffed to the front porch with a dead chicken wrapped around his neck. Five social service workers were fired, one demoted, while the supervisor and her partner were charged by police for felony child abuse. Representative Sarah Stevens (Wilkes, Surry), who is co-chair of the Legislative Research Commission's Committee on Omnibus Foster Care and Dependency, said she was pleased by the steps included in the budget. "We have some money to provide more workers. Now we need revisions to the law to make the process more clear and to expedite the process to protect children," said Stevens in voting for the budget bill. According to Stevens, Child Protective Services' should have a caseload no greater than 10 families at any time for workers performing child protective services assessments and 10 families at any time for staff providing in home services. However, data suggests that in 43 of the counties in the state, 21 have a caseload size of more than 15 cases per worker; and further, in nine of those 21 counties, there is an average caseload size of more than 20 cases per worker. During the 2013-2014 fiscal year, records show county departments of social services lost federal funding for child protective services under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant and Title IV funding. However, the number of child protective services investigations has grown by 20 percent from fiscal year 2002 to fiscal year 2012. Funding Child Protective Services Lawmakers appropriated to the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services, the sum of \$7,369,970 for county departments of social services. Of those funds, \$4,500,000 shall be used to replace federal funds counties lost during the 2013-2014 fiscal year previously used to pay for child protective services' workers. Beginning Oct. 1, the remaining \$2,869,970 shall be used to provide additional funding for child protective services' workers to reduce caseloads to an average of 10 families per worker. In-Home Services Funds in the amount of \$4,500,000 are to be allocated for child welfare in-home services to provide and coordinate interventions and services that focus on child safety and protection, family preservation, and the prevention of further abuse or neglect. Oversight of Child Welfare Services Funds totalling \$750,000 shall be allocated to fund nine positions to the division to enhance oversight of child welfare services in county departments of social services. These positions shall be used to monitor, train and provide technical assistance to the county departments of social services to ensure children and families are provided services that address the safety, permanency and well-being of children served by child welfare services. Pilot Program Also, \$300,000 shall be used to establish and implement a child protective services pilot program. The funds shall be used to enhance coordination of services and information among county departments of social services, local law enforcement agencies, the court system, Guardian ad Litem programs, and other agencies as deemed appropriate by the department. The division shall coordinate with the Government Data Analytics Center (GDAC) in developing the pilot program and commence the pilot program by Dec. 1. Statewide Evaluations In addition, \$700,000 shall be used to provide for a comprehensive, statewide evaluation of the state's child protective services system. The Division of Social Services shall contract for an independent evaluation of the system, which evaluation shall include developing recommendations on the following: (1) The performance of county departments of social services as related to child protective services. (2) Caseload sizes. (3) The administrative structure of the child protective services system in the State. (4) Adequacy of funding. (5) Child protective services' worker turnover. (6) Monitoring and oversight of county departments of social services. The division shall report the findings and recommendations from the evaluation to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services no later than Jan. 4, 2016. Study Conflicts of Interest/Public Guardianship and Child Protective Services. The Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services, shall study the issue of conflicts of interest in child welfare cases as related to public guardianship. In conducting the study, the department shall consider the following regarding addressing potential conflicts of interest: (1) Creating internal firewalls to prevent information sharing and influence among staff members involved with the conflicting cases. (2) Creating a formal or an informal "buddy system" allowing a county with a conflict to refer a case to a neighboring county. (3) Referring the guardianship to a corporate guardian until the child welfare case is resolved. (4) Having the Department assume responsibility for either the guardianship or the child welfare case. (5) Recommending legislation to permit the clerk the option to appoint a public agency or official, other than the Director of Social Services, to serve as a disinterested public agent in exceptional circumstances only. (6) Any other issues specific to this matter the Department deems appropriate. The division shall submit a final report of its findings and recommendations to the Senate

Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services, the House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services, and the Fiscal Research Division. Anthony Gonzalez may be reached at 336-835-1513 or on Twitter @newsgonz. Source: http://www.elktribune.com/news/community_news-home_top-news/50144963/State-funds-overhaul-of-child-services#U97fnOl0y1s

WASHINGTON STATE PASSES LANDMARK LEGISLATION: ESSB 5946, SIGNED INTO LAW ON JULY 23RD, 2014

by The HEAL Team

Beginning August 23rd, 2014, all Washington public schools are mandated to eliminate ineffective and punitive (i.e. exclusionary) discipline practices and to provide due process for all children facing discipline in public schools.

In 2012, HEAL submitted requests to Washington legislators asking they investigate the misuse of Individual Education Plans and oppressive disciplinary policies. Our recommendations to Washington legislators included the following:

• Mandate an annual report by the OSPI detailing how many students have been sent to private residential programs; what residential programs were used; where the residential programs were located; and the cost of each enrollment.

• Place a moratorium on contracting with out-of-state residential schools and programs.

• Amend Washington State Laws as proposed in Initiative 999 from 2008. See: <http://www.secstate.wa.gov/elections/initiatives/text/i999.pdf>

• Amend our State's child abuse statutory definitions to include the following: :

Emotional Abuse Citation: Ann. Stat. § 9:6-8.21 (New Jersey Statutory Definition) Abused child or abused or neglected child means a child under age 18 years who is in an institution, and:

• Has been placed there inappropriately for a continued period of time with the knowledge that the placement has resulted or may continue to result in harm to the child's mental or physical well-being

• Who has been willfully isolated from ordinary social contact under circumstances that indicate emotional or social deprivation The definitions and laws pertaining to child abuse and/or endangering the welfare of a child in our State are found in our Rev. Code §§ 26.44.020; 26.44.030; 9A.16.100. Please amend our State's laws to include the above definitions as applied under our Child Endangerment, Child Welfare, and Child Abuse laws."

ESSB 5946 Mandates the Following:

* Edits for clarity and readability

* The removal of the word "punishment" throughout the chapter

* The relocation and consolidation of rules regarding non-attendance and discipline (HEAL Note: May include statewide reports regarding IEP/RTC use)

* The revision of rules regarding emergency suspensions, expulsions, and conversion

* The revision of due process notice requirements, procedures, and timelines (HEAL Note: Due Process for Minors, No More Secret Spiriting Away)

* The alignment with civil rights laws, specifically vital documents and protected classes (HEAL Note: Respecting the civil rights of minors, including due process should in large part eliminate the use of out-of-state placements, if not entirely.)

* The removal of physical restraint or the use of aversive therapy as a general education discipline exception, and adding a reference to the Special Education rules detailing those provisions (HEAL Note: Outlawing physical restraint and aversive therapy, it is about time!)

* The addition of definitions and procedural requirements for reengagement meetings and reengagement plans

Other organizations who contributed to these efforts include, but, are not limited to:

Washington Appleseed (<http://www.waappleseed.org/#!school-discipline/c6wu>)

ACLU of Washington (<https://www.aclu-wa.org/sites/default/files/attachments/Guide%20for%20Public%20School%20Students.pdf>)

Change can happen, it is up to all of us to make sure it does!

EXCLUSIVE: Riker's Island bosses promoted after managing jail where teen inmates were beaten In May, Correction Commissioner Joseph Ponte promoted William Clemons to chief of department. Turhan Gumusdere, one of Clemons' top underlings, was named warden of Rikers' largest facility. BY [Dareh Gregorian](#), [Reuven Blau](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Wednesday, August 6, 2014, 2:30 AM A A A 8 Share this URL Bryan Smith/Bryan Smith Joseph Ponte, commissioner of the city Department of Corrections, stands by his appointments of William Clemons and Turhan Gumusdere, said a spokesman. The foxes might be in charge of reforming the hen house. Two top jail bosses were recently promoted to plum spots in the city Department of Correction even though they ran a Rikers Island facility for troubled teens where a federal report found repeated inmate beatdowns were improperly reported and investigated. In May, Correction Commissioner Joseph Ponte named William Clemons his chief of department, the top uniformed position. Clemons previously served as warden of the East River lockup's Robert N. Davoren Center from April to December in 2011. That's the Rikers facility where teens awaiting trial were subjected to a "culture of violence," according to Manhattan U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara, who released a bombshell report Monday detailing violence that occurred there from 2011 to 2013. The 79-page report concluded that correction officers covered for each other and blatantly lied in reports, even when medical evidence and surveillance video directly contradicted their version of events. But more than 30% of the time, surveillance video that should have captured altercations mysteriously disappeared, according to the report. One of Clemons' top underlings, Turhan Gumusdere, also worked at the teen facility as deputy warden of security from April to November 2011. In May, Ponte named him warden of Rikers' largest facility, the Anna M. Kross Center. The jail head defended the promotions, arguing many of the incidents cited by the feds occurred before or after Clemons and Gumusdere were in charge. "Commissioner Ponte stands by his appointments of Chief Clemons and Warden Gumusdere, who have shown exemplary leadership in their current roles and are fully committed to the Department's reform agenda," said jail spokesman Robin Campbell. Source: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/riker-island-bosses-promoted-article-1.1893293>

City Council hearing to probe abuses at Rikers teen jails BY [Erin Durkin](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Wednesday, August 6, 2014, 12:46 PM A A 77
 23 Share this URL Councilman Fernando Cabrera The City Council will hold a hearing to probe rampant violence at jails holding teen offenders at Rikers Island, the chair of its juvenile justice committee said Wednesday. A Department of Justice investigation [found](#) young inmates were routinely beaten by guards, and the Daily News [reported](#) that two top jail bosses were recently promoted to high-ranking posts despite running the facility for troubled teens while the abuses were going on. Councilman Fernando Cabrera (D-Bronx), chair of the juvenile justice committee, said the group would convene a hearing to grill corrections officials on the matter. "The mistreatment of prisoners is out of control. More than half of the Rikers population suffers from mental illness, yet solitary confinement is still widely used perpetuating mental illness," he said. "This tells us it is the time to stop unconstitutional practices and conduct a full review of procedures." Source: <http://www.nydailynews.com/blogs/dailypolitics/city-council-hearing-probe-abuses-rikers-teen-jails-blog-entry-1.1893963>

'Better Than Republicans,' Not Good Enough For Education A common admonition progressives have gotten used to hearing over the years is to support more conservative Democratic candidates because "Republicans are worse." This admonition makes some sense in electoral politics, when, in most cases, progressives face a ballot box decision where they have to choose the "lesser evil" instead of someone who wants to do something really horrible like roll back government policies to what was in favor a hundred years ago. Elections, after all, are societal constructions where you're forced to make a choice between only two candidates, usually. To not vote at all forfeits your right to have a say-so in the matter. And few Americans get the opportunity to vote for third party candidates who have viable shots at winning. But "better than the other side" loses any legitimacy in the policy arena, or at least it should. For sure, there are often trade-offs between adversaries in the legislative process. But when there's not an actual bill facing an up-or-down vote, there's simply no reason for progressives to accept policy positions from office holders on the basis of those positions being better than what the other side wants. Yet progressives who push for policies reflecting their values are constantly scolded for exhibiting a "[have it all fantasy](#)." They're told to give centrist Democrats "credit" for positions where there is some agreement – such as marriage equality or climate change – and understand when those officials have to make deals with the other side. "That's how the game is played," goes the refrain. When it comes to the education policy arena, "the game" has played into a disaster for the nation's schoolteachers, parents, and students. Two new interviews with leading voices in the progressive education movement have brought to light how policy compromises forged by centrist Democrats have enabled truly bad consequences for public education. And progressives are increasingly saying "enough." A "Catalyst For Something Really Idiotic" The "better than the other side" retort came to the fore in my recent interview with [Lily Eskelsen Garcia](#), the charmingly feisty new president-elect of the National Education Association at the 2014 Netroots Nation convention in Detroit. Quick to rise to the top of our discussion were recent actions by both the NEA and the American Federation of Teachers to demand the resignation of U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. A particular sore spot for the unions has been the Department's insistence that states wanting federal grant money or waivers to harsh legal penalties imposed by the feds put into place elaborate evaluation systems that rate classroom teachers based, to varying extents, on student test scores. Eskelsen Garcia echoed what many educators and experts have said that these types of test-based evaluations are [unfair to teachers](#) and encourage schools to [cheat or game the system](#) in order to hit their numbers. For the first time in public, she spoke of her conversation with Duncan on July 16, the first discussion between them since the unions had called for his resignation. "He's very upset with the NEA Representative Assembly's decision to call for his resignation," she recalled. "He felt he wasn't being given enough credit from NEA for advocating for expanded early childhood education and greater access to affordable college. And it's true there is no light between us on those issues." But as Eskelsen Garcia pointed out, "Sure, we get pre-K dollars and Head Start, but it's being used to teach little kids to bubble in tests so their teachers can be evaluated. And we get policies to promote affordable college, but no one graduating from high school gets an education that has supported critical and creative thinking that is essential to succeeding in college because their education has consisted of test-prep from Rupert Murdoch. The testing is corrupting what it means to teach." In other words, being for something that progressives usually want – expanding education opportunities to more of the nation's young children and college-aged students – can't absolve a Democratic administration from implementing bad policies taken from the other side of the political spectrum – in this case, harsh measures that punish teachers and schools for conditions that are by and large out of their control. Eskelsen Garcia told Duncan, "When you required states to base their education programs mostly on test scores, and let states respond with 'OK, we'll just do this,' you encouraged bad policy. You became the catalyst for something really idiotic. Eskelsen Garcia is far from being the only progressive voice criticizing the status quo in education policy making. "A Sorry Substitute When Government Gives Up" One of the most outspoken and articulate parent advocates for public schools is Helen Gym from Philadelphia. Gym, who co-founded the grassroots activist group Parents United for Public Education, was also on hand at [Netroots Nation](#) where she appeared on a panel "[Reclaiming the Promise of Public Education](#)." A reporter, Bill Hangley Jr., for the local Philadelphia news outlet [The Notebook](#) caught up with Gym after the event and asked her to reflect on her experiences there. What she described is an awakening among progressives to the reality of education "reform" policies pushed onto communities by the Obama administration and a host of conservative state governors. As a result of these policies, "We're seeing public land being turned over to private enterprises," Gym explained, "labor rights being undermined, state takeovers and emergency managers upending democratic governance of schools, schools closed down and communities devastated in their wake." Current education reform policies, Gym insisted, are "a launching pad for some of the grossest abuses in the dismantling of public services nationwide. In Detroit, an emergency manager who superseded an elected school board and shuttered dozens of city schools was simply a precursor for a city emergency manager who overran local governance and was shutting off water to hundreds of thousands of Detroit residents, while letting wealthy delinquents like golf courses and sports teams off the hook." Gym was particularly critical of political leaders on the left who have abandoned the cause of education equity to rally around the rightwing notion that a market based approach that provides more "choice" will improve education results. "We used to have an equity agenda in this country," she lamented, "where our public schools' vision, despite their flaws, became a model for the world. Moneyed interests have poured millions into convincing the public to walk away from that social contract. But choice is just a sorry substitute when government gives up on equity." "No Longer Neutral Territory" For years, education policy has been portrayed as a neutral ground where political factions were supposed to "meet in the middle" and agree to do "what's best for kids." [This was never really true](#), but the narrative played well to the media and to policy elites. But "education reform" has mostly been a product of groupthink built on a consensus without diversity and without the input of skeptics. Now, that the false consensus is crumbling, people on the ground are more determined to take control of the narrative and make politics about fighting the free market assault on the common good. "At Netroots," Gym observed, "I think the future was really laid out for us by the Rev. William Barber, leader of North Carolina's Moral Monday movement, who called for fusion politics and mass coalition-building to re-establish a real and moral civil rights agenda of our time – of which education is but one part. This is where I see the future going and what inspires me today." "People in the progressive movement have to realize," Eskelsen Garcia asserted, "that regardless of the particular fight they are engaged in, it starts with education. Whether you're fighting for environmental causes, women's rights, voting rights, all of these causes – and the very foundations of democracy and how our society makes decisions – start at a schoolhouse door." Gym echoed these views, saying, "You're naive if you don't make the connection between what's happening to our schools and communities and what we're doing more broadly as a nation in terms of attacks on poverty, attacks on immigrants – most of whom are in our public schools too – and attacks on women and women in labor, in particular. "For a growing number of progressives, education is not neutral territory." But is public concern over education significant enough to change the political equation? Both Gym and Eskelsen Garcia believe the public concern is building and in some communities is influencing elections. Gym noted that progressive activism animated by the fight for public schools made critical differences in recent mayoral races in [New York City](#) and [Newark](#). Eskelsen Garcia stated, "We've proven that when we ask people to sign petitions and show up at the ballot box to support public schools, they will. And they will do it in droves." As my colleague [Robert Borosage](#) recently observed, "Providing a fair and healthy shot for every child requires reversing the conservative retreats of the last decades." The "economy that does not work for working families," which Borosage decried, is being mimicked by education policies that don't work either. This policy agenda "won't be changed without fierce battles to dislodge powerful and entrenched interests and change the rules." The fact that centrist Democrats don't really get this is what is animating progressives in ways not seen since the fight for civil rights. "These fights will be at the center of our political debates over the next years," Borosage wrote. "They will be pitched battles against powerful interests. Politicians will have to decide which side they are on." Those politicians had better choose carefully. Source: <http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/better-than-republicans-not-good-enough-for-education/>

Suspensions, Expulsions, Arrests Don't Work: On School Discipline, We Can Do Better By [Daniel Willingham](#) RCEd Commentary Stick a few hundred kids together in a building for six hours and you can bet that a few are going to misbehave. How teachers and administrators should react to rule infractions -- especially more serious ones -- is perennial problem. A [newly published report](#) from the [School Discipline Consensus Project](#), with over 700 experts

contributing, offers the most comprehensive answer I've seen. The report starts with two grim facts. First, present practices are ineffective. Policies tend to focus on student removal--suspensions, expulsions and arrests--as a way to keep schools orderly and safe. But while they are removed, the offenders fall behind in their schoolwork, and removal puts them at greater risk for dropping out or getting in trouble with the law. Second, present policies are poorly implemented. Students are often suspended for minor infractions such as cell phone use, and kids from some groups--those with disabilities, kids of color, and LGBT youth--are disproportionately disciplined. What's a better way? The overarching principle emphasized in the report is the creation of more positive environments in schools and classrooms, and more supportive relationships among students, teachers, and administration. Sounds great. How do we get there? Actions in schools and districts such as these: Collect (disaggregated) data on infractions and on factors that are predictive of misbehavior. Make these data transparent to all, consistent with privacy policies. Work on school climate, for example through social/emotional learning programs. Design a graduated system of responses to misconduct that keeps students in school whenever possible, addresses the harm caused, and considers the factors that may contribute to the problem, while encouraging students to take responsibility for changing their behavior. Have a place on school grounds to which disciplined students can be removed but still receive instruction and social or emotional support, as needed. Partner with police to ensure that officers understand school policies, to formalize cooperation in written documents that are periodically reviewed, and to ensure that officers on school grounds are committed to the school learning environment. Plan for ways to divert students from the juvenile justice system for minor infractions (if appropriate); plan for ways that students released from correctional facilities can transition smoothly back to community schools. The six points listed above constitute an incomplete summary of the very broad goals that the report addresses. These broad goals are cashed out in over 60 more specific action recommendations. But even in a long report (some 400 pages,) these inevitably end up as guidelines rather than specific blueprints, e.g., "Address physical facility conditions and school security procedures to ensure schools are safe and feel secure while also being welcoming and orderly." The value of the report lies not in the specificity of the recommendations, but in the breadth of its vision. It gives an administrator or legislator a view of just how broad the problem is, and emphasizes that attending to just one or two pieces of this complex puzzle will not be sufficient. And although it cannot serve as a policy guidebook, it does lay out big-picture conclusions based on solid research. A natural reaction upon reading this report might be despair: 60 recommended actions, each of them formidable in its own right. The authors anticipate this reaction, and confirm that implementing all of the recommendations at once would be impossible, and further, that there is no right or wrong place to start. The important thing is to start. Let's hope this report provides some impetus to reform in discipline practices. There's little evidence that current policies are serving students and schools well, and there is reason to think we can do better. Daniel Willingham is a columnist for RealClearEducation and professor of psychology at the University of Virginia. He also writes the Daniel Willingham science and education blog. Source:

http://www.realcleareducation.com/articles/2014/06/17/suspensions_expulsions_arrests_dont_work_on_school_discipline_we_can_do_better_1018.html

NY excludes prison time from sex-abuse law [Article](#) more in [New York](#) | [Find New \\$LINKTEXTFINDS\\$](#) » [smaller](#) [Larger](#) [facebook](#) [twitter](#) [google plus](#) [linked in](#) [inShare](#) [Email](#) [Print](#) [smaller](#) [Larger](#) Associated Press ALBANY, N.Y. — New York has amended its penal law to exclude prison and jail time when calculating the 10-year period that elevates a repeated low-level sex offense into a felony. The law effective Nov. 1 will exclude time locked up from the calculation whereby two or more misdemeanor offenses rise to "persistent sexual abuse" punishable by up to four years in prison. The applicable crimes are misdemeanors of forcible touching and sexual abuse in the second or third degree, meaning sexual contact without the other person's consent, including children who by law cannot consent to sex. Sponsors say time incarcerated shouldn't count since offenders then are removed from general society and unable to commit the crimes against innocent people. —Copyright 2014 Associated Press Source:

<http://online.wsj.com/article/AP7b513261427c42a9900a2ac1f5689233.html>

The Impact of Foster Care on Students' Education August 4, 2014 | 12:15 PM By [Melissa Prax](#) [1 Comment](#) [Email](#) STEVENDEPOLO / FLICKR Harold Sloke was 12-years-old when he entered South Carolina's foster care system. Not long after that, he ended up repeating ninth grade three times. "A lot of my caseworkers believed I would never graduate, so they just kept passing me along, and I kept getting into trouble," Sloke told [The Annie E. Casey Foundation](#). Foster care offers kids temporary living arrangements to improve their current home environment. Sloke grew up in the system, and after attending a dozen different high schools, he eventually graduated. That's not an uncommon journey for many kids in foster care. Only half of foster youth complete high school by their 18th birthday, according to [data from the National Working Group on Foster Care and Education](#), compared to the [70 percent of kids](#) not in the foster care system who graduate by age 18. "I probably wouldn't have graduated," said Sloke. "And I could have ended up in prison (if my teacher hadn't intervened)." Children ages five to 17 make up the largest group of children in foster care, and just under 60 percent of these kids will experience at least two to three living placements, according to the National Working Group on Foster Care and Education. That can really set back a student's learning. When a move to a new school happens, up to six months of [academic progress can be lost](#), which can make finishing high school a struggle for some students. [In the Midwest](#), nearly 37 percent of previous foster youth repeated a grade. Many foster care students ultimately make the decision to drop out of high school, especially after class credits sometimes don't easily transfer from school to school. For those who choose to stay enrolled, the path isn't necessarily a traditional one. Some foster children complete high school after five years, or choose an alternative like a General Educational Development (GED) transcript or diploma. Here in Ohio, youth [age out of the system](#) when they are 18, unless they're adopted or return to their biological family. When foster children are still under that age, each county in Ohio offers support, and foster care placement is an issue typically addressed through private agencies. While many states, including California and [New York](#), have done recent and extensive research, Ohio's records on foster care children's education and enrollment differ county to county. In attempts to improve the nation's outlook, [the Uninterrupted Scholars Act](#) was signed into law by President Obama last January. The act lets foster care organizations look at educational records to better help support foster care youth and prevent educational turbulence. Source: <http://stateimpact.npr.org/ohio/2014/08/04/the-impact-of-foster-care-on-students-education/>

More Time in Foster Care Linked to More Psychotropic Medicating August 3, 2014 Children as young as four in foster care are taking three or more psychotropic medications, and the length of time that children aged six or under are being medicated with psychotropics increases two-fold for every year that they live in foster care, according to a study in Psychiatric Services. University of Maryland researchers studied 1,491 foster children aged six and under in a mid-Atlantic city between 2009-11. While other studies have shown that psychotropic medicating of foster children is high, this is the first to examine developments over time in care. "The higher likelihood of using antipsychotic, antidepressant, and ADHD medications for three or more weeks per month with each increase in year of age suggests a trend toward chronic use," they wrote. "Such use occurred over a very short period of tremendous developmental growth." Listing some of the serious side effects and dangers of common psychotropics, the researchers then wrote, "Notwithstanding these risks, few patients receive routine metabolic monitoring in outpatient clinical care." They further noted that, "Few youths in this study had a psychotherapy visit, not to mention evidence-based treatments," and concluded, "There is a critical need for long-term studies to evaluate the effect of chronic exposure on children's health and well-being." [Age-Related Trends in Psychotropic Medication Use Among Very Young Children in Foster Care](#) (dosReis, Susan et al. Psychiatric Services in Advance, August 1, 2014; doi: 10.1176/appi.ps.201300353) Source: <http://www.madinamerica.com/2014/08/longer-time-foster-care-linked-psychotropic-medicating/>

Rikers prison guards used excessive force on minors, Justice finds [Injuries included broken bones, cuts needing stitches](#) By [Phillip Swarts](#) - The Washington Times - Monday, August 4, 2014 Corrections officers used excessive force to control adolescent inmates at a major New York City prison, including inflicting wounds that required medical treatment, a Justice Department investigation concluded Monday. Rikers Island corrections officers hit inmates in the face or head, and beat prisoners who were not resisting, Justice Department investigators reported, adding that the abuse often took place in areas not covered by surveillance cameras. The results were broken jaws, arm and leg bone fractures and cuts that required stitches, among other injuries, the agency's report said. "The extremely high rates of violence and excessive use of solitary confinement for adolescent males uncovered by this investigation are inappropriate and unacceptable," Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. said Monday in a statement. Mr. Holder said the Justice Department and New York City officials must work to ensure that "incarceration is used to deter, punish, and ultimately rehabilitate, not merely to warehouse and forget." The Justice Department's two-year investigation uncovered many specific examples of violence that occurred in the jail. For example, one inmate on his way to lunch got into a heated argument with a corrections officer captain. It culminated with the captain throwing out the inmate's bag of chips, and the inmate cursing the officer. Upon the inmate's return to the school classroom area — where there are no cameras — the captain ordered three other guards to mace and then beat the inmate, kicking him in the face and ribs. The inmate was not taken for medical treatment until three hours later, and an internal prison system review decided

the use of force was justified. In 2012 and 2013, investigators found more than 1,000 inmate injuries at Rikers Island annually resulting from excessive use of force by corrections officers. Nearly half of all inmates suffered injuries at some point in their stay in the prison, the report said. In 2013 alone, emergency medical services for adolescent detainees were needed 459 times, though some of those may have been due to fights among the inmates. The Justice Department report said investigators found "a pattern and practice of conduct at Rikers Island that violates the rights of adolescents." "Simply put, Rikers is a dangerous place for adolescents and a pervasive climate of fear exists," the report said. Commissioner Joseph Ponte — who became the city's Department of Corrections leader in April — will likely have his tenure judged by many in New York based on how he addresses the problems at Rikers Island, where several adult inmates have recently died due to abuse or negligence. "I have made it clear that excessive use of force, unnecessary or unwarranted use of punitive segregation and corruption of any kind are absolutely unacceptable, and will not be tolerated under my watch," Mr. Ponte said in a press release Monday. Investigators said there was little intervention or oversight by senior management, adding that corrections officials failed to "address the extraordinarily high levels of violence." Preet Bharara, the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, said the conditions seemed "more inspired by 'Lord of the Flies' than any legitimate philosophy of humane detention." "For adolescents, Rikers Island is a broken institution," Mr. Bharara said. "It is a place where brute force is the first impulse rather than the last resort; where verbal insults are repaid with physical injuries; where beatings are routine while accountability is rare; and where a culture of violence endures even while a code of silence prevails." Investigators also found that solitary confinement was often used excessively as a punishment, including for inmates who were mentally ill or who were placed in confinement for months at a time for minor infractions. On any given day, 15 to 25 percent of the inmate population was being held in solitary confinement, often for months at a time for non-violent infractions, the report said. Source: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/aug/4/prison-guards-used-excessive-force-on-minors-justi/?page=all#pagebreak>

Foster care watchdog says reform has slowed [Rina Paltu](#) August 04 2014 Audio from this story [1:12](#) Listen Share this story [Share via Email](#) [Share on Twitter](#) [Share on Facebook](#) 49 After Gabriel Fernandez's death in 2013, the county spun into action, creating a Blue Ribbon Commission to recommend changes to the child welfare system. Since then, a new report says, things have stalled. NBC4 A foster care watchdog will issue a report Tuesday saying the pace of reform for L.A. County's troubled child welfare system has slowed over the past few months. In April, a Blue Ribbon Commission issued a final version of its report on the county's foster care and child protection agencies - and called for urgent action to address a "state of emergency". The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors responded by creating an Office of Child Protection and deciding to hire a child welfare czar to oversee reforms. Since then, things have slowed, however, said Dan Heimpel, a lecturer at UC-Berkeley's Goldman School of Policy and founder of Fostering Media Connections, a journalism non-profit dedicated to watching the child welfare system. Tuesday's report will be the first of quarterly reports on the progress of reform. "What we see is a lack of real strong urgency," Heimpel said. "A lot of that has evaporated and that's been a little bit disheartening." The Blue Ribbon Commission made 42 recommendations the board then endorsed, but Heimpel said he's unclear how they will be carried out. "We have not seen any evidence that any financial resources have been committed to these reforms," Heimpel said. There has been some progress: Next week, the "transition team" created to design the bureaucracy of the new Office of Child Protection is expected to present a job description for the new agency's director to the Board of Supervisors. The state has created a mechanism for counties to increase stipends for families who take in relatives as foster children. Typically, relatives get less money than other parents, but if L.A. county opts into the state funding stream, that would change. But other recommendations, like a request by the Los Angeles County District Attorney to create an electronic system for tracking child abuse investigations, have indefinitely stalled, Heimpel said. "We're not advocating for any particular reform," he said. "But the idea that the system can be improved and that the only thing that's going to make sure that happens is people taking a look at it and really holding the players who've taken this on accountable." Source: <http://www.scp.org/news/2014/08/04/45765/foster-care-watchdog-says-reform-has-slowed/>

Two Day Gathering For Indigenous Adoptees & Foster Care Survivors Of The '60s Scoop Generation by mmmniontalk on August 5, 2014 98 Views The Indigenous Adoptee Gathering Committee will be hosting the first national "Bi Giwen Indigenous Adoptee Gathering 2014", for Indigenous adoptees and foster care survivors. The gathering will take place in the unceded territory of the Algonquin nation on September 20th and 21st, 2014 at the Richelieu-Vanier Community Centre in Ottawa, Ontario. The focus of the gathering is to provide adoptees and foster care survivors, from across North America, a unique opportunity to be: (1) heard, listened to and have their lived experiences validated by other survivors; (2) be met 'where they are at' in acknowledgement that as survivors they are all at different places on their journey towards healing and wholeness; (3) prioritize community support while building to strengthen mutual and accountable relationships for the survivors' safety and collective well-being; and; (4) build momentum towards a national grassroots, survivor-led, community-driven justice and healing movement to address impacts of colonial child welfare policies. The gathering will feature a series of workshops, presentations and evening activities, by survivors for survivors, with support from Indigenous and non-Indigenous volunteers. For further information contact Colleen Cardinal at (613)790-7057 Source: http://nationtalk.ca/story/two-day-gathering-for-indigenous-adoptees-foster-care-survivors-of-the-60s-scoop-generation/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=two-day-gathering-for-indigenous-adoptees-foster-care-survivors-of-the-60s-scoop-generation

Rikers Island Guards Accused of Horrific Inmate Beatings Won't Be Prosecuted By [Margaret Hartmann](#) Follow @marghartmann Though the case was highlighted by the New York Times and a U.S. attorney's report, 4 Shares [Share 0](#) [Tweet 4](#) [Share 0](#) [Share 0](#) [Email Print](#) Share In a report this week on the treatment of teen inmates at Rikers Island, U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara described the prison as "a place where brute force is the first impulse rather than the last resort, a place where verbal insults are repaid with physical injuries, where beatings are routine, while accountability is rare." Still, one would probably assume that the guards accused of severely beating two inmates strapped to gurneys would be punished after the case was referred for prosecution twice by the New York City Department of Investigation, highlighted in Bharara's report, and described in a [front-page New York Times exposé last month](#). However, the Bronx district attorney's office said on Tuesday that it has [decided not to prosecute](#) the officers who allegedly left the walls of a medical examination room stained with the blood of two inmates. Witnesses were so disturbed by the December 2012 incident that they reported it to investigators, which is rare at Rikers. Three anonymous clinicians told the Times that after Andre Lane, 24, splashed guards with an unknown liquid, he was taken from solitary confinement, handcuffed to a gurney, and wheeled into a clinic examination room where there were no video cameras. Lane repeatedly screamed, "Don't leave me, they're going to kill me." The witnesses say about six officers were in the room, and several medical staffers begged them to stop beating Lane, but they refused. Later a second inmate, 20-year-old Tamel Dixon, was taken to the examination room and beaten as well. Related Stories [8 Appalling Stories of Inmate Abuse From Rikers Island's Teen Jails](#) [Can Mayor de Blasio Tame Rikers Island? Mentally Ill Rikers Inmates Are Frequently Attacked by Officers, Says Secret Study](#) The official incident report [said](#), "Dixon was eventually escorted to the main clinic for medical examination without any further incident of force used." A senior health official told investigators that one of the guards warned him not to tell anyone what really happened, remarking, "Sure is good there were witnesses to see that those guys hit their heads on the cabinets themselves." The case was referred for prosecution in July 2013 and June 2014, but on Tuesday a Bronx district attorney's office spokeswoman told the Times that the case will not move forward "because of inconsistent versions of events, contradictions between the witness statements and the forensics (injuries of the inmates), and the inability of witnesses to observe the events." The U.S. attorney's report described a "powerful code of silence" among Rikers staffers, and it's clear just from the statistics exposed in the last month that it's extremely rare for Rikers guards to be prosecuted for assaulting inmates. While The Times reported that between January and November last year 129 inmates were injured so badly by guards that they required emergency treatment, in the last five years the Bronx district attorney's office has opened just 20 cases against correction officers, and only four have resulted in prison sentences. Source: <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2014/08/rikers-guards-wont-be-prosecuted-for-beatings.html>

South Bend group home worker admits to abusing mentally disabled resident [Lance Anglin, 51, pleaded guilty to a charge of criminal deviate conduct for sexually abusing a mentally disabled man in a South Bend group home.](#) [Emily Pfund](#) Posted on Aug. 6, 2014 at 9:04 a.m. A South Bend man pleaded guilty Tuesday to a charge of criminal deviate conduct for sexually abusing a mentally disabled man. Lance Anglin, 51, a former worker at a South Bend group home, was accused of forcing a 49-year-old mentally disabled resident to perform oral sex on him, according to [a report from the South Bend Tribune](#). Lance Anglin pleaded guilty on Tuesday, Aug. 5, to a charge of criminal deviate conduct for forcing a mentally disabled man to perform oral sex on him. (Photo supplied / St. Joseph County Jail) The victim told his mother about the incident when she picked him up at the home to go out for a meal, according to [court documents obtained by the Tribune](#). She then told other staff at the home, reported the incident to police and other necessary state agencies like [Adult Protective Services](#). According to the documents, the victim was too disabled to give proper consent. Anglin was removed from duty when the allegation was

made and fired after his arrest in August 2013. He is scheduled to appear in St. Joseph Superior Court for sentencing on Sept. 25. Source:

<http://www.elkharttruth.com/news/crime-fire-courts/2014/08/06/South-Bend-group-home-worker-admits-to-abusing-mentally-disabled-resident.html>

RaiseAChild.US Opposes New Bill That Allows Religious Foster & Adoption Agencies to Discriminate Against LGBT Parents & Families

>PRWEB.COM Newswire > PRWEB.COM NewswireLos Angeles, CA (PRWEB) August 06, 2014 A bill introduced in Congress by Sen. Mike Enzi (R-WY) and Rep. Mike Kelly (R-PA) would allow religious foster and adoption agencies to deny services to same-sex and unmarried heterosexual couples, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) and heterosexual singles, and people from other religions. "The Child Welfare Provider Inclusion Act of 2014 is harmful to foster children," said Rich Valenza, Founder and CEO of RaiseAChild.US. "It is a misguided attempt to go back to claiming religious rights ahead of the real needs of foster children. At a time when RaiseAChild.US is successfully growing a larger, more diverse and inclusive pool of safe, loving, and permanent homes for the 400,000 children in our nation's foster care system, this bill tries to shrink and edit that pool of prospective parents by using taxpayers' funds to promote intolerance, discrimination, and homophobia." RaiseAChild.US is the only U.S. nonprofit organization that encourages and assists the LGBT community in building families through fostering and adoption through direct services and its Parent Advocate mentorship program. The organization's success rate for moving interested foster and adoptive prospective parents through the training and certification process has proven to be five times greater than the industry's national average. "This bill runs contrary to the beliefs of most faith-based communities, recent national polls, and what science overwhelmingly tells us: that there are no differences in children adopted by heterosexual versus same-sex couples," said Valenza. "My hope is that all people who have children's best interests at heart will contact their elected representatives in Washington and let them know this kind of legislated hatred will not be tolerated. To solve the nation's foster care crisis we need to expand the available pool of prospective parents, not reduce it." More than 16,000 same-sex couples are raising an estimated 22,000 adopted children in the U.S., according to the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law. Societal acceptance of LGBT-headed families is growing rapidly, and scientific studies are showing that the sexual orientation of parents does not negatively affect their foster adopted children. A [Gallup poll published in May 2014](#) found that a majority of Americans (63%) now say same-sex couples should have the legal right to adopt. A [2013 study by the Williams Institute](#) found that family type is not a predictor of a child's psychological adjustment among early placed adopted children with lesbian, gay, or heterosexual parents. A [2012 study by the Williams Institute](#) found that foster kids do equally well when adopted by gay, lesbian, or heterosexual parents. In support of positive legislation that puts children's needs first, RaiseAChild.US has joined forces with Family Equality Council and a coalition of more than one hundred child welfare, foster/adoption, civil rights, religious, and LGBT advocacy organizations in support of the Every Child Deserves A Family Act. This legislation focuses attention on the best interests of children in the foster care system. By eliminating state laws, policies, practices, and procedures that exclude potential adoptive and foster parents because of their marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity, this bill will dramatically increase access to permanent, loving homes for children in foster care. According to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Administration for Children & Families, there are 400,000 children in our nation's foster care system. More than 104,000 of these children have had parental rights terminated and are waiting to be adopted. Families certified for both foster and adoptive placements are in short supply. RaiseAChild.US finds prospective parents through media campaigns that include outdoor advertising, radio and television public service announcements (PSAs), print media, social media, and special events. All prospective parents who sign up at events or at the RaiseAChild.US website receive free information, support, and mentorship through the organization's unique Parent Advocate program. Since 2011, RaiseAChild.US has engaged more than 2,200 prospective parents nationally and become a leading organization for public education and advocacy on behalf of these children. Read more: <http://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/2106085#ixzz3A21JAwuB> Source: <http://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/2106085>

Marion elder group home closed after reports residents locked in bedrooms overnight Cited home one of only three in state By Erin Jordan, The Gazette Published: August 8 2014 | 12:01 am in [Front Rotator](#), [Local News](#), [News](#), [Photos](#) State officials closed down a Marion group home Thursday based on allegations owners had locked four elderly residents in their rooms overnight. The Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals revoked the certificate of Park Setting Elder Group Home, 1470 Tama St., Marion, based on allegations operators Don and Peggy Berns locked residents in their bedrooms, in one case using a board to block the tenant's door after state officials told them not to lock the rooms. "There was no real justification provided as to why they took that action," said department spokesman David Werning. "It's my understanding they didn't have overnight staff at that point. I could hypothesize it was for convenience." A four-page certificate revocation notice says the Berns also failed to secure medication and hazardous chemicals, did not get physicians' orders for over-the-counter drugs and admitted tenants whose health needs the Berns could not meet. "They retained individuals that were beyond their (the Berns') level of care," Werning said. "They (residents) were exhibiting dementia and there was no record of any training for staff." "Not a good situation," Werning added. The Bernses can appeal the closure. A hearing is scheduled for Sept. 9 in Des Moines. Residents were being moved from the group home Thursday, with Department of Human Services caseworkers and the state's long-term care ombudsman helping family members figure out new facilities or care situations, Werning said. The closure came after a complaint was made about the elder group home, one of only three in the state, Werning said. The others are Postillion in Davenport and Seventh Heaven in Dubuque. Elder group homes are single-family residences operated by a person providing room, board, personal care and some health-related services to three to five elders not related to the operator. The home must be staffed 24 hours a day, according to Iowa Code. Elder group homes, never widespread in use, have declined in recent years with the growth of assisted-living centers, Werning said. Park Setting, opened in 2011, was fined \$1,000 in 2012 after state inspectors found the group home insufficient in standards that include evaluation of tenant service plans, staffing and records checks. A third investigation in 2012 yielded no fines or certificate action and a 2013 survey found no violations. The Bernses had not returned phone calls or an email from The Gazette by press time. 1 Comments: (319) 339-3157; erin.jordan@thegazette.com Read more at <http://thegazette.com/subject/news/marion-elder-group-home-closed-after-reports-residents-locked-in-bedrooms-overnight-20140808#vOmL9ZXCiCODJpo.99>

Exclusive: Family of group home residents in Bronx claiming abuse Sarah Wallace has the Eyewitness News exclusive. By [Sarah Wallace](#) Friday, August 08, 2014 BRONX (WABC) -- Family members of mentally challenged adults make disturbing claims of abuse against a group home. State investigators are now confirming that they are looking into at least two incidents at the Union IRA home in the Bronx involving alleged staff abuse. Investigative Reporter Sarah Wallace spoke with devastated and outraged relatives. These are loving relatives who are unable to keep their loved ones at home because they are so severely disabled. So the families have to trust strangers. Now, they believe that trust has been broken in the worst kind of way imaginable. "When I saw Bianca, she had a blue and black eye and I said wow," said Carlos Ramos. Ramos can't even bear to look at the pictures he took of his severely disabled daughter, Bianca. Ramos visits his daughter every weekend at the Union IRA group home in the Bronx, when he saw this (black eye) during a trip in May, he says he demanded an investigation. Sarah Wallace: "They told you that a staff member hit her in the eye?" Ramos: Definitely...It was physical abuse." He says he was never told who did it and what happened to them. "How does somebody do that? That's what hurts me so much. How does anybody do that to my daughter?" asks Ramos. Or to Tony Kearins' daughter Laura Kearins's sister. They say they were told earlier this week by staff at the Union IRA home that 45-year-old Debbie had been taken to Lincoln Hospital. "They said it was allergies...yes, that she had rubbed her eye all night. Does that look like someone rubbing her eye, Sarah?" But what is even more disturbing is this internal hospital report which says Debbie was abused in the emergency room by her escort from the group home who was quote "Verbally aggressive towards patient" and "violently pushed the patient." So much so that hospital police intervened. "Debbie can't speak, she can't get on the telephone and say, Laura, they're doing something," adds Laura. She adds, "You go to bed and worry, what's happening to them in the middle of the night." Tony Kearins was just as upset. "This facility needs to be cleaned out from top to bottom. There's been a coverup. We don't know what else is happening. Metro IRA would not comment about any staff because of a state investigation. A spokesperson for the agency which oversees homes for the mentally challenged told Eyewitness News. "We will continue to work with the (state-run) Justice Center and law enforcement to ensure that employees who are accused of criminal conduct against individuals with developmental disabilities are thoroughly investigated and brought to justice if found guilty." "You don't just hurt my daughter, you killed me," Tony said. Source: <http://7online.com/news/exclusive-family-of-group-home-patients-claiming-abuse/248923/>

Families First Group Home in Davis at Center of Lawsuit [Permalink](#) Posted Thursday, August 7th 2014 @ 11am by KFBK News - Kaitlin Lewis The Families First Group Home has been at the center of lawsuits for years. Allegations of neglect and child sex abuse closed the home in 2013. But trouble continues. In a new lawsuit, a victim of alleged child sexual abuse is charging that he was molested at the home. "The group home was an abominable facility," Dr. Joseph George, who is representing the victim, said. The victim claims he was also restrained by employees; forced to spend the night locked in a room without a bed, water, or the use of a restroom. "Euphemistically called a 'quiet room,'" he said. George says the boy's father found out about the situation and contacted police. Davis police cited the home, but that didn't stop the violence. "Then the word gets out that the guy who initiated the 'quiet room,' he gets

fired. Then our child gets harassed by the other workers there," George said. Families First in Davis has since been shut down, but as George says, the new lawsuit seeks accountability for violence in a facility that should have been a safe haven. Read more: <http://www.kfbk.com/articles/kfbk-news-461777/families-first-group-home-in-davis-at-center-of-lawsuit-12647061/#ixzz3A26qKQm>

DCF resumes placement with foster care subcontractor By Tim Potter The Wichita Eagle Published Friday, August 8, 2014, at 11:16 a.m. Updated Friday, August 8, 2014, at 11:22 a.m. comments [Email](#) [Print](#) [Reprints](#) [close x](#) Photos « 1 of 2 » Jaime Green/ The Wichita Eagle | [Buy this photo](#) "I felt it was in the best interest of children to suspend placements until all homes could be inspected. Our investigation into the death is ongoing, but placements are once again permitted," said Phyllis Gilmore, secretary of the Kansas Department for Children and Families. Brian Corn/ The Wichita Eagle | [Buy this photo](#) A 10-month-old girl died after being left in this Dodge Charger in the 1500 block of South Topeka. (July 25, 2014) [Affidavit: Both Wichita foster parents smoking pot while baby in hot car](#) [Child dies after being left in car in south Wichita](#) [Police, state conducting own investigations into child's death in hot car](#) [Wichita police present baby-death case to prosecutors](#) [Foster father charged with first-degree murder in death of baby in hot car](#) [DA: Foster father was using marijuana when baby left in car](#) [Baby's death in Wichita puts focus on foster system](#) [Police affidavit on Seth Jackson case](#) After suspending foster care placements with a subcontractor that sponsored a Wichita foster home where a 10-month-old girl died after being left in a hot car, the state has allowed placements to resume, a state agency said Friday. "I felt it was in the best interest of children to suspend placements until all homes could be inspected. Our investigation into the death is ongoing, but placements are once again permitted," said Phyllis Gilmore, secretary of the Kansas Department for Children and Families. "While we know this affected our valued foster families, it was never intended to be an insult to foster parents who have opened their homes to care for children in need. It was simply a safety precaution," Gilmore said in an e-mail news release. The baby died July 24. The next day, DCF ordered contractors to assess the safety of all children in TFI-sponsored homes, the release said. The directive was to inspect within 72 hours homes where children were under 7 and within a week where foster children were older than 7, the release said. During the inspections, social workers with the two foster care contractors, Saint Francis and KVC, "addressed with the foster parents any safety concerns and reiterated the importance of removing children from vehicles and refraining from being impaired while serving as a foster parent," Gilmore said. "We were pleased to learn that no major issues were discovered. It appears the recent tragedy is a rare exception to an otherwise strong record of foster care child safety in Kansas." Read more here: <http://www.kansas.com/2014/08/08/3587691/DCF-resumes-placement-with-foster.html#storylink=cpy>

Roskam: Fighting human trafficking in the foster care system Published: Thursday, Aug. 7, 2014 4:09 p.m. CDT Caption U.S. Rep. Peter Roskam, R-Wheaton, represents Illinois' 6th District By Peter Roskam For too many children in the foster care system, their lives have been filled with instability, abuse, and neglect. Often these children are passed from home to home not knowing how long they will stay in one place or who they can trust. The psychological toll of such an environment makes it all too easy for human trafficking rings to target vulnerable foster care youth and force them into what can only be described as modern day slavery. That is why lawmakers, community leaders and law enforcement agencies are joining forces to prevent the estimated 104,000 children in foster care from becoming victims of physical and psychological abuse. Source: <http://www.mysuburbanlife.com/2014/08/04/roskam-fighting-human-trafficking-in-the-foster-care-system/a3lo5op/>

Boy celebrating 13th birthday drowns in Oregon Ridge lake Beach closed indefinitely after death of boy from Silver Spring camp [Comments](#) 12 By [Jean Marbella](#) and Alison Knezevich, The Baltimore Sun 9:01 p.m. EDT, August 8, 2014 A Laurel boy who was celebrating his 13th birthday drowned at the Oregon Ridge lake Friday, prompting Baltimore County officials to close the beach until further notice. Dennis Kemp, 13, of the 3000 block of Old Channel Road, was on an outing with the Silver Spring-based Camp Sonshine, according to county public safety officials. Fire Department rescuers were called to the park shortly before 12:30 p.m. Witness told them they saw the boy in distress and slipping under the water, officials said. Kemp's body was recovered just after 3 p.m. in about 45 feet of water, officials said. He and others from the camp had passed a swimming test required for entry to the deeper part of the lake. County officials described the section where the boy drowned as a "roped area," but said swimming was permitted there. Camp Sonshine is a Christian camp founded in 1981, according to its website. Participants in the camp's Wilderness Teen Program arrived at Oregon Ridge shortly before noon, according to a statement posted on the site. "We are deeply saddened by this situation and are going to do everything that we can to help the family and campers affected," the statement said. "This is the first time that something like this has ever happened at Camp Sonshine in our 33-year history." "We send our prayers and thoughts to the family at this time," the statement said. "More than everything, we are a family here, and any loss felt by one of us is felt by all of us." County Executive [Kevin Kamenetz](#) spoke with the boy's parents, who were called to Oregon Ridge after their son was reported missing. Kamenetz also spoke to staff at the park. "This is a terrible tragedy," he said, "On behalf of the citizens of Baltimore County, I offer deepest sympathy to the victim's family and friends." Park lifeguards searched the water unsuccessfully for the boy until county rescue crews arrived from the nearby Texas Station in Cockeysville, and from Kingsville and Middle River fire companies. A Carroll County dive unit also responded. Baltimore City sent a sonar unit, but the boy's body was recovered before it arrived. Baltimore County Fire Lt. Jay Ringgold said rescuers could not remember any previous drownings in the lake. Oregon Ridge, at more than 1,100 acres, is the largest park owned by the county. The beach and its pavilion will remain closed indefinitely to allow investigators to review the incident, Ringgold said. Read more: <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/baltimore-county/cockeysville/bs-md-oregon-ridge-missing-0809-20140808.0.1501573.story#ixzz3A29YWSLR>

Oklahoma mother sentenced to 22 years in prison for keeping 4-year-old son in dog cage | Fox News Oklahoma mother sentenced to 22 years in prison for keeping 4-year-old son in dog cage Published August 08, 2014 [Associated Press Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) 6 CLAREMORE, Okla. — An Oklahoma woman has been sentenced to 22 years in prison for locking her 4-year-old son in a dog cage. A district judge in Claremore handed down the punishment Thursday to the 34-year-old Chelsea woman. She pleaded guilty in May to child abuse by injury and child neglect. ADVERTISEMENT ADVERTISEMENT Court documents say the boy was held in the cage last year for an estimated 14 hours each day. Her co-defendant and common-law husband was sentenced last month to 27 years in prison for child abuse and sexually abusing another child. The man told authorities that they kept the boy in the cage for discipline and protection. The Associated Press typically does not name victims of child abuse and is withholding the adults' names to avoid identifying the child. Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2014/08/08/oklahoma-mother-sentenced-to-22-years-in-prison-for-keeping-4-year-old-son-in/>

Foster care cases to remain open to the public under new order Judge Michael Nash Gina Ferazzi / Los Angeles Times Superior Court Judge Michael Nash presides over Los Angeles County's juvenile court. Hearings to decide whether a potentially endangered child should be removed from his or her parents and placed in foster care will remain largely open to the media and public under a new order from Nash. Superior Court Judge Michael Nash presides over Los Angeles County's juvenile court. Hearings to decide whether a potentially endangered child should be removed from his or her parents and placed in foster care will remain largely open to the media and public under a new order from Nash. (Gina Ferazzi / Los Angeles Times) By [Garrett Therolf](#) [contact the reporter](#) [CrimeJustice System](#) New courtroom rules will allow foster care placement hearings to be open, if participants identify themselves Hearings to decide whether a child should be removed from a home will be largely open to the public Los Angeles County court hearings to decide whether a potentially endangered child should be removed from his or her parents and placed in foster care will remain largely open to the media and public under a new judicial order. Superior Court Judge Michael Nash, who presides over the county's juvenile court, issued the order Friday in response to an appeals court decision that struck down a previous order opening the courts to public view. [Related story: Judge erred in opening dependency court to media, appeals court rules](#) [Garrett Therolf In a 2-1 decision, appellate panel says L.A. County judge's order interfered with individual judges' discretion in juvenile hearings. In a 2-1 decision, appellate panel says L.A. County judge's order interfered with individual judges' discretion in juvenile hearings. \(Garrett Therolf\)](#) Under the new order covering all dependency hearings, Nash said judicial officers should ask attendees to identify themselves and state their interest in the case or the court's work. Under the previous order, Nash did not require attendees to identify themselves. Lawyers involved in the case will have the opportunity to argue that the news media or public should be barred from the hearing, but they must show that the presence harms a child's best interest. In January 2012, Nash issued his first decree that dependency hearings, which had been presumptively closed for years, were now presumptively open to the press. [Related Opinion](#) [Newton: Failing our children, in and out of court](#) [See all related](#) 8 But in March, a California appeals court ruled that Nash erred in the order. In a 2-1 decision, the appellate panel said the first blanket order opening the courts for hearings to decide whether children should be removed from their families interfered with individual judges' discretion "to determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether a person may be admitted to the hearing based on a 'direct and legitimate interest in the particular case or the work of the court.'" [Comments](#) Superior Court Judge Michael Nash, is to be commended for bringing transparency to the juvenile court. I think the appeals court

erred in wanting to continue to keep the juvenile court proceedings cloaked in secrecy. Andre-Leonard at 10:08 AM August 09, 2014 [Add a comment](#) [See all comments](#) 1 The appeal had been brought by a 15-year-old girl who challenged a judge's decision to allow a Times reporter to observe a hearing at which lawyers discussed whether she should be removed from her family after being assaulted by her stepfather. Leaders of the court-appointed law firm representing most of the county's foster children said they would not have objected to the first order if Nash had required attendees to identify themselves upon entering the courtroom. Twitter: @gtherolf Source: <http://www.latimes.com/local/countygovernment/la-me-media-access-20140809-story.html>

In Need of Care: Child neglect easy to miss, affects development, safety By Deb Gruver The Wichita Eagle Published Saturday, August 9, 2014, at 2:49 p.m. Updated Sunday, August 10, 2014, at 6:58 a.m. comments [Email](#) [Print](#) [Reprints](#) [close x](#) Photos « 1 of 2 » Brian Corn/ File photo After a 12-year-old Wichita girl and her siblings hadn't taken a bath or brushed their teeth in a month, they got cleaned up at the Wichita Children's Home. Reports of suspected child abuse or neglect in Sedgwick County This story is part of our ongoing "In Need of Care" series. As reports of child abuse and neglect rise locally, the stakes are huge – for the children and for the community. The Eagle takes readers inside two cases to examine how the system works and to show the problem's extent. Here are the previous stories: CASE 1: [Part 1: The girl in the basement](#) | [Part 2: Parents are charged](#) | [Part 3: Lawyer wants case closed to media](#) | [Part 4: Reports of abuse 'unsubstantiated' by DCF](#) | [Part 5: Trial continued to October](#) CASE 2: [Part 1: Helpless in the face of violence](#) | [Part 2: State proves 4 children in need of care, judge says](#) | [Part 3: Reintegration of kids in child-in-need-of-care case 'viable option,' judge says](#) CASE 3: [Part 1: Child neglect easy to miss, affects development, safety](#) Suspect child abuse or neglect? Report it Confidential reports may be made by calling the Kansas Protection Report Center toll-free at 800-922-5330. [The Kansas Department for Children and Families](#) says on its website: "Every call is taken seriously and every effort will be made to protect your identity." The number is answered 24 hours a day. In situations where a child's safety is at immediate risk, people should call 911. More information about reporting is available at the DCF website, www.dcf.ks.gov/Pages/Report-Abuse-or-Neglect.aspx. If you are required by law to report suspected abuse or neglect – for example, if you are a teacher, doctor, social worker or therapist – you may use the [Kansas Intake/Investigation Protection System](#). A complete list of mandatory reporters is available at www.dcf.ks.gov/services/PPS/Pages/MandatoryReportersChild.aspx. How to get help The Kansas Children's Service League hotline for parents, 1-800-CHILDREN, offers education, resources and referrals. How to give help Give or volunteer • Child Advocacy Center of Sedgwick County, which helps abuse victims navigate services and resources, needs new or gently used children's clothing; toys for boys ages 5 to 14, such as Hot Wheels and footballs; and gas cards for families. The center also needs financial donations and volunteers. Donations may be dropped off at 130 S. Market, Suite B183, Wichita, KS 67202. More information is available at www.cacskansas.org or by calling 316-660-9494. • [The Wichita Children's Home](#) is where children who have been placed in police protective custody initially stay. The home is the only emergency residential center in Sedgwick County open 24 hours a day. The home at 810 N. Holyoke keeps a list of needed donations and volunteers at <http://wch.org/giving/wishlist>. More information is available by calling 316-684-6581. • Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children offers free training for volunteers who want to advocate in court for an abused or neglected child. More information is available at www.casaofsedgwickcounty.org or by calling 316-866-2920. The [volunteer form](#) is online. • Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center also seeks volunteers. More information is available at www.wichitasac.com/volunteer or by calling 877-927-2248. Become a foster parent Kansas children need foster parents. To become foster parents, you must: • Be at least 21 years old. • Be able to meet basic income guidelines. • Be able to provide adequate bedroom space and a separate bed for each foster child. • Have reliable transportation. • Complete 30 hours of free training in Partnering for Safety and Permanency – Model Approaches for Partnerships in Parenting. • Agree to use nonphysical forms of discipline for children. • Be willing for everyone in your household to undergo a complete background check. There are different levels of foster parenting. Family foster care parents provide children with temporary homes until they can return to their own homes, be placed with relatives, find adoptive homes or become adults. Respite care providers give foster parents planned time off to recharge. Emergency providers care for children just coming into foster care who have not been placed in a home yet. The state contracts with two foster care providers. More information is available by calling Saint Francis Community Services toll-free at 866-999-1599 or going online to www.st-francis.org or by calling [KVC](http://www.kvc.org) at 316-618-5437 or going online to www.kvc.org. Sources: Kansas Department for Children and Families, www.st-francis.org, www.kvc.org They hadn't taken a bath or brushed their teeth in a month. That's what a 12-year-old Wichita girl told social workers recently after she and her siblings got cleaned up at the Wichita Children's Home. They had been living without electricity or water, court documents say, because their parents hadn't paid the utility bills. Prosecutors filed a child-in-need-of-care petition on behalf of the four children July 30 after police removed them from their home during a welfare check three days before. Neglect happens every day in homes across the Wichita area. In state fiscal year 2014, which ended June 30, physical and medical neglect of a child made up about 18 percent of all child-in-need-of-care cases assigned for investigation by the Kansas Department for Children and Families. Since February, The Eagle has been regularly reviewing child-in-need-of-care petitions and is following several cases through the system, including this one. To protect children's privacy, The Eagle is not identifying them or their parents. The petition alleges that the children were covered in bug bites, some scabbed over and some fresh. That the youngest child, a 7-month-old, hadn't been to the doctor since she was born. That the youngest boy, who is autistic and nonverbal, was kept in a locked house out of fear he would run away. People hear about "dirty house" cases and may think it sounds draconian that police remove children because of how a house looks, Sedgwick County Deputy District Attorney Ron Paschal said. But a dirty house is one thing, he said. A filthy house that can affect a child's health is another. "We've all had a house that's been dirty before. My house is dirty right now," Paschal said Friday. "When we talk about these kind of cases, we talk about houses that are so severe or so chronically dirty that they will ... present some kind of risk to the child." Paschal remembers a case in which a family was using a bathtub as a toilet because the home had no running water. The family urinated and defecated in the tub. A girl in the home cut her foot on a broken beer bottle in the yard, got in the tub to use the bathroom and became sick with a severe infection that threatened her life. He recalled another case where a wall appeared to be moving with cockroaches. "It's not uncommon to see children who are living in filth," Paschal said. "Not dirty houses, but filth." Neglect cases grow The number of reports of child abuse and neglect in Sedgwick County has increased 31 percent since 2009, records from the state show. The state agency that investigates child abuse and neglect, formerly known as SRS, received 12,989 reports in Sedgwick County in the state fiscal year that ended June 30. The department assigned 7,438 of those intakes to a social worker for further review. Physical abuse accounts for 33 percent of the cases. Physical neglect makes up almost 14 percent, and medical neglect makes up almost 5 percent. "It takes a significant concern before (a neglect case) is going to rise to the level where it gets assigned to investigate," said Diana Schunn, executive director of the Child Advocacy Center of Sedgwick County. "Any time there is that potential for short-term or long-term negative outcomes, those are the cases where we get involved." Neglect manifests itself in various ways. A child may be seriously overweight or short for his age because he isn't being fed regularly. Or he may show up to school dirty on a regular basis, wearing the same clothes over and over. He might need to go to a doctor for a problem that's been ignored. Or parents may leave children alone, as was the case in May when a maintenance worker discovered a 1-year-old in a closet at a Wichita apartment complex. The mother said she put her son in the closet when she took the child's father to work. In some cases, a combination of problems threaten a child's safety. "Neglect is often an ongoing situation. It's a combination of things that are occurring," Paschal said. "Hygiene, attention issues, nutrition. We see a little bit of everything when it comes to neglect." Brian Dempsey, director of protection and prevention services for the DCF, said a report initially may be made because, say, a child is coming to school dirty. "A lot of times with any report, that's the tip of the iceberg and when we engage the family, we find other issues that (need to be) addressed as well," Dempsey said. "It's nasty" In the case filed late last month, social workers sent all of the children to Via Christi Hospital St. Francis, where doctors examined them and treated them for bug bites. The next day, investigators began interviewing the children and the parents. Asked by social workers whether she understood why she and her siblings had been taken away, the 12-year-old girl said "because my parents are working on getting the bed bugs fixed," the petition says. All of the children, including the baby, had bug bites. The girl said her family did not have air-conditioning. She said she shared a room with her baby sister and opened windows in the home to try to keep cool. She said her parents brought home bread, jelly and peanut butter for the children to eat. The oldest boy in the home said he shared a room with his younger brother, who is autistic. The girl said her parents "have to lock the doors because the (boy) will run out of the house and down the street," according to the petition. The oldest boy told social workers his parents brought home chips and pudding to eat. "It's nasty," he said of their home, adding that it smelled. The oldest girl told social workers her home would be better if someone could help her parents "get the house clean." Despite the allegations, the girl said she thought she and her siblings were safe in the home. Previous reports The children's parents wouldn't let social workers into their house, owned by a relative, the petition says. Social workers interviewed the father July 28 in front of the home. He also had bug bites, the petition says. When social workers asked for access to the home, the father said he couldn't find his keys. He later called the children's mother, the petition says, and told her, "They want in the house." He told investigators the children were bitten by bugs while playing outside. He denied that the home was unlivable and said there may be fleas in the home because the children brought a toy home from a friend who had pets. He later told social

workers the family had consulted a lawyer who said not to let investigators in without more information. The father said the family did not receive assistance of any kind. He said his wife worked, and he was getting involved in wind and solar energy but didn't have any customers yet. Social workers later interviewed the children's mother by phone. One of them "explained the importance of seeing the home to make sure it is safe for the children to return to," the petition says. The social worker explained the state would not return the children to the home without seeing it. The mother confirmed there was no electricity or water at the home, court documents say. The mother said she remembered the state previously had offered the family preservation services but she and the father "thought we were okay on our own at that point so we just didn't think we needed services." She said the family had to buy a new vehicle recently and it cost more than what they had expected. A "giant water leak" under the house caused the water bill to get "way too expensive and out of hand," the mother said. The mother confirmed that her son with autism was not receiving any services. "I don't know where to go for him either," she said, according to the petition. "He's too old for Rainbows." Rainbows United serves children with special needs from birth to age 21, according to the nonprofit group's [website](#). The DCF had two previous reports about the family, one from January about the oldest girl not attending school regularly. The DCF "addressed the concerns with the family and referred them to Saint Francis Community Services. The family was unable to be located and DCF was provided with a false address. DCF closed the case," the petition says. On Feb. 13, the DCF received a report that the baby had tested positive for cannabis. "There were additional concerns that (the baby) had not been seen by a physician since her birth. The intake was screened out," the petition said. The state requested a clinical interview assessment of the parents and the oldest three children, medical exams for all the children, dental and vision exams for the three oldest children, and developmental examinations for the two youngest children. Social workers who observed the baby said she seemed happy and on track developmentally. Signs of neglect/neglect can be easy to miss, experts say, but there are telltale signs. "The person who the child spends the most time with can tell you," said assistant district attorney Sandra Lessor, who prosecutes many of Sedgwick County's children-in-need-of-care cases. Common signs are: • Being underweight or short for one's age. • Hoarding food. • Poor hygiene. • Medical conditions or problems that aren't being treated, including vision and dental issues. • Behavior problems. • Lack of parental supervision. • Refusal by a family to let someone into a home. Public awareness of neglect is important, said the DCF's Dempsey. "Certainly in some of these scenarios, if nobody is in that home, it's hard to see," he said. "That's why rely on schools, for example." If people suspect child abuse or neglect, they should report it, Dempsey said. Too often, experts say, people don't want to get involved or make a fuss. The DCF can offer or refer services to parents struggling financially or who need help with parenting or household skills, Dempsey said. "The best place for any child, as long as it's safe, is in the home," he said. Lessor had a simple piece of advice to help children in the community: "Keep your eye open for your neighbor kids." Reports of suspected child abuse or neglect in Sedgwick County Fiscal 2009 Fiscal 2010 Fiscal 2011 Fiscal 2012 Fiscal 2013 Fiscal 2014 Reports received in Sedgwick County 9,901 10,606 10,748 11,680 12,366 12,989 Reports assigned for further investigation in Sedgwick County 5,242 5,434 5,854 6,768 7,401 7,438 Reach Deb Gruver at 316-268-6400 or degruver@wichitaeagle.com. Follow her on Twitter: [@SGCountyDeb](#). Read more here: <http://www.kansas.com/2014/08/09/3589266/child-neglect-easy-to-miss-affects.html#storylink=cpy>

Too much, too young? One in three Wyoming foster care children prescribed psychotropic drugs 4 Saved Save Article [My Saved Items](#) [Print Email](#) [»](#) Foster Care Dan Cepeda/Star-Tribune photos Carissa O'Malley, center, and her brother Cameron, 15, take instructions from dance teacher Andrew Nelson at the Heart of Dance Productions dance studio recently in Casper, Wyo. Carissa, 22, legally adopted Cameron after he was drifting through different foster families. After the adoption, she took him off of his prescribed psychotropic medications and increased scheduled activities such as cycling and dance lessons. 2014-08-10T00:15:00Z Too much, too young? One in three Wyoming foster care children prescribed psychotropic drugs By LEAH TODD Casper Star-Tribune The Billings Gazette 17 hours ago • [By LEAH TODD Casper Star-Tribune](#) 0 CASPER, Wyo. — For Cameron O'Malley, weekends at his sister's house meant tucking a pair of jeans, a few shirts and his toothbrush into his backpack. The 15-year-old's foster mom would zip a weekend's worth of pills the size of jelly beans into plastic baggies. Cameron and his sister Carissa, 22, knew the routine: Take daily with food. Carissa didn't like the medications, prescribed for a list of conditions she was not convinced Cameron even had: Prozac for his hyperactive attention disorder. Fluoxetine for depression. Straterra for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Wellbutrin for depression. They made Cameron's brain feel weird, like he was thinking in fog. But if the adoption was to go through, he and his sister had to follow the rules. Nearly one in three foster children in Wyoming is prescribed psychotropic medications like the ones Cameron took. That's more than four times the rate found in other low-income children not living in foster care, where the frequency is one in 12. Critics say psychotropic drugs — any medication that affects a patient's mood, thought or behavior — lack evidence as to their effectiveness and safety in children. Many of the medications have not been studied in children, and doctors say they can't assume what works on adults will be safe for children, whose central nervous systems are still developing. Carissa believes state and medical officers rushed to use prescriptions to control Cameron, who acted out as a child. "They want to put a diagnosis on everything," she said. Cameron was a "lost" child in the middle of a large family, one social worker wrote in a 2011 report. His parents focused on the youngest of the family's 12 children, giving little to no attention to the older kids, the worker wrote. In reports filed with the Wyoming Department of Family Services between 2004 and 2011, doctors attributed Cameron's conditions and behaviors to abuse and neglect he endured as a young boy. His mother was charged with neglect, and Cameron left his biological family for good about 2010. By 2011, he'd been diagnosed with ADHD, mild long-term depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety. He had lived with foster families on five separate occasions. Carissa didn't like the medications, and she wasn't alone. "I never wanted to take meds," Cameron said. He felt lethargic while on them. He was tired, not himself. Carissa recalls how out-of-touch he was, slow to engage in conversation. But to not take the medications? He thought he'd get in trouble. Reports on file with DFS suggest that while in foster care, Cameron attended classes regularly. His teachers described him as respectful but easily distracted. He required multiple prompts to stay on task. He had an active imagination and was easily absorbed into his drawings. Cameron received a few disciplinary procedures in school but was never suspended. His grades varied tremendously — from A's to F's. "Cameron needs to work on listening to directions," one teacher wrote on a report card. "When Cameron tries hard in class, he does excellent work." Cameron told doctors repeatedly he was sad about leaving his brothers and sisters, who were also living in foster care. A doctor once noted that fluoxetine, prescribed for Cameron's depression, seemed to calm Cameron down. Beyond that, doctors never noted whether the medications were working or not. Nearly 30 percent of the state's 3,500 foster children were prescribed at least one psychotropic drug last year, according to data from the state Department of Health. In comparison, only about 8 percent of the 57,000 Wyoming children whose low family income qualified them for Medicaid took psychotropics. Though no definitive national average has been tabulated, several regional studies suggest that Wyoming is among the most frequent prescribers of the medications. A 2011 report using Medicaid claims from five states found that 21 to 39 percent of children in foster care received a prescription for psychotropic medication in 2008, compared with 5 to 10 percent of children not in foster care. In 2004, a report showed that psychotropics are prescribed to foster care kids at rates three to 11 times greater than the rate for Medicaid-insured youngsters. Though the rate of psychotropic medication use among foster children has decreased in Wyoming since 2010, the number of children taking the drugs has increased slightly. Some experts attribute the higher rate of psychotropic drug use to the fact that foster care children are more likely to have suffered emotional or mental trauma than their peers, said James Bush, the state medical officer for Wyoming Medicaid. Foster children have often been abused or neglected seriously enough to draw the attention of state authorities. On top of that, many have been taken from their homes. Some experts say children in foster care are up to twice as likely to be diagnosed with a mental health disorder than other children. But that doesn't account for the fact that a child in state custody in Wyoming is four times as likely as his peers to be taking the mind-altering medications. Carissa's fondest memory of her brother is at a doctor's office when Cameron was about 3 years old and his younger sibling needed blood drawn. A nurse prepared a needle. Cameron watched. As the nurse brought the needle toward their infant brother, Cameron broke out into tears. "No!" Carissa remembered him saying. "Don't poke my brother!" Carissa lost touch with most of her siblings around the time she aged out of the foster care system. She moved into her own place about five years ago and works now as a welder and hairdresser in Casper. She said she wanted to adopt as many of her 11 brothers and sisters as she could. Carissa believed that DFS allowed her to communicate with Cameron because no foster parent was pushing to adopt him, unlike the case with her other siblings. Weekend visits started in late winter 2012. By last summer, Cameron moved in full time with Carissa. And when he did, Carissa said no more medications. Cameron's prescriptions always made his sister uneasy. Carissa rented books from the library on mental health and ADHD. She researched the side effects of many psychotropic medications — suicidal thoughts, severe liver damage, heart-related problems. She signed up Cameron for a local mountain biking club. She volunteered him to shovel stalls and groom horses at a nearby therapy farm, and when his grades started slipping, she wrote him a daily schedule. "He needed an activity, not medication," Carissa said. She signed the last page of adoption paperwork on Valentine's Day. Bush, the state medical officer for Medicaid, wanted to know how doctors were prescribing the drugs to Wyoming children. To find out, the Department of Health examined Medicaid claims from 2009 to 2013 and counted how many

listed a psychotropic prescription. Bush looked for children who fell into one of several categories and found that between 1 and 2 percent of foster care children in Wyoming were prescribed more than 150 percent of the dosage recommended by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration during those years. Between five and 11 children under the age of 5 were prescribed psychotropic medications, and one child in each of his study years took more than five of those medications at the same time. Little is known about the drugs' long-term and short-term risks, especially when they're used in combinations. That prompted the Health Department to add an extra layer of accountability to outlier cases, where a child's dosage is high, his age is young or the number of prescribed medications is greater than five. Now, every case that exceeds one of Bush's parameters — too many, too much or too young — will receive a second look from medical faculty at the University of Washington, which partners with the University of Wyoming as the state's medical school. It's not that in all cases doctors made mistakes in prescribing these children's medications. Sometimes, exceeding the recommended dose is advisable, Bush said. But those cases should be rare, he explained. "And you should document closely and you should make sure you've explored other options," Bush said. Psychotropic drugs themselves are not problematic, he said. Being underdiagnosed is a problem, too. With kids, it's often a very tentative diagnosis. "How can you diagnose a 2-year-old as psychotic?" Bush said. "The children's brain is still evolving, it's still maturing." Marty Nelson, clinical services administrator for the Wyoming Department of Family Services, said he advocates as few medications as possible. "It's better for kids to not be on medications or to be on as few medications as they need," Nelson said. But there are cases when medications like psychotropics are necessary, Nelson said. For foster care children, that's a decision reached by a group of physicians, case workers and, ideally, the child's biological parents. "While we want the therapy to deal with the depression and anxiety, that's going to take a little time," Nelson said. "So for the six months before the talk therapy, the children are better off not beginning depressed or anxious." As talk therapy increases, ideally the medications should decrease. "What I'm hoping for them as adults is saying, 'Get your talk therapy and you won't have to get your medications,'" Nelson said. "But I don't know how that tracks out over time." Cameron doesn't fall asleep in class anymore. He said he has matured since moving in with Carissa a year ago. He's not angry. No tantrums, no behavioral problems, Carissa said. Why? Cameron threw a thumb in Carissa's direction. "It's because of her," he said. Before moving in with his sister, Cameron had never played an organized sport, never been part of a team. So far, mountain biking makes the short list of Cameron's favorite things. It's just fun, he said. "You feel free because you get to go as fast as you want," he said. His favorite thing, though, is hanging out with his sister. He walks their dogs, Capone, Delilah and Envy, outside every day. Carissa knows she has three years left with Cameron before he is 18. She hopes that by then he will have found a passion in his life. She recently sent him on a three-week adventure trip in California so he'd have some positive childhood memories. They plan to spend time at a brain center in Colorado to explore alternative treatment options. Cameron still deals with attention issues, and because of developmental delays, he needs help focusing. But the two of them steer clear of the medications that doctors once proposed to address those problems. "By taking a pill, it doesn't just automatically make things better," Carissa said. "That is not the answer, especially not by itself." A few days ago, a postcard came in the mail. On the front was a picture of teenagers jumping into the air, flanked by ice-capped mountains. On the back, she read Cameron's scratchy handwriting. "I have been haveing (sic) the best time of my life so far," he wrote. "One amazing thing I found was a dead baby octopus. I picked it up and chased people with it. I found a whole bunch of sea shells. Well I better get going. Sincerely, Cameron O'Malley." Read more: http://billingsgazette.com/news/state-and-regional/wyoming/too-much-too-young-one-in-three-wyoming-foster-care/article_1ee9cf95-ba7e-52b5-9b8d-8a47cf0d0c5d.html#ixzz3A2DNt4pZ

Springfield residents raise concerns about group home for girls in East Forest Park Some residents of Forest Park in Springfield are opposing using this site at 64 Treetop Ave. for a group home for girls. (The Republican file photo / John Suchocki) [Print](#) By [Peter Goonan](#) | [pgoonan@repub.com](#) The Republican [Follow on Twitter](#) on August 11, 2014 at 3:22 PM [Reddit](#) [Email](#) Springfield headlines [Springfield Mayor Domenic Sarno responds to Holyoke Mayor Alex Morse's 'Ice Bucket Challenge'](#) [East Forest Park residents describe Springfield group home plans as threat to neighborhood tranquility](#) [From The Republican's archives: Images of Page 1 from the past 50 years, week of Aug. 10-16](#) [Lieutenant governor candidate Steve Kerrigan to visit Springfield Tuesday](#) [Adolfo Colon denies cocaine trafficking, over 200 grams, in Springfield](#) [SPRINGFIELD](#) — Residents of [East Forest Park](#) have launched a petition drive, opposing plans for a group home for girls at 64 Treetop Ave., raising fears that such a facility will "change the character of this wonderful neighborhood." Joan Ingersoll, executive director of the [Mental Health Association](#), said her agency is planning a four-person group home for girls ages 16 to 22, that will be staffed 24 hours a day and not cause any harm or disruption to the neighborhood. Paul Edwards, a neighbor at 56 Treetop Ave., said residents are very upset and have gathered more than 60 signatures. "Our concern is that this corporation is going to place a large number of mentally unstable patients into a densely populated neighborhood," the petition states in part. "The homes in this street are situated very close together, yet it has remained a very quiet neighborhood for many, many years. Some residents have been living here for 60+ years." City Solicitor Edward Pikula, in a legal opinion to Deputy Planning Director Philip Dromey, said the proposed group home is exempt from local zoning regulations under state law. Under the law, known as the Dover Amendment, such a use of property is exempt because it involves educational services by a nonprofit educational institution. The group home is being provided through the Youth in Transition program, which involves residential services and to help the girls establish the skills they need in order to live independently, Ingersoll said. The petition asks that the Mental Health Association "find a more suitable location for their potentially proposed facility." The petition states that neighborhood residents were "completely unaware of the plans while renovations progressed. Ingersoll said the girls residence was in a different Springfield neighborhood for seven years without any complaints in that time. There is no date for the move yet, but there will be an open house for neighborhood residents to set the site and ask any questions, she said. "We fully expect that this program will not disrupt or negatively impact the neighborhood in any way," Ingersoll said. "We expect the girls to be good neighbors." The Mental Health Association purchased the property, and is caring for girls under the care of the state Department of Children and Families, Ingersoll said. Source: http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2014/08/springfield_residents_raise_co.html

S.C. ranks among worst in care of underprivileged children Tim Smith, The Greenville News 2:53 p.m. EDT August 11, 2014 South Carolina ranks among the worst states in its care of underprivileged children, according to a national study released this morning. (Photo: Rick Nease , MCT) 19 [CONNECT](#) [TWEET](#) [LINKEDIN](#) 1 [COMMENT](#) [EMAIL](#) [MORE](#) COLUMBIA — South Carolina ranks among the worst states in its care of underprivileged children, according to a national study released this morning. The state ranks 32nd in percentage of maltreated children, with one being the lowest ranking; 46th in health for the children and 42nd for education. Overall, the study by WalletHub, a personal finances website, ranked South Carolina 45th in its care of underprivileged children. The study used a variety of factors to rank each state, ranging from infant death rates, to food insecurity to percentage of children in foster care. South Carolina had one of the lowest percentages of children in foster care, according to the study, but one of the highest percentages of children in single-parent families. The United States has the second highest rate of relative child poverty among economically developed nations, according to WalletHub. Source: <http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/local/south-carolina/2014/08/11/sc-ranks-among-worst-care-underprivileged-children/13888253/>

Texas Judge Orders Removal of YouTube Video Exposing Abuse in Foster Care System [News Links](#) Aug 11, 2014 0 281 HOUSTON, Texas — In a continuing cover-up by Child Protective Services ("CPS") in Texas, ng they had too many children to take care of. The trouble with CPS started when their youngest son Buddy, died in March 2013 because he had HIV. The Cooks had adopted Buddy and his younger sister after their biological mother left the children with the Cooks. She was hiding from CPS from two different states. Photos on Mrs. Cook's Facebook page show the scars, bruises, and cuts on the boy when he was left with them. It was the Cooks that notified CPS that the mother had left the children in their care. The biological mother of the boy, [Amanda Lunsford](#), was later found incompetent to stand trial for allowing eight men to sexually assault Buddy. Lunsford had also left her six-week-old daughter in the tent for three days. Lunsford has had three more children since she was found incompetent to stand trial. CPS took the Cooks' seven children on the same day that Buddy died. Mrs. Cook has told authorities, members of the Sunset Commission, Breitbart Texas, and others that the CPS caseworker lied and withheld evidence about Buddy's HIV status and the biological mother's CPS history from law enforcement and the Coroner. Mr. and Mrs. Cook were arrested for Injury to a Child by Omission. Although the charges were dropped in December of 2013, CPS kept the children for four more months. The agency still will not relinquish legal custody. Under Texas law, CPS and the Judge have until October to terminate the Cooks' parental rights or the case must be dismissed. Even though the children are back in the Cooks' care after they have been exonerated from any wrongdoing, CPS still has legal custody of the children. CPS is expected to dismiss its case against the Cooks in October. The Cooks have spent over \$140,000.00 defending themselves and protecting their family from CPS. Jim Black, a CPS watchdog from Humble, Texas, said that "anytime a TDFPS employee fails to follow the guidelines, statutes, and rules set forth by the State, they are actually insubordinate to their employer, the people of Texas. When it comes to statutes, in many cases that insubordination results in down-right criminal behavior. Moreover, what we have is the fox guarding the henhouse. Texas needs another entity in charge of CPS internal investigations.

Right now it is the Office of the Inspector General of the same agency.” Lana Shadwick is a 22-year lawyer who has been a family court associate judge, CPS lawyer, and prosecutor. Follow her [@LanaShadwick2](#) Source: <http://www.theminorityreportblog.com/2014/08/11/texas-judge-orders-removal-of-youtube-video-exposing-abuse-in-foster-care-system/>

DOJ slams Riker's Island for horrific violence against young inmates [Cory Doctorow](#) at 8:00 am Tue, Aug 12, 2014 [ADVERTISE AT BOING BOING!](#) [SHARE](#) [TWEET](#) [STUMBLE](#) [COMMENTS](#) From the age of 16 on, children are integrated into the general population at Riker's Island, where the guards routinely engage in brutal, illegal beatings whose video evidence mysteriously disappears. The DOJ's investigation is unequivocal in its condemnation, documenting events like guards beating mentally ill inmates until they were hospitalized, then continuing to beat them in the face and head after they were restrained on a medical gurney. Based on a review of Department 24-hour reports from October 2012 through early April 2014, we identified 64 incidents involving blows to an adolescent inmate's head or face. This is undoubtedly an underestimate of the number of headshots during this period, because 24-hour reports contain only initial incident summaries prepared by staff themselves. Indeed, our review of incidents and witness interviews suggest that headshots were utilized far more frequently during this period. However, the fact that these summaries so often openly refer to headshots is disturbing. Our consultant reported that headshots are far more common at Rikers than at any other correctional institution he has observed. In many instances, correction officers readily admit hitting inmates but claim they acted in self-defense after being punched first by the inmate. As a threshold matter, even when an inmate strikes an officer, an immediate retaliatory strike to the head or face is inappropriate. Moreover, there is often reason to question the credibility of the officer's account. These incidents also disproportionately occur in locations without video surveillance, making it difficult to determine what transpired. Source: <http://boingboing.net/2014/08/12/doj-slams-rikers-island-for.html>

Failure in foster care redesign Express-News Editorial Board : August 11, 2014 [E-mail](#) [Print](#) 0 Page 1 of 1 Recent Headlines [Today's Editorial Cartoon: Aug. 18 Values tested by border crisis](#) [School accountability system failing Your Turn: Aug. 16 Telemedicine plan merits state support](#) SAN ANTONIO — Changing Texas' beleaguered foster care system won't matter if the funding is inadequate to keep these vulnerable kids safe. That is the clear takeaway from recent news surrounding the [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services](#) foster care redesign. As numerous media outlets have reported, the lead contractor for foster care redesign, [Providence Services Corp.](#), has voluntarily terminated its five-year contract with the state after just 18 months. It essentially handled a pilot version of the redesign. This is hardly a loss. The Arizona-based firm, which was tasked with the care of 1,100 foster kids in 60 North and West Texas counties, had issues. Earlier this summer, two children in its care drowned. The state put Providence on notice for failing to keep kids close to home or develop a wide array of services for the young Texans. It also struggled to stay on budget. The rationale Providence gave for dropping its \$30 million annual contract was a lack of money to adequately serve children and families. This concern was raised in the [Sunset Advisory Commission's](#) review of DFPS' foster care redesign, which noted there was “no additional investment of state funding” but still “the expectation that the quality of care provided to foster children will improve.” [John Specia](#), commissioner of DFPS, has said a second pilot will continue, but expansion is on hold as the agency studies what went wrong. Clearly, the redesign should be on hold until lawmakers address the funding concerns. The stakes are high. In fiscal 2013, seven young Texans died despite being in foster care. It's also telling that the typical CPS worker juggled 32 ongoing cases in 2013, per state figures. The best practice is 17 children per worker, according to the [Child Welfare League of America](#). A redesign of the foster system could, ultimately, lead to a stronger safety net. But a redesign doesn't matter if funding for child welfare is inadequate. Source: <http://www.mysanantonio.com/opinion/editorials/article/Failure-in-foster-care-redesign-5681984.php>

GCPD: 2 arrested for abusing foster kids [Small Text](#) [Medium Text](#) [Large Text](#) [Print](#) [Email](#) GCPD speaks about arrested foster couple GARDEN CITY, Kan. - Garden City police officers say they started looking into a couple suspected of foster abuse after concern from the Kansas Department for Children and Families. More from KWCH.com [Twins top Royals Water main break floods West street Saturday Royals hold off Twins, increase division lead Man shot by Newton Police officer dies Supreme Court upholds conviction in baby's death](#) Capt. Randy Ralston said by the time the investigation wrapped up, the alleged victims no longer lived in the home. “No serious injuries as far as needing medical treatment immediately, because of the time frame from 2008 to now obviously a lot of the injuries have healed and were unreported.” The abuse is said to have occurred over six-year period, from 2008 to 2014, to seven children. The couple faces multiple child abuse charges. They're scheduled to appear in court later this week. ----- Two people have been arrested, accused of child abuse, with the crimes dating back six years ago, according to Garden City police. Police said the child abuse case against foster children began in April. The investigation revealed two women had allegedly abused and mistreated several children who were in foster care in the 1300 block of East Fair. Eight victims, between the ages of 1 to 15 years old, told police the abuse reportedly began in 2008. Glenda Griffin, 40, and Stacy Griffin, 47, were arrested last week. Glenda faces 9 counts of child abuse and 1 count of child endangerment. Stacy was booked on two counts of child abuse. The case will be turned over to the Finney County attorney's office for formal charges. No other details are being released at this time. Source: <http://www.kwch.com/news/local-news/gcpd-2-arrested-for-abusing-foster-kids/27418508>

KSN investigates safeguards to keep foster children safe By Brittany Glas Published: August 12, 2014, 10:31 pm Updated: August 12, 2014, 11:03 pm [5](#) [162](#) Related Coverage [Garden City police arrest two for abuse against foster children](#) GARDEN CITY, Kansas — After the [Garden City Police Department arrested two people on suspicion of abuse](#) against foster children, KSN is investigating what safeguards Kansas has put in place to keep foster children safe. The Kansas Department for Children and Families says Glenda Griffin, 40, and Stacy Griffin, 47, like all foster parents in the state, underwent background checks when they became licensed foster parents. KSN wanted to know what the exact procedures are to keep foster children safe. We sat down with representatives of Saint Francis Community Services Tuesday to learn more about the safeguards. In Kansas, two programs are designed to protect foster children: the foster care home system and reintegration services. Per Kansas Department of Health and Environment regulation, both require monthly home visits. “All of our foster care homes are assigned a foster care worker and those staff are responsible to go at least monthly out to the home and visit with the foster parents, as well as with the children, to see how they're adjusting in the home,” said Patrice Claassen, the director of foster care homes for Saint Francis Community Services. At that time, Claassen says, a visual inspection of the home environment is also conducted to ensure the site still meets regulations. These visits usually take about an hour, but could last longer. “Also regularly with visits between the parents and the biological children, or between the children and the family, the biological family,” said Rachel Marsh, an attorney for Saint Francis Community Services. “You'll see bruising, you'll see marks, you might see if the clothes aren't being changed, if they're coming to school dirty; all of those [can be] signs of abuse or neglect. They're something that can be observed by a social worker who's licensed to notice those things,” explained Marsh. Reintegration services may also include requiring a social worker to transport foster children to and from medical appointments and/or therapy appointments, as needed. Foster care workers are required to complete activity logs and summaries of those monthly reports, indicating what they have seen and how the child is adjusting to life in the foster home. In order to remain foster parents in Kansas, foster parents' license must be renewed each year, complete with a thorough site inspection. “Sometimes there are blatant signs that you can tell, and sometimes there are no signs at all until a child may disclose to another party of incidents that have occurred,” said Claassen. “What we know about children who have been abused or neglected is that they may have been sort of trained to be quiet about that, or they've learned not to talk,” said Marsh. “You do have a higher risk population when you're talking about foster children, which is why it is necessary and helpful in the vast majority of situations that the providers in the system are having their eyes and ears on the child as often as we can,” she continued. Regardless of the checks and balances put into place, experts tell KSN you cannot prevent everything. “All of the regulations that we have in place probably wouldn't prevent bad choices from being made,” said Claassen. Source: <http://ksn.com/2014/08/12/ksn-investigates-safeguards-to-keep-foster-children-safe/>

Violence by Rikers Guards Grew Under Bloomberg By [MICHAEL SCHWIRTZ](#) and [MICHAEL WINER](#) AUG. 13, 2014 Inside Photo Guards' violence toward young inmates of New York City jails on Rikers Island was the focus of a scathing federal report last week. Credit Richard Perry/The New York Times The portrait that emerged from [the report on Rikers Island by the United States attorney's office](#) in Manhattan last week was of a place with almost medieval levels of violence, meted out with startling ferocity by guards and their superiors. The two-and-a-half-year [investigation, which focused on the abuse of teenage inmates by correction staff](#), was exhaustive in cataloging the brutality. But a critical question that went unaddressed is how conditions were allowed to get to this point. Rikers has been a place of violent excess for decades. And the growing ranks of inmates with mental illnesses, reaching nearly 40 percent of the jail population today, have added to the challenges for correction officials. But conditions worsened substantially under the administration of Mayor [Michael R. Bloomberg](#), which reduced jail staff and failed to curb escalating violence by guards, according to former correction officials, inmates' advocates and others

intimately familiar with the jail. “There was very little interest in expending political capital and financial capital on the jails,” said Martin F. Horn, who was correction commissioner during Mr. Bloomberg’s first two terms. Photo Michael R. Bloomberg, mayor for 12 years, presided in a period when violence by guards at Rikers rose sharply. Credit Ozier Muhammad/The New York Times As mayor, Mr. Bloomberg earned a reputation for being a consummate manager who leveraged his private sector experience to tackle municipal problems. But he never made Rikers a high priority, at a time when conditions were drastically deteriorating, according to people familiar with its problems. During Mr. Bloomberg’s last term, use of force by officers on inmates jumped by 90 percent, according to Correction Department data. Inmates’ advocates and public officials charged with overseeing the jails said they pleaded for the administration to address the issue. “We met with the Department of Correction and the Bloomberg administration about the prevalence of violence directed by correctional staff towards prisoners, and they didn’t respond,” said Dr. Robert Cohen, a member of the New York City [Board of Correction](#), a watchdog agency. Early on, the Bloomberg administration cut more than 3,000 correctional positions. While some of the cuts were attributable to the declining inmate population and the closing of facilities, Mr. Horn said the reductions eventually went too far. When even more were proposed in 2008, he sent a letter to the city’s budget office, warning that further reductions would be “impossible without compromising the safety of everybody in the jail.” For the remaining officers, mandatory overtime became the norm. Exhausted guards were increasingly prone to lashing out at inmates, officers and oversight officials said. More recently, during Mr. Bloomberg’s third term, the Correction Department greatly reduced the number of officers responsible for escorting mentally ill inmates to therapy, meaning that many were locked in solitary confinement 23 hours a day and rarely got out for services. Resentment and anger among inmates built, according to a senior health department official, leading to more attacks on guards by inmates. A mental health task force, created by the Bloomberg administration in 2011, produced few results and lacked participation from key city officials, including Raymond W. Kelly, who was the police commissioner. Stu Loeser, a former press secretary who is again a spokesman for Mr. Bloomberg, challenged claims that as mayor he was indifferent to conditions at Rikers, noting that at City Hall the mayor sat a few feet from Linda I. Gibbs, the deputy mayor who oversaw the Correction Department, and conferred with her “throughout the day, almost every day.” Violence at Rikers Island 250 Use-of-force incidents Rate per 1,000 inmates 200 150 100 50 0 ’90 ’13 Source: Department of Correction The current crisis at Rikers stems in part from aggressive efforts to end the chaos and bloodshed that plagued its jails in the 1980s and 1990s. At the time, the average daily population was around 20,000, almost twice its current level. Gangs like the Netas and the Latin Kings battled one another as well as the guards. The chief problem then was inmate violence. Slashings and stabbings were routine. And a thriving trade in drugs and weapons went virtually unchecked by a demoralized staff. Today, violence is once again surging, but now it is the guards who are perceived to be at the heart of the problem. [Bernard B. Kerik](#), who helped oversee Rikers from 1995 to 2000, first as the top deputy at the Correction Department and then as commissioner, is credited with bringing inmate violence under control. A beefed-up SWAT team was equipped with clubs, pepper spray and electrified stun shields. A data system similar to the Police Department’s Compstat was created to identify the jails’ trouble spots. In 1999, there were fewer than 100 stabbings by inmates, compared with 1,100 five years earlier. But even as conditions improved, advocates warned that allowing guards to rely so heavily on force could get out of hand. [“Whenever you impose a system of restraint on this scale, it can easily be abused,”](#) [Jonathan S. Chasan, a lawyer for the Legal Aid Society, said in a 1999 interview](#) with The New York Times. The frequency of officers’ using force on inmates remained steady during Mr. Kerik’s tenure under Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani and dipped during Mr. Bloomberg’s first term, reaching its lowest point in 2004, according to department data. But then it spiked. Photo Martin F. Horn, former correction commissioner, saw a reluctance to expend political or financial capital on the jails. Credit Andrea Mohin/The New York Times In 2004, the department documented 961 altercations with inmates involving force. In 2013, with the ranks of inmates with mental illnesses on the upswing, there were 3,285. In the first six months of 2014, use of force was up by a third. Mr. Horn, the former commissioner, left shortly after the 2008 beating death of an 18-year-old inmate named Christopher Robinson. Mr. Robinson was killed by a gang of teenage inmates who prosecutors said were enlisted by officers to brutalize other inmates. New York eventually paid \$2 million to Mr. Robinson’s mother, and two officers went to prison. Mr. Horn blamed City Hall for being ignorant of the complexities of Rikers. Mary Lynne Werlwas, a Legal Aid lawyer, agreed. “Bloomberg did nothing to restrain his out-of-control work force at Rikers,” she said. Conditions worsened under Dora B. Schiri, who became correction commissioner in 2009 and was widely criticized by uniformed workers for what they perceived as ineffectual leadership. Though Ms. Schiri promised changes, her reform efforts often fell short. She had talked of reducing solitary confinement, but it expanded during her tenure. A multimillion-dollar centralized intake facility intended to streamline the processing of incoming prisoners was deemed a failure and closed after four months. Photo Dora B. Schiri, correction commissioner for more than four years, talked of reducing solitary confinement, but it expanded. Credit Michael Appleton for The New York Times A former senior department official who worked with Ms. Schiri and declined to speak for attribution so as to avoid retaliation from former colleagues described her as extremely intelligent, but unable to put her vision into effect. She appointed chiefs who failed to develop a systematic plan for addressing a longstanding culture of violence, and she rarely toured the jails, preferring to meet off-site with senior staff at department headquarters. She almost never addressed the uniformed staff at roll call, one of the few places where commissioners can communicate directly with officers, the official said. In an email sent by her spokesman, Ms. Schiri, who is now commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, declined to address the rise in violence, but said that while she oversaw Rikers, “there was an appreciable increase in referrals of staff to the inspector general for criminal prosecution for misconduct including excessive force.” Recent Comments robertgeary9 2 days ago Between 1984-1996, a fellow INS officer just happened to be from NYC. Although I had served as an infantry squad leader and high school... FreeOregon 2 days ago Violence is a sign the staff and guards are suffering mental illness. See Philip Zimbardo's classic 1971 Stanford Prison Experiment. Why do... Sancho 2 days ago It's becoming increasingly clear that Rikers Island, a vast torture chamber which is in fact the world's largest penal colony, should have... See All Comments During her five-year tenure, violence by officers increased almost every year, and the number of serious injuries suffered by inmates in altercations with guards jumped. Howard Wolfson, a former deputy mayor who is now a spokesman for Mr. Bloomberg, defended Ms. Schiri, saying she had made important changes, such as increasing the number of supervisors and bolstering mental health care, taking advantage of additional money allocated by the mayor’s office. As a result, Mr. Wolfson said, “we experienced the start to improvements in 2013.” Under Ms. Schiri, former and current correction officials said, the influence of the president of the correction officers’ union, Norman Seabrook, grew. Daniel Selling, a former director of mental health care at Rikers, called Mr. Seabrook “much more powerful than any commissioner.” The union’s clout has made it more difficult to punish uniformed officers. The federal report identified a lack of accountability for guards as a root cause of the violence. Photo Norman Seabrook is the powerful president of the city correction officers’ union. Credit Hiroko Masuike/The New York Times Over the previous two administrations, there have been incremental efforts to improve conditions, some of which succeeded for a time. But these have been achieved mostly through court intervention. The department has been the subject of six class-action lawsuits in the past three decades, alleging egregious violence by officers. Five of the suits ended with judges issuing court orders aimed at reducing brutality, though mostly for individual facilities like the solitary confinement unit. One of the more successful suits, according to Mr. Chasan, the Legal Aid lawyer, led to the stationing of federal monitors to oversee the solitary-confinement cellblocks in the late 1990s and early 2000s, including the supervision of staffing decisions. “If someone had a history of violence, they were turned away,” Mr. Chasan said. “The result was a dramatic decrease of abuse.” The most recent suit, brought by Legal Aid on behalf of 12 inmates who were seriously injured during encounters with guards, has been certified for class action and is currently the subject of settlement negotiations with the city. Since taking office, Mayor [Bill de Blasio](#) has pledged to bring Rikers under control. He appointed Joseph Ponte, who has a reputation as a reformer, as correction commissioner and allocated \$26 million in the new budget for more officers and \$6 million for mental health programs. Mr. de Blasio has embraced inmates’ advocates in a way that his predecessor never did. Five Mualimm-ak, the director of Incarcerated Nation, a group that helps inmates who have spent time in solitary, said he had met with Mr. de Blasio five times since the mayor took office. He said he also met with Mr. de Blasio’s staff at least twice a week. He met with Mr. Bloomberg once. Pressure from outsiders, including the news media, the city’s Department of Investigation and now federal officials, to enact changes is the strongest it has been in years. After releasing the report last week, prosecutors gave Mr. de Blasio 49 days to submit a plan to reduce brutality or face federal intervention. Advocates say they are hopeful about the possibility for change, but they question why it has taken so long. “I’m encouraged, but I think this attention and action was overdue,” said Jonathan S. Abady, a lawyer who has been pressing brutality cases for 12 years. “Unnecessary violence and excessive force have afflicted [Rikers Island](#) like a highly resistant disease for decades.” Source: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/14/nyregion/why-violence-toward-inmates-at-rikers-grew.html?_r=0

Hurdles remain for Snugg Harbor in permitting process [Story](#) [Comments](#) [Image \(2\)](#) [Print](#) [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) [Previous](#) [Next](#) Staff photo— Rod Aydelotte snugg harbor ra2A Snugg Harbor owner Rosalyn Ruffin, speaking at a public hearing last month, says Waco and McLennan County need a facility like the one she proposes. Staff photo— Rod Aydelotte snugg harbor ra1A Waco City Councilman Wilbert Austin,

center, says he will fight Snugg Harbor's application for a city permit. Posted: Wednesday, August 13, 2014 5:01 pm [Hurdles remain for Snugg Harbor in permitting process](#) By TOMMY WITHERSPOON twitherspoon@wacotrib.com Waco Tribune-Herald A proposed 90-bed residential treatment center in East Waco, under threat of derailment by a Waco City Council member, must clear at least two more administrative hurdles as it waits for state licensing. Besides getting a license from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Snugg Harbor, which proposes to operate a center for boys with severe mental or emotional disorders at 1916 Seely Ave., also must win city approval at two or more public hearings and gain a city special-use permit. Snugg Harbor owner Rosalyn Ruffin, a marriage and family therapist from Katy, said last month at a state-mandated public hearing that she thinks the former nursing home is zoned properly for her proposed business and she could begin operations as soon as she obtained her state licensing. But since then, city of Waco officials have told Ruffin that Snugg Harbor will be classified as a transitional shelter II under zoning ordinances, and that it will require a special permit issued by the city council. Ruffin balked last month at the public hearing when Waco City Manager Dale Fisseler informed her that she would need a special permit from the city. But this week, she said she is committed to the project and is "thinking about applying" for the special permit. "The state is waiting to hear from me about a few matters, and I am just going to go through the application process with the state and let the city take it from there," Ruffin said. "I intend to let the procedure take its course, and I will try to get the city and the community to see what I am trying to do. There are children at risk and I am trying to help, that's all. There is a need." In a letter dated July 23, Fisseler asked Lea Long, a state licensing supervisor, to put the state's licensing decision on hold until the city completes its special permit process. Julie Moody, a spokeswoman for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, said Ruffin is being cooperative with state licensing officials and said the process is ongoing. But the residential child care licensing division cannot issue a permit to any operation until all credentials, qualifications and permits have been satisfied from the city where it is located, she said. Community "in need" "The community of Waco and McLennan County is in need of residential treatment centers like the one Ms. Ruffin has proposed," Moody said. "There are 552 children from McLennan County in foster care. Only 309 of those children remain in McLennan County. That means 243 children have to go outside of their own communities for the care they need. That means those children are further away from their families and schools and other support." Moody said she is unsure how many of those children need the specialized care at a facility similar to what Snugg Harbor is proposing. "But there is a great need for foster homes and for a treatment facility to care for children traumatized by the effects of abuse or neglect in McLennan County. And that need isn't going to go away anytime soon," she said. Ruffin has said she hopes to turn the 27,148-square-foot facility into a residential treatment center for boys ages 8 to 17 that would be placed there through contracts with Child Protective Services. She said the center will not accept sex offenders or those prone to violence or running away. If Ruffin applies for the city's special permit, it will go first to the Waco Planning Services Department. Two public hearings are required in the granting of a special permit. One would be before the Waco Plan Commission, which would decide whether to recommend the special permit request to Waco City Council. The second public hearing is held by the city council, which would decide if the permit should be granted. Despite overwhelming opposition at the first public hearing last month, Ruffin said she could use the other hearings to meet the public and try to "educate the citizens about any fears and concerns they may have." In a letter dated Aug. 5 to Long, the state licensing supervisor, Waco police Chief Brent Stroman said he cannot support the project at this time because of a "lack of transparency in dealing with the owner, Ms. Ruffin, and the seeming unwillingness to answer or respond to questions posed at the community meeting and in dealing with city staff." Councilman's opposition District 1 City Councilman Wilbert Austin said nothing Ruffin can say at this point will change his opposition to the proposed center. "She hasn't responded to nothing we have asked of her," Austin said of Ruffin. "That tells me she is not going to do right if she gets it. I hear from my constituents daily, and they don't want it. We just don't need that type of facility in District 1." While the center is in Waco, the students there would attend La Vega Independent School District schools. La Vega Superintendent Sharon Shields attended last month's public hearing and expressed grave concerns about the district's ability to handle such an influx of potentially troubled students. She invited Ruffin to attend a La Vega school board meeting the next week to discuss the proposal, but Ruffin did not attend. "Let's just say it would be a tremendous undertaking," Shields said of the proposed center's students attending La Vega schools. Source: http://www.wacotrib.com/news/business/hurdles-remain-for-snugg-harbor-in-permitting-process/article_f165c7e7-e3dd-55bc-a18f-9d4b75f40a2e.html

Palmetto youth worker to face judge for sexual battery Posted: Aug 13, 2014 1:04 AM PDT Updated: Aug 13, 2014 1:11 AM PDT By Melissa Beckman - bio | email Leroy Bostic. Mug shot courtesy MCSO Weblinks [Palmetto youth specialist accused of sexually assaulting teens](#) [Palmetto youth specialist accused of sexually assaulting teens](#) Updated: Tuesday, August 12 2014 10:17 PM EDT2014-08-13 02:17:14 GMTAug 12, 2014 7:17 PM PDTAug 12, 2014 7:17 PM PDT Mug shot of Leroy Bostic Jr, from a previous arrest A father is in shock after learning his son is locked up and accused of sexually assaulting two teen boys. Leroy Bostic Jr., 34, is locked up on charges of sexual battery, lewd and lascivious molestation and introduction of harmful material to a minor. A father is in shock after learning his son is locked up and accused of sexually assaulting two teen boys. Leroy Bostic Jr., 34, is locked up on charges of sexual battery, lewd and lascivious molestation and introduction of harmful material to a minor. [More>>](#) PALMETTO, FL (WFLA) - A man hired to work with troubled teens is now locked up on charges of sexually battering two young inmates. Leroy Bostic, Jr., 34, is set to face a Manatee County judge Wednesday on charges of sexual battery, lewd and lascivious molestation, and introduction of harmful material to a minor. Bostic started working at the Palmetto Youth Academy for teen offenders on June 9. He was fired Monday. The Manatee County Sheriff's Office claims a 15 and 17-year-old at the facility made the allegations against Bostic. Monica Lewman-Garcia with G4S Americas, that contracted Bostic, released this statement: "The safety and security of the youth entrusted to our care is our top priority. As a condition of employment, all G4S Youth Services employees are expected to comply with local, state or federal laws or ordinances as well as G4S codes of conduct. Mr. Bostic was hired as a Youth Specialist at G4S Youth Services' Palmetto Youth Academy on June 9, 2014. Mr. Bostic was hired based on his qualifications and experience and on his ability to pass complete background and drug screening checks, in accordance with the law and requirements of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. Mr. Bostic was terminated on August 11, 2014." Source: <http://www.wfla.com/story/26266585/youth-worker-to-face-judge-for-sexual-battery>

AUSTRALIA--> State Government changes to foster care to promote more prompt permanent home placements for children by: Dana McCauley From: Port Phillip Leader August 15, 2014 12:00AM Changes to legislation will mean foster children can be placed into permanent care more promptly. Source: News Corp Australia WITH the State Government set to overhaul the foster care system to give children more stability, a Port Phillip woman has called for more families to open their homes. Mary* said she was shocked by the system's callousness when two "beautiful children" she looked after for a week, as a family friend, were separated and sent to live in outer Melbourne suburbs. "It took all my might not to fall apart in front of the eldest, who was visibly distressed," Mary said. "These children are lovely, wanting to learn, wanting to help cook and most of all, to be read a story at night ... They will be moving every few days to a week, living out of bags, for the next few months." As a parent of small children, Mary said she was not in a position to become a foster carer right now, but she urged Port Phillip residents who could to open their homes. "I'm sure there are people out there who might have left it too late to have their own kids, or theirs have grown up and left, who could potentially fill their house with more laughter and nurture," Mary said. And she hoped new legislation, introduced in Parliament this month, would make the task more appealing. **IS THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM WORKING? HAVE YOUR SAY BELOW. FOR MORE LOCAL NEWS IN YOUR NEWS FEED LIKE US AT [THE PORT PHILLIP LEADER FACEBOOK PAGE](#).** The laws, if passed, will allow children to be placed with a permanent foster family after 12 months in the system. This will allow birth parents a chance to get their act together, while sparing children the current trauma of a protracted wait for permanent care. A 2012 parliamentary inquiry established that many foster children were being shuffled between family members, foster carers and residential care placements for an average of five years before being settled permanently into a home. Community Services Minister Mary Wooldridge said too many children were deprived of certainty about their future. "Continuity of care, certainty about the future and the ability to form positive attachments with trusted adults are important for the healthy development of all children, and especially for vulnerable children," Ms Wooldridge said. Under the new laws it will also be easier for carers to allow siblings to have contact with each other. Foster Care Association of Victoria Executive Officer Katie Hooper said 1000 extra carers were needed across Victoria to ensure children could be placed appropriately. "That way even if we have to place siblings separately, they could be close enough to each other to have regular play dates," Ms Hooper said. * Not her real name, which has been changed to protect the children's identities. [Click here to find out more](#) on foster care in Victoria. **FOSTER CARE REFORM** FOSTER children eligible to be placed with a permanent foster family after a year, giving them more stability **RECOGNISING** the child's need for ongoing contact with their birth family, where appropriate **INDIVIDUAL** case plans to be developed earlier **BIRTH** parents who are making progress can get one 12-month extension Source:

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/leader/central/state-government-changes-to-foster-care-to-promote-more-prompt-permanent-home-placements-for-children/story-fngnvlpt-1227024653740?nk=95b02fbafd88cbbf22be417b058891e>

Drugs and foster kids: too much, too young? By LEAH TODD Casper Star-Tribune August 14, 2014 2014-08-14T16:28:45Z By LEAH TODD Carissa O'Malley and her brother Cameron, 15, take instructions from dance teacher Andrew Nelson at the Heart of Dance Productions dance studio on July 19, 2014, in Casper, Wyo. Carissa O'Malley, 22, legally adopted Cameron to get him out of foster care. After the adoption, she took him off of his prescribed psychotropic medications and increased scheduled activities such as cycling and dance lessons. CASPER, Wyo. — For Cameron O'Malley, weekends at his sister's house meant tucking a pair of jeans, a few shirts and his toothbrush into his backpack. The 15-year-old's foster mom would zip a weekend's worth of pills the size of jelly beans into plastic baggies. Cameron and his sister Carissa, 22, knew the routine: Take daily with food. Carissa didn't like the medications, prescribed for a list of conditions she was not convinced Cameron even had: Prozac for his hyperactive attention disorder. Fluoxetine for depression. Strattera for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Wellbutrin for depression. They made Cameron's brain feel weird, like he was thinking in fog. But if the adoption was to go through, he and his sister had to follow the rules. Nearly one in three foster children in Wyoming is prescribed psychotropic medications like the ones Cameron took. That's four times the rate found in other low-income children not living in foster care, where the frequency is one in 12. Critics say psychotropic drugs — any medication that affects a patient's mood, thought or behavior — lack evidence as to their effectiveness and safety in children. Many of the medications have not been studied in children, and doctors say they can't assume what works on adults will be safe for children, whose central nervous systems are still developing. Carissa believes state and medical officers rushed to use prescriptions to control Cameron, who acted out as a child. "They want to put a diagnosis on everything," she said. --- Cameron was a "lost" child in the middle of a large family, one social worker wrote in a 2011 report. His parents focused on the youngest of the family's 12 children, giving little to no attention to the older kids, the worker wrote. In reports filed with the Wyoming Department of Family Services between 2004 and 2011, doctors attributed Cameron's conditions and behaviors to abuse and neglect he endured as a young boy. His mother was charged with neglect, and Cameron left his biological family for good about 2010. By 2011, he'd been diagnosed with ADHD, mild long-term depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety. He had lived with foster families on five separate occasions. Carissa didn't like the medications, and she wasn't alone. "I never wanted to take meds," Cameron said. He felt lethargic while on them. He was tired, not himself. Carissa recalls how out-of-touch he was, slow to engage in conversation. But to not take the medications? He thought he'd get in trouble. Reports on file with DFS suggest that while in foster care, Cameron attended classes regularly. His teachers described him as respectful but easily distracted. He required multiple prompts to stay on task. He had an active imagination and was easily absorbed into his drawings. Cameron received a few disciplinary procedures in school but was never suspended. His grades varied tremendously — from A's to F's. "Cameron needs to work on listening to directions," one teacher wrote on a report card. "When Cameron tries hard in class, he does excellent work." Cameron told doctors repeatedly he was sad about leaving his brothers and sisters, who were also living in foster care. A doctor once noted that Fluoxetine, prescribed for Cameron's depression, seemed to calm Cameron down. Beyond that, doctors never noted whether the medications were working or not. --- Nearly 30 percent of the state's 3,500 foster children were prescribed at least one psychotropic drug last year, according to data from the state Department of Health. In comparison, only about 8 percent of the 57,000 Wyoming children whose low family income qualified them for Medicaid took psychotropics. Though no definitive national average has been tabulated, several regional studies suggest that Wyoming is among the most frequent prescribers of the medications. A 2011 report using Medicaid claims from five states found that 21 to 39 percent of children in foster care received a prescription for psychotropic medication in 2008, compared with 5 to 10 percent of children not in foster care. In 2004, a report showed that psychotropics are prescribed to foster care kids at rates three to 11 times greater than the rate for Medicaid-insured youngsters. Though the rate of psychotropic medication use among foster children has decreased in Wyoming since 2010, the number of children taking the drugs has increased slightly. Some experts attribute the higher rate of psychotropic drug use to the fact that foster care children are more likely to have suffered emotional or mental trauma than their peers, said James Bush, the state medical officer for Wyoming Medicaid. Foster children have often been abused or neglected seriously enough to draw the attention of state authorities. On top of that, many have been taken from their homes. Some experts say children in foster care are up to twice as likely to be diagnosed with a mental health disorder than other children. But that doesn't account for the fact that a child in state custody in Wyoming is four times as likely as his peers to be taking the mind-altering medications. --- Carissa's fondest memory of her brother is at a doctor's office when Cameron was about 3 years old and his younger sibling needed blood drawn. A nurse prepared a needle. Cameron watched. As the nurse brought the needle toward their infant brother, Cameron broke out into tears. "No!" Carissa remembered him saying. "Don't poke my brother!" Carissa, the oldest child, lost touch with most of her siblings around the time she aged out of the foster care system. She moved into her own place about five years ago and works now as a welder and hairdresser in Casper. She said she wanted to adopt as many of her 11 brothers and sisters as she could. Carissa believed that DFS allowed her to communicate with Cameron because no foster parent was pushing to adopt him, unlike the case with her other siblings. Weekend visits started in late winter 2012. By last summer, Cameron moved in full time with Carissa. And when he did, Carissa said no more medications. Cameron's prescriptions always made his sister uneasy. Carissa rented books from the library on mental health and ADHD. She researched the side effects of many psychotropic medications — suicidal thoughts, severe liver damage, heart-related problems. She signed up Cameron for a local mountain biking club. She volunteered him to shovel stalls and groom horses at a nearby therapy farm, and when his grades started slipping, she wrote him a daily schedule. "He needed an activity, not medication," Carissa said. She signed the last page of adoption paperwork on Valentine's Day. --- Bush, the state medical officer for Medicaid, wanted to know how doctors were prescribing the drugs to Wyoming children. To find out, the Department of Health examined Medicaid claims from 2009 to 2013 and counted how many listed a psychotropic prescription. Bush looked for children who fell into one of several categories and found that between 1 and 2 percent of foster care children in Wyoming were prescribed more than 150 percent of the dosage recommended by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration during those years. Between five and 11 children under the age of 5 were prescribed psychotropic medications, and one child in all but one of his study years took more than five of those medications at the same time. Little is known about the drugs' long-term and short-term risks, especially when they're used in combinations. That prompted the Health Department to add an extra layer of accountability to outlier cases, where a child's dosage is high, his age is young or the number of prescribed medications is greater than five. Now, every case that exceeds one of Bush's parameters — too many, too much or too young — will receive a second look from medical faculty at the University of Washington, which partners with the University of Wyoming as the state's medical school. It's not that in all cases doctors made mistakes in prescribing these children's medications. Sometimes, exceeding the recommended dose is advisable, Bush said. But those cases should be rare, he explained. "And you should document closely and you should make sure you've explored other options," Bush said. Psychotropic drugs themselves are not problematic, he said. Being underdiagnosed is a problem, too. With kids, it's often a very tentative diagnosis. "How can you diagnose a 2-year-old as psychotic?" Bush said. "The children's brain is still evolving, it's still maturing." Marty Nelson, clinical services administrator for the Wyoming Department of Family Services, said he advocates as few medications as possible. "It's better for kids to not be on medications or to be on as few medications as they need," Nelson said. But there are cases when medications like psychotropics are necessary, Nelson said. For foster care children, that's a decision reached by a group of physicians, case workers and, ideally, the child's biological parents. "While we want the therapy to deal with the depression and anxiety, that's going to take a little time," Nelson said. "So for the six months before the talk therapy, the children are better off not being depressed or anxious." As talk therapy increases, ideally the medications should decrease. "What I'm hoping for them as adults is saying, 'Get your talk therapy and you won't have to get your medications,'" Nelson said. "But I don't know how that tracks out over time." --- Cameron doesn't fall asleep in class anymore. He said he has matured since moving in with Carissa a year ago. He's not angry. No tantrums, no behavioral problems, Carissa said. Why? Cameron threw a thumb in Carissa's direction. "It's because of her," he said. Before moving in with his sister, Cameron had never played an organized sport, never been part of a team. So far, mountain biking makes the short list of Cameron's favorite things. It's just fun, he said. "You feel free because you get to go as fast as you want," he said. His favorite thing, though, is hanging out with his sister. He walks their dogs, Capone, Delilah and Envy, outside every day. Carissa knows she has three years left with Cameron before he is 18. She hopes that by then he will have found a passion in his life. She recently sent him on a three-week adventure trip in California so he'd have some positive childhood memories. They plan to spend time at a brain center in Colorado to explore alternative treatment options. Cameron still deals with attention issues, and because of developmental delays, he needs help focusing, Carissa said. But the two of them steer clear of the medications that doctors once proposed to address those problems. "By taking a pill, it doesn't just automatically make things better," Carissa said. "That is not the answer, especially not by itself." A few days ago, a postcard came in the mail. On the front was a picture of teenagers jumping into the air, flanked by ice-capped mountains. On the back, she read Cameron's scratchy handwriting. "I have been having (sic) the best time of my life so far," he wrote. "One amazing thing I found was a dead baby octopus. I picked it up

and chased people with it. I found a whole bunch of sea shells. Well I better get going. Sincerely, Cameron O'Malley." Information from: Casper (Wyo.) Star-Tribune, <http://www.trib.com> Read more here: <http://www.newsobserver.com/2014/08/14/4071333/drugs-and-foster-kids-too-much.html?#storylink=cpy>

Changing 'normal' for foster care's used and abused children By [Penny Young Nance](#), [Vicky Hartzler](#) Published August 15, 2014. They normalize the experience of being used for financial gain? Isn't that slavery? Who would say such a thing? Is that an actual quote? These are the words of Ms. Withelma "T" Ortiz Walker Pettigrew as she testified before Congress in 2013 on how to prevent sex trafficking of youth in foster care. Now only in college, T spent the first 18 years of her life in the foster care system, and for seven of those years she "was a child being sexually trafficked on the streets, internet, strip clubs, massage parlors and even in the back of express papers." Words like those above should never have to come out of a child's mouth. Never. There is no doubt that the system and its consequences are problems that need fixing. If you ask T, she would be the first to tell you that sex trafficking is a heinous crime – one committed by heinous people – and that the foster care system in this country does not do enough to care for the youth residing in it. In 2010, Los Angeles officials reported that 59 percent of juveniles arrested for prostitution were in the foster care system. More recently, in 2013, 60 percent of child sex trafficking victims recovered in an FBI nationwide raid from over 70 cities were children involved with the foster care system or group homes at some point. In 2012, Connecticut reported 88 child victims of sex trafficking. Eighty-six of them were involved with the child welfare system, and most reported abuse while in foster care. With all the various numbers from all the various studies, there is still only one number that we need to worry about: one. One victim of this atrocious crime is too many. While the connection of foster care to child sex trafficking victims is not definite, the current foster care system does not do enough to protect those living in it or help them prepare for normalcy once they leave it. Some child welfare policies may have unintentional negative effects on the well-being of the children living under them. Rules and policies that inhibit youth from participating in sports, obtaining a driver's license, or even getting a part-time job may contribute to a young person's isolation and inability to gain "meaningful relationships or attachments," no matter how well-intentioned those policies may be. There is no doubt that the system and its consequences are problems that need fixing. Over the past year, the U.S. House of Representatives has been working to craft bills that aim to prevent child sex trafficking and improve the lives of foster care youth. On Wednesday, July 23, those bills were passed with sweeping bipartisan support. Each of the eight bills is an important, effective piece of legislation that goes far to change the atmosphere that has been plaguing the foster care system, equip the federal government to combat the horrific crimes of human and sex trafficking, and/or provide for the proper treatment of victims of sex trafficking. The bottom line is that human trafficking is nothing more than modern-day slavery. That it has come to be associated with foster care youth is deplorable. This practice is the buying and selling of human beings with the average age of entry into servitude between 11 and 14. Through exploitation, it reduces an individual's value to that of an object. Sickeningly, because of a foster child's vulnerable nature, they are heavily sought after by the industry and are targeted by criminals who run sex trafficking rings. We must work to help those most at risk of falling victim to this evil crime. The scourge of human trafficking runs deep and is difficult to root out. By no means does that mean it cannot be addressed or solved. Through legislation passed in Congress and support and outreach from groups like Concerned Women for America, we can bring this heinous crime to light, uproot traffickers, and make sure that children like T find normalcy in loving, caring homes. Penny Young Nance is president and CEO of [Concerned Women for America](#). Congresswoman Vicky Hartzler, Representative for Missouri's 4th Congressional District. Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2014/08/15/changing-normal-for-foster-cares-used-and-abused-children/#>

Florida's Foster Care Program Becomes Model for Nation Wide Pilot Program: Updated: Saturday, August 16 2014, 09:11 PM CDT The Florida Department of Children and Families' electronic system used for placing foster children across state lines is being used as the model in a national pilot project. Six states will participate in the pilot program over the next several months. Florida has used the system since 2008. Officials say it significantly decreases the amount of time it takes to place a Florida foster child into a home with relatives or adoptive parents in another state. The state processes approximately three thousand requests for children to move in and out of state each year. The database also saves nearly 100 thousand dollars annually in postage and paper. Florida's foster care program becomes model for nation wide pilot program. Source: <http://www.veartv.com/news/features/top-stories/stories/floridas-foster-care-program-becomes-model-nation-wide-pilot-program-48284.shtml>

Butler County children services workers strike Sheila McLaughlin, smclaughlin@enquirer.com 8 a.m. EDT August 18, 2014 Buy Photo Picketers protest Monday after efforts to avoid a Butler County Children Services caseworker strike broke down. (Photo: The Enquirer/Amanda Rossmann) Buy Photo 75 CONNECT [TWEET](#) [LINKEDIN](#) [COMMENT](#) [EMAIL](#) [MORE](#) About 30 protesters are picketing Monday morning after a last ditch effort to avoid a strike Butler County Children Services broke down. Union representatives and county officials met with a federal mediator for three hours on Sunday but County Administrator Charles Young said neither side would budge on wages. "The gap between what we can offer in compensation from the county and what the union was looking for just proved too large to overcome today," Young said. "The county must move to performance pay. The old model of compensation that the union continued to seek in annual step increases and annual percentage increases nearly bankrupted the county during the crisis following the 2008 recession and we simply can't go back there." Union President Becky Palmer said county officials "are using the children's wellbeing as a pawn in a fight by those who are more concerned with political ideology." She emailed this statement to The Enquirer: "We believe that the entire negotiation process demonstrated a blatant lack of good faith bargaining on behalf of the employer and Commissioners. There have been comments made by the employer that they were hoping to avoid a strike. It appears to the union that these comments were disingenuous. The union believes that the Commissioners' attempt to force a strike in this manner creates a tremendous amount of liability regarding the children this agency is charged to protect. We are devastated that the agency directors, Jerome Kearns and Bill Morrison, have chosen to stay silent and further the agenda of the County Commissioners. We believe they are using the children's wellbeing as a pawn in a fight by those who are more concerned with political ideology. We will continue to be available to negotiate a fair contract on behalf of our members." The county had offered annual lump sums payments of between \$500 and \$550 for the next three years with the hope of eventually moving toward performance pay. The union had accepted a fact finder's recommendation in June that workers receive automatic step increases and cost of living raises of 1.5 percent for the first year, with 1.75 percent and 2 percent each of the following two years. Felicia Bernardini, the fact finder, reported that pay ranges for Butler County caseworkers were "substantially below average" compared with children services workforces in counties with similar demographics. Butler County caseworkers have gone without raises for three years. The union had threatened to strike Monday over wages after more than a year of unsuccessful negotiations. County officials made a final offer Wednesday, which included the lump sum payments. The union rejected it. County officials hired 16 full-time workers last week to fill existing vacancies, and Young said seven of them will start work Monday, while the county attempts to get help from 25 full time temporary workers from agencies that provide services to children. The strike will leave the agency with about 48 staffers to investigate new complaints of abuse and neglect and provide services for children already in county care, Young said. The \$23 million agency – supported in part by a local tax levy – oversees about 365 foster children. Young said the lump sum payment system with a goal toward performance pay already has been accepted by 10 unions representing county employees. "The fact finder's recommendation would have resulted in an annual increase in compensation costs of over \$700,000 and total costs during the contract of \$1.3 million. We cannot afford those kinds of increases," Young said. He said it would take a better offer from the union for the county to move to end the strike. Financial projections presented to county commissioners last week indicate children services already won't be able to make payroll in early 2016 and expects to have a \$2.2 shortfall in 2014, mostly because of the increased costs in placing foster children. **Union representatives have said the county was at fault for the financial gap because it was over spending on programs to place children in foster care rather than investing in less expensive programs to keep children with their families. Agency officials have been working for about a year on restructuring to reduce foster care numbers.** Source: <http://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/local/2014/08/17/butler-county-children-services-strike/14197997/>

Teen Alleges Abuse At Police/BDF Camp posted (August 18, 2014) [Email](#) [Print](#) Last week we told you about the camp that police are offering to Belize City families who have troubled teenagers in their house. It's a boot camp run by the BDF at Camp Belizario in Cayo. It can last for four to six weeks depending on whether the students are enrolled in school. But, one Belize City family today reached out to us to say one week was too long. Their 16 year old son has come back with a story of wretched and systematic abuse that's, honestly, hard to believe until you hear them out. We spoke to mother, son, and a neighbor today to hear their allegation of constant beatings at the hand of police... Voice of: Georgia, Mother "I called him and he said to please come for me because they beat me. I ask what happen and so he was crying over the phone and he said to please come for me because they beat me, they got me in mud and water and if they move the GSU beats them." Voice of: 16 year old "They have a long chain and they whop me in the back with it and they stomp me in my belly when I am explaining to them. They don't want to hear anything - they still beat us. I was on the ground because I was in bad pain and as I turn over one of the soldier kick

me in the belly and whop me on my foot several times. One of them stomp me in my jaw and burst up my jaw. They had to give me an injection in my jaw to make it numb. Everybody who was in my barrack house got beaten. A soldier took a chain and whop a young man about 4 times at the back of his head and his head was bursts up. He must have gotten stitches in his head. Everybody got beaten - everybody saw their blood." "Every 5am in the morning, once you can't do 80 pushups they beat you." Jules Vasquez "Are you sure you are not misunderstand what is going on? Maybe they are trying to say that maybe they are giving you all a boot camp to try to strengthen you up or to teach you some discipline." Voice of: 16 year old "We were at the station at Raccoon Street, Mr. Hamilton told us that it is a camp where we will learn a trade and that we would be better off in life and when we went there nothing like that happen. All what we did as we got drilled so they beat us. I went there thinking that I would learn a trade from them but I never knew that this is what would happen to me." Voice of: Georgia, Mother "My son call me crying and I talk to the man who my son borrowed the phone from and he said the only way my son could go down was if the parents go for them." Junior Willoughby, father "They said they were going at the BDF camp to learn something for the future or to defend the country if that be the case, but we are not sending them for them to get beaten up - that is stupidity." Voice of: Georgia, Mother "Any parents who are listening to this right now, don't make any police come and say that it's just a little training or a camp or a little swimming - don't believe them because all they do is beat them." While it is administered by the BDF, Police are in charge of the camp and we spoke to Senior Superintendent Edward Broaster who told us he is certain that the young man's allegations are completely false. He says no GSU personnel have been assigned to the camp, and added that his officers just went there today and he can confirm that there are no abuses. We will keep looking into the story. Source: <http://www.7newsbelize.com/sstory.php?id=29755>

Back To Schools White People Cannot See As the season for new school openings rolls out, there are reasons for a new consciousness-raising about those schools – the kind of consciousness-raising that can be brought about when there's a shock to the system like Ferguson, Missouri. Of the many heartfelt, well thought-out, and clearly written responses to the ongoing travesty happening in Ferguson, one of the most insightful was "Dear White People: The Race You Can't See Is Your Own" that appeared on [Blue Nation Review](#). Written by author and communications consultant Anat Shenker-Orsorio, the post delved into the issue of race and perceptions of race – the starting point for understanding not only what caused events in Ferguson but also what conditions the [different ways people have responded to those events](#). From a scientific perspective, Shenker-Orsorio explained, people "formulate judgments by race. Not only does race constrain our ability to recall and differentiate among faces and constrain empathy for physical pain, it structures our desired responses to public policies." These are just the facts of the matter – with one notable exception, as Shenker-Orsorio noted: "whites don't see race ... when they're looking at other whites." To illustrate this phenomenon, Shenker-Orsorio recalled a focus group she had run in which "we showed different groups an all white image and asked them to discuss it. None of the white folks remarked upon the lack of people of color, but for the African American, Latino and Asian-Pacific Island groups, it was the first thing they said." Shenker-Orsorio also pointed out how the "oxymoronic" term "majority-minority" is another "clear indicator" of how white people continue to perceive themselves as a "majority" even when statistically they no longer are, in many respects. Public education, in particular, is now one of those "majority-minority" arenas. As [numerous recent reports](#) have recently conveyed, this new school year will be the first in which white students are no longer a majority in public schools. Of course, this seismic demographic change didn't happen overnight. For years, schools have been becoming more and more populated by higher percentages of non-white children, with many districts having been mostly non-white. But given this understanding of the way white privilege distorts perceptions of reality, it's not a leap of logic to suggest that political and policy leaders have a distorted understanding of the conditions in schools populated by children who look nothing like them. And it's not unfair in the least to wonder if these leaders are incapable of really seeing the schools they purport to render policy direction for. Failure To See The Funding Crisis Take the issue of school finance. While [some would have us believe](#) that the "recovery" has healed school finances, the reality for most schools is very different. The financial recovery that has occurred in some public and private sectors simply has not happened in K-12 education. Despite some improvements in overall state tax revenues (which provide about 45 percent of K-12 education funding), according to the [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#): New state budgets for school year 2013-2014 provided less per-pupil funding for kindergarten through 12th grade than they did six years ago – often far less. 34 states provided less per-student funding for K-12 education in 2013-14 than they did in fiscal year 2008. Schools in around a third of states entered the school year with less state funding than they had the previous year. At least 35 states provided less funding per student for the 2013-14 school year than they did before the recession hit. Adding to the financial plight, counties and municipalities that fund schools at the local level collected 2.1 percent less in property tax revenue in the 12-month period ending in March 2013 than in the previous year. There are no indications 2014 is any better. Federal funds for K-12 education have continued to decline too according to a report in [FiveThirtyEight](#). Federal per-student spending fell more than 20 percent from 2010 to 2012 and continued to fall in 2013-2014. Title I was down 12 percent. Spending on disabled education went down 11 percent. No increases are coming from the feds for the 2015 school year. The impact of funding cuts were significant as school administrators had to dig deeper into budgets and cut instructional-related expenses, including teaching positions, instructional materials, and teacher professional development: A [survey of school superintendents](#) found that federal funding cuts implemented in 2014 resulted in reduced expenditures on professional development (59 percent), eliminated personnel (53 percent), increased class size (48 percent), and deferred technology purchases (46 percent). [Another survey](#) of school district leaders found only 11 percent disagreed/strongly disagreed that budget shortfalls would be "a challenge for my school district." Only 16 percent of district officials surveyed about their instructional budgets in 2013 said they expected their financial situations to improve in 2014. It's not likely 2015 will bring on a recovery. The "Recovery" Isn't Happening Where funding has increased, it has generally not increased enough to make up for cuts in past years. A [recent report on school funding levels in New York](#) by the Alliance for Quality Education found a \$5.9 billion shortfall on what is owed to schools in that state. The report quoted a school official who said, "We've cut writing classes, science, athletics, arts, everywhere." Another official said, "We have eliminated our entire business program, cut our JV sports teams, reduced our academic intervention programs, as well as decimating our administrative leadership team." Cuts to school funding in [Pennsylvania](#) have been so severe staffing levels have hit a ten-year low. Democratic state leaders accuse Governor Corbett of cutting a billion dollars from the state education budget, with [one public school advocate quoted](#) as saying, "We've lost over 400 teachers ... 20 percent of the teaching compliment of the Allentown School District." In the current [North Carolina](#) state budget, education gets \$500 million less than the 2008 inflation-adjusted budget, even though school populations have grown dramatically. Progressive group NC Policy Watch has tracked, [county by county](#), the effects of budget cuts on classrooms, documenting slashed classroom teacher and teacher assistant positions, increased class sizes, and cuts to instructional supplies and textbooks. One [little-noticed provision in the budget](#) ensures schools no longer get more money when their enrollments increase. In [Florida](#), Governor Scott declared this year's budget includes record levels of education funding, but his proposal left the state's per pupil spending about \$200 lower than in the 2007-08 school year, while district needs have only risen. In Michigan, after a previous state budgets cut education spending over \$1 billion, modest increases in the 2015 version barely recovered a quarter of what had been cut. This means a school district, such as [Ann Arbor](#) for example, will have funding levels of \$6,445,869 (based on 2010-11 levels) compared to \$7,727,263 from the previous year. But the cumulative results are still a near \$30 million shortfall over a four year period, and that's just for one district. In [Kansas](#), largest-ever cuts in state school funding history took funding back to 1992 levels, when adjusted for inflation. The cuts resulted in the elimination of teaching aids, school specialists, and classroom teachers. Textbook purchases were put on hold, schools resorted to radical measures including removing half the light bulbs, dropping tutoring activities, and cancelling summer school. In Nevada, state funding for schools is so inadequate, communities are resorting to unheard of measures, including, as [NPR recently reported](#), a district raising funds through bars and brothels. Nationally, [a recent survey of teachers](#) found one in three using textbooks 10 years old or older. Thirty percent of teachers report not having enough textbooks to assign homework. Another [national survey](#) found budget cuts have resulted in only a third of schools now having school librarians. **Funding Disparities Follow Race/Income** The relationship of education cuts to race becomes even more obvious when recognizing how resources, as dear as they are, are being distributed. The budget cuts themselves have been distributed in inequitable fashion, with schools serving the poorest – and by proxy nonwhite – children bearing the brunt of the disinvestment. As an [annually recurring report](#) on school funding fairness found in its 2014 edition, "The Great Recession triggered dramatic reductions in state and local revenue from property, sales and income taxes. To prevent layoffs and cuts to education programs, the federal government provided substantial stimulus funds on a temporary basis. When the stimulus ended, however, states faced a crucial test: either restore revenue or allow cuts to education funding and programs. This report shows many of the states failed this test, sacrificing fair school funding after the foreseeable loss of federal stimulus." That report found "school funding in most states remains remarkably unfair ... The majority of states have flat or regressive funding distribution patterns that ignore the need for additional funding in high poverty settings. Even among 'progressive' states, only eight provide more than a 10 percent boost to high poverty districts. In the five most regressive states (North Dakota, Vermont, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Nevada), the poorest districts receive at least 20 percent less funding than higher wealth districts." Even within school districts there are huge disparities in spending

depending on the wealth – and by proxy, the race – of the local community. As a recent article on [The Huffington Post](#) contended, “Students who live in wealthy communities have huge advantages that rig the system in their favor.” The article pointed to an [analysis](#) showing that “wealthier districts” use private local education foundations to ensure their students “attend summer schools that provide educational enrichment, help students make up courses they missed or failed during the academic year, and look good on students’ transcripts when they apply to college.” For students who aren’t in these affluent districts – no such luck. “Just within Los Angeles County,” the author noted, “there are huge differences between wealthy communities like La Cañada Flintridge (with a median household income of \$154,947 and 2.1 percent poverty rate) and San Marino (\$139,122 — 4.6 percent) and poorer cities like Pomona (\$48,864 — 20.4 percent) and Huntington Park (\$36,620 — 27.7 percent) in their ability to raise additional money for their local schools.” Regarding federal funds, as the above referenced report from FiveThirtyEight noted, “most federal education aid targets two groups, low-income and special education students, who are overrepresented in urban school districts. As a result, urban districts have been hit harder by the recent cuts.” Funding Fairness Matters, A Lot These funding disparities have consequences. As the author of the above linked Huffington Post article noted, “Affluent students in well-off school districts have higher rates of high school graduation, college attendance, and entry to the more selective colleges. This has little to do with intelligence or ability.” According to a report at [Vox](#), researchers found, “Spending more money on educating children in poor districts can dramatically change the trajectory of those children’s lives.” The analysis found, “A 20 percent increase in per-pupil spending could make a big difference for students from poor families ... The additional spending had virtually closed the high school graduation gap between poor students and their wealthier peers. High school graduation rates increased 23 percentage points for poor students, and those students attended school or college for another year on average.” Another recent study, according to an article at [Education Week](#), found, “How much state governments spend per pupil and how they spend it does in fact have a significant correlation with achievement, particularly for the low-income students.” The researches found, “A \$1,000-per-pupil funding increase is correlated with a .42-point increase in National Assessment of Education Progress scores for low-income 4th graders ... an increase of 20 percentage points in the state share of spending correlated with a 1-point improvement in the 8th grade math scores of low-income students.” Funding fairness mattered even more as, “An improvement in the equity of funding across a state can improve academic performance without any additional spending overall. And the effect is significant: For example, a 20-point improvement in the equity ratio, holding all other factors constant, is correlated with nearly 2 point improvement in 4th grade NAEP reading scores for low-income students, equal to a roughly 1 percent gain.” The School Reality White People Cannot See Many who slough off the importance of equitable funding for schools instead point to other issues they deem to be more apt to even the playing field – such as promulgating new standards or changing teacher personnel policies. According to this view, if we were just to “raise the bar” on what we expect all students to achieve or “hold teachers more accountable” for the results students get on standardized tests, then these issues of funding simply wouldn’t matter. These arguments are distractions. As the new president of the National Education Association [Lily Eskelsen Garcia](#) recently stated, “That is their narrative. Because if you can talk about something like that you don’t have to talk about why do these kids have an Olympic swimming pool and these kids have a leaky roof. How come these kids get French classes and AP classes – and they should – and these kids don’t even get recess because they spend it drilling and practicing for the standardized test. Equity costs money, so you want to change the subject as fast as you can.” Back to Shenker-Osorio, she concluded her reflection on the Ferguson tragedy with a call “to face some hard truths. The race we don’t see is our own, and it keeps us from understanding our privilege and thus others’ lived experience of baked-in, perpetual, harms.” One of those “baked-in, perpetual harms” is that too many of the schools in this country are like the school Michael Brown attended in Ferguson. As a [recent post on the liberal blog site Daily Kos noted](#), Brown’s schools “was created by merging two of the poorest, most heavily minority districts around St. Louis – Normandy and Wellston. The poverty rate for families sending their kids to Normandy Schools was 92 percent. At Wellston School District, the poverty rate was 98 percent. Every single student in the Wellston district was African American.” The fact that Brown graduated from this school and was about to attend college may have been a “miracle,” as the post claimed. But the reality of his dead body bleeding on the street should spur a call to action very different from the actions education policy leaders want us to undertake. The fact these folks can’t see that is what really is the whole problem. Source: <http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/back-to-schools-white-people-cannot-see/>

“This is a test”: Educating to End the School-to-Grave-Pipeline in Ferguson and Beyond By [I AM AN EDUCATOR](#) on August 22, 2014 “We were at graduation, me and him, and we were talking. He said he wasn’t going to end up like some people on the streets. He was going to get an education.” –[Hershel Johnson](#), a friend Michael Brown’s since middle school. In the wake of the police murder of the unarmed 18-year-old African American high school graduate Michael Brown, and the ensuing uprising of the people of Ferguson, the Ferguson-Florissant School District announced classes would not resume for the school year on Aug. 14 as planned, and as of today, school is still not in session. The unrest between police and protesters prompted Gov. Jay Nixon (D) to declare a state of emergency in Ferguson and then impose a curfew. Comedian John Oliver described Gov. Nixon’s curfew announcement as “patronizing,” and charged him with speaking in the tone of a “pissed-off vice principal” attempting to further restrict the freedom of the people of Ferguson. Oliver’s school analogy may have been prompted by Nixon’s statement that, “...to protect the people and property of Ferguson today, I signed an order declaring a state of emergency and ordering implementation of a curfew in the impacted area of Ferguson... But if we’re going to achieve justice, we must first have and maintain peace. This is a test.” For all of his authoritarian scolding, Gov. Nixon is correct about one thing: This is a test. But it isn’t one that will be scored accurately by a police force or a political class that sees itself as above the law. Ferguson, like cities around the nation, has plenty of problems of race, class, and education to choose from. The schools in Ferguson—like to many districts across the nation—are still separate and unequal. 77.1 percent of the students in the Ferguson-Florissant School District are black, and some 68 percent of white students who live in the district attend schools outside of the district. Black students make up a disproportionate 87.1 percent of students without disabilities who receive an out-of-school suspensions, according to [2011-12 data from the U.S. Department of Education’s Civil Rights Data Collection](#). And the black youth continue to be targets when they leave the schoolhouse and enter the streets. Last year, black residents accounted for 86 percent of the [vehicle stops](#) made by Ferguson police and nearly 93 percent of the arrests made from those stops, [according to the state attorney general](#). FBI statistics show that 85 percent of the people arrested by Ferguson police are black, and that 92% of people arrested specifically for disorderly conduct are black. The city of Ferguson is 67.4 percent black and 28.7 percent white, yet five of the six city councilmembers are white and six of seven school board members are white. The first African American Superintendent of the Ferguson-Florissant School District, Dr. McCoy, [was forced out of his position in March by the then all white school board](#). Normandy High School, the alma mater of Mike Brown, has a poverty rate of 92 percent. As [Daily Kos related](#), “The grinding poverty in Mike’s world only allowed Normandy High School to acquire two graduation gowns to be shared by the entire class. The students passed a gown from one to the other. Each put the gown on, in turn, and sat before the camera to have their graduation photographs taken. Until it was Mike’s turn.” “Career and college ready” are the new buzzwords in the education reform world and every teacher certainly hopes their students achieve these personal successes. Yet to limit education to only these puny goals is to extinguish the true power of education. Education must also be in service of transforming our very troubled society. Mike Brown was to have started attending Vatterott College on August 11, two days after he was killed, exposing the fact that the work of educators to help students achieve a diploma means little if our society succumbs to lawless police who gun down our unarmed children in the street. Many black youth have had their caps and gowns snatched from them and replaced with orange jumpsuits, as students are funneled into what is commonly called the “[school-to-prison-pipeline](#)”—a series of interlocking policies such as zero tolerance discipline and high suspension rates, overbearing police presence in schools, and [high-stakes exit exams](#) required for graduation. But increasingly it appears police are intent on constructing what I guess we now must term the “[school-to-grave-pipeline](#)”—a series of interlocking policies such as giving police weapons designed for war zones, the disproportionate policing of areas frequented by black youth, and incentivizing police to shoot black people by not arresting them and giving them paid leave when they do. The school-to-grave-pipeline is not only a problem in Ferguson. Nationally, a [study revealed that a black person is killed by police somewhere in the United States every 36 hours](#). When there are witnesses, or when onlookers are able to capture these murders on a cellphone camera, we get to hear about their case; people such as Eric Garner, Ramarley Graham, Sean Bell, Oscar Grant, and many others. Yet too often, black people are shot down by police and discarded with little attention. If education is not dedicated to empowering our youth to solve the problems they face in their communities, in our nation, and in our world, then it isn’t really an education at all—it is an indoctrination designed to reproduce oppression. As Richard Shaull explains in the forward to Paulo Freire’s masterwork, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, “Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.” The way you know that those who control the education system—the many corporate style education reformers who push high-stakes testing and standardized curriculum—are not actually interested in nurturing black youth, closing the

achievement gap, or supporting education that undermines oppression, is that you won't hear any of them publicly defending Michael Brown or calling for the arrest of his murderer, Darren Wilson. (Or maybe Bill Gates, Arne Duncan, and Michelle Rhee carpooled and got lost on their way to the rally in Ferguson?). On the issues that most deeply affect the lives of African Americans—mass incarceration, police terror, unemployment, housing discrimination—these education reformers and officials have nothing to say, content to prattle on with the exhortations about “accountability,” “career ready,” “21st century education,” and other hollow pronouncements devoid of the social supports that would make them a reality. Thankfully, educators in Ferguson and around the nation are rising to the challenge of redefining the purpose of education with the intent of building a more just society in wake of the killing of Michael Brown. On August 17, [Dr. Marcia Chatelain](#) tweeted a call for resources for parents and educators to talk to young people heading back to school with the hashtag [#FergusonSyllabus](#). People from around the nation began collecting and [retweeting](#) articles, books, videos, and photos to aid educators in lesson ideas that engage students in a critical dialogue about the meaning of Michael Brown's death and the mass uprising it has inspired. Jackie Gerstein, Ed.D (@JackieGerstein) tweeting with [#FergusonSyllabus](#), wrote: And Caryn Riswold (@feminismxianity) tweeted: Some of the best lessons ideas shared on [#FergusonSyllabus](#) include a link to the video, “[Race the House We Live in](#),” about redlining and housing discrimination, a Rethinking Schools lesson on teaching about [The Murder of Sean Bell](#) (a young African American killed by New York City Police), Christopher Emdin's essay, “[5 Ways to Teach About Michael Brown and Ferguson in the New School Year](#),” and Teaching for Change's, “[Teaching About Ferguson](#).” Any teacher of American history or civics would do well to discuss Amy Goodman's essay, “[The ghost of Dred Scott haunts the streets of Ferguson](#),” outlining the case of the slave (buried just down the street from where Mike Brown was killed) who took his case for freedom to the Supreme Court, which subsequently ruled that African Americans had, “no rights which the white man was bound to respect.” National Public Radio ran a story on August 19th, “[Ferguson Teachers Use Day off As Opportunity for Civics Lesson](#)” where they reported, “So this morning, instead of being in the classroom, 150 area teachers took part in some unusual professional development: picking up broken glass, water bottles and tear gas canisters from the street. “It says ‘Defense Technology’ on it,” says social studies teacher Arthur Vambakertes, showing off a busted canister from his trash bag.” When the schools reopen in Ferguson, teachers would do well to close up the jingoistic textbooks, discard the bubble tests, and ask students what they think about the fact that our nation spends more on “defense technology,” militarized policing and mass incarceration than on education. It might not be on the new Common Core exams, but the killing of Michael Brown is a test for our nation's schools nonetheless. As I prepare to head back to the classroom, I pledge to Michael Brown and his family that I will do my best to foster a classroom that allows for the emotional intensity and critical dialogue vital to achieving a world that puts institutional racism in its final resting place and gives our black children a bright future. — Jesse Hagopian is the editor and contributing author to the forthcoming book (available for pre-ordering), [More Than a Score: The New Uprising Against High-Stakes Testing](#). Jesse teaches history and is the co-advisor for the Black Student Union at Garfield High School, the site of the historic boycott of the MAP standardized test. Jesse is an associate editor for Rethinking Schools magazine, a founding member of Social Equality Educators (SEE), and recipient of the 2013 “Secondary School Teacher of Year” award from the Academy of Education Arts and Sciences. Follow Jesse on his blog at [www.iamaneducator.com](#) or on Twitter: [@jessedhagopian](#) Source: [http://iamaneducator.com/2014/08/22/this-is-a-test-educating-to-end-the-school-to-grave-pipeline-in-ferguson-and-beyond/comment-page-1/#comment-3987](#)

August 18, 2014 Nonprofit Shares Data About Troubled Teens With Researchers By Nicole Wallace Researchers are gaining access to enormous amounts of data about teenagers who are struggling with depression, bullying, and other problems, thanks to [Crisis Text Line](#), which has been operating for a year. The service makes it easy for teens to get crisis counseling and referrals simply by sending text messages on their cellphones. The nonprofit is making available data about roughly 60,000 counseling sessions in the hope that academics, government officials, and other charities can help even more troubled young people. “With researchers and policy makers being starved for this kind of data, suddenly they’ll be able to make more informed decisions about how do you try to help teens in crisis,” says Bob Filbin, chief data scientist at Crisis Text Line. The [public dataset](#) provides visualizations of aggregated information. Among the findings: Alaska, Kentucky, and Montana have the most requests per capita for help for suicidal thoughts. Requests for assistance related to sexual orientation are highest on Sunday and Monday. Text messages about self-harm peak between 9 p.m. and 10 p.m. The data don't contain information that could identify individuals. Researchers who apply to gain access to more in-depth data go through a formal application process, are restricted in how they can use the information, and have to follow strict guidelines to keep the data safe. Professors at the Johns Hopkins University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the University of Rochester are already working with the data, and researchers from the University of California at Berkeley, Princeton, and Stanford have started the application process. “A lot of people are interested because there just isn't data available on teens in crisis,” says Mr. Filbin. Officials at Crisis Text Line say that the value of its data will only grow as the group provides assistance to more young people. Crisis specialists with the nonprofit have more than 7,000 text-message exchanges with troubled youths each month. The organization plans to update its datasets at least weekly. Mr. Filbin thinks more nonprofits need to weigh whether they can expand the impact of their work by making their data available to others: “The idea behind the public data project is that as an organization trying to create social change in the world, this data can create more of that value if we share it with other people.” [HEAL Note: The problem here is that the kids are looking for real help and someone they can trust. When you turn that data over to others (i.e. abusive behavior modification programs) so they can market their fraudulent and abusive services to youth and families, it becomes a real crisis and a serious ethical breach and breach of trust. Making it even less likely for individuals who truly need mental health services to seek them out because of the lack of oversight and rampant fraud and abuse in the industry.] Source: [http://philanthropy.com/article/Nonprofit-Shares-Data-About/148399/](#)

Sherburne foster care provider loses license Kirsti Marohn, [kmarohn@stcloudtimes.com](#) 11:05 p.m. CDT August 17, 2014 Watchdog(Photo: Times graphic) 73 CONNECT [1 TWEETLINKEDIN](#) COMMENTEMAILMORE ELK RIVER — A Sherburne County foster care provider's license has been revoked after she was found responsible for abusing a foster child last year. The Minnesota Department of Human Services on July 17 ordered that the license of Sheila Noelle Scharber, 48, also known as Sheila Bower, of Big Lake, be revoked. Scharber has appealed. A hearing is scheduled for later this month. According to the DHS order, Sherburne County Health & Human Services investigated a report and determined that a foster child in Scharber's care had been physically abused. Scharber admitted that as a means of discipline, she kicked the foster child, causing a red mark on his shin; plucked hair from the child's head with a pair of tweezers; and, with another person, had the child hold two heavy olive cans with arms outstretched, the order states. When the child could no longer hold the cans, Scharber suggested the child stand with bare feet on top of the cans so the edges of the cans would hurt his feet, the order states. In November, Scharber was criminally charged in Sherburne County District Court with malicious punishment of a child, a gross misdemeanor. She pleaded guilty in April to a lesser misdemeanor charge of disorderly conduct and was given a stayed sentence of 90 days in jail. According to a court statement, the child reported that his foster mother had kicked him on the leg and pulled out his hair as punishment for his mistreatment of her pets. A message left Friday on the phone number DHS listed for Scharber was not immediately returned. Jodi Heurung, Sherburne County social service supervisor, said Scharber had received a foster care provider license in August 2013. This was the first and only child placed in her home, Heurung said. The child is now in a different home. “We hate these situations,” Heurung said. “They're just ... really unfortunate.” Revoking a foster care license is rare, Heurung said. It's the first time in her more than six years with Sherburne County that a foster care provider license was revoked. The county followed normal procedure during the licensing process, Heurung said. The county provided the family a therapeutic social worker for additional support due to the child's needs, Heurung said. “In this case, we felt that we had done what we needed to do, what we could have done to make it the most appropriate, best placement for the child and for the provider,” she said. Heurung said the situation speaks to the need for more foster care providers. “We have very unique situations, very unique kids with significant behaviors, and so we're always trying to find the best match,” she said. “The more providers we have to choose from to make that match is just really critical.” Source: [http://www.sctimes.com/story/news/local/2014/08/18/sherburne-foster-care-provider-loses-license/14216663/](#)

Lawsuit: Pa. boy, 7, placed in foster home with abuser [Comment Print](#) Email Published: Tue, August 19, 2014 @ 3:09 p.m. SCRANTON, Pa. (AP) — A federal lawsuit says a child welfare agency in northeastern Pennsylvania knowingly placed a 7-year-old Scranton boy in foster care with a couple whose 18-year-old adopted son had a history of sexual abuse. The Times-Tribune of Scranton reports the boy was sexually abused by the adopted son five months after he came to live with the couple in Wilkes-Barre. The teenager was arrested and is serving a state prison sentence. The lawsuit says a caseworker with Lackawanna County's child welfare agency knew the teenager had a history of abusing other children but placed the 7-year-old in the home anyway. The lawsuit was filed Monday by the boy and his mother. - See more at: [http://www.vindy.com/news/2014/aug/19/lawsuit-pa-boy-7-placed-foster-home-abuser/?nw#sthash.PzT3E6SJ.dpuF](#)

Teens Cited after Incidents at Treatment Center [Permalink](#) Posted Tuesday, August 19th 2014 @ 4pm Nine juveniles face charges after a pair of incidents at a residential treatment center for teenage girls. Fayette County Sheriff Vernon Stanforth said the first incident at the Ranch of Opportunity was reported Friday afternoon after a 17-year-old client got into an altercation with some of her peers and caused minor injury to some of the staff members who intervened. The Sheriff said one staff member was treated and released at a hospital, and the teen was cited with four counts of delinquency by assault. On Friday night, deputies were called back to the Ranch of Opportunity on a report of a large physical altercation involving 8 juveniles, ranging from ages 13 to 17. Authorities were able to peacefully return them to their living quarters. The clients involved were cited for delinquency by disorderly conduct. Sheriff Stanforth says all of the teens will appear before Fayette County Probate Juvenile Court Judge David Bender to answer to the complaints filed against them. Read more: <http://www.buckeyecountry105.com/articles/local-news-stories-226193/teens-cited-after-incidents-at-treatment-12685755#ixzz3BGgO3dGz>

Wichita group home closed due to numerous violations By: KAKE News [Email](#) Updated: Wed 5:08 PM, Aug 20, 2014 By: KAKE News WICHITA, Kan. — A Wichita group home has been shut down after a state agency found numerous violations. The Kansas Department for Aging and Disabilities Services has revoked the license of the Atishwin Institute, a group home and treatment provider for individuals with substance use disorders. On Tuesday, August 19, KDADS agency representatives conducted a site visit and survey of Atishwin. They observed numerous violations of state regulations, some major, that could "impact safety and quality-of-care provided to individuals receiving treatment there." The violations included improper storage of drugs, treatment being provided by unlicensed staff, unsafe conditions such as disconnected fire alarms, broken mirrors and glass, insect and rodent infestations and other unsanitary conditions. Inspectors also determined employee tuberculosis tests had not been completed, no biohazard waste disposal was available and the facility had no way to maintain controlled medications. They also found the licensee had failed to comply with the Alcohol or Other Drug Addiction Treatment act and said there was no evidence of a current fire inspection. The facility, located at 937 S. Bluffview, was required to close immediately. KDADS said the licensee may request a hearing regarding the closure within 15 days of the notice. Failure to do so would result in a waiver of their right to a hearing and the closure order will become final, revoking the licensee's order to operate a treatment facility. The facility has 35 beds. KDADS staff is assisting about 25 residents find alternate accommodations. Source: <http://www.kake.com/home/headlines/Wichita-group-home-closed-due-to-numerous-violations-272021221.html>

Md. agency failed to monitor placement of foster children, audit says [Evidence of abuse or neglect found in more than a dozen cases](#) [Comments](#) 5 Department of Human Resources Secretary Ted Dallas (left) and health secretary Dr. Joshua Sharfstein at a legislative briefing. (Doug Donovan / Baltimore Sun / July 24, 2014) Related [Sun Investigates: LifeLine, Inc. Maryland agencies need to improve oversight of group homes, officials say](#) [Families of LifeLine residents plan to sue state Maryland group home where boy died had staffing shortage, nurse says](#) By Doug Donovan, The Baltimore Sun 11:09 p.m. EDT, August 19, 2014 Some foster children were placed in the care of relatives with a history of alleged abuse or neglect because Maryland's social services agency did not properly monitor local agencies, according to a new audit. State auditors found that 16 children, ranging in age from 2 months to nearly 5 years old, were put in the care of relatives despite "credible evidence of abuse or neglect" by them before or during the placements. The Office of Legislative Audits, which released the report this week, reviewed records from July 2010 to January 2013. "We need to do better. The bottom line is, these placements need to be safe," said Melissa Rock, child welfare director for Advocates for Children and Youth, a nonprofit advocacy group. "When a child is abused or neglected in a DHR placement — be it a group home, a foster home, a kinship care home — we need accountability and there needs to be more public awareness to help hold everyone accountable." This is not the first time auditors have cited the foster care agency, overseen by the state Department of Human Resources, for failing to properly monitor such placements. A 2011 audit found the same problem. Department officials responded then by saying they would implement a quarterly monitoring process to make sure local agencies were not placing children in danger. But that process wasn't performed during this audit period, the report said. The audit comes after a recent investigation by The Baltimore Sun revealed that state officials were unaware of reports of abuse and neglect made to Anne Arundel County police on behalf of foster children living at a Laurel-area group home operated by LifeLine Inc. The state moved the children after it determined that a child there was receiving inadequate health care. A 10-year-old, Damaud Martin, died a day before the last of the children was removed. The state is investigating his death and whether inadequate care contributed to it, but officials have cautioned against drawing conclusions prematurely. The state continued to contract with LifeLine for the care of children even after it cited the company for inadequate care in three adult deaths in 2010 and 2011, and it shut down the adult facility. State and local government agencies jointly spend about \$200 million to provide "out-of-home" placements for nearly 5,619 abused or neglected foster children either in group homes, foster care or with relatives, called "kinship" care. Placements with relatives with a history of alleged abuse or neglect are rare. State law prohibits placements with such relatives except when state officials provide evidence that there is no continuing risk. According to the recent audit of the social services agency, one relative who was known to have a history of physical abuse was allowed to care for a foster child for 41/2 months. In response to each audit, state officials said that no children had been harmed and that their placements were safe. The issue, they say, is that the Department of Human Resources did not maintain proper documents proving that children were not in danger. "In these very rare cases, the child is represented by an independent attorney, and each case is reviewed, approved and monitored by a judge," department spokesman Brian Schleter said Tuesday in an email. "To provide some context, a common example is a grandmother who has a relatively minor finding of neglect ... who the court and other parties involved believe is the most appropriate placement for her grandchild," he added. One example, he suggested, would be a decades-old finding of lack of supervision for a child. Regarding the kinship care placements cited by the audit, state officials said they knew of reports of abuse and neglect with the relatives but followed proper procedure. Maryland's secretary of human resources, Ted Dallas, disagreed with the audit in an official written response, stating that local agencies and judges relied on documented evidence that the placements were safe. "Safety assessments completed for each child indicated that there were no safety or risk issues relating to the placement with the kinship provider," the response stated. "At no time were any of the children harmed or placed at risk of harm by their placement with their relative." The department added that local agencies reviewed the histories of relatives and provided information to judges before children were placed with them. But Thomas Barnickel III, the state's legislative auditor, said Dallas' department never handed over the documentation to auditors despite being given "several months" to do so. "Maybe all these placements were appropriate, but they never provided the documentation," Barnickel said. Shelley Tinney, executive director for the Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Children, said the state was exhibiting a "double standard" by allowing placements with relatives with a history of abuse allegations while the group homes she represents would be "absolutely excluded" from caring for children if any of its employees had certain criminal histories. "It's different when it's family somehow," Tinney said. "The philosophy is, if the child is not able to return to their biological parents, the next best option is kin — regardless of how far removed they may be or what the nature of the relationship may have been prior to the need for a placement." She said private group homes could never get paid without documentation, yet the state is allowed to make questionable placements without having to provide evidence that no risk exists. "The department says it's just a documentation issue," she said. "In our world, if it's not documented, it doesn't happen." The audit also faulted the department for not seeking more reimbursement from the federal government for providing care to disabled foster children. Those children are eligible for both federal foster care money as well as supplemental funds from Social Security. The state says it prefers reimbursement under Social Security because the children are eligible for the funds after they become adults, unlike the federal foster care money. If children lose their Social Security eligibility because their care was reimbursed from both sources, state officials say, it would be to their "detriment to exit foster care and wait for reinstatement of SSI benefits." Read more: http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/bs-md-audit-20140819_0.4132122.story#ixzz3BGs85hld

Founder of boot camp for at-risk Montgomery youth accused of sexual abuse [Print](#) By [Erin Edgemon](#) | eedgemon@al.com AL.com Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#) on August 21, 2014 at 10:42 AM, updated August 21, 2014 at 10:46 AM Glenn Veasy (MCSO) MONTGOMERY, Alabama -- The founder of a boot camp for at-risk youth in Montgomery is accused of sexually abusing one of the teenagers he mentored. Glenn Veasy, 43, was arrested by Montgomery police on Aug. 20 and charged with two counts of first-degree sexual abuse, Montgomery police say. He is being held in the Montgomery County Detention Facility on \$30,000 bond. Veasy is the founder of **Team Achievers Discipline Academy**, which provides military-style training to at-risk youth from kindergarten to 12th grade, [according to an interview Veasy gave to WSFA about the program](#). Veasy is accused of inappropriately touching one of the teenagers during boot camps at his residence from June 2013 through August 2014. Montgomery Department of Public Safety Spokesperson Martha Earnhardt said the investigation is ongoing. Source: http://www.al.com/news/montgomery/index.ssf/2014/08/founder_of_boot_camp_for_at-ri.html

DJJ closes Milton juvenile treatment center Kevin Robinson, Staff Writer 11:14 a.m. CDT August 21, 2014 The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) canceled the contract for a 40-bed residential youth commitment program in Milton because concerns over the safety and security of juveniles committed

there(Photo: Special to the News Journal) 12 CONNECT [3 TWEETLINKEDINCOMMENTEMAILMORE](#) The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) canceled the contract for a 40-bed residential youth commitment program in Milton because concerns over the safety and security of juveniles committed there, a news release from the DJJ said. The residential program, Santa Rosa Substance Abuse Treatment Center, is a low-to-moderate risk program operated by Youth Services International. The staff of the facility "failed to correct deficiencies and sustain those corrective actions in areas involving safety and security, effective behavioral interventions, and appropriate reporting of incidents for this program," the release said. Because of those failures, contract with Youth Services International was terminated effective as of midnight this morning. "DJJ takes very seriously the safety and welfare of the youth currently in our care and does not tolerate actions which could place the youth for whom we are responsible in harm's way, including those under the supervision of our contract providers," Interim DJJ Secretary Christina K. Daly said in a written statement. According to a report compiled in May by the Bureau of Quality Improvement, the facility was found to be in compliance with 135 of 144 state standards and in limited compliance with six of the standards. They failed three of the standards: Provision of an abuse-free environment, protective action response and timely completion of Residential Positive Achievement Change Tool assessments. The report said there were three substantiated reports of excessive force, nine complaints against staff under review by the DJJ and two complaints against staff under review by the Inspector General's Office. Reviews of personnel files indicated two of the employees who used excessive force were terminated, and one was provided with additional training. The 40 boys at the facility have been moved temporarily to four North Florida detention facilities. DJJ has prioritized admission of these youth to existing residential commitment programs that have vacancies and are designed to meet their substance abuse treatment needs. Youth Services International will be precluded from participating in the Intent to Negotiate process for any new contract with the agency for the next 12 months. Source: <http://www.pnj.com/story/news/2014/08/21/djj-closes-milton-juvenile-treatment-center/14387715/>

Social workers can now check if foster parents have criminal pasts Sen. Bob Huff Rich Pedroncelli / AP Senate Minority Leader Bob Huff, R-Diamond Bar, left, meets with Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento, during the Senate session earlier this month. Huff was the main sponsor of a foster care bill signed Thursday by Gov. Jerry Brown. Senate Minority Leader Bob Huff, R-Diamond Bar, left, meets with Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento, during the Senate session earlier this month. Huff was the main sponsor of a foster care bill signed Thursday by Gov. Jerry Brown. (Rich Pedroncelli / AP) By [Garrett Therolf contact the reporter Laws and LegislationAccounting and AuditingHolly J. MitchellCriminal Minds: Suspect Behavior \(tv program\)Bob Huff](#) Gov. Brown signs SB 1136 in response to @latimes reports that some foster parents had criminal backgrounds Calif. law gives county social workers access to criminal histories of foster parents and contract employees In response to a series of scandals involving mistreatment of children under state supervision, Gov. Jerry Brown on Thursday signed into law new rules giving county social workers access to the criminal histories of foster parents and employees at foster care contractors before abused and neglected children are placed in their care. The legislation, SB 1136, comes in response to [Times reports documenting instances when children were harmed and taxpayer money was allegedly misspent](#) by people with criminal backgrounds who had been granted special waivers from the state to receive foster children. [Related story: Reform the private foster care system, right now The Times editorial board State and county governments can begin by scrutinizing the waiver process that allows convicted criminals to operate agencies or even become foster parents. State and county governments can begin by scrutinizing the waiver process that allows convicted criminals to operate agencies or even become foster parents. \(The Times editorial board \)](#) In the past, county social workers, who have the responsibility to place at-risk children in safe homes, were unable to view criminal records of foster parents or workers at agencies that help find and train foster families. The law takes effect on Jan. 1. [Related Local Private foster care system, intended to save children, endangers some See all related 8](#) Over the last year, The Times has reported on a convicted forger who auditors said mishandled tens of thousands of taxpayer dollars as a chief executive of a private, nonprofit foster care agency; a convicted thief who later was convicted of murdering a foster child; and a woman convicted of fraud who was later convicted of criminal charges for causing debilitating burns to a girl in her care. Each had received a special waiver from the California Department of Social Services to enter the foster care system. The state has granted more than 5,000 waivers currently in effect, 1,400 of them in Los Angeles County. "We should allow state and local agencies to work together and share information to protect innocent children from additional harm or danger. Our legislation will allow this," said Sen. Bob Huff (R-Diamond Bar), who co-sponsored the law with Sen. Holly Mitchell (D-Los Angeles). The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors sought the legislation earlier this year. We should allow state and local agencies to work together and share information to protect innocent children.... Our legislation will allow this.- Sen. Bob Huff, co-sponsor "It is possible for government to better protect children while cutting red tape. Today our colleagues have agreed that this is the right approach," Mitchell said. The Times also has reported that county workers had no reliable means to ensure that social workers at nonprofit, contracted agencies that recruit and supervise foster parents were complying with rules limiting them to oversight of 15 foster children at a time. The paper found that numerous private social workers violated the cap while supervising children who were injured by their foster parents, according to records filed with the state. [eComments Got something to say? Start the conversation and be the first to comment. Add a comment 0](#) Some social workers got around the limit by working for multiple foster care agencies. L.A. county officials have sought to crack down on the practice by requiring foster care agencies to submit information on their social workers' outside employment. Additionally, state and county workers are imposing new requirements on nonprofit foster care organizations to obtain advance permission before entering into business and real estate transactions with their employees. [Related story: Private foster care troubles in California lead to new scrutiny Garrett Therolf County auditors looking into one of Los Angeles' biggest foster care agencies in 2003 uncovered \\$445,000 in ineligible or unsupported spending. County auditors looking into one of Los Angeles' biggest foster care agencies in 2003 uncovered \\$445,000 in ineligible or unsupported spending. \(Garrett Therolf \)](#) State records show that between 2007 and 2011 one foster care agency executive, Sukhwinder Singh, charged the taxpayer-subsidized organization she managed almost \$1.8 million in rent for properties she owned. Auditors found that some lease payments for the properties were significantly higher than allowed market rates and totaled thousands of dollars in impermissible payments. Other efforts to improve the state's contracted-out foster care system have stalled. Some county officials and advocacy groups have called on the state to change the way it funds nonprofit foster care groups. Critics say the current system encourages the agencies to cut corners and retain children in foster care, and should be replaced with a so-called "performance based contracting" program. Under that system, agencies are rewarded when they serve children well and penalized when children in their care are abused or fail to make adequate progress developmentally. Brown's social services director, Will Lightbourne, said such a major realignment of financial incentives would be too difficult. Private agencies now care for 15,000 children statewide. They were paid hundreds of millions of dollars more than the government-run system they replaced and were meant to provide children with more intensive services and supervision. But a Times analysis found children in homes overseen by private, nonprofit agencies were about a third more likely to be the victims of serious physical, emotional or sexual abuse than those in state-supervised foster family homes. Source: <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-la-foster-parents-criminal-pasts-20140821-story.html>

Barbara Brooks: Former foster parent pleads guilty to raping children, gets 7 years behind bars [WCPO Staff](#) 9:53 AM, Aug 22, 2014 10:16 AM, Aug 22, 2014 Barbara Brooks Copyright 2013 Scripps Media, Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. Copyright 2013 Scripps Media, Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. Barbara Brooks CINCINNATI -- A Colerain Township woman accused of sexually abusing children she babysat pleaded guilty to rape charges Friday in a plea deal. Barbara Brooks, a 63-year-old former Hamilton County foster parent, pleaded not guilty in June 2012 to charges of sexually assaulting four different children she babysat between January 2000 and Feb. 27, 2007. Officials said the rapes occurred in her homes in Mt. Healthy and Springfield Township. She has been held at the Hamilton County Justice Center since her arrest. Brooks was charged with 15 counts of rape and three counts of gross sexual imposition. She faced the possibility of spending the rest of her life in prison before accepting the plea deal. She pleaded guilty to four counts of rape and was sentenced to seven years in prison. She has served two of those years since her arrest in 2012. She will be behind bars for about five more years. She is now classified as a tier 3 sex offender, meaning she will have to register her address every 90 days as a sex offender. Brooks was a foster parent from 1996 until 2008, according to Hamilton County Job and Family Services spokesperson Brian Gregg. Police arrested Brooks on June 7, 2012 after a relative of the alleged victims, who are now 18 and 23-years-old, reported to police that the babysitter had abused them between 2000 and 2003. In 2008, a child sex abuse complaint was made against Brooks, said Gregg. Cincinnati police investigated, but didn't file charges. Brooks resigned from the foster care program and Job and Family Services officials permanently terminated their relationship with her. "These cases are always difficult to comprehend," Deters said in a previous news release. "We are glad that the victims had the courage to come forward so that we can make sure that Brooks is never in a position to care for a child again." Source: <http://www.wcpo.com/news/crime/barbara-brooks-former-foster-parent-pleads-guilty-to-raping-children-gets-7-years-behind-bars>

Pueblo Foster Parents Accused Of Child Abuse By: KKTU Updated: Fri 11:40 AM, Aug 22, 2014 By: KKTU [Home / Headlines List / Article From left:](#) Paul Finn, Sara Finn (Credit: Pueblo Police Dept.) A 2-year-old child is in critical condition after falling down the stairs--and police believe her foster parents are responsible. Sarah Finn, 23, has been charged with child abuse resulting in serious bodily injury, and 36-year-old Paul Finn has been charged with withholding proper medical care. Both have been booked into the Pueblo County Detention Center. According to Pueblo police, fire and rescue personnel were called to a home on the 300 block of E. Orman Ave., where a little girl was unconscious after falling down the stairs. Police say she was suffering from head trauma, had facial and eye injuries, and bruising on her body. She was airlifted to a hospital in Colorado Springs, where she remains in critical condition. Police say they spoke to the Finns at the hospital, who said they were in the process of adopting the toddler through a foster program. During the course of an interview with the couple, police say their story changed several times. The couple was arrested after a search warrant was executed in their home. The investigation is still ongoing. Source: <http://www.kktv.com/home/headlines/Foster-Parents-Accused-Of-Child-Abuse-272309011.html>

Rosemont, a 112-year-old program in SE Portland for troubled girls, closes its doors citing funding shortfall **Rosemont Treatment Center, a residential school and behavioral therapy program for troubled girls, closed on August 22, 2014.** Morrison Child & Family Services will continue to use the facility in Southeast Portland for other programs. (Melissa Binder/The Oregonian) [Print](#) By [James Reddick](#) | [Special to The Oregonian](#) The Oregonian [Follow on Twitter](#) on August 27, 2014 at 8:00 AM, updated August 27, 2014 at 10:42 AM Reddit Email A Southeast Portland school that has housed and taught troubled teenage girls since 1902 has closed its doors. [Rosemont Treatment Center](#), a 27-bed facility that provides mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment and schooling is terminating its contract with [Oregon Youth Authority](#) and the [Department of Human Services](#) due to a chronic lack of funding. Girls in the program have been sent to foster care, the custody of family members or other treatment facilities. Rosemont becomes the third state-funded provider of adolescent "behavioral rehabilitation" to contemplate closing or fundamentally transforming its focus this year. "We've tried and tried and tried to make this work, but most years in the past decade we've run at a loss," said Drew McWilliams, chief executive officer of [Morrison Child & Family Services](#), the nonprofit organization overseeing Rosemont. "It's one of the most difficult decisions I've ever made," he said of the Aug 22 closure. The [Pettygrove House](#) in Southeast Portland is also terminating its contract with OYA. The 10-bed facility will shift its focus to abused teenage girls served by the Department of Human Services. According to Janet Arenz, president of an umbrella group that represents child welfare providers, an additional, non-residential program in Oregon is slated to close but hasn't made an announcement yet. She declined to name the program. "These are credible, longstanding organizations who have a clash between their mission and the resources to be able to get there," Arenz said. Christopher Drake, a spokesman for the state youth authority, said of the Rosemont closure: "We're sorry they made that decision, but it was their decision to make. Obviously, they have their reasons to stop doing business with us." One client's experience For some adolescents placed by OYA, treatment centers like Rosemont are a last chance before juvenile detention. Most have experienced trauma, and many are in the juvenile justice system due to violence or substance abuse. The rehabilitation services are designed to ready adolescents to return to their families or to foster homes. "These programs provide care for kids that need something more than standard foster care," said Kevin George, who oversees foster programs for the state human services agency. Rosemont was founded in North Portland by a Catholic organization called Sisters of the Good Shepherd. It moved to its current location near Mount Scott in 1995. Rebekah Tilahun, a 26-year-old from Oregon City, spent more than two years at Rosemont. She said she was taken from her mother when she was an infant and had lived in about 15 foster homes before ending up at Rosemont in her freshman year. "Walking into that place was pretty similar to an old person walking into a retirement home," she said. "You're treated like a child's child every second and being monitored and constantly controlled." Still, Tilahun got good grades and ended up graduating from high school a year early despite missing her freshman year. She took art classes and worked on her anger issues with a counselor. Over the course of two years, she noticed certain luxuries, like going on field trips, being cut. There were auctions and stage performances to raise money for programs. Staff members were constantly changing, she said, and rules shifted on a regular basis. Eventually, OYA and DHS residents were combined into one wing in 2009 as Rosemont reduced its capacity from 52 to 27 girls. Unstable funding Rosemont's decline reflects the struggles of child services providers statewide. Until 1998, providers were guaranteed money each month based on their size and services. "The state said, 'We want you to have a certain number of beds available for children,'" said Michael Balter, president of [Boys & Girls Aid](#), which runs the Pettygrove House. "Every month they would keep buying that capacity," he said, "and if they weren't making referrals to us, they bore that responsibility." Under the new plan, providers are paid not based on capacity but on a daily rate for each resident actually served by the facility. They say they have very little control over whether or not beds are full because providers like Rosemont rely on DHS and OYA case workers for referrals. Yet Rosemont is also required to have enough staff to handle 27 adolescents, even when the facility isn't full. "All the risk for losses is on the service providers," Balter said. Further, providers say, the state's reimbursement rates have not kept up with costs. DHS' Kevin George doesn't disagree. He said providers need to rely on other sources of funding to reduce their risk. "State funding has never been able to keep up with market values," he said. "The longer you go without any right-sizing, the larger the gap." A group of 18 providers sued in 2011 over the state's reimbursement rates, settling out of court this summer on condition that the state will negotiate changes to the system with them. "The erosion of the system has been subtle and gradual," Balter said. "It reaches a point where it becomes so threatening that you have to do something dramatic." Closing Rosemont In the end, Rosemont officials said, the new financing system slowly made it impossible to continue serving teens held by the state agencies. Girls at the facility have all been placed in other homes or will return to their families. For Tilahun, the closing of the school is a reminder of the hardships facing foster youth. Although she said she was considered a "success case," she lost her job and ended up periodically homeless within months of reaching adulthood. "I'm far from a polished gem," Tilahun said. "But I'm probably better off because of Rosemont." --James Reddick Source: http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2014/08/rosemont_a_112-year-old_facili.html

Charter Schools Don't Need An Ad Campaign, They Need Regulation This time of year, while classroom teachers and administrators in public schools are busy welcoming students back to a new school year and figuring out how they're going to cope with [devastating financial constraints](#), advocates in the charter schools industry are propping up their image with an extensive new [public relations campaign](#), called "Truth About Charters." That contrast alone pretty much tells you everything you need to know about where we are in the nation's parallel education narratives, in which a gritty documentary competes with what is essentially an advertising campaign for a shiny, new product. There are good reasons for charter schools advocates to feel they need an ad campaign. Recent polling results from the annual [PDK/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Towards the Public Schools](#) show that Americans generally have favorable opinions about charter schools but [don't really know very much about them](#). That situation is eerily similar to what has befallen another education policy favored by influential private interests and federal and state authorities: the Common Core. [Last year's](#) PDK/Gallup survey found that the Common Core was pretty much a mystery to most Americans, although public support for national standards was high. However, as new standards rolled out, and people became more knowledgeable about them and all they entail, opinion gradually changed. According to this year's survey, over 80 percent of Americans have heard about the Common Core -- 47 percent indicating they have heard a great deal or a fair amount. And most Americans, 60 percent, now oppose them. A similar evolution may be occurring with charter schools. Because only about 6 percent of school children are enrolled in charters, the vast majority of Americans have had virtually no actual experiences with these schools. But in communities where charters are more prevalent, public opinion is more starkly divided. In school systems such as [Philadelphia](#), [Bridgeport](#), [Pittsburgh](#), and [Chicago](#), where charter schools are major providers, parents and local officials have increasingly opposed charter takeovers of their neighborhood schools. Probably even more concerning to charter school advocates is the news that credit rating agency [Standards & Poor's](#) recently down-rated the nation's charter sector to a "negative" outlook. What are the concerns? Apparently while charter advocates have their version of "truth," another version of the truth has been playing out in communities around the country. "A Racket" A recent article in the online news outlet [The Progressive](#) reported, "There's been a flood of local news stories in recent months about FBI raids on charter schools all over the country. From Pittsburgh to Baton Rouge, from Hartford to Cincinnati to Albuquerque, FBI agents have been busting into schools, carting off documents, and making arrests leading to high-profile indictments." Reporter Ruth Conniff found charter schools allegations range from "taking money that was meant for the classroom," to spending taxpayer dollars on "luxuries such as fine-dining and retreats at exclusive resorts and spas," to engaging in "bribes and kickbacks." Conniff couldn't help but conclude the special attention from the FBI is due to the likelihood these charter schools are "a racket." Recent news of charter school financial malfeasance abound. [The Washington Post](#) reported, according to a [pending civil lawsuit](#), the District of Columbia financial officer "responsible for monitoring charter schools' business practices and ensuring their compliance with rules meant to prevent financial mismanagement" was instead allegedly receiving \$150,000 to help three former managers of a local charter school chain "evade those rules and take millions of taxpayer dollars for themselves." Another report from [The Post](#) revealed that "about 25 percent" of the city's charter schools pay fees -- "ranging from 3 percent to 100 percent" of the schools' total revenue --

to nonprofit or for-profit management companies. Not surprisingly, several of the operating agreements with these management organizations prevent “the kind of transparency necessary to assure that schools are operating appropriately,” a DC school board review contended. In Florida, a [local news outlet](#) investigating charter school operations found millions of taxpayer dollars misdirected from classrooms and students to management companies. The report pointed to charter school chain Charter Schools USA that makes “tens of millions” by operating as, essentially, a real estate firm. CUSA uses tax-exempt bonds to build schools that it then rents to UCSA-affiliated schools. Then the CUSA schools are saddled with rent payments back to CUSA and its management company at rates considerably higher than those charged to other non-CUSA schools in the area. One CUSA school will pay “more than \$2 million this year in rent” – a 23% share of its budget. “That’s money that won’t be spent in classroom resources or teachers,” the report noted. Education historian [Diane Ravitch](#), writing on her personal blog, recently highlighted a report from the Florida League of Women Voters that explained how these charter school real estate schemes work across the state: After receiving a variety of grants, loans and tax credits for building a charter school, the for-profit chain charges ever escalating rents and leases to the school district, paid by taxpayer education dollars. The for-profit then reaps the profits when the building is sold in a few years. Meanwhile the properties with high, non-taxable, values based on claimed ‘commercial’ revenue streams from public taxpayer dollars are leveraged to borrow additional funds to build more school buildings. The League’s report noted, “The high per student management fees (around \$450) plus rent/lease fees (at least 20 percent of the total school budget) mean that there is less funding available for ‘instruction,’ including teacher salaries, books, etc.” The charter school racket goes beyond real estate deals. [The Arizona Republic](#) recently “reviewed thousands of pages of federal tax returns, audits, corporate filings, and records filed with the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools” and found, “Board members and administrators from more than a dozen state-funded charter schools are profiting from their affiliations by doing business with schools they oversee. The deals, worth more than \$70 million over the last five years, are legal, but critics of the arrangements say they can lead to conflicts of interest.” In Newark, NJ, the money making opportunity for the charter school chains when the federal government made available millions of dollars in school construction bonds for charter schools. Noticing the potential windfall, the administration of governor Chris Christie promptly withheld funds designated for repairing and renovating existing public schools. This created a bonanza for new charter school construction, while local public schools went deeper into disrepair. As Owen Davis reported for [Truth Out](#), “By systematically underfunding the public sector while extending market incentives to private actors, the Christie administration has essentially placed its thumb on the scale for charters. The result: Some charters enjoy gleaming new facilities (bankrolled by the same financial milieu that spends its down time plugging them), while the public sector continues its decline.” The Gülen Factor An increasingly frequent target for scrutiny is the largest bricks-and-mortar charter-school chain in the United States run by the secretive Turkish cleric, Fethullah Gülen, who lives in exile from Turkey in rural Pennsylvania. In her Progressive article, Conniff pointed to an August 12 story in [The Atlantic](#) that found Gülen schools “don’t have a great track record when it comes to financial and legal transparency.” Reporter Scott Beauchamp found a Utah Gülen school that was \$350,000 in debt while using much of it publicly provided funds to donate to Gülen-affiliated organizations and “pay the cost of bringing teachers to Utah from Turkey.” Beauchamp also linked to a report in [The New York Times](#) that found two Gülen schools giving \$50 million to Gülen-connected contractors “even though other contractors had offered lower bids.” And in [Georgia](#), a county audit found three Gülen schools “skipped the bidding process altogether and paid nearly half a million dollars to organizations associated with the Gülen movement. Federal investigations into Gülen schools across the Midwest have found similar shady practices. [The Chicago Sun-Times](#) recently reported that Chicago-area Concept Schools, [also part of the Gülen charter chain](#), are subjects of an ongoing federal investigation. The enquiry is about nearly \$1 million that has been paid to contractors for work at done at three Chicago-area charter schools run by Concept. The contractors, a management consulting firm, and a foundation – all with ties to the Gülen network – are wrapped up into the scheme. In [California](#), state auditors are looking at the Magnolia network of charter schools, [also affiliated with the Gülen charter network](#). The audit stems from a sampling of transactions from the charter campuses by the inspector general of the Los Angeles school district, who “found over \$43,000 in duplicate payments to vendors.” Another review revealed, “the schools sent \$2.8 million to the network’s management organization. The funds were poorly documented loans, and much of the cash was never paid back to classrooms.” Only a judicial intervention has prevented two of the Magnolia schools from being closed, and now the state has to intervene. In [Ohio](#), charter schools operated by Horizon Science Academy, also part of the Gülen Concept network, are accused by the whistleblower website WikiLeaks of being covers for Turkish nationals to get into this country. According to a [local news report](#), four former teachers from one of the Horizon schools, “accused officials at the school of possibly completing state tests for students, of unqualified teachers, of teachers showing videos day after day in class, of women being treated as second-class citizens and of teachers encouraging sexually harassing behavior toward female students.” Another [Ohio press outlet](#) reported that the Gülen schools involved in the scandal are also “related through membership, fundraisers and political giving to the nonprofit Niagara Foundation, which provides trips to Turkey for state, local and federal lawmakers.” Indeed, the influence of the Gülen network goes beyond the schoolhouse into the statehouse, by “making inroads in US politics,” according to a recent account at [BuzzFeed](#). “Liberal Democrats like Yvette Clarke, Sheila Jackson Lee, and Al Green, and conservative Republicans like Ted Poe and Pete Olson have all benefitted from donors affiliated with Gülen,” reporter Rosie Gray found. “The patterns of giving suggest some level of coordination,” Gray discerned, and a number of the donations handed over to political campaigns from modestly paid classroom teachers are surprisingly large, the maximums allowed. A ‘Market For Lemons’ In his Atlantic article on the spread of Gülen-related charter schools, Beauchamp felt compelled to note, repeatedly, that it could seem xenophobic to single out the Gülen schools for their mysterious use of public funds. However, “it isn’t the Gülen movement that makes Gülen charters so secretive,” Beauchamp wrote, “it’s the charter movement itself.” Indeed, one of the supposed advantages of charter schools was their exemption to laws and regulations that some feel shackle public schools. But do these exemptions, in fact, lead to less transparency and accountability? For instance, as a post on the Ohio blog [Plunderbund](#) recently explained, charter schools in that state are exempt from over 150 laws required of public schools, including “minimum standards” covering such things as training and qualifications of personnel; public disclosure of instructional materials, equipment, and facilities; “organization, administration, and supervision of schools; and “reporting requirements.” The blogger, “Greg,” wrote, “If it wasn’t so appalling, we might be able to laugh at the continued insistence that Ohio’s charter (community) schools are held to the same level of accountability as are traditional public schools.” An article appearing on the website for the [University of Connecticut](#) reported the conclusions of a professor who found, “the phenomenal growth of charter schools nationwide has been aided by a canny legal strategy in which the schools claim to be public for the purpose of taking in tax dollars but private for the purpose of evading government oversight.” The article noted, for instance, “While public schools must provide due process to students when making decisions about suspensions or expulsions, most states exempt charter schools from school district discipline policies.” Another example of how charter schools evade public scrutiny: [A recent law passed in North Carolina](#), supported by charter schools lobbyists, “allows private, for-profit charter school management companies to keep their employees’ salaries secret, even though they are paid with public funds.” Another example: When a [Hartford, CT](#) charter management group was recently rocked by scandals involving its leadership, the firm responded to media enquiries by simply closing its books. Another way charter schools organizations evade public scrutiny is by simply rebranding its services under another corporate name, as the online charter company [K12, Inc.](#) recently did with one of its product groups. The culprits behind all this lack of transparency are, of course, public officials, many of whom – fiercely urged on by powerful charter schools lobbying and public relations efforts – actively support charter schools. As Rutgers University professor [Bruce Baker](#) recently wrote on his personal blog, School Finance 101, “In theory, the accountability and efficiency advantage of charter schooling is driven by the market for choice of one school over another. [Increasingly, state education agencies have moved from being impartial technical assistance agencies and accountability reporting agencies to strongly promoting the charter sector](#). This advocacy behavior corrupts the state agency role and creates what economists refer to as an ‘asymmetry of information’ – in the extreme case a ‘market for lemons.’” For ‘The Kids’? Faced with the expanding number of charter schools scandals (keep in mind, the above examples are just a sample of what’s been reported just in the past two months), some government officials are beginning to wake up and act. As [Education Week](#) recently reported, “Charter school authorizing, caps, and performance-based closures are among six policy areas getting growing attention in state charter school laws, according to a [policy brief released by the Education Commission of the States](#) this month.” One such measure got the attention of [Diane Ravitch](#) who noted on her blog, “The Massachusetts State Senate voted 26-13 not to increase the number of charter schools in the state. A similar bill cleared the House by a vote of 114-35 in May.” So how do charter schools proponents respond to this kind of legislation? By fighting it tooth and nail. As edu-blogger [Jennifer Berkshire](#) reported on her Edushyster blog, during negotiations on the bill, the positions of the Massachusetts charter lobby were, “any compromise was completely unacceptable.” And the decision was immediately made a matter of rhetorical overkill by Republican gubernatorial candidate Charles Baker, who according to Ravitch, “issued a statement suggesting the Senate ‘bowed to political pressure and handed urban families stuck in struggling schools a massive defeat by shutting down access to high performing schools.’” [Other charter school proponents](#) responded by comparing anyone wanting to put the brakes on charter school expansions to “George Wallace” declaring “segregation now,

segregation tomorrow, segregation forever.” Really? Indeed, when charter proponents aren’t [engaged in a clever PR campaign](#), they resort to [demagoguery](#), accusing any and all detractors of charter schools of being engaged in “politics.” And they say they do this “for the kids”? Source: <http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/charter-schools-dont-need-an-ad-campaign-they-need-regulation/>

Dept. of Corrections to shut down Camp Summit Boot Camp in LaPorte By: NewsCenter 16 [Email](#) Posted: Fri 5:45 PM, Aug 29, 2014 By: NewsCenter 16 [Email Home](#) / [Headlines List](#) / Article From the Indiana Department of Corrections Due to the continuous decline in the Indiana Department of Correction’s (IDOC) youth population, the IDOC is announcing plans to close the Camp Summit Boot Camp in LaPorte, IN. The 72 youth currently housed at Camp Summit will be transitioned to community-based programs or transferred to other IDOC juvenile facilities before the facility officially closes on or about October 1, 2014. Those who are not scheduled for release before then will be moved to either the Logansport or Pendleton Juvenile Correctional Facilities, where there is ample bed capacity available. To continue the boot camp model, Pendleton Juvenile plans to expand the facility’s current Future Soldiers Program, a paramilitary program that prepares youth as potential military recruits by teaching good citizenship, leadership, self-reliance and responsibility. Since 2009, when the IDOC Division of Youth Services (DYS) was created, DHS has utilized national best practices to improve treatment and services to the youth in our care. The agency has undertaken major efforts to reduce the length of stay of youth in secure facilities and to assign youth to the least restrictive setting based on their individual needs and risks. This has not only resulted in the dramatic reduction of the number of youth being held in Indiana’s juvenile correctional facilities, from more than 1,200 youth in 2007 to just over 400 today, but has also allowed that only those youth who pose the greatest public safety risk are being committed to a juvenile correctional facility. “Due to efforts of our youth services staff, at-risk youth are spending less time in prison and are returning to community programs as quickly as possible to reunite them with their families and provide them with the support they need to be responsible citizens. This move will enable our youth services staff to better serve the youth in our care, while making more efficient use of taxpayer dollars,” said Commissioner Bruce Lemmon. Approximately 50 Camp Summit employees will have the opportunity to transfer to other facilities or apply for vacant positions throughout the Department following the facility’s closure. The IDOC is working closely with the State Personnel Department to find placement options and minimize the impact on staff. “Our goal is continued State employment for every affected worker,” assured Commissioner Lemmon. About Camp Summit Camp Summit Boot Camp was established in 1995 and is situated on 60 acres in Northern LaPorte County between LaPorte and Michigan City. Camp Summit is Indiana’s only Para-military style boot camp which blends military components with a programs approach that addresses the needs of adolescents and affords the best possible environment for change and growth. Pelath: Camp Summit about to be sacrificed to Pence administration’s surplus worship Indiana House Democratic Leader Scott Pelath from Michigan City today issued the following statement upon receiving word that Gov. Mike Pence and the state Department of Corrections (DOC) intend to close the Camp Summit boot camp in LaPorte County: “It has come to our attention that the governor and his administration will announce in the next few days their intentions to close Camp Summit for budgetary reasons. In other words, they want to eliminate 70 LaPorte County jobs in the service of their increasingly bloated budget surplus. “If they follow through on this threat, it marks the latest indication that people and jobs don’t matter as much as politically crafted financial statements. “This decision would be particularly crazy because the state is shuttering a program that has a demonstrated impact in turning around the lives of troubled youths. At any time at Camp Summit, close to 100 youths across Indiana have the chance to resume their education, receive counseling, and gain the skills that will enable them to return to society and care for themselves and others. “But that apparently means nothing to an administration that has no problems with shuttling those youths to other locations around the state, and telling the dedicated staff at Camp Summit that they can either uproot their families or find other jobs. It also will wreak havoc on federal guidelines covering staffing at correctional facilities, leading to less rehabilitation and more wayward lives. “They only care about one thing: \$2 billion in the bank. The havoc they wreak on schools, kids, and our health to get to that figure seemingly means little to them.” Camp Summit, established in 1995, is Indiana’s only para-military style boot camp. The five-and-a-half month program is designed for juvenile males (average age 16.7 years) from throughout Indiana who have been adjudicated delinquent by Indiana juvenile courts. The medium-security facility has a fully accredited high school and a GED program for some students who are 16 years of age or older. Programs include individual, group and family counseling, as well as substance abuse counseling and classes in parenting and anger management. Attached below is a copy of the letter that Leader Pelath sent to Indiana Gov. Mike Pence regarding the closure of Camp Summit Dear Governor Pence: It has come to my attention that your office and the Department of Corrections intend to close the Camp Summit Juvenile Correctional Facility in La Porte County. This is unacceptable. Camp Summit currently serves as the state’s only alternative form of juvenile rehabilitation. It provides an environment for at-risk youth to flourish in a structured, para-military environment. As a fully accredited high school, the facility offers students an opportunity to receive their diploma. When the students re-enter their communities, the facility works to ensure they have an opportunity to be productive citizens. But when Camp Summit closes, this positive benefit will end. The juvenile population currently housed at Camp Summit will be shifted to the Pendleton Juvenile Correctional Facility, and there will be no staffing increases to match the influx of new juvenile offenders. The increased staffing ratios will harm, not help, at-risk youth. I can only assume the State Budget Agency and Office of Management and Budget claim that a budget shortfall has involuntarily forced their hand. On the contrary, we have a sizable surplus that has been the subject of boastful press releases from state leaders. The infinitesimal savings from the closure serve no grand purpose. There is, however, a real human cost. Seventy La Porte County staff members and their families will be thrown into economic turmoil. The public was not consulted. I was not consulted. Camp Summit should remain open. It should continue to provide opportunities for the youth who made a mistake and simply need a second chance. Sincerely, Scott D. Pelath, House Democratic Leader cc: Commissioner Bruce Lemmon, Senator Karen Tallian, Senator Jim Arnold, Representative Tom Dermody Source: <http://www.wndu.com/home/headlines/Dept-of-Corrections-to-shut-down-Camp-Summit-Boot-Camp-in-LaPorte-273240961.html>

State at fault in fatal group home fire Judge rules New York is liable for death of woman in Wells blaze Rick Karli, Times Union By Rick Karlin Published 9:56 pm, Friday, August 22, 2014 0 [Larger](#) | [Smaller](#) [Printable Version](#) [Email This](#) Georgia (default) Verdana Times New Roman Arial [Font](#) [Latest News](#) [Audit: Schenectady schools dipped deeply into surplus Gloversville shelter makes plans for 'Woofstock' 2 are injured in 4-car crash Joseph E. Persico, acclaimed historian and biographer, dies at 84](#) Page 1 of 1 Albany A state Court of Claims judge has found New York state to be “100 percent liable” in the March 2009 death of a developmentally disabled woman who perished in a fire that tore through her state-run group home in the Adirondack community of Wells. Judge [Diane Fitzpatrick](#) cited a variety of problems, including delays in contacting firefighters and the failure of the two staffers on duty to immediately evacuate [Gloria Bonilla](#) from the [Riverview center](#). The facility was operated by the [Office for People](#) with Developmental Disabilities. Bonilla, 44, was one of the four disabled residents who died in the fire. “She lacked preservation skills,” said attorney [Evan Foulke](#) of Goshen, who is representing Bonilla’s family. “She was entitled to be protected from any form of danger.” The precise amount of damages is unclear, although it could be in the millions of dollars, Foulke said. Following the fire, investigations by the state as well as a Hamilton County grand jury found a number of oversights and lapses in safety procedures that contributed to the loss of life, such as a lack of realistic fire drills and the state’s failure to enforce a smoking ban, which likely led to the blaze in the first place. Bonilla, who could not express herself verbally and was unresponsive to fire alarms, endured a particularly gruesome fate, according to court filings. Those documents reiterated earlier reports that workers initially moved her to the house’s “mud room” and tried to extinguish the fire rather than immediately evacuate her. She was found alive but badly burned more than two hours later and died en route to the hospital. Other lapses cited in the court papers was the practice of workers at the center calling the alarm company rather than the local fire department right away. In this case, an assistant fire chief lived across the street, but he didn’t learn of the blaze until three minutes after the call had first gone out to the alarm company. Nine residents lived in the facility and two aides were working when the fire broke out at around 5:30 a.m. Foulke said the state is appealing the ruling, which could take nine months or more. After the tragedy, OPWDD toughened its fire drill and other safety requirements. Bonilla belonged to the “Willowbrook class,” people who had earlier lived in the former [Willowbrook State School on Staten Island](#). After media exposes on bad conditions, Willowbrook was closed in 1987. People who resided there are afforded special oversight and protections, such as close monitoring of their care. rkarlin@timesunion.com • 518-454-5758 • @RickKarlinTU Source: <http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/State-at-fault-in-fatal-group-home-fire-5707020.php>

Mercury News editorial: California over-drugs --and fails --foster youth Mercury News Editorial Posted: 08/22/2014 05:19:15 PM PDT [4 Comments](#) Updated: 08/24/2014 07:31:53 AM PDT Related Stories Aug 28: [Mercury News editorial: Sen. Lieu to the rescue of overdugged foster kids](#) Aug 27: [Medical regulators to investigate risky psych drug prescribing to California foster youth](#) Aug 26: [Lawmakers call for end to reckless prescribing of psych meds to California foster kids](#) Aug 23: [Drugging our kids: Children in California's foster care system are prescribed risky medications](#) Aug 15: [Live Chat: Drugging our kids, August 26 at noon PT](#) Will Lightbourne, head of California’s Department of Social Services, says there’s no simple way to end the pattern of thousands of

foster children spending much of their youth drugged into malleability -- the horror eloquently revealed by reporter Karen de Sá on Sunday's Page One. He says it has to be part of the holistic rethinking of the entire foster care system that's under way, giving doctors better options than prescribing psychotropic drug upon psychotropic drug to control children who act out. Really? Really? If this isn't a crisis, then what is? The abusive use of powerful medications on kids with formative brains cries out for action. Each child who grows up scarred by this is a human tragedy and, in many cases, a lifetime burden on society. Joymara Coleman, a 24-year-old Cal State East Bay student, displays two of the psychotropic medications she was prescribed while in foster care. She no longer takes Abilify or Trazodone, but keeps them in her apartment as a reminder of what she has overcome. (Dai Sugano, Bay Area News Group) Yes, the whole foster care system needs rebuilding, and yes, that could reduce the incentive to drug kids to alter behavior. But we can't write off the children in the system now. That's like declining to treat a cancer because the cure hasn't been found. It's time to act. There are things the state can do now to at least begin to control the damage to children's minds and physical health. Foster children are the most vulnerable of California's young. They are in state custody as a last resort because going back to their families is impossible. Thousands of them are given powerful psychotropic medications -- often two or four or more at a time, prescribed to deal with behavior and not to treat the mental illnesses for which the FDA has approved them. They can lead to lifetime health problems, such as obesity. De Sá relates story after story of young people who experienced over-medicating in foster care. One, Rochelle Trochtenberg, as a teen-ager was diagnosed, so to speak, with a laundry list of mental illnesses including bipolar and post-traumatic stress disorders. When she turned 18 and left the system to live on the streets -- don't get us started on that aspect of foster care -- she was on 10 medications. When she finally got real help, she came off drugs entirely and how is working on a master's degree. Anecdotes do not prove a problem; the data does that. But it's important to look at individuals' stories to understand why waiting for global solutions to the foster care system is not tenable. De Sá found 12.2 percent of California foster children who received a psychiatric drug last year were taking multiple drugs at the same time. System insiders say it's often in doses never determined to be safe for children, whose brains are still developing. How is this even legal? And how hard can it be to limit? There are simple rules that could help. As just one example, California appears to have cut the use of antipsychotic drugs in children under 5 a few years ago when it added an additional layer of documentation required of doctors. The Department of Health Care Services is looking at requiring the same for teen-agers. Why not immediately? Three years ago the federal government identified overuse of psychotropics on foster children as a national problem and ordered states to come up with plans to control it. The committee California set up has moved at a snail's pace, unable to get access to prescribing information, among other issues. Members are frustrated. They don't expect to finish their work until at least 2016. Frustration is no surprise. It took this newspaper nine months to get the data for these articles, and it's required by law to be public as long as identities are concealed. Lightbourne, who previously ran Santa Clara County's social services, might be able to pull off a holistic remake of the foster care system. We hope he does. But massive drugging of California's foster children is not a problem that can wait. The state needs to act now. Source:

http://www.mercurynews.com/opinion/ci_26389685/mercury-news-editorial-california-over-drugs-and-fails?source=rss

Drugging our kids: Children in California's foster care system are prescribed risky medications. By Karen de Sá, Bay Area News Group, kdesa@mercurynews.com Posted: 08/23/14, 7:40 PM PDT | Updated: 6 days ago # [Comments](#) For more coverage, visit <http://webspecial.mercurynews.com/druggedkids/>. They are wrenched from abusive homes, uprooted again and again, often with their life's belongings stuffed into a trash bag. Abandoned and alone, they are among California's most powerless children. But instead of providing a stable home and caring family, the state's foster care system gives them a pill. With alarming frequency, foster and health care providers are turning to a risky but convenient remedy to control the behavior of thousands of troubled kids: numbing them with psychiatric drugs that are untested on and often not approved for children. An investigation by this newspaper found that nearly 1 out of every 4 adolescents in California's foster care system is receiving these drugs — 3 times the rate for all adolescents nationwide. Over the last decade, almost 15 percent of the state's foster children of all ages were prescribed the medications, known as psychotropics, part of a national treatment trend that is only beginning to receive broad scrutiny. "We're experimenting on our children," said Los Angeles County Judge Michael Nash, who presides over the nation's largest juvenile court. A year of interviews with foster youth, caregivers, doctors, researchers and legal advocates uncovered how the largest foster care system in the U.S. has grown dependent on quick-fix, taxpayer-funded, big-profit pharmaceuticals — and how the state has done little to stop it. "To be prescribing these medications so extensively and so, I think, thoughtlessly, with so little evidence supporting their use, it's just malpractice," said George Stewart, a Berkeley child psychiatrist who has treated the neediest foster children in the Bay Area for the past four decades. "It really is drugging them." The state official who oversees foster care, Department of Social Services Director Will Lightbourne, concedes drugs are overused, but insists his department is wrapping its arms around the problem: "There's a lot of work to be done here to make sure we do things right." No one doubts that foster children generally have greater mental health needs because of the trauma they have suffered, and the temptation for caregivers to fulfill those needs with drugs can be strong. In the short term, psychotropics can calm volatile moods and make aggressive children more docile. But there is substantial evidence of many of the drugs' dramatic side effects: rapid-onset obesity, diabetes and a lethargy so profound that foster kids describe dozing through school and much of their young lives. Long-term effects, particularly on children, have received little study, but for some psychotropics there is evidence of persistent tics, increased risk of suicide, even brain shrinkage. Sade Daniels, of Hayward, became so overweight in her teens, that at age 26 her bathroom mirror still taunts and embarrasses her. Mark Estrada, a 21-year-old from Anaheim, said he felt too "zoned out" to focus on high school and so groggy he was cut from his varsity basketball team. And Rochelle Trochtenberg, now 31 and living in Eureka, still struggles to bring a glass to her lips because her hands are so shaky from the years she spent on a shifting mix of lithium, Depakote, Zyprexa, Haldol and Prozac, among others. When people ask, she tries to cover it up with remarks about a possible hereditary condition. The truth is too painful to explain, she said. "I don't want to tell people I have a tremor because I was drugged for my whole adolescence." Questionable prescribing revealed Despite the concerns, state officials have been slow to even reveal foster care prescribing patterns in California. This newspaper and its lawyers spent nine months negotiating with the Department of Health Care Services for data that is public under state and federal law, as long as individuals cannot be identified. The 10 years of data begins in 2004 and — even though the state continues to resist many of this newspaper's requests — provides the most comprehensive look yet at psychotropic medication use on California's foster kids. The newspaper also interviewed more than 175 people, including more than 30 current and former foster youth throughout the state. The findings, which will be examined here and in future stories, include:

- Growing use of antipsychotics to treat bad behavior: Of the tens of thousands of foster children placed on psychotropic drugs over the past 10 years, nearly 60 percent were prescribed an antipsychotic, the class of psychotropic medications with the highest risks. That figure stunned experts in the field and alarmed officials who oversee the state's foster care system. The Food and Drug Administration authorizes antipsychotics for children only in cases of severe mental illness, but evidence suggests doctors often prescribe them to California foster children for behavior problems — a legal but controversial practice that critics say should be limited.
- Multiple psych meds common but dangerous: In many cases, doctors piled on prescriptions: 12.2 percent of California foster children who received a psych drug in 2013 were prescribed two, three, four or more psychotropic medications at a time — up from 10.1 percent in 2004. These drug combinations often fall in uncharted medical territory, with no scientific evidence that young brains aren't being harmed. • Psych meds the norm in group homes for troubled kids: More than half of the foster kids who live in California's residential group homes — and as many as 100 percent in some counties with very small numbers in group homes — are authorized by juvenile courts to receive psychotropic drugs. These homes shelter some of the most troubled foster kids, about 3,800 annually, many of whom the system has been unable to place with families. Health care professionals say children are being medicated to sleep to keep them manageable. In these group homes, foster children who refuse medications are often punished, losing basic privileges such as visiting siblings or simply going outdoors.
- Very young kids also medicated: Hundreds of foster children 5 and younger have been prescribed psychotropics, although federal health officials say the drugs are not safe for the very young and other states actively discourage the practice. In California in the last 10 years, an average of at least 275 of these very young children each year have been prescribed psych medications.
- High cost to kids, and taxpayers: California spends more on psych drugs for foster children than on any other kind of medication. This newspaper analyzed Medi-Cal spending on the 10 most costly groups of drugs for foster kids over the last decade. The state shelled out more than \$226 million on psych meds for foster children — an astounding 72 percent of the total.
- Illegal marketing drives sales: Company documents show how drug manufacturers misrepresented scientific evidence to maximize the national market for the antipsychotics that are the top five such drugs prescribed to California foster children. The companies eventually agreed to \$4.6 billion in settlements with federal prosecutors. Lawsuits revealed that some of the companies' sales reps pitched doctors to broaden the use of their drugs among children while downplaying side effects, such as massive weight gain and breast growth in boys. Eli Lilly, for example, advised its sales force: "The competition wins if we are distracted into talking about diabetes."
- State is slow to act: California has done little to address psychotropic drug use among foster children. Three years ago, the federal government called on states to develop plans to monitor the use of psychotropic medications prescribed to foster youth.

Many states, including Illinois, Texas and New York, have formal plans. Yet California, with more than 60,000 foster children, has a target date for its policy of no sooner than 2016. State says it's hard at work Officials with the Department of Social Services say they are working hard on improvements. Two years ago, they assembled statewide experts to act on the federal mandate, and they say that group is making good progress. Lightbourne said the real story behind the numbers is more positive: As the state's foster care population plunged in the past 10 years — part of a national trend to keep families intact — so has the total number of foster youth prescribed psych medications, dropping by thousands of kids. In a sharp defense of his department's oversight, Lightbourne insisted those numbers represent progress, even though the percentage of foster children on psych meds has remained roughly the same — ranging from 14 to 16 percent annually — for the past decade. "Clearly there are some situations in which psychotropic prescriptions may be appropriate," Lightbourne said. "We have to know that something is being done because it's absolutely necessary, not because it's convenient — that it's not simply behavior management. "There are things that are much better handled through therapies," he said. "Psychotropics should be the end, not the start." Many on the front lines, however, defend the prescribing, saying the risks are weighed against the benefits and that there are often no alternatives to treating kids with such deep emotional scars. Foster parents and group home directors tend to cast out kids with the most anti-social behaviors, and no one wants them to end up in juvenile halls, psych wards or treatment facilities. "The goal is to deinstitutionalize the child so he can live safely in the community," said therapist Randall Ramirez, director of behavioral health for San Jose-based residential treatment provider Unity Care Group. "If one of the drawbacks is they have to be medicated because we don't want to raise kids in orphanages, that's the trade-off." To be sure, California is not alone in its questionably high prescribing rates. Growing evidence has revealed alarming rates of psychotropic medication use on foster youth across the country, and particularly antipsychotics. The numbers are difficult to compare from state to state because of differences in methodology, but one recent survey found that in 2009, some states, including Texas, Colorado and Missouri, prescribed antipsychotics at an even higher rate than California. Overuse concerns date back decades The state has known about the overuse of psychotropic medication on foster children for years. Legislators first tried in 1999 to address the concerns, passing a law that made California the only state requiring juvenile courts to approve all psych med prescriptions, with reviews every 180 days. But this newspaper's analysis of a decade of prescribing data shows the court oversight has done nothing on a statewide level to lower prescribing rates. A UCLA study in 1998, cited in the legislation, found that 13 percent of school-age foster children in Los Angeles were receiving psychotropic medications. While the state failed to provide data that would allow an updated look at Los Angeles school kids, this newspaper's study revealed high prescribing rates have persisted statewide for all foster kids and all age groups. "I don't think there's one substantive thing that we can point to that has ensured that foster children in California today are only receiving psychotropic medications appropriately," said Bill Grimm, an attorney with the Oakland-based National Center for Youth Law. Grimm's organization is a central part of the state effort — along with public health nurses, state pharmacists and child welfare directors — to comply with the federal mandate to better monitor psychotropic medications. But he is frustrated that the group has been meeting for two years without producing any reports or policy recommendations, and said it has been hamstrung in part by the state's refusal to provide good data on prescribing patterns. Doctors' orders rarely questioned A foster child's path to psych medication can begin innocently enough — for example, when a child can't sit still in class and receives an attention-deficit diagnosis and a prescription for stimulants. But like so many other painful experiences in these children's lives, the drugs are often ramped up during a crisis. Sometimes, kids end up in the hospital after harming themselves or threatening suicide. Often, though, the prescriptions for stronger drugs come after a child lashes out. In dozens of interviews with this newspaper, foster youth freely recounted their rash behavior, which they attributed to anger and frustration: They broke furniture, punched people or trashed their rooms. Sade Daniels, the Hayward resident, said she threw a chair at a teacher who had deeply humiliated her — and betrayed her confidence — by telling the class she was in foster care. Mark Estrada, the former Orange County foster youth, depressed and defiant in his late teens after being separated from his siblings, said he had his behavior subdued by the antipsychotic Seroquel, which is approved only for manic episodes associated with bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. "They'd make me take it anytime I'd have a tantrum or felt rebellious," Estrada said. "I felt like I was being controlled. They gave it to me in the morning, and I'd fall asleep all day." A juvenile court authorizes each prescription, but the forms the courts use often lack critical details and a doctor's expertise is rarely questioned. Nash, the Los Angeles judge, acknowledges the resulting challenges — even in Los Angeles, where mental health experts now review all applications for prescriptions and in 2013 officials created protocols to curb prescribing of multiple psych meds. "The last time I looked around, there aren't too many psychiatrists or psychologists on the bench," the judge said. "So how in the heck are we able to make good decisions about these meds?" How overprescribing happens The progression from medication to overmedication is also surprisingly routine, said child psychiatrist Tony Stanton. At first, psych medications can stabilize moods and dangerous behaviors. Yet once the immediate crisis is over, foster children often remain on a high-dose pharmaceutical course that future doctors are reluctant to reverse. The drugs "might stun them for a while," said Stanton, who treated Bay Area foster children for 24 years. "But after two or three weeks they'd stop working." Then, if the child seems depressed, they add an antidepressant. "And when that got worse, they'd change the diagnosis — they'd say it's actually bipolar," Stanton said. "Then, if they said they heard a voice telling them they were bad or something, then they'd say: 'Oh, they're psychotic.' Then an antipsychotic would be added." Aggressive behavior? A second antipsychotic may get added to the mix. "Usually in my report I'd say, if in fact any of this had been successful, the child should not be in our care," said Stanton, whose San Leandro group home typically received the most difficult-to-place foster children. "So I think we can safely say this does not work." Stanton's reports in recently published articles summing up his work with 450 children ages 5 through 13 are startling: Most children arrived at residential homes run by the Seneca Center for Children and Families on at least four or five — and as many as eight or nine — different psychotropic medications. One 9-year-old shuffled into a Seneca home on a medication dose that was 10 times the amount recommended for a psychotic adult. "It's a story I've gotten used to," said Robin Randall, medical director of San Francisco's Edgewood Center for Children and Families, which also offers residential treatment programs for troubled foster youth. "I used to say when I saw kids walk in on eight or nine different medications that I was shocked and appalled — now I'm just appalled." Randall said children "stay on the meds for reasons that are not necessarily heinous. It's not that doctors want to get kids on a ton of meds. They're putting out fires, and not allowed the time. The system is set up in a way that everyone is adding, adding, adding, and doesn't allow for a space to safely take them off." "They'd make me take it anytime I'd have a tantrum or felt rebellious," said Estrada. "I felt like I was being controlled. They gave it to me in the morning and I'd fall asleep all day." A juvenile court authorizes each prescription, but the forms the courts use often lack critical details and a doctor's expertise is rarely questioned. Nash, the Los Angeles judge, acknowledges the limitations — even in Los Angeles, where mental health experts now review all applications for prescriptions and in 2013 officials created protocols to better monitor psych meds. "The last time I looked around there aren't too many psychiatrists or psychologists on the bench," the judge said. "So how in the heck are we able to make good decisions about these meds?" "I wanted to take the pill" When a psychiatrist told Joymara Coleman that medication could help her enjoy life more, "it sounded like magic to me at first, honestly." She had been searching for some peace after a decade in and out of foster care in Alameda County. "It was pretty clear that I was depressed because of all the things that I went through," said Coleman, now 24 and a senior studying sociology at Cal State East Bay. "I was in the foster care system with folks who weren't very loving. I had a lot of things I needed to heal from — from losing my mom, losing my siblings, from witnessing my mom smoking crack. I was depressed because my father was incarcerated." Coleman had seen her roommate in a home for troubled teens wet the bed while on the medications, and she surely didn't want that. "But after experiencing so much tragedy and so much confusion and chaos in my life, when the psychiatrist told me that it would make me happy, I wanted to take the pill." She was 17 when a doctor prescribed the antidepressant Prozac for depression and panic attacks, but the list of medications grew to a series of overlapping trials of psych meds, according to court records she shared with a reporter: There were antipsychotics Risperdal and Abilify and mood stabilizers such as Depakote and lithium. Court files show that when Coleman was 18, she "was put on 300 mg of lithium to help her control her anger; however, it was stopped after client felt dizzy and nauseous." Psychiatrists who reviewed that diagnosis for this newspaper called it disturbing that lithium, a powerful treatment for bipolar disorder, would be prescribed for anger management. The cocktail of drugs left her exhausted and "spaced out," dulling her spunky personality. "When I was on the medication I just didn't act like Joy," she said. She said her nurse practitioner seemed to really care about her. But when the self-conscious teen complained about weight gain — she added 35 pounds to her 4-foot-8-inch frame — the nurse simply encouraged her to avoid sugary drinks. "They were really adamant," Coleman said of her case workers' insistence that she take medications. "Initially I bought into it, that I needed this because these are professionals — these are all white professionals, with degrees and they're older and they're telling me that something's wrong with me, and they just know this." "It's the behaviors they want treated" From all quarters, the pressure in favor of the drugs can be intense. Estrada recalls the consequences at his group home when he refused to take his Seroquel: He couldn't go on field trips, play video games, watch TV or go outside. But the pressure starts elsewhere, said longtime public health nurse Carol Brown, with the caregivers struggling to control troubled kids. Many of those caregivers are loving and committed, genuinely trying to do the right thing; others are simply overwhelmed. "Very often, there's pressure on the

doctors from the foster parents and the group homes to provide medication to deal with the behaviors that the foster youth are exhibiting,” Brown said. “The foster parents won’t take the kids with the behaviors, and it’s the behaviors they want treated.” Child psychiatrist Edgardo Tolentino, a doctor with Pathways to Wellness, a medication clinic that serves foster children in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, conceded he has felt that same pressure from caregivers. “The expectation is that they’ll be given some type of medication,” he said. “If they are already on medications, the only thing I can do is continue them.” Psych meds indispensable for some kids Pressure or no, many who are part of the system — while insisting they avoid overmedicating kids — say some use of drugs is essential. “I wouldn’t want people to think as caregivers we are medicating them so they are comatose, or putting them to sleep so we don’t have to deal with them,” said Barbara Leiner, who fostered more than 300 children in Los Angeles County over 24 years and runs online training forums for foster parents. On the contrary, she said, in her experience medications benefited a significant number of her children. “They’re better in control of their behaviors. When they’re not on psychotropic drugs, they have a tough time in school, the other kids don’t like them, they’re out of control.” Psychiatrists concerned about overprescribing acknowledge there are legitimate reasons for some children to take psychotropic medications, and even the riskiest drugs can be lifesaving for the small sliver of kids with psychoses that are clearly diagnosed. Studies show that’s no more than 1 to 2 percent of children, depending on the illness. Marjorie, an Oakland special-education teacher who uses only her first name, adopted two of her students from the foster care system and said antipsychotics have been indispensable in their care. The two boys, Jakeel, 18, and Smith, 11, take one antipsychotic medication daily to treat symptoms of severe autism. Off the meds, Jakeel tried to leap out of a moving car because he didn’t get a toy he wanted. Smith killed a family pet and once tried to climb out a third-story window. “He talks about the ants in his head without the Abilify,” said Marjorie, who approaches her mothering with a cheerful practicality. “So I say, ‘OK, we don’t want ants in your head!’” Still, when her sons first came to live with her, Marjorie quickly discovered they were on more medications while they were in foster care than she felt were necessary. So she lowered the dosages and limited the multiple antipsychotics to just one. That kind of attention can be lacking in the foster care system, and that adds another layer of concern for often-displaced kids on such powerful drugs. More than 60 percent of the children who have been in foster care at least two years have moved two or more times in the system. So even their prescribers — who may be private practitioners or work at public clinics — often know little about them or their family histories when they meet during office visits. Nash recently reviewed 150 requests for medication in the Los Angeles juvenile court and said he found cases in which doctors prescribed with no medical records or drug history. The dangers are real. For example, some antidepressants carry a “black box label” proclaiming a high suicide risk for young patients. The FDA advises that children be closely monitored for worsening depression and sleeplessness. Yet for foster kids without parents, the medications are often prescribed even when a watchful eye is absent, said attorney Jennifer Rodriguez, a former foster youth who is now executive director of the San Francisco-based Youth Law Center. “As a parent, when your child goes on something that’s dangerous, the most dangerous drugs that are out there,” she said, “your doctor is relying on you — someone who knows that child, who watches over time.” ‘Treatment for a broken heart’ Many of the foster youth interviewed for this story shared another theme: There was no need for medication when they got the emotional support they needed all along. Often it was an adult who vowed to stick by them no matter what — a long-lost relative, a teacher, a volunteer advocate, an exceptionally devoted nurse, or the foster parent who seemed to see through the raucous behaviors to the kid inside. Those key relationships — not medications — are what most helped them eventually calm down and start to feel better, the youth said. “I cannot count the number of times I have seen children on multiple medications who are really suffering from a broken heart,” said Menlo Park child psychiatrist David Arredondo, who has worked with foster youth for 30 years. “And the treatment for a broken heart is not another medication.” Today, Rochelle Trochtenberg doesn’t take a single psychotropic medication. She works with troubled youth in Humboldt County and is working on a master’s degree in social work. But in foster care in Los Angeles, she was diagnosed with a host of mental illnesses, including bipolar, schizoaffective and post-traumatic stress disorders, major depression, bulimia and generalized anxiety. “They attach all these labels to you in foster care,” she said, “but the bottom line is I come from a home where physical and sexual abuse were my daily norm, where I lived in fear every day, where I felt responsible to protect my younger sister from the abuse.” Trochtenberg knew she needed help with depression at age 13, when she was removed from her family home in Los Angeles. After suffering years of physical and sexual abuse that drove her to attempt suicide in the seventh grade, she was grateful when social workers rescued her. Yet while the state freed her from one type of abuse, it delivered her into a life of so many temporary homes and psych meds that she lost count. When she aged out of foster care with a list of 10 medications and nowhere to stay, she lived on the streets until a friend’s family took her in. Then she met Nicoli Tucker, a therapist who helped her see beyond her medicated self to a girl who had simply been failed by her family and by the foster care system. Tucker treated the troubled teen for six years. It took a year to build up trust, she said, but only a single counseling session to see that Trochtenberg had been horribly misdiagnosed. “My professional answer is I think that was overboard,” Tucker said of Trochtenberg’s drug regimen. “My personal answer is: Big Pharma and Wall Street. There’s big money in keeping these kids drugged, and I think it’s a travesty.” Daniels also looks back on her medication history as a terrible miscalculation. In a six-week span when she was 14, social workers moved her to three different group homes in Alameda County, where she spent much of the time worrying about her stuff being stolen. The antidepressants and antipsychotics used to subdue her during that time didn’t work for what was really hurting, she said. “When I look back as an adult at who I was when I was initially diagnosed and given the medication — I needed love,” Daniels said. “Nobody really sees that hurt girl, or the one who truly just wants her mom to get her act together and to get off drugs, or who wants a family, something stable. “The system relies heavily on medication to do a job that parents are supposed to do.” Source: <http://www.dailynews.com/health/20140823/children-in-californias-foster-care-system-are-prescribed-risky-medications#we-recommend>

Long Beach family told by county: Medicate foster kids or lose \$900 a month By [Phillip Zonkel](#), Long Beach Press Telegram Posted: 08/23/14, 7:56 PM PDT | Updated: 1 week ago [5 Comments](#) long beach >> Leslie May and her spouse, Anita, receive \$2,400 a month in county assistance for their three adopted foster children, but that money may be cut by \$900 if they refuse to medicate their children with psychotropic drugs. The potential cut would hit the Long Beach couple hard. Leslie, 54, is a hospice nurse, but Anita, 52, has reduced her work hours as a licensed vocational nurse to less than part time so she can stay with the kids and home-school them. Anita’s cut in hours means the family income has dropped about 60 percent. Their children, ages 9, 10 and 13, have been diagnosed with various behavioral disorders, and the drugs are aimed at treating them, though May doesn’t like the idea of putting the kids on drugs. She would prefer more emphasis on therapies dealing with attachment disorders. “You have these young brains not fully developed, and you’re giving them these drugs they may or may not need,” she said. “It’s horrible to put kids on drugs because of money.” The [Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services](#) could not be reached for comment. [A 10-month investigation by this news organization](#) has found that over the past decade nearly one of every four adolescents in California’s foster care system received prescribed drugs, or 3½ times the rate for all adolescents nationwide. May said the couple’s kids were on some medication for a 16-month trial period that ended about a year ago. When their son stopped taking the drugs, they noticed a stark difference. “It helped their lives and ours, but our son’s personality was blunted,” she said. “When he got off the meds, he was funny with a great sense of humor. We were missing out on that.” Mary Artino, now a hospice social worker, was a social worker for seven years with two Long Beach-based foster care agencies overseen by the county. She worked with children who experienced extreme violence in the home or whose mothers abused drugs and alcohol during pregnancy. Artino, who became frustrated with the system and quit her job in 2008, said the issue of overmedicating foster care children with drugs goes back almost 15 years. “I saw medications prescribed for a number of children, but there was very little information on how to prescribe medications for children with serious psychiatric and behavioral disturbances, who were in a constant state of rage from extreme trauma,” she said. “The county officials who oversaw these kids didn’t understand what was going on with these children. They couldn’t access tools or tools weren’t made available to them to understand the children,” she said. “Therapy takes a long time and is expensive for kids who have been through extreme trauma. The reaction was the child needs medication.” Some people, however, are advocating a long-term, holistic approach instead of drugs to helping foster care children cope with and heal from their trauma. [Brandon Gamble](#), an assistant professor of school psychology at Cal State Long Beach, said the community has to be a part of the solution. “We have to create a sense of community, encourage people to mentor foster care kids,” said Gamble, who worked with foster care youth while he was a school psychologist in the Long Beach Unified School District from 1998 to 2008. “We have to help foster youth bond with people. It will help them heal from their trauma and alleviate the need for so many medications.” Jim Schrage, executive director with the Long Beach-based [Families Uniting Families](#), said the foster care agency takes a team approach in trying to reunite kids with their birth families or adoption, collaborating with social workers, doctors and family members. Diet and self-care, including exercise and yoga, are also important. “Getting kids on a structured sleeping and eating habit can change things,” he said. “It’s so much more than get the kids some meds. We are emotionally invested. We want to see these kids succeed.” Contact Phillip Zonkel at 562-714-2098. Source: <http://www.presstelegram.com/general-news/20140823/long-beach-family-told-by-county-medicate-foster-kids-or-lose-900-a-month>

Los Angeles County caregivers working to get foster kids off psychiatric drugs By [Sandy Mazza](#), Daily Breeze Posted: 08/23/14, 7:37 PM PDT | Updated: 6 days ago [0 Comments](#) Psychiatric drugs like lithium, Depakote and Prozac remain a popular choice for care providers trying to calm angry, depressed or anxious children in the Los Angeles County foster care system, but the pills are losing fans amid concerns about side effects and long-term consequences. Still, in the South Bay and across the county and state, there isn't an immediate replacement for the quick, easy and cheap answers provided by psychotropic drugs, though efforts to develop more comprehensive therapeutical solutions are in the works. Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services prescribes such drugs to roughly one in five children who cycle through its group homes in San Pedro and Harbor City needing treatment for hyperactive behavior, thought disorders, depression and other psychiatric issues, said Frank Hunter, director of health services for the nonprofit corporation. Optimist works with teenagers on parole or in foster care. "Our kids come to us with a variety of behavior problems," Hunter said. "We have a lot of depression and adjustment disorder because of what's happened in the past. I see a value in psychotropic meds, and I do know that there's abuse and over-prescription in the private sector. "But what we're doing here is to socially correct things so that these kids can function in groups, therapy and group living situations." [A 10-month investigation by this news organization](#) has found that over the last decade nearly one of every four adolescents in California's foster care system received prescribed drugs, or 3½ times the rate for all adolescents nationwide. While children in the foster care system generally have a high rate of mental health problems, the side effects associated with psychotropics have caused alarm. Problems include obesity, diabetes, lethargy, persistent tics and increased depression. Though Hunter acknowledged that about 20 percent of children in Optimist facilities are given the drugs, he said that figure once was closer to 50 percent. "There's an awareness to try other things possible," Hunter said. "But if a kid really does have a clear ADHD diagnosis, I would honestly say that medications are helpful." Superior Court Judge Michael Nash, who has presided over Los Angeles County's Juvenile Court system since 1995, has worked for years to revolutionize the way medication is distributed to youths in the system. "We started looking at these medications eight to 10 years ago, and it's really been Judge Nash leading it," said Dr. Charles Sophy, medical director for the county Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). "In Los Angeles County, we have 30,000 to 35,000 kids under our watch at any given time. Of that, we have 5,000 to 6,000 on meds at any one point, which is really not a lot." Under Nash's leadership, the DCFS has implemented a psychotropic medication authorization process to ensure that children in the system are closely monitored, Sophy said. Past problems with children receiving multiple prescriptions from multiple doctors as they moved among different foster homes have been ameliorated in recent years, but Sophy said he still struggles to find enough funding to provide needed therapy for foster children. "I've been implementing more one-on-ones with a behavioralist," Sophy said. "With the high cost of what they charge, I have to take it out of county money but what's the point (of treating children with mental health concerns) if we don't treat what they have? "A lot of people don't take the time because they're not paid to do it, but somebody needs to take it apart to understand it and treat it. We need trauma-focused kinds of treatment specifically based on the needs of these kids." Peggy Stewart, a clinical social worker at Children's Hospital Los Angeles and an adjunct professor at USC, said the biggest problem she encounters is a lack of quality foster homes in the county. Often, foster parents seek drugs to treat a child with behavioral issues before they are adequately diagnosed, she said. "When a child has a mental health diagnosis, there's a bigger government benefit attached to it, so it's almost to their advantage to have a foster child diagnosed with some sort of mental disorder," Stewart said. "We see a move toward getting children diagnosed with a mental disorder even if they might just have anger issues or are acting out and could be treated with therapy. There's also a tendency to overmedicate because we have a lack of good programming where therapy can be the treatment modality." Source: <http://www.whittierdailynews.com/health/20140823/los-angeles-county-caregivers-working-to-get-foster-kids-off-psychiatric-drugs> (HEAL Note: One HEAL volunteer was prescribed Depakote for depression in the 1980s. Before taking Depakote, their IQ was over 135. While on Depakote, it went down to 80. While 80 is still in the "normal" range, every 10 points is an intelligence grade. These medications stupefy and do not heal.)

'They've Got Him in This Corrupted Environment': Mother of Missouri Teen Held in Illinois Foster Care Blasts Neighborhood as Unsafe Aug. 24, 2014 8:15am [Liz Klimas](#) 176 Shares Email this story to a friend With a juvenile court judge denying a motion that could have sent home the [Missouri teen being held in the Illinois foster care](#) system after his parent was accused of medical child abuse, his mother is now speaking out against the school and community where her son is currently residing. "He's basically in the ghetto. He's in [an] environment he's not used to. I didn't realize how bad it was," Michelle Rider, the mother of 16-year-old Isaiah Rider, told TheBlaze, explaining that in supervised visits with her son he told her he has been exposed to marijuana and was jokingly shown a gun by a peer he met while living in a Chicago suburb with a foster family for the last few months. "He reported all this information to me and his case worker who was there." Isaiah Rider and his mother Michelle Rider. (Image source: [Team Isaiah/Facebook](#)) City-Data.com, a website that tracks various metrics like crime statistics based on what's available from the public record, [lists Dolton, Illinois](#), which is south of Chicago and is where Isaiah's foster family lives, according to Isaiah's mother, as having "high" crime. Liberty, Missouri, where Michelle Rider lives, is [rated as having "low"](#) crime. Rider also pointed a finger at the school her son would attend if enrolled for the start of the fall semester. Image source: [vixla/Flickr](#) Thornridge High School, [according to Great Schools](#), a website that rates academic institutions, is [given a score of one out of 10](#) overall. Stanley High School in Kansas City, Missouri, the school Rider said her son would otherwise attend, on the [same rating scale](#) achieved an overall 8/10 score. "This has been going on for four months and I have not seen any ... there's not been any justice," Rider said of the situation, which began after she took her son to Lurie Children's Hospital in Chicago for surgery to remove tumors from his legs. "We've been waiting for them to do the right thing. It just seems like it's a very corrupt system." The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services told TheBlaze it could not comment on questions regarding the safety of foster families' neighborhoods or school conditions. When pressed with general questions about this topic, the spokeswoman said she was unable to comment because they were in relation to Isaiah's case. Isaiah, who has neurofibromatosis, and his mother visited multiple hospitals and doctors within the last year, looking for treatment for pain and uncontrollable tremors in a leg that he had partially amputated nearly two years ago. It was this hopping from hospital to hospital and other factors that led doctors at Lurie Children's to get state workers involved, accusing Rider of medical child abuse. The Chicago Tribune, earlier this summer, [obtained a medical report](#) that said Isaiah showed a "a clear pattern of patient improvement when the mother is not around, deterioration when mother is present and continued conflict regarding mother's insistence that only pharmacological means can be used to treat [the boy's] pain." "All attempts to ... have [the] mother voluntarily partner with us in [the boy's] care have been futile and met with resistance," the Tribune reported of one of the records. "In order to best develop a therapeutic medical plan for [the boy], we need to remove the mother from his care at the moment." Rider rejected at such accusations, saying she only wanted to get the right care for her son. Isaiah also [told TheBlaze in an earlier interview](#) that he doesn't understand why he was taken out of his mother's custody. Randy Kretchmar, Rider's attorney, argued in court last week that a federal law was violated in Isaiah's custody case, trying to convince the judge to grant a motion that would send Isaiah home. The Indian Child Welfare Act, which was [passed in the late 1970s](#), "establishes burdens of proof that are higher than those applied in non-Native cases" to remove custody. The judge did not grant Kretchmar's motion, the lawyer said, because ICWA, at the time, did not envision the complexity of procedures that now currently exist in the child welfare system to take temporary custody, the lawyer said. "What the judge decided with regard to ICWA is that procedural standards do not apply to the initial temporary custody hearing," which is where Kretchmar argued the violation had occurred. A group of people gathered outside of the juvenile courthouse on August 11 to encourage the judge and DCFS to agree to send Isaiah Rider home. (Image source: [Team Isaiah/Facebook](#)) While Kretchmar said he thinks this decision could be appealed, he is working on other angles for their next court date on Sept. 19, which will include several witnesses for Rider and Isaiah's case. Ahead of this most recent hearing though, Kretchmar filed an emergency motion to have Isaiah removed from his current placement with the foster family in Illinois. The crux of his argument, Kretchmar told TheBlaze, was that Isaiah's environment in Dolton was "worse than any conceivable danger even if you find state's allegations [against his mother] credible. Get him out of there, give him back to Michelle, get it over with." The judge denied this emergency motion, but agreed to grant a second motion, which was a cease and desist for any DCFS workers to use their position to interfere with Rider's due process rights. Kretchmar accused a case worker of trying to discourage Rider from opposing some of the state's case against her and of trying to obtain information about her own legal strategy. "He's attempting to demoralize her," Kretchmar said of the alleged actions by the case worker. "It's an abuse of that position." Michelle and her 16-year-old son, Isaiah, who was removed from her custody four months ago when she was accused of medical child abuse. (Image source: [Team Isaiah/Facebook](#)) Kretchmar and Rider also said that the Missouri Department of Social Services conducted their own investigation and background checks into Rider and her family. "They are not in agreement with any of this. They have written up [a] report, saying they recommend Isaiah be returned to me at home," Rider told TheBlaze. The Missouri department did not return TheBlaze's request for confirmation or comment regarding their own investigation. Next month, a judge will begin hearing the reports of witnesses brought in on behalf of Rider and a case made by Illinois DCFS. A date is already set for another hearing in October, Kretchmar said, because it will likely take that much time to continue going through all the information in court. A document obtained by TheBlaze has DCFS asking that Rider comply with a mental health assessment,

any therapy that might be recommended and a parenting assessment. The document ultimately states that DCFS's ultimate goal is for Isaiah to return home.

Source: <http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2014/08/24/theyve-got-him-in-this-corrupted-environment-mother-of-missouri-teen-held-in-illinois-foster-care-blasts-neighborhood-as-unsafe/>

Eight in Adoption Abuse Case Agree to \$17.5 Million Settlement With Foster Agencies By BENJAMIN WEISER AUG. 27, 2014 Inside [Continue reading the main story](#) [Continue reading the main story](#) [Continue reading the main story](#) [Continue reading the main story](#) Share This Page [email facebook twitter save more](#) [Continue reading the main story](#) [Continue reading the main story](#) Eight young adults with disabilities who were fraudulently adopted by a Queens woman and subjected to years of abuse have agreed to a \$17.5 million settlement of their lawsuit against three private New York foster care agencies that had placed them with the woman, a new court filing shows. The woman, Judith Leekin, 69, who adopted the children in the 1980s and '90s, was arrested in 2007 in Florida, where she had moved with them. She was later convicted of fraud and abuse charges and is serving a lengthy prison sentence. The case has long been seen as a horrific breakdown in the city's foster care system. The authorities said Ms. Leekin used false names to adopt 11 children — one disappeared while in her care and is presumed dead — and she collected \$1.68 million in subsidies from New York that were intended for their care but went to support her own lavish lifestyle. [Continue reading the main story](#) Related Coverage [10-Year Sentence in Scheme to Bilk Adoption System](#) JULY 16, 2008 [New York City Settles Suit by Abused Foster Children](#) DEC. 6, 2012 In December 2012, New York [agreed to pay \\$9.7 million](#) to settle its portion of the 2009 lawsuit, including claims by two of the children; they had been placed with Ms. Leekin through a city-run adoption unit. The city denied liability in the case. The combined settlements in the case now total just over \$27 million, including legal fees and costs. The children, most of whom are now in their 20s, had physical, emotional or developmental disabilities, including autism and blindness. In a January ruling that allowed the lawsuit against the private agencies to proceed, Judge Eric N. Vitaliano, of Federal District Court in Brooklyn, offered what he called "a glimpse of life in Leekin's house of horrors." "The story is undisputedly sad and tragic," the judge wrote, citing findings by Peg McCartt Hess, a former Columbia University social work professor who had been retained by the plaintiffs to review the cases. The judge said Ms. Leekin had routinely denied the children access to food and a toilet; handcuffed and restrained them for hours; trapped them in cribs that were held shut with boards and heavy objects; beat them with a belt, a nightstick and other objects; forced them to stand for hours, sometimes with their hands above their heads; failed to protect them from sexual abuse; and repeatedly threatened them with a gun or with being beaten to death. When they were removed from her care in 2007, only three could read (at a third-grade level), and six were declared either "totally incapacitated" or "vulnerable adults," the judge noted, citing Dr. Hess's findings. The latest settlement, detailed in the court filing on Monday, covers the eight children who were placed with Ms. Leekin by the private agencies. Judge Vitaliano must still approve the deal, which was reached in June with the assistance of a mediator, the filing said. A vast majority of the net proceeds, said Howard M. Talenfeld, a lawyer for the plaintiffs, will be paid through annuities or trusts "to ensure that these children will have the support and therapeutic services necessary to address the lifetime of challenges they face after surviving their appalling abuse by Judith Leekin." The private agencies that were defendants in the suit are HeartShare Human Services of New York, SCO Family of Services and the now-closed St. Joseph Services for Children and Families. The agencies denied liability. HeartShare said it "chooses not to make any comment" about the settlement, while SCO referred a reporter to the city's [Administration for Children's Services](#), which oversees the foster care system. The two private agencies still have foster care contracts with the city. A Children's Services spokesman declined to comment on Wednesday, but when the city settled in 2012, the agency said, "There are much more sophisticated systems in place today that would never allow this kind of fraud to be perpetrated on the city or our children." Source: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/28/nyregion/eight-in-adoption-abuse-case-agree-to-17-5-million-settlement-with-foster-agencies.html?_r=0

Nurse charged with molesting foster baby By Kristina Davis 2:04 p.m. Aug. 27, 2014 Updated 5:51 p.m. [Print Comments 16](#) [Reddit](#) [16 Comments](#) SAN DIEGO — A pediatric nurse was charged Wednesday with sexual exploitation of a child after FBI agents found numerous videos and photographs of him repeatedly molesting a 2-month-old premature foster baby who had been placed in his care, authorities said. Booking photo of Micahel William Lutts FBI San Diego Share Photo [Reddit](#) [Print](#) Booking photo of Micahel William Lutts Michael William Lutts, 50, was arrested Tuesday after agents served a search warrant at his College Area home. The investigation began in April, when the FBI came across a person who was distributing child pornography and had apparently received images from Lutts' email account, according to the complaint filed in San Diego federal court. Agents learned Lutts, who worked as a pediatric nurse at Kaiser Permanente, was also a foster parent who began caring for a baby Aug. 4. An iPhone seized during Tuesday's search showed numerous videos and images of Lutts committing various sexual acts on the baby boy, apparently beginning on the first day he gained custody, court records say. One video showed the baby crying throughout the molestation, the FBI said. At one point, Lutts is seen urinating on the baby in a bathtub, the records say. Agents also seized numerous hard drives, computers and hundreds of CDs, which revealed several hundreds images and videos of child porn, the FBI said. Lutts pleaded not guilty in court Wednesday and will remain in jail until potential bail can be discussed at a hearing Friday. An official with the county's Health and Human Services Agency, which oversees the foster system, said he could not comment on Lutts' case because of the ongoing criminal investigation. He said potential foster parents go through a rigorous background investigation, including home visits, fingerprinting and a health report. Foster parents then must complete 27 hours of training. It was not known how long Lutts had been a foster parent or if he cared for any other children previously. Kaiser Permanente officials said there is no indication from law enforcement at this time that patients were involved, and that they are fully cooperating with the investigation. Lutts will not be returning to work while the criminal case is underway, the officials said. "We hold sacred the trust our patients place in Kaiser Permanente. We will not tolerate any employee or physician abusing that trust," Kaiser officials said in a statement. State nursing board records show Lutts was licensed in 2002 and has no disciplinary action on his record. The FBI is asking anyone with information on the case or about any potential victims to call investigators at (858) 320-1800. Source: <http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2014/aug/27/nurse-charged-molest-foster-baby-child-porn/>

Nashville youth detention centre had troubled history prior to mass escape Eight teenagers still at large after 32 managed to escape Woodland Hills, the latest scandal to hit the beleaguered facility [Share 38](#) [inShare0](#) [Email Amanda Holpuch](#) in New York theguardian.com, Tuesday 2 September 2014 14.15 EDT [Jump to comments \(8\)](#) n. Thirty-two teens escaped from the youth detention center by crawling through a weak spot in a fence. Photograph: Mark Humphrey/AP A Nashville detention center, from which [nearly half of the inmates escaped](#) on Monday night, has a troubled history that includes allegations of sexual abuse and a wrongful death lawsuit. Eight teenagers were still at large on Tuesday, after 32 youngsters got into the yard at Woodland Hills Youth Development Center late on Monday, then escaped through a weak spot in the facility's fence. This breakout is the latest blemish for Woodland Hills Youth Development Center and the beleaguered agency that operates it — Tennessee's department of children's services (DCS). Woodland Hills, which holds 78 teen boys between the ages of 14 and 19, has in recent years been the subject of a wrongful death lawsuit, sex abuse allegations and a smaller breakout attempt earlier this year. "Right now, it's not clear if this is a clear breakout, or if some kids just saw the opportunity to do something and did it rashly," DCS spokesman Rob Johnson told the Guardian. Tennessee highway patrol and metro police helped the department of children's services (DCS) with the round-up, as did some of the escaped teens' parents, who turned their children in. Johnson said internal affairs is looking into the circumstances of the breakout. Six or seven teenagers [broke out of their bedrooms in May](#) before staffers convinced them to return to their rooms. In [May 2013, Nashville news station WSMV published videos](#) and photos of Woodland Hills guards sleeping on the job. Tennessee agreed to pay a \$250,000 settlement in May for a wrongful death lawsuit brought by the father of Kendall Oates, an 18-year-old who died in May 2012. Oates suffered from a seizure disorder and may have lain sick or dead in his room for hours before security noticed him, [according to an investigation into the facility by The Tennessean](#). [A 2010 investigation by the paper](#) showed that sex abuse allegations have plagued the facility, which had some of the highest rates of sexual victimization of any US juvenile center, [according to a Department of Justice 2010 report](#). State lawmakers wrote [a scathing audit of the DCS in January](#), though new head Jim Henry insists the agency is making tremendous progress since the former commissioner, Kate O'Day, resigned in a wash of controversy. Attorney Everette Parrish has represented youngsters at Woodland Hills, as well as the state's other two youth development centers, in constitutional and civil rights cases since 2008. Parrish believes DCS needs more resources to improve the juvenile justice system and said the agency is doing all it can to provide treatment and security for the teenagers. "I know what the problem is. It is the guards, and the structure in which the guards are either not trained or insufficient or not attentive — not aware," said Parrish. "That's obvious, it doesn't take an attorney to figure that out. They are not mistreated in the center. If they were, that's what I hear about and what I address." He said that the decades-old facility should have known how to keep kids secure in the facility. "Here are the facts: if you want to improve the system, give DCS more resources," said Parrish. Woodland Hills is a level four facility, the highest level of security possible for juveniles besides adult prison or jail. Laurence Steinberg, author of *Age of Opportunity: Lessons from the New Science of Adolescence* and a psychology professor at Temple University, said in an email that

adolescents are more more focused on the immediate potential rewards of things like an escape and are less likely to think about the long-term consequences of such an act. “I think, based on our research on risky decision-making, that adolescents would generate a much shorter list of possible risks than adults would, so their assessment is more likely to be incomplete,” Steinberg said. “Adolescents also make decisions more impulsively, so they probably would not spend as much time thinking through the risks and, more important, thinking about how best to avoid them.” Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/02/nashville-mass-escape-youth-center-troubled-history>

On My Son's First Day of Kindergarten: OurSchoolsAreNotFailing.org organizes communities to defend their schools from NCLB By [I AM AN EDUCATOR](#) on September 3, 2014 Today is the first day of school in Seattle. I have never been more excited and nervous for the first day because, not only do I start teaching, but my 5-year-old starts kindergarten! My son is so thrilled for his first day of school and our family feels so fortunate to have such a wonderful public school to send him to. Unfortunately, the irreparably flawed No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has cast a shadow on what should be a joyous start to the year. As explained below, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan revoked the NCLB waiver for Washington state because our legislature would not tie teacher evaluations to test scores. Revoking the NCLB waiver then labeled nearly every school in the state a failure and mandated that districts notify parents that their child attends a failing school. My son's school is not a failure. The school where I teach is not a failure. It is the test-and-punish policy of NCLB that is failing. Thankfully, a new initiative from parents, students, educators, and community members has formed to stand up to Arne Duncan's bullying of our schools called [OurSchoolsAreNotFailing.org](#). Be sure to [sign the petition in support Washington state's schools](#), share your story on the website about the great work that occurs in your school, and read the following statement from the [OurSchoolsAreNotFailing.org](#) website: Our Schools Are Not Failing: NCLB is Failing Us This year, most school districts across Washington state were forced by Secretary Arne Duncan's selective enforcement of the No Child Left Behind Act to send letters to all parents that labeled our schools as failures. We are parents, teachers, students and community members who reject this label that has been placed on our schools. We know that our schools are not failures. In fact, our schools' accomplishments have been remarkable, especially given the deeply flawed policy imposed on them by the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). While there are certainly changes needed for our schools—many due to the legacy of racism, class inequality, and lack of equitable funding for our schools—we believe that those changes should be directed by communities that make up local school districts, not from top-down mandates. This website will share stories and testimonials about the great things that are happening in our schools that should be supported and connect our communities so that we can organize opposition to Arne Duncan's policies and No Child Left Behind. According to NCLB, our schools should have had 100% of students test at proficient levels in reading and math by 2014. No county, no state, and no school district has ever achieved 100% proficiency on standardized tests and, in fact, the way the tests are designed make it statistically impossible to achieve that goal. Washington, like many other states, originally had a waiver in place that would have exempted it from this absurd NCLB mandate. However, when the state legislature refused to pass bills tying teacher evaluations to test scores (following overwhelming evidence that this would not improve teaching or learning), Arne Duncan chose to punish Washington state by [revoking the waiver](#). With the waiver gone, nearly all of Washington's schools have been labeled failures, we may lose control of millions of dollars in federal money, and some schools will be at risk of state takeovers and mass layoffs of teachers. This kind of political game-playing has no place in our schools. Our schools and teachers should not be labeled as failures simply because we have rejected extremely flawed education policies. In August 2014, 28 school superintendents from around the state authored [a letter](#) criticizing No Child Left Behind and declaring that their schools' successes are not reflected in these ratings. We agree. It's time for the voices of parents, teachers and students to be heard and respected. If you have a story to share about why your school is not a failure, tell us [here](#). Also, [sign our petition](#) to reinstate the NCLB waiver for Washington state. Source: <http://iamaneducator.com/2014/09/03/on-my-sons-first-day-of-kindergarten-ourschoolsarenofailing-org-organizes-communities-to-defend-their-schools-from-nclb/>

The Education Conversation 'Reformers' Want Versus The One They Get What will \$12 million get you? How about a “conversation about education?” That's what a new organization [Education Post](#) aims to get for its “initial grants,” courtesy of, according to education reporter Lindsay Layton of [The Washington Post](#), “the Broad Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Walton Family Foundation, and an anonymous donor.” In [a debut post](#), the organization's leader Peter Cunningham — a former “communications guru,” according to Layton, for U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan — called for a “new conversation.” That “new conversation” Cunningham wants, is less “screaming at each other from across the aisle ... an honest, open conversation ... based on the facts.” Layton also quoted Bruce Reed — former chief executive of the Democratic Leadership Council and now president of the Broad Foundation that “originated” the new site — who said the idea for Education Post came from “a shared disappointment in the tenor of the debate.” Education Post is not being terribly original here. Recent calls for more “civility” in discussions about education and for taking “the politics” and “partisanship” out of policy debates are suddenly all the rage among the edu-policy crowd gravitating around Washington, D.C. There are reasons why Beltway-inspired education wonks are calling out the tone police — but it's got very little to do with honesty and “facts.” Instead, read a little more deeply into these calls for taking “the politics” out of the debate, and what you find is itself a rather political agenda. Bipartisan Banality Echoing the Education Post's zeal for making nice over differences on education policy, two right-wing think tank operatives who have differed in public over the Common Core Standards recently declared their determination to overcome the acrimony of that debate. Writing in [The Washington Times](#), Mike Petrilli of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute and Neal McCluskey of the Cato Institute's Center for Educational Freedom endeavored to lay out “the facts on which we think everyone should agree.” Looking past the hubris of a claim to overcome differences that include only those held by conservatives, their facts are “technically” — a word they use in describing the process used to adopt the “voluntary” standards — true. Yet the facts they put forth are very carefully chosen, ignoring, for instance, the [fact](#) that the standards are by-and-large a product of the testing industry, without much influence from educators and parents. From another conservative corner, columnist [Juan Williams](#), writing for The Hill, came the similar call for “getting beyond the tired old fights” in education policy. His preference was to declare a “crisis in the nation's schools” and steel political leaders to direct federal money to school voucher programs and do something about all those “bad teachers” that plague the system. Unfortunately for Williams, his arguments happen to be the oldest and “tireddest” of all. School vouchers, [Greg Anrig](#) has reminded us, were originally conceived by the economist Milton Friedman in 1955 and have been a cornerstone of Republican education policy since the presidential administration of Ronald Reagan. And education journalist Dana Goldstein, in her new book [The Teacher Wars: A History of America's Most Embattled Profession](#), reminds us that as far back as the early 1800s, “the history of education reform shows ... recurring attacks on veteran educators.” In his review of Goldstein's book appearing in [The Atlantic](#), Noah Berlatsky equated current calls for weeding out America's “bad teachers” Reagan-era claims about a scourge of “welfare queens.” He wrote, “If welfare mothers are the cause of poverty, then you can solve the problem of poverty with tighter restrictions on welfare mothers. If teachers are the problem with education, then you can solve the problem of education with ever more vigorous control, and ever more constant evaluation, of teachers.” (Interestingly, Williams also conflates vouchers and teacher tenure with renewing No Child Left Behind, which has nothing to do with either of those issues.) Outside of conservative circles (sort of), former press secretary for the Clinton White House, Mike McCurry recently lamented “an American political system ripped apart by partisanship.” The salve to apply to the bitterness — indeed, “the antidote to the poison that's now invaded our political system” — McCurry believes is to rally around the “the school choice movement.” Interestingly, McCurry's remarks were carried by a conservative education policy outlet [RefinedED](#), illustrating the absurdity of calls for consensus between right and left on education policy that is absent of any representation from what is truly “left.” “The school choice movement's appeal to all points on the political spectrum is a source of pride, McCurry said. The movement needs to continue doing the hard work of making the center hold, of putting aside differences on other issues to find common ground on kids and education.” No doubt, McCurry has not been to [Newark, N.J.](#) lately where a new plan for district wide “school choice” is not being opposed by “partisanship,” but by the parents and students in that community. In a similar vein, New America's Conor William, writing at the online news outlet [The Daily Beast](#), recently hailed the achievement of charter schools, no doubt part of the “bipartisan” composition of the “school choice movement.” Noting that three charter schools were in the top echelon of an [annual ranking of best performing American high schools](#), Williams declared there was “growing evidence — borne out by this year's rankings — that the charter approach can make an extraordinary difference for students.” Williams may want to look a little more deeply to notice that the charter schools he recommended for the rest of America have “[student bodies that are disproportionately affluent and white](#).” They also [experience very high student attrition and graduate very small numbers of students](#). The Outsiders Want To Be Heard In an attempt to clarify the standoff over education policy, [Rick Hess](#) from the American Enterprise Institute (yet another conservative Beltway think tank) recently wrote that the divide over education policy was between two easily delineated factions that are bent on “reform.” On the one hand, you had “progressive” reformers who “have historically been wedded to a technocratic vision ... and a

belief that the right policies and programs can cure society's ills." And on the other hand, there are "conservative" reformers who "respect the limits of government." In this mutually held "reform" agenda, the "points of traditional agreement" – charter schools, incentivizing/ punishing teachers, Teach For America, and so forth – seem unchangeable, while oppositional lines are drawn only over the issues of "means and ends." This analysis may all be well and true. It just leaves out the vast majority of Americans. [Surveys](#) show that what Americans have a problem with are more than just issues of means and ends of "reform." They're increasingly disturbed by what's being posed to them as "reform" altogether. What Hess described is really just a view from the "inside" of the debate. Now the "outsiders" want to be heard. Score One For The Education Spring The tables didn't start turning just last week. Let's go back in time to a white, hot moment that illustrates what's really happening today. It was June 2011. It was [Madison, Wisconsin](#). Republican legislators had come prepared to ram through a radical education agenda that included taking away teachers' collective bargaining rights, rolling out Milwaukee's deeply flawed voucher program to the rest of the state, expanding charter schools, and drastically cutting public school budgets. At the time, teachers were clamoring from the state house rafters, parents and students pitched tents and carried signs in protest to what was befalling their communities, and public school activists were banging drums of resistance to seeing the common good stolen away from them. What did the "insiders" think then? At the time, a field operative for the [Democrats for Education Reform](#) observed that the "worst part" of the conflagration was not the drastic harm being done to Wisconsin communities and their school children. No, the "worst part" was the "fall of bipartisanship on education." That bipartisanship, [I wrote at the time](#), consisted chiefly of declaring education "a crisis, blame the teachers, bring in the privatizers, and muster financial backing from Wall St. to push it through." What's changed since then is that the Wisconsin stirrings erupted into an [Education Spring](#) sweeping the nation, and the voices of those on the outside, who reject the education bipartisan agenda crafted by insiders, have increased in volume and intensity. The outsiders are now becoming more organized too and have started to reach into the confines of Beltway think tanks and foundation boardrooms. Recently, the group [Democrats for Public Education](#) formed to counter the weak complicity represented by Democrats for Education Reform and other groups whose views completely fail to include the progressive majority. One of that group's chief leaders, Democratic Party strategist [Donna Brazile](#), decried those "under the guise of 'education reform,' undermining America's public schools." In sharp contrast to the insider consensus that has ruled education policy for years, Brazile observed "Here's what dedicated parents and seasoned educators all across the country see: stalled reform efforts, poor implementation of programs, and nervous students spending 30 percent of their school year on test preparation. By speaking out about this troubling pattern, teachers are exemplifying what it truly means to be answerable to and responsible for the well-being of children..." No one benefits when 'education experts' – many with only a couple years in the classroom and some with none at all – tell teachers that their expertise doesn't matter and they don't have the best interests of children at heart. When you peel back the onion, it's clear these well-orchestrated attacks are coming from nothing more than a few well-funded, vocal groups intent on cherry-picking statistics and warping facts." She concluded, "Enough is enough. It's time we collectively push back against efforts to undermine America's education system, our teachers, and the kids themselves." This may not be the education conversation the reformers want. But it's the one they're going to get. Source: <http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/the-education-conversation-reformers-want-versus-the-one-they-get/>

Former group home employee pleads no contest to sex abuse [Print](#) [Font](#) [\[+\]](#) [\[-\]](#) [Leave a comment](#) > By [Pat Reavy](#), Deseret News Published: Thursday, Sept. 4 2014 8:10 p.m. MDT Updated: yesterday A former employee at a group home for troubled teens pleaded no contest Thursday to multiple counts of abusing a 14-year-old girl. Shutterstock Sat Sep 06 19:32:14 2014 SPANISH FORK — A former employee at a group home for troubled teens pleaded no contest Thursday to multiple counts of abusing a 14-year-old girl. Wade Russell, 60, pleaded no contest to 12 counts of forcible sexual abuse, all second-degree felonies. Each count carries a potential sentence of one to 15 years in prison. Russell was scheduled to be sentenced Oct. 16. By pleading no contest, Russell avoids a six-day trial that was scheduled to begin at the end of the month. Russell worked for Extended Family Services, which houses troubled teens who are in the custody of the state, according to court documents. Between February and November of 2013, Russell inappropriately touched a 14-year-old girl on at least 12 different occasions, according to court documents. As part of the plea deal, Russell acknowledged in court records, "I know that if I enter a no contest plea, a judgment of conviction will be entered by the court and I will be sentenced the same as if I had entered a guilty plea." — Pat Reavy Source: <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865610265/Former-group-home-employee-pleads-no-contest-to-sex-abuse.html>

Mass escape, violence at juvenile jail leading to review by Department of Children's Services Article by: LUCAS L. JOHNSON II, Associated Press Updated: September 4, 2014 - 5:05 PM [0 comments](#) [resize text](#) [print](#) [buy reprints](#) Share! NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Despite its idyllic-sounding name, the Woodland Hills Youth Development Center had seen a decade of violent clashes, breakout attempts and attacks on guards. Then, on Monday night, 32 teens escaped. Just two days later, two dozen detainees broke into the yard wielding sticks and spraying a fire extinguisher. The problems shed light on the difficulty of maintaining order at a center where most of the 14- to 19-year-olds have committed at least three felonies, and the challenges faced by Tennessee's Department of Children's Services in trying to fix the issues. In an interview Thursday, DCS Commissioner Jim Henry said policies will be reviewed to see if guards could be given weapons such as stun guns to help control unruly detainees. Currently, guards do not carry weapons and must rely on talking with the inmates to quell disturbances. Henry also said parts of the facility's structure are being looked at, and officials will try to figure out how to better help detainees who suffer from mental illness or drug addiction. Despite being perceived as tough, most of the youths are "damaged when they come to us ... They're angry." "What we're going to go less to is a correctional mentality," said Henry, who plans to give a report to Gov. Bill Haslam next week. However, some lawmakers say that's not enough. They want Haslam to reopen a facility closed in 2012, Taft Youth Development Center, which primarily housed older, more violent offenders. The inmates there were transferred to Woodland Hills, which then saw a spike in assaults. In a letter to Henry, some state lawmakers said they felt "very confident if Taft was still open, these incidents would not have happened." Republican state Rep. Cameron Sexton said the Taft facility was better equipped to handle problem cases and its staff more experienced and better trained. "We always thought it was a bad idea to put these more violent offenders back in general population with younger offenders," he said. Between July and September of 2012, police had to be called at least 47 times for assistance, which surpassed total police visits for the previous two years combined. Among the acts of violence listed in police records is a guard trapped in a headlock and repeatedly punched by a young man. Another assault involved four youths ambushing a staff member and beating him until he was rescued by colleagues. In 2010, the U.S. Department of Justice ranked Woodland Hills as 13th in the country among juvenile facilities with reports of sexual abuse by staffers. In a 2004 breakout attempt, more than a dozen teens armed with broom handles and hurling bricks injured 16 staffers before they were dispersed by police in riot gear. Everett Parrish, an appointed attorney for juveniles housed at Woodland Hills, said the state had dialed back the population at Woodland Hills from 140 to 80 this year because of a shortage of guards. "That was a good example of DCS responding in a way they could control the kids — so they thought," he said. Instead, some teens at the facility found ways to exploit security flaws, he said. Parrish also noted the unarmed guards are not trained to be aggressive. "To me that's a good thing. It keeps the kids out of harm," Parrish said. Officials are considering improvements to the facility itself. In this week's violence, inmates kicked through foam panels surrounded by metal to get into the yard. Those may be replaced with solid metal panels, Henry said. Furthermore, Henry said, officials may rethink allowing teens free access to common areas. According to officials, the 32 teens who escaped Woodland Hills on Monday found a weak spot in the fence surrounding the yard and broke out. Six remained at large Thursday. Wednesday night, about 24 teens — some of whom were part of the breakout — reached the yard. This time, police formed a ring around the center's fence, and no one escaped. Video showed teens chasing and assaulting a man who appeared to be a staff member. Ten ringleaders were brought to another detention center in Rutherford County for questioning, Department of Children's Services spokesman Rob Johnson said. The rest were returned to their dorms. People who live nearby are hoping for swift changes to head off further problems. "It's kind of scary to wake up to helicopters flying over your house," said Nichole Sherman, who lives about a mile from the facility with her two children. "Something major has to change," she said. "This is the second time in a week. That's ridiculous. And to be a parent, that's scary." Source: <http://www.startribune.com/nation/273893571.html?page=1&c=y>

Owatonna woman's family child care, foster care licenses revoked after infant death [Story Comments](#) [Share](#) [Print](#) [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) Posted: Thursday, August 28, 2014 5:30 pm | Updated: 9:57 pm, Thu Aug 28, 2014. [Owatonna woman's family child care, foster care licenses revoked after infant death](#) By ASHLEY STEWART astewart@owatonna.com Southernminn Posted on Aug 28, 2014 by [ASHLEY STEWART](#) OWATONNA — An Owatonna woman's child foster care and family child care licenses have been revoked by the Minnesota Department of Human Services after an infant death occurred in her home last November. According to documents from the Department of Human Services, Joleen Anderson of Owatonna was found responsible for serious maltreatment or neglect of a child after Steele County Human Services, Rice County Social Services and law enforcement investigated an incident last year. The documents state that on Nov. 15, 2013, Anderson placed an infant on its stomach with a

blanket in a mesh-sided crib with a sheet that wasn't tight-fitting. She then left the infant on the lower level of the home and went to the upper level, and left the infant's supervision to another individual for about 15 minutes. When Anderson went to wake the infant about 30 minutes later, she found it face down and unresponsive. Anderson immediately began CPR and called 911, but emergency responders were unable to resuscitate the infant, and the child died. Rice County Human Services determined Anderson failed to follow Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) reduction requirements when she placed the infant on its stomach in the crib, and she left the infant in the care of another individual, who was not an approved caregiver and didn't have SUID and Abusive Head Trauma (AHT) training as required, the documents said. On Nov. 18, 2013, the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services determined that the health, safety and rights of children in Anderson's care were in "imminent risk of harm," and her family child care and child foster care licenses were immediately suspended temporarily. But because of these violations, the Department of Human Services revoked Anderson's family child care license as well as her child foster care license — a license she shared with her husband, Michael — on Aug. 20. Attempts to reach the Andersons for comment were unsuccessful. Karen Smigielski, a spokesperson with the Minnesota Department of Human Services, said Joleen Anderson was licensed for family child care in November 2003 and licensed for child foster care in November 2010. Smigielski said the Andersons have 10 days to appeal the license revocations. However, if they don't, they will be disqualified from receiving licenses for seven years under state law. But Anderson also has charges pending against her in Steele County District Court. In June, Anderson was indicted by a grand jury in court on charges of child endangerment, including one gross misdemeanor and one felony. Because of the indictment, details on the proceeding are sealed. Smigielski said if Anderson is convicted at the felony level, she would be disqualified from receiving child foster care and family child care licenses for 15 years, and if convicted at the gross-misdemeanor level, she will be disqualified for 10 years. She added it is possible that the Andersons could be licensed again in the future, but it isn't likely. In an unrelated case in Steele County, the Minnesota Department of Human Services completed an investigation of Steven and Rita Dornquast Adult Foster Care in Owatonna and concluded neglect of an individual by staff and the facility. According to a document from the Department of Human Services, on June 21 a "vulnerable adult" left the Dornquasts' facility without supervision and was gone for about two hours before he or she was found by a community member who called 911. Although facility staff weren't disqualified as a result of the maltreatment determination, the Dornquasts were fined \$1,000. Reach reporter Ashley Stewart at 444-2378 or follow her on Twitter.com @OPPashley
Source: http://www.southernminn.com/owatonna_peoples_press/news/article_3316e0eb-d726-5993-8832-2af22928fb43.html

DOC plans to close Camp Summit Boot Camp [Story Comments](#) [Print](#) [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size 2](#) Posted: Friday, August 29, 2014 6:02 pm **DOC plans to close Camp Summit Boot Camp** STAFF REPORTS TheNewsDispatch.com | [0 comments](#) La PORTE — The Indiana Department of Correction has announced plans to close Camp Summit Boot Camp, 2407 North 500 West, La Porte, due to the continuous decline in the IDOC's youth population. With plans to close on or about Oct. 1, the 72 youth currently housed at Camp Summit will be transitioned to community-based programs or other IDOC juvenile facilities. Those not scheduled for release will be move to Logansport or Pendleton Juvenile Correction Facilities, where there is reportedly bed capacity available. To continue the boot camp model, Pendleton Juvenile plans to expand the facility's current Future Soldiers Program, a paramilitary program that prepares youth as potential military recruits by teaching good citizenship leadership, self-reliance and responsibility. Since 2009, when the IDOC Division of Youth Services was created, it has utilized national best practices to improve treatment and services to youth in IDOC care, resulting in the reduction of the number of youth being held in Indiana's juvenile correctional facilities. "Due to efforts of our youth services staff, at-risk youth are spending less time in prison and are returning to community programs as quickly as possible to reunite them with their families and provide them with the support they need to be responsible citizens," IDOC Commissioner Bruce Lemmon said. "This move will enable our youth services staff to better serve the youth in our care, while making more efficient use of taxpayer dollars," he said. State Rep. Scott Pelath, D-Michigan City, issued a statement regarding the closing of this facility. Included in his statement was a letter he addressed to Gov. Mike Pence's office stating the facility should remain open. Pelath's primary concerns were the loss of jobs and the loss of services for Indiana youth. "(Pence and his administration) want to eliminate 70 La Porte County jobs in the service of their increasingly bloated budget surplus," Pelath said. "If they follow through on this threat, it marks the latest indication that people and jobs don't matter as much as politically crafted financial statements." Approximately 50 employees will have the opportunity to transfer to other facilities or apply for vacant positions throughout the department following the closing of Camp Summit. The IDOC is working closely with the State Personnel Department to find placement options and minimize the impact on staff. "Our goal is continued state employment for every affected worker," Lemmon said. Pelath, the House minority leader, also voiced his concern about the impact closing Camp Summit would have on the youth in the state. "(The idea to close Camp Summit) would be particularly crazy because the state is shuttering a program that has a demonstrated impact in turning around the lives of troubled youths," he said. "At any time at Camp Summit, close to 100 youth across Indiana have the chance to resume their education, receive counseling and gain the skills that will enable them to return to society and care for themselves." Opening in 1995 on 60 acres between La Porte and Michigan City, Camp Summit is Indiana's only paramilitary style boot camp that blends military components with a programs approach that addresses the needs of adolescents and affords the best possible environment for change and growth. Source: http://www.thenewsdispatch.com/news/article_95aa30d6-2fd0-11e4-b415-001a4bcf887a.html

Prosecutor: Idaho worried about money before releasing FLDS boys Polygamy » The state wanted to send them home to save on foster care, prosecutor says. By nate carlisle | The Salt Lake Tribune First Published Sep 01 2014 01:01 am • Last Updated Sep 01 2014 04:53 pm The agency responsible for child protection in Idaho wanted to send [eight boys from the Fundamentalist Church](#) of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints home with their parents to save the state money, a prosecutor said last week. Ian Service, a deputy Bannock County prosecutor, said he wanted the boys to remain in foster care. [Tweet](#) [Photos](#) [View photo gallery \(10 photos\)](#) Join the Discussion [Post a Comment](#) The disagreement was so great, Service said, that the Idaho Attorney General's Office petitioned to join the juvenile court case and represent the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. Normally, Service said, the county prosecutor would represent the department. A deputy attorney general later said he would appeal any ruling keeping the boys in foster care, Service said. "It's the first case in my career where I had such a juxtaposition between the county and the state," Service said. A judge [returned six of the boys](#) to parents earlier this month. Two boys remain in foster care because they did not want to return to their mother or the FLDS, a polygamous sect. Service said money was discussed from the day a judge granted a petition to remove the boys from the home of an FLDS caretaker in Pocatello. Service said he and a social worker were with police at the home. The social worker "was like, 'Where am I going to place these kids? And my boss is going to throw a fit about the costs,'" Service said. Health and Welfare and law enforcement removed eight boys from the Pocatello home on July 10. A sheriff's report indicates their ages ranged from 12 to 17. A ninth boy had been living there but was not located. At a hearing on Aug. 11, a judge dismissed the custody cases for six of the boys, ordering two teenagers to remain in state custody. Source: <http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/news/58351926-78/service-parents-health-welfare.html.csp>

Allegheny County puts on campaign for more foster parents September 1, 2014 12:00 AM John Heller/Post-Gazette Foster mom Wendy Stephens talks about foster care at Pressley Ridge. Share with others: [16 inShare](#) By Kaitlynn Riely / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette More than two years ago, a teenager arrived at the Knoxville home of Wendy and Mary Ann Stephens, two sisters who took him in as a foster child. He called them Ms. Wendy and Ms. Mae. A year later, he asked if he could call them his aunts. "He said, '[you] are my extended family,'" Wendy Stephens said. "That really touched me, how he said it." The teenager, who now is 16 and whose biological mother requested that he not be named in this story, said he plans to take the Stephens name as his middle name when he becomes an adult. "Even though I call them aunts, I do consider them moms," he said. In Allegheny County, there is a need for more people to fill the role of foster parents to teenagers. In July, the county Department of Human Services issued a request for proposals to develop a marketing and public relations campaign to increase foster care awareness and to recruit potential foster parents for children ages 14 to 17. The department expects to award a contract not to exceed \$60,000 later this fall, with an estimated start date of early 2015. "We don't have enough foster families stepping forward willing to work with teens," said Katie Stoehr, manager of program operations for the Office of Children, Youth and Families within Human Services. There are about 1,400 Allegheny County children in the foster care system, according to county Human Services data. More than half of the children and teens in the foster care system are placed with a relative who is licensed to be their foster parent; others are placed with non-relatives who have undergone foster-parent training. There are more than 200 children and teens in congregate care such as a group home for youth. That's the number the county wants to see reduced. According to county figures, 169 of the children in congregate care are 15 or older, with 60 children ages 12-14 and just 16 younger than 11. "There has been some research in recent years that shows there's no real benefit to being placed in a congregate, as opposed to a family setting," Ms. Stoehr said. The county is interested, instead, in placing children with families. "Children really do better, on the whole, when they are able to live with a family," she said. Foster parents come from "all walks of life," Ms. Stoehr said. Some are empty nesters who want to have children in their home again. Some want to add more children to the family they

have. Some can't have children but still want to take on a parental role. Others are fostering because they want to give back to their community. Foster families usually take care of children who are no longer able to live in their biological family homes, often for reasons of neglect. The goal is always to reunify children with their families. If that's not possible, adoptions can be pursued, with the foster family or others. The average length of time a child stays with a foster family is nine months, according to county figures. During that time, foster parents, who receive a stipend, take on the typical duties of parents, such as taking them to the doctor, making sure they are involved in activities. Many children in the foster care system have gone through a traumatic experience, and foster parents also might have to be involved in ensuring they receive mental health care. Foster parents receive training through organizations such as Pressley Ridge, which offers treatment foster care and adoption services. As for what the marketing campaign to recruit more people as foster parents will look like, the county is not yet sure. Typically, the most effective recruitment method is to find someone the young person already knows and see if that person is willing to be a foster parent, Ms. Stoehr said. The public relations drive about foster parenting, once it gets underway, will most likely focus on a targeted campaign to interested populations rather than serve as a general public service announcement, she said. Foster parents also are often the "best ambassadors" in finding new people to sign up, said Ms. Stoehr. For Mary Ann and Wendy Stephens, foster parenting runs in the family. Mary Ann Stephens, who is retired from her nearly 40-year career at BNY Mellon, and Wendy Stephens, a clinic coordinator for the Kane Regional Center at Glen Hazel, have been foster parents for more than 20 years. Both are single and without biological children, though between them they've been foster parents to 15 children. Their sister, Elva Dorsey, who lives near them in Knoxville, also is a longtime foster parent. The sisters grew up in South Fayette, part of a family that included a mother, a father and 16 children. Their positive family experience contributed to their decisions to become foster parents. "I got to think about how fortunate we were growing up, having both our families," Wendy Stephens said. She decided to become a foster parent, like her sisters, because she wanted to give children in less happy homes good memories. One afternoon last week, the Stephens sisters and the 16-year-old foster child met at Pressley Ridge's Perry South office. The organization offers treatment foster care and adoption services. It was through Pressley Ridge that Wendy Stephens became foster parent to the teenager, whom the county Office of Children, Youth and Families removed from his home due to concerns about economic hardship, according to Rhonda Sullivan, program director for Pressley Ridge. Although Wendy Stephens is his primary foster parent, all three sisters are involved in his life, especially Mary Ann Stephens, who lives with her sister. Being a foster parent has not always been easy, the three sisters each said. The teenage years are particularly difficult and require a strong person as a foster parent, Wendy Stephens said. Both women said the experience has been worth the trials. It's brought them a lot of joy, Wendy Stephens said. "It was worth it, all the sleepless nights I went through," said Wendy Stephens, about a foster child who was particularly difficult but with whom she still keeps in touch several years later. As for the teenage boy, all three sisters spoke fondly of him. "He's just exceptional," Mary Ann Stephens said. "He's smart. He's witty. He respects us." The teenager, who is starting his freshman year of high school, said he is happy. He hopes to attend Carnegie Mellon University then work in cyber security. He wants to get married, have children and to be a good father, and he wants to "help these two out," he said, gesturing to Wendy and Mary Ann Stephens, "and help my mom." "Not every teen is going to be bad," he said, referring to teenagers in the foster care system. "There are some really good teens out there who just want homes, who just want people to love them." Kaitlynn Riely: kriely@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1707. Read more: <http://www.post-gazette.com/local/city/2014/09/01/County-puts-on-campaign-for-more-foster-parents/stories/201409020026#ixzz3Cgj53RML>

STUDY: LGBT Youth Face Worse Treatment in Foster Care Than Peers A new study discovers that LGBT youth face twice as much mistreatment in the foster care system as do their non-LGBT peers. BY Mitch Kellaway September 03 2014 4:10 PM ET [16](#) According to a new [study](#), LGBT children are, on average, twice as likely as their non-queer peers to report being treated poorly in the Los Angeles foster care system, reports the [Los Angeles Times](#). The findings and research method employed by fellows at the Williams Institute, based at the University of California Los Angeles, may help other cities conduct similar research on an issue that L.A. officials say is largely overlooked. "People refer to it as the 'dirty little secret' that there are so many LGBTQ kids in foster care," Lorri L. Jean, chief executive of the Los Angeles LGBT Center, told the Times. "But nobody's been able to document it." The Williams Institute study also found that LGBT adoptees experienced more foster placements, were more likely to live in a group home, and were hospitalized for emotional reasons three times more often than peers. Despite overrepresentation in state systems — comprising an estimated averaging [19 percent](#) of Los Angeles' foster care population — LGBT youth remain largely "invisible," according to the study's authors. Social workers often wait for children to initiate discussions about their own sexuality or gender identity because they are unsure of how to protect the child's privacy, notes the Times. Furthermore, many LGBT youth do not feel safe coming out to their foster parents. In addition, the study notes, 83 percent of adoptees in the Los Angeles foster care system are black or Latino. Youth of color who are also LGBT face added discrimination, researchers said. Source: <http://www.advocate.com/youth/2014/09/03/study-lgbt-youth-face-worse-treatment-foster-care-peers>

No contest plea entered by former group home employee in sex abuse case No contest plea entered by former group home employee in sex abuse case Saved Save Article [My Saved Items](#) [Print Email](#) [»](#) Wade Russell Daily Russell 2014-09-05T12:25:00Z 2014-09-05T20:35:10Z No contest plea entered by former group home employee in sex abuse case Billy Hesterman Daily Herald September 05, 2014 12:25 pm • [Billy Hesterman Daily Herald \(3\)](#) [Comments](#) [Trial date set for man accused of sexually abusing teens at group home](#) PROVO -- A trial date has been set for a man accused of sexually abusing two teen girls at a group home for troubled youth in Spanish Fork. [Read more](#) [Man accused of sexually abusing teens at group home bound over for trial](#) PROVO -- A man accused of sexually abusing two teens at a group home for troubled youth in Spanish Fork has been bound over for trial. [Read more](#) A former employee at a Spanish Fork group home for troubled youth has pleaded no contest to 12 counts of forcible sexual abuse. Wade Russell, 60, entered the motion Thursday with the Fourth District Court, which resulted in the cancellation of his jury trial. According to court records, Russell could be sentenced to 1-15 years in prison for each count. He also faces a \$10,000 fine, plus a 90 percent surcharge for each count. It has not yet been determined if he will serve his prison time consecutively or concurrently for each count. Russell was arrested in November 2013 after a 14-year-old female at the Extended Family Services youth center told a state worker he had inappropriately touched her and another female at the home. Police reports at the time stated Russell had entered the room of one of the individuals and touched her inappropriately over her clothing. One of the victims also told authorities they had been assaulted by Russell on multiple occasions at the home, including an event in the laundry room of the center. Police reports also stated Russell agreed to be interviewed by police and told the officers he "showed poor judgement" in going into the girls' rooms, but he denied any touching. Security footage obtained by police showed Russell entering the girls' rooms and the laundry room. One of the videos showed Russell entering one of the girls' rooms and emerging nine minutes later. Court records show that abuse took place 12 separate times from February 2013 to November 2013. Russell will be sentenced in October. Daily Herald reporter Billy Hesterman can be reached at bhesterman@heraldextra.com or (801) 344-2559 or on Twitter [@billyhesterman](#). Source: http://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/no-contest-plea-entered-by-former-group-home-employee-in/article_f45e2f86-a9b8-55ae-ae00-e9197e50177a.html

Recognizing Real Leadership For Education Progress: Mayor Bill de Blasio What's wrong with this picture? During the nation's Back-to-School Season, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has been touring states in a bus to "[highlight the champions of reform](#)." At one stop, where he spoke to an audience of parents at a Nashville, Tennessee middle school, he challenged the National PTA, according to reporters for [Education Week](#), to "make education a presidential campaign issue." Good idea. But when the Secretary offered to the audience an example of an ideal candidate, he pointed to a Republican. "Duncan pointed out that Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam, a Republican, is one of the few politicians who has followed through on promises of being 'the education candidate,'" reported Lauren Camera. Sadly, there are too few leaders in the Democratic Party who would qualify as education champions. But there is one very clear example. Not only is he a Democrat, but he is an unabashed progressive. And if Arne Duncan really wants to find politicians who "walk the walk" of real education reform, he can find an example of authentic progress coming not from Republicans, but from the left wing of his own party. But first to dispense with the Haslam-hysteria that has overcome the Secretary. Haslam Is No Education Hero Duncan's proof of Haslam's supposed accomplishments and ability to "walk the walk" (Duncan's words) of education progress is the "state's recent academic gains. Tennessee's students made the biggest improvements in the country in math and reading on the 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress. Duncan said the increased scores are a direct result of the state implementing the Common Core State Standards." Crediting Tennessee's NAEP scores to adoption of the Common Core is a huge leap of faith for sure, especially since the state has [backed out of using Common Core aligned tests](#) created by one of the two national consortia endorsed by Duncan. Also, Tennessee is chronically one of the nation's poorest performers on NAEP, so it had the most ground to gain in comparison to other states. And for every state Duncan can identify as a "top performer" on the NAEP assessment, [one can find](#) at least one state or more that has excelled in NAEP score gains without

adopting the measures Tennessee has exemplified. A more recent and comprehensive gauge on Tennessee student achievement – the state’s own assessments – shows that [student performance levels have barely budged at all](#), even decreasing slightly in grades 3-8 reading. Rutgers University professor [Bruce Baker](#) recently looked at Tennessee’s support for education and found the state to be woefully lacking: Tennessee is persistently among [the lowest spending states](#) in the country on its public education system. Tennessee is not only one of the lowest spenders, but Tennessee [spends less as a share of gross state product than most other states](#). Tennessee has one of the [largest income gaps between public school enrolled and private school enrolled children](#), and has among the higher shares of private school enrolled children. Tennessee has relatively [non-competitive teacher wages with respect to non-teacher wages](#). Baker contended that regardless of how you feel about any of the “reform” measures Tennessee has adopted – Common Core, charter school expansion – “none can succeed in a system so substantially lacking in resources, and none can improve the equity of children’s outcomes unless there exists greater equity in availability of resources.” Speaking of charter schools, in addition to adopting Common Core, Tennessee’s Governor Haslam has been eager to expand the presence of privately operated, even for-profit, charters. As education historian [Diane Ravitch](#) noted on her personal blog, “The Governor and the legislature enacted legislation in 2011 authorizing the Tennessee Virtual Academy, an online charter school run by K12 Inc.” K12, a for-profit company traded on Wall St, is infamous for its bad reviews in the [New York Times](#) and the [Washington Post](#) and the [atrocious academic results](#) it has achieved in Pennsylvania. Nevertheless, Tennessee state leaders are determined to inflict K12 schools on their own state’s students, even though those schools continue to be “one of the lowest performing schools in the state,” according to Ravitch. So, sorry Arne, Governor Haslam is hardly an education “reform champion.” What’s even sadder than the fact that you think he is an example of one, is the fact there is a leader on the national stage who has championed a real education reform. But you’ll need to look further left to find him. A Real Education Reform Rolls Out In New York City While Duncan was touring Tennessee, praising Republicans, a genuine reformer was leading positive change in New York City. As [The New York Times](#) reported, “Mayor Bill de Blasio, elected on promises of fighting income inequality, trumpeted the expansion of prekindergarten as a crucial step in leveling the playing field among children and declared it his first priority. His push to expand the system so rapidly, more than doubling it in eight months, is seen as a crucial test for his young administration. On Thursday, all that planning sprang to life as tens of thousands of 4-year-olds poured into freshly painted classrooms adorned with letters and numbers.” Now, that’s real education progress! As the editorial board of the [Times](#) noted, “It’s worth pausing to note what an accomplishment this is. Fifty thousand is a small city’s worth of children, each getting a head start on a lifetime of learning. It is so many families saving the cost of day care or private prekindergarten. It is a milestone of education reform.” As I wrote earlier this year, “There is definitive evidence that expanded pre-k programs can benefit poor children socially, emotionally and academically.” [Research](#) has shown that high quality education programs for three- and four-year olds who can be viewed as being academically at risk can “produce strong economic returns ranging from about \$4 per dollar invested to over \$10 per dollar invested.” Expanding education opportunity to more little kids also happens to be very, very popular. As the new pre-K program was rolling out in New York City, a [new survey](#) from Gallup found, “Seven in 10 Americans say they favor using federal money to make sure high-quality preschool education programs are available for every child in America.” Even most Republicans (53 percent) are in favor of federal dollars going to early childhood education. Despite all the interest, “access to high-quality early education opportunities for every child who needs them – especially for every child in low-income working families – remains elusive,” as a report from the [New America Foundation](#) found this summer. The hang-up has always been finding a way to pay for it. As folks at New America point out on their foundation’s [blog](#), funding for early childhood programs has become a new “third rail” in policy discussions. As more children living in poverty are added to waiting lists to get into programs like Head Start, politicians seem incapable of coming up with the money. Mayor de Blasio is the exception. Not only did he make campaign promises to expand pre-k programs, but he has proven that a capable leader can make those promises reality. Of course there was resistance to his initial proposal, which was to find the money for pre-k in rich people’s pockets. As [Sarah Jaffe](#) reminded in Truth Out, “Once elected, the mayor seemed to be a step behind Governor Cuomo when it came to negotiating in Albany. The struggle began shortly after he took office in January, and it seemed to reach a rather nasty peak in early March when Cuomo appeared at a [pro-charter schools rally](#) held in Albany by charter school entrepreneur Eva Moskowitz on the same day as de Blasio’s rally for his pre-K plan.” Then came a deal – “the result of de Blasio’s heavy lobbying,” according to Jaffe – with \$340 million in the budget for a statewide pre-K program. The Times agreed, writing in its editorial, “Mr. de Blasio’s dogged lobbying worked. Noted [WNYC](#) on its School Book blog, “The mayor said there were no glitches on the first day of the 2014-15 school year,” despite the negotiating tactics from the governor that delayed money until April and made the City ramp up its program in less than six months’ notice.” De Blasio’s determination in the face of resistance should be held up as an example to follow across the country. In addition to championing universal access to pre-k, his administration opened afterschool programs to more than 70,000 middle-school children. And instead of reflexively opting for more unproven charter schools, [he recently outlined a plan](#) to “set a ‘clear standard’ for charter schools” that includes “how they serve high-needs students, their student retention rates, and even how much they ‘teach to the test.’” This is what real education reform looks like: increasing children’s opportunity to learn and demanding authentic accountability from schools, not mere test scores. Recognizing Real Progress Mayor de Blasio’s accomplishments in New York City make Secretary Duncan’s praise for Governor Haslam look all the more ludicrous. In fact, when Haslam was recently given opportunities to support expanded access to pre-k, he balked. As [Chalkbeat Tennessee](#) recently reported, “Both of Tennessee’s largest school districts, in Nashville and Memphis, are not only pushing to expand pre-K, but to also make it more effective.” Where is Haslam’s support for this effort? He is waiting for a study, “according to a spokesman.” While we’ve yet to see any recognition of de Blasio’s achievement coming from the Department of Education, others are noticing. Next month, the progressive group [Campaign for America’s Future](#) (disclosure: a partner of the Education Opportunity Network) will honor de Blasio – along with Saru Jayaraman, Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Restaurant Opportunities Centers United and Lee Saunders, President of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees – as “progressive champions.” Perhaps Secretary Duncan will consider attending. Source: <http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/recognizing-real-leadership-for-education-progress-mayor-bill-de-blasio/>

Boy at Queens school for troubled teens was sexually assaulted, suit says The assault allegedly took place at Martin De Porres Residential Group Home and school in Ozone Park, Queens. The boy’s mom, whose name is being withheld, says a staffer encouraged the boy to perform a sex act on another resident. BY [Dareh Gregorian](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Thursday, September 11, 2014, 1:05 AM A A A 6 10 Share this URL [Anthony DelMundo/New York Daily News](#) The Martin De Porres Residential Group was where a boy was sexually assaulted, a suit claims. A student at a Queens school for troubled teens was repeatedly sexually assaulted by a staffer, the boy’s mom says in court papers. The assaults took place at the Martin De Porres Residential Group Home and school in Ozone Park, “a residence for people/children with special needs and/or disabilities,” between June and August of 2013, the suit says. In court papers filed Tuesday, the mom, whose name is being withheld to protect her son’s identity, says the unidentified staffer encouraged the boy to perform a sex act on another resident, and on another occasion, got into bed with him and touched him, the suit says. The suit says the abuse never should have happened because the school was aware he inappropriately touched other residents, the filing says. The suit doesn’t identify the staffer, said the family’s lawyer, Charles Gayner. In a statement, Martin De Porres executive director Edward Dana said the school reported the incident to authorities and the staffer was later fired. “We were shocked and saddened by the allegations,” Dana said. Read more: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/nyc-crime/boy-queens-school-troubled-teens-sexually-assaulted-suit-article-1.1935739#ixzz3DFO6xOy0>

Ex-daycare CEO gets prison time for stealing \$1.9 million | www.ajc.com Ex-daycare CEO gets prison time for stealing \$1.9 million 9 87 9 130 Sponsored Links [Find a great place to board your pet on Kudzu](#) By [Alexis Stevens](#) The Atlanta Journal-Constitution A former CEO of an Atlanta-based daycare chain will spend two years and a month in federal prison for stealing nearly \$2 million in nutrition funds used to feed needy children, the U.S. Attorney’s Office said Friday. Antonio T. Hurt, 39, of Macon, arranged for Bright Star Early Learning Center to participate in the Child and Adult Food Program, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The federal program partially reimburses day care centers for serving breakfast and lunch to children from low-income families. But prosecutors said Hurt submitted fraudulent claims that misstated the number of eligible students in the program. “Hurt used the child nutrition funds to expand his day care business, lease cars, buy jewelry, and pay for other personal expenses,” U.S. Attorney Sally Quillian Yates said in an emailed statement. “Stealing almost \$2 million in taxpayer money is bad enough, but stealing funds intended to feed underprivileged children is outrageous.” Between 2007 and 2010, Hurt served as the chief executive officer of Bright Star Early Learning Center, which owned and operated multiple daycare centers throughout metro Atlanta, and in other parts of north Georgia under the name Bright Star. Hurt, a former high school principal Georgia and Maryland, was also ordered to pay back nearly \$1.9 million. “We hope this conviction sends a strong warning to anyone who might consider taking advantage of this program through fraud

or deception," Amy M. Jacobs, interim commissioner for Bright from the Start, said Friday afternoon in an emailed statement. Source:

<http://www.ajc.com/news/news/former-daycare-ceo-gets-prison-for-stealing-nutri/nhG46/>

Editorial Don't miss out on this foster care fix, L.A. Children's Court Los Angeles Times Children play a computer game at Edmund D. Edelman Children's Court in Monterey Park. Children play a computer game at Edmund D. Edelman Children's Court in Monterey Park. (Los Angeles Times) By [The Times Editorial Board](#) [contact the reporter](#) [Laws and Legislation](#) L.A. County must act before Oct. 1 or lose millions of dollars to keep kids with relatives Thousands of California children who have suffered abuse or abandonment are sent to live with strangers in foster homes. That often happens even if there are extended family members ready and willing to take them in, despite California laws requiring placement with relatives when possible, and even in the face of countless studies that show the kids do better in the long run after stays with relatives rather than strangers. So why do we keep doing it? Because so many of those relatives, retired or with their budgets maxed out raising their own kids, need a bit of financial assistance to be able to take in their nieces and nephews, siblings or grandchildren — and because under a complicated and outdated set of state, federal and local laws and rules, they can get only a tiny fraction of the funding that non-related foster parents get. Worse yet, there is a shortage of foster parents, so the children often end up being sent to group homes, which are the most expensive option and produce the least desirable outcomes. Government foolishly requires itself to pay more to get worse results. Family members taking responsibility for relatives in the foster care system are expected to use money available under CalWORKS. But those poverty-level funds represent a small fraction of what other foster families get to ensure children are adequately fed and clothed. This year's California budget goes a long way toward fixing the problem. It provides money that counties can use to bring financial aid for many eligible relative caregivers up to the same level they would receive if they were non-relative foster parents. All the counties have to do is opt in by Oct. 1 to be in line for 2015 funding. Why wouldn't they? Government foolishly requires itself to pay more to get worse results. - A few counties may be skittish because they know that if they opt in, they are in all the way: They must pay all relative caregivers who take in children even after the state funding runs out. It stands to reason that they'd want to know how many families will seek the funding. But counties always have the option to change their minds and opt out, even mid-year. Besides, Los Angeles County, which has the largest number of children who need places to go after abuse or neglect, and the largest number of relative caregivers ready to step up if only they had some assistance, has a federal waiver that gives it even more flexibility than other counties have to allocate money for just such a purpose. Yet Los Angeles County has yet to act. The clock is ticking. The county has just over three weeks left to act or lose by far the largest chunk of the state's \$30-million fund for relative care for a year. It's time to opt in. Source: <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-foster-care-kinship-opt-in-20140907-story.html>

San Antonio man who led Bible study gets prison for child porn An inside look at a jail cell. (AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli) Saturday, September 06, 2014 SAN ANTONIO, TX -- A former Bible study instructor for children at a South Texas church has been sentenced to 20 years in federal prison for distributing child pornography online. Jacob Robert Holguin was sentenced Friday in San Antonio. Prosecutors say the 42-year-old Holguin in June 2013 pleaded guilty to the distribution charge. An undercover officer who was operating online helped track shared child pornography that led to Holguin. Federal agents raided Holguin's home in November 2012 and recovered nearly 3,000 images and videos of child pornography on computer equipment. Court documents indicate Holguin taught a Bible study class to children at Calvary Chapel of San Antonio in Universal City. Investigators do not believe Holguin molested any of those children. Source: <http://abc13.com/news/man-who-led-bible-study-gets-prison-for-child-porn/297321/>

Atlanta school cheating trial has teachers facing prison Atlanta schools cheating scandal Kent D. Johnson / Associated Press Defendants in a school cheating case and their attorneys listen during a hearing in Fulton County Superior Court this month. Twelve former Atlanta Public Schools employees are accused of boosting students' scores by altering answers in standardized tests. Defendants in a school cheating case and their attorneys listen during a hearing in Fulton County Superior Court this month. Twelve former Atlanta Public Schools employees are accused of boosting students' scores by altering answers in standardized tests. (Kent D. Johnson / Associated Press) By Jenny Jarvie An Atlanta school cheating case highlights what many say is the mounting pressure to meet testing targets Amid school cheating scandals across the country, teachers are facing decades in prison in an Atlanta trial Amid a wave of school cheating scandals across the country, a landmark trial here is set to begin with school teachers facing up to 35 years in prison in one of the biggest academic misconduct cases in American history. Opening statements are expected to start this month in the trial of 12 former Atlanta Public Schools employees accused of boosting students' scores by altering and falsely certifying students' answers in standardized tests. The state's investigation implicated more than 180 teachers and administrators in 44 schools. The case highlights what many educators say is the mounting pressure to meet testing targets in the data-driven era of No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top. This scandal is a cautionary tale. If we continue to overemphasize test scores, there will be more bad apples.- Tim Callahan, Professional Assn. of Georgia Educators spokesman "This scandal is a cautionary tale," said Tim Callahan, a spokesman for the Professional Assn. of Georgia Educators, the state's largest organization for professional teachers. "If we continue to overemphasize test scores, there will be more bad apples." The trial also has opened wounds among some residents who say that teachers and administrators on trial — all African Americans who worked in low-income neighborhoods — are being unfairly prosecuted under Georgia's Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations statute. "This is a witch hunt against black teachers," said the Rev. Timothy McDonald III, pastor of First Iconium Baptist Church in southeast Atlanta. Like many African American leaders here, he said the state's investigation is a politically motivated attempt to discredit Atlanta's public schools. "Yes, there should be some punishment — suspensions, fines, even loss of jobs — but 35 years in jail?" McDonald said. "The community did not ask for this kind of prosecution." Atlanta Public Schools was once hailed as one of the highest-performing urban districts in the nation. Test scores climbed so rapidly that its chief, Beverly Hall, was named National Superintendent of the Year in 2009 by the American Assn. of School Administrators. Just a few months later, however, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution published a series of reports on suspicious jumps in that year's state-mandated test results. Then-Gov. Sonny Perdue launched an inquiry, sending more than 50 investigators to elementary and middle schools to interview more than 2,100 teachers, administrators and students. Investigators found "organized and systemic misconduct" in 44 of 56 schools and said administrators created a "culture of fear, intimidation and retaliation." The administrators used data as an "abusive and cruel weapon" to coax employees into crossing ethical lines, investigators said. Atlanta schools cheating scandal John Bazemore / Associated Press Students at Emma Hutchinson School in Atlanta leave after a day of classes in 2011. Hutchinson was one of 44 schools involved in a test cheating scandal at Atlanta Public Schools. Students at Emma Hutchinson School in Atlanta leave after a day of classes in 2011. Hutchinson was one of 44 schools involved in a test cheating scandal at Atlanta Public Schools. (John Bazemore / Associated Press) Teachers received bonuses when schools achieved 70% or more of their annual progress goals — mostly based on students' performance on standardized tests — but their jobs were threatened if they fell short. More than 80 educators confessed to test tampering. In some schools, they huddled together in offices to correct multiple-choice papers. In one case, a principal was reported to have held "erasure parties" at her pool. In March 2013, a Fulton County grand jury returned a 65-count indictment charging 35 teachers and administrators with taking part in a racketeering enterprise and other charges, such as making false statements and influencing witnesses. As scores of educators were paraded in a televised "perp walk" to Fulton County Jail, former Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin publicly questioned the "lynch mob mentality." Another former mayor, civil rights leader Andrew Young, later appeared in court to plead for leniency for Beverly Hall: "It would be merciful for this court, these prosecutors, this whole city, if this trial never took place." Hall, who is charged with racketeering, making false statements, theft and influencing witnesses, has denied any knowledge of cheating. Her trial has been postponed as she receives treatment for breast cancer. Another defendant has passed away, and 21 others have agreed to assist prosecutors in exchange for probation. The trial for the remaining 12 teachers and administrators is almost certain to be one of the most scrutinized in Georgia history. "Will the jury want to send ordinary teachers to prison on felony convictions?" said Ronald Carlson, chair of law emeritus at the University of Georgia. He noted that it was rare, if not unprecedented, for teachers to be prosecuted using the racketeering statute. Prosecutors, he said, will attempt to show a conspiracy to achieve ill-gotten gain — in this case, the bonuses. Carlson said he expects to hear two major lines of defense: Some will deny cheating occurred under their watch or by their hand, while others may admit to cheating but claim they were pressured by superiors. Going into the trial, Gerald Griggs, a defense lawyer representing Angela Williamson, 48, a former elementary teacher, said defense attorneys would try to present a united front. "The state cannot prove beyond reasonable doubt that my client cheated," Griggs said. "The state doesn't have the level of proof against all these teachers, and labeling Atlanta Public Schools a corrupt enterprise is overreaching." The Atlanta educators are not the first to face criminal prosecution for cheating. Last year, the former schools chief in El Paso became the nation's first superintendent to be convicted of manipulating test scores for financial gain. Last year, a report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office said that officials in 40 states detected potential cheating in K-12 tests given to public school students between 2010 and 2012. In California, the state Department of Education stripped 27 schools of their academic ratings last year because of testing irregularities. A growing number of

critics question whether the emphasis on testing leads to a better education. "Endless practice tests and work sheets — that's not the kind of education most of us want for our children," said Robert Schaeffer, public education director at the National Center for Fair and Open Testing, which is critical of standardized tests. In Atlanta, the new schools chief, Meria Carstarphen, has vowed to usher in a culture change to restore faith in the system. After establishing a special cabinet to ensure more accountability, the district will continue to measure teachers according to students' tests. Though Georgia has overhauled its state-mandated tests this year — they now rely less on multiple choice and include more open-ended questions — it is also expanding the stakes for teachers, basing 50% of their assessment on students' test results. After receiving a \$400-million grant from the federal Race to the Top program, the state will also introduce one-time merit bonuses for teachers in certain districts whose students perform well on standardized tests. "I'd like to say we've learned that when we focus too much on testing, and not on quality teaching, we get off track," said Callahan, of the Professional Assn. of Georgia Educators. "I'm not sure that everyone has learned that lesson." Source: [http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-cheating-trial-20140907-story.html?track=rss&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+latimes%2Fnews%2Fnationworld%2Fnation+\(L.A.+Times+-+National+News\)#page=1](http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-cheating-trial-20140907-story.html?track=rss&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+latimes%2Fnews%2Fnationworld%2Fnation+(L.A.+Times+-+National+News)#page=1)

City Council passes legislation requiring reports on foster care The City Council passed legislation on Wednesday that requires increased reporting about the city's foster care programs. (Staten Island Advance/Jan Somma-Hammel) [Print](#) By [Anna Sanders](mailto:asanders@siadvance.com) asanders@siadvance.com Staten Island Advance Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#) on September 10, 2014 at 10:03 PM Reddit Email CITY HALL -- The City Council passed legislation on Wednesday that requires increased reporting about the city's foster care programs. "We spend a great deal of time focusing on how to best serve youth and prepare them for adulthood, but the foster care system is too often neglected," Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito said. In June, there were 11,386 children in foster care, according to the Administration for Children's Services (ACS). The number of current [foster care children on Staten Island](#) wasn't immediately available, [but there were 815 in the borough as of April 2012](#). The package of three bills aims to help legislators examine issues facing the system, requiring ACS to provide yearly reports on certain aspects of foster care. Under the laws, ACS would have to disclose the number youth in foster care over age 17 who have government-issued identification or got an ID with the help of the agency. The number of youth leaving the foster system with IDs would also have to be reported. Another bill would require a report on high school graduation rates of foster children. ACS would also have to track where those in foster care go when they are discharged under a third bill introduced by Public Advocate Letitia James. "There are significant laws and regulations in both the state and city level to try to prepare young adults before they age out," Ms. James said. "There is no data to say that these interventions are working for our young people." In a statement, ACS said the agency worked with Ms. James and the Council to negotiate the legislation. "These bills will further deepen citywide collaboration to ensure improved outcomes for our young people," the statement read. The package passed 46-0. All bills were co-sponsored by Councilwoman Debi Rose (D-North Shore), [who was unable to attend the City Council meeting because of a fall](#). Both Councilmen Vincent Ignizio (R-South Shore) and Steven Matteo (R-Mid-Island) voted for the legislation. They said providing oversight of city agencies is a key responsibility of the Council. "This information is critical in evaluating whether the city's foster care program is providing a quality education and a path to adoption for children in foster care," Ignizio said. Graduation and adoption rates, as well as other statistics that would be required annually, could also help develop the foster care system, Matteo said. "These reports help demonstrate where we are succeeding and where we are not," Matteo said. "Often, they help clarify how and where we need to make improvements." Source: http://www.silive.com/news/index.ssf/2014/09/city_council_passes_legislatio.html

Volunteer Your Time to Change a Child's Life Nobody longs for a safe and loving family more than a child in foster care. As a CASA volunteer, you are empowered by the courts to help make this dream a reality. You will not only bring positive change to the lives of these vulnerable children, but also their children and generations to come. And in doing so, you will enrich your life as well. What Do CASA Volunteers Do? CASA volunteers listen first. Then they act. Volunteers get to know the child by talking with everyone in that child's life: parents and relatives, foster parents, teachers, medical professionals, attorneys, social workers and others. They use the information they gather to inform judges and others of what the child needs and what will be the best permanent home for them. Who Can Be a Volunteer? You do not have to be a lawyer or social worker to be a volunteer. We welcome people from all walks of life. We are simply looking for people who care about children and have common sense. As a volunteer, you will be thoroughly trained and well supported by professional staff to help you through each case. You must pass a background check, participate in a 30-hour pre-service training course and agree to stay with a case until it is closed (a year and a half on average). Read more about the [requirements and role of being a CASA volunteer](#). Interested in helping children but not ready to commit to becoming a volunteer advocate? [Learn about other volunteer opportunities](#). For more information, visit: <http://www.casaforchildren.org/site/c.mtJ5J7MPIS/b.5301309/k.9D58/Volunteering.htm>

Colorado foster care youth less likely to graduate than homeless kids [By Eric Gorski The Denver Post](#) Posted: 09/14/2014 12:01:00 AM MDT [3 Comments](#) Updated: 09/15/2014 10:10:48 AM MDT Latisha Alvarado Barrington, a psychology major at the University of Colorado Denver, prepares to leave the Auraria Campus on Wednesday. Barrington faced a lot of hurdles growing up in the foster care system. (Craig F. Walker, The Denver Post) Each morning before school, Latisha Alvarado Barrington and her younger brother packed an extra set of clothes in their backpacks because they were unsure where they would sleep that night. Often, they would not want to go at all for fear of being taken again. Latisha guarded her identity as a foster child. She was fearful of the stigma as she bounced among a dozen placements, at times because her foster parents thought she was too much to handle. The despair of falling behind caused her to lay her head on the desk and think of school as pointless. Public officials and child advocates in Colorado have long known that students in foster care lag behind academically but have lacked the data to quantify it, a necessary step for finding solutions. [Colorado Classroom Read: The voices of former foster care youths who beat the odds](#). Now, new research involving an unusual merging of information from two state agencies paints a distressing picture: Children in Colorado's foster care system are far less likely to graduate from high school than other at-risk populations — including homeless students. Just 27.5 percent of public school foster care students in the class of 2013 graduated on time, compared with 77 percent of all students, [according to statistics from the state Department of Education and Department of Human Services published last week](#). About half of homeless students graduated with their class. Advertisement [A deeper look at five years of data](#) by University of Northern Colorado researcher Elysia Clemens found persistent problems: • Fewer than 1 in 3 Colorado students who were in foster care during high school graduated within four years of starting. Click to enlarge (The Denver Post) • The gap between foster care children and the overall population is widening as the graduation rates of all Colorado students have grown and foster care students' rates remain flat. • About 1 in 11 students in foster care drop out of school at least once, but dropout rates are declining, a rare bright spot in the research. • Foster care students dropped out earlier than students facing other challenges, an indication that earlier intervention could help. The hope is that the bleak statistics will offer clues for helping students who not only must overcome tough backgrounds — most are in the system because of abuse or neglect, and many are poor — but also a flawed system that forces them to move constantly and doesn't provide the support given to other high-risk students. "We have a lot of work to do," said Julie Krow, director of the Department of Human Services' Office of Children, Youth and Families. "I'm glad we have the data we have now. With that baseline, we can seek to work together to move the needle in the right direction." About three years ago, Mile High United Way began a conversation with the state agencies to better address educational needs of foster youth. That led to a \$1.5 million commitment from the Morgridge Family Foundation, the hiring of a state coordinator for foster child education and an agreement to share the data. There's no way to measure how Colorado ranks nationally because apples-to-apples comparisons don't exist, said Clemens, the UNC professor. Very few states have conducted such research, she said. Former foster care youth and advocates say instability is perhaps the greatest barrier to academic success. The study found foster children had the state's highest mobility rates, meaning they moved in or out of school outside of the normal rhythm of the academic calendar. The mobility rate for foster care students was 42 percent, compared with 16 percent for all students. "That is one of the greatest policy implications," said Rebecca Holmes, an associate commissioner for the Education Department. "What can be done to help students in foster care have more continuity of school settings? And when that can't happen, what can we do to address transfers and credits?" Click to enlarge (The Denver Post) At age 4, Emily Samora was taken from her drug-addicted birth mother and put into foster care. So began a rocky path. She was adopted and given up again, placed back in the system. She was expelled from school after getting busted for possession of marijuana with the intent to distribute. She graduated from an all-girls high school that doubled as a residential treatment home. "One of the biggest struggles in my journey was it was really choppy, getting transferred from place to place, trying to go from one subject to another subject and not knowing what they are teaching you," Samora said. "You could go from pre-algebra in one school and you go to another school and they'll be on something like advanced algebra." Samora is now 26, raising a 3-year-old daughter, living in an apartment subsidized by a United Way voucher and starting work for a program helping foster care youth. Foster care children

also lack the transportation help given homeless children through federal law, said Brian Brinkerhoff, executive director of Denver CASA, which advocates for children in the court system. [SPECIAL REPORT: Trying to live, trying to learn](#) The McKinney-Vento Act of 1987 requires schools to enroll homeless children immediately, even if they lack normally required documents, and ensures that youth have transportation to school. Fostering Connections, federal legislation approved in 2008, puts the obligation of providing school transportation to foster care youth on counties. But Brinkerhoff and others say the law is not as strong as it could be and vague about who is responsible for paying the bill. More broadly, Brinkerhoff said agencies and advocates tend to naturally focus on emergency needs for such high-risk kids — housing, clothing and food. "What happens is education is sometimes not always as front and center because the basic needs are so demanding and important," he said. The research has yet to look at whether students do any better or worse academically in different settings. For instance, Colorado ranks near the top nationally in percentage of foster care children in group homes. Advocates say that could hurt academic results because it's generally ideal to put children in homes with loving parents. The data also could signal a need for more foster homes. According to the latest figures, Colorado has 2,173, down from 2,573 in 2011. Looking more closely at the numbers is among the next steps. There are also plans to involve foster care youth in developing strategies to improve academic achievement, officials said. For Latisha Alvarado Barrington, the girl who thought school was pointless, the barriers did not prove insurmountable. She was placed in foster care at age 8 after authorities found her and her siblings home alone in a filthy house with rotten food. From ages 8 to 12, she drifted through 12 foster homes before being adopted. All the while, she kept her foster care status to herself. "It was bittersweet," said Barrington, now 21. "I didn't want them to lower the bar for me. All the different stigmas that come with being a foster kid, I wanted nothing to do with. For other kids, they might benefit." The state does not require school districts to collect information on foster care status, said the Education Department's Holmes. Some counties report that information to school districts, but district policies on who gets access to that vary or policies are nonexistent, she said. Barrington got a big boost from finding stability in a single home and a solid college-preparatory program. Now a student at the University of Colorado Denver, she has plans for nursing school. "Education is obviously important, and it changed my path in life," she said. "If it wasn't for school, I wouldn't be as well-rounded as I am. Or as successful or articulate. Or wanting to be better than my past." Eric Gorski: 303-954-1971, egorski@denverpost.com or twitter.com/egorski Source: http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_26528734/colorado-foster-care-youth-less-likely-graduate-than

Plan Commission skeptical of East Waco youth treatment center [S](#)— Rod Aydelotte, file snugg harbor ra Rosalyn Ruffin, shown here at a state public hearing in July, is seeking a special permit for a treatment center for boys with mental and emotion problems. If you go What: Waco City Plan Commission meeting When: 7 p.m. Sept. 23 Where: Waco Convention Center's Bosque Theatre, 100 Washington Ave. On the agenda: Public hearing and vote on a special permit for Snugg Harbor residential treatment facility, 1916 Seley Ave. Posted: Wednesday, September 17, 2014 8:01 pm [Plan Commission skeptical of East Waco youth treatment center](#) By J.B. SMITH jbsmith@wacotrib.com Waco Tribune-Herald The applicant for a special zoning permit for a 90-bed treatment facility for troubled boys in East Waco faces an uphill climb at next week's Plan Commission meeting. City planners Wednesday recommended against the permit for Snugg Harbor Inc. during a Plan Commission work session. Commission members, who will vote at a public hearing Tuesday on whether to recommend the permit to Waco City Council, expressed strong reservations about the project. The application already has drawn fierce opposition from neighbors of the proposed facility at 1916 Seley Ave., as well as Councilman Wilbert Austin and officials of La Vega Independent School District, which would educate the boys with severe mental and emotional disorders. Plan Commission members Wednesday reviewed an Aug. 5 letter to state licensing officials from Waco Police Chief Brent Stroman, who cited a "lack of transparency" on the part of operator Rosalyn Ruffin. "When the chief of police says, 'I have concerns about it,' that kind of shuts the book for me," said Josh Carter, outgoing chairman of the commission. Plan Commission member LaRaine DuPuy said Ruffin hasn't made a serious effort to answer the project's critics. "I realize there's a need, but the way they are not addressing the concerns and issues, that concerns me greatly," she said. "Until they do that to the satisfaction of the police chief and city, I have great concerns even about a temporary special permit." Zoning laws require a special "transitional shelter II" permit for residential treatment centers such as Snugg Harbor. The council has no obligation to grant that permit if it deems the use to be incompatible with the neighborhood. Planning Director Clint Peters said the staff isn't necessarily opposed to that kind of use in the vacant former nursing home on Seley Drive, but Ruffin hasn't presented enough evidence that her project fits the neighborhood. Ruffin became defensive when neighbors and school officials asked for more information during a four-hour state hearing in July that drew about 60 people. She declined La Vega Superintendent Sharon Shields' invitation to discuss the matter with her school board. Peters said Ruffin has not been willing to meet with city staff to address concerns about the project. Tuesday meeting In a phone interview Wednesday, Ruffin acknowledged that she has not met with opponents of the project in recent weeks and said she doesn't plan to do so before Tuesday's Plan Commission meeting. "I'm just going to wait and go before the Plan Commission," said Ruffin, a marriage and family counselor from Katy. She said she doesn't have a Plan B if the city doesn't grant her permit. "I don't know," she said. "I'm hoping they do. I love working with children. I can't see beyond that." Source: http://www.wacotrib.com/news/nonprofits/plan-commission-skeptical-of-east-waco-youth-treatment-center/article_1c465fe5-1026-5795-84b9-597f6d5e39fa.html

Group home employee arrested for child cruelty Tyler H. Jones tjones@civitasmedia.com September 19, 2014 An employee of a Hogansville group home was arrested this week and charged with battery, terroristic threats and child cruelty in the first and third degrees. Terri Canady, 25, of Dream House Youth Services, a Hogansville-based group home management company, was taken into custody Monday after a cell phone video emerged of her allegedly abusing a child in her care at a Granite Street group home in Hogansville. The owner of the group homes, Jimmy McCamey, called the video "horrific" and said Canady has been terminated from her job. The Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) has since terminated its contract with Dream House and children from all three of Dream House's group homes have been removed and placed in other facilities. The incident is under investigation by the Hogansville Police Department and DFCS. **This isn't the first time Dream House has been under scrutiny. Formerly known as the Center for Creative Growth, the company owns one group home in Hogansville and two in LaGrange.** In October 2009, a youth from their group home on Ridley Avenue in LaGrange ran away, and one month later shot and killed a gas station attendant at the Shell Mart on Vernon Road. The shooter plead guilty and was sentenced to life in prison. In 2011, DFCS and the Department of Juvenile Justice also pulled their youths from the Center for Creative Growth, the precursor to Dream House. Also in 2011, a 45-year-old female employee of the Center for Creative Growth was accused of having a sexual relationship with a 17-year-old boy under her supervision. In March 2012, two boys from one of the homes stole a van from the program — one of them made it all the way to an Atlanta MARTA station before being picked up by police. The string incidents prompted city officials in both Hogansville and LaGrange to draw up new ordinances pertaining to the management and licensing of group homes. LaGrange passed its ordinance after the shooting death of the gas station attendant — and Hogansville followed suit in November of 2011. The homes have been plagued by allegations of poorly trained staff, uncontrollable boys and frequent disruptions to the communities in which the homes sit. According to a former employee of Dream House, staff members are paid between \$8 and \$10 per hour, depending on their level of education. McCamey said there are two staff members with the boys during the day and one overnight. Dream House receives a per day payment of between \$100 and \$170 for each boy in the group home, according to McCamey. The homes can house up to six boys at a time — doing the math, that's more than \$30,000 each month in payments from the state government to Dream House, assuming the house is at capacity and Dream House is receiving the maximum per day for each boy. Operating all three houses at capacity with the maximum per day, that's nearly \$370,000 yearly. A woman who lives near the Granite Street group home in Hogansville told the Daily News she's observed staff member harassing the boys in the street and said the boys "roam the streets" at all hours unchecked. "I have seen one of the staff members beat up on the kids — not real bad, but slap them down, you know? I saw him body slam him," another neighbor said. McCamey said the staff members go through a 40-hour training before beginning work at the group homes. They are trained in a curriculum known as "Mindset," which teaches de-escalation and restraint techniques. Staff members also receive training in medication administration, McCamey said. Staff member also receive training in first aid, including CPR. The Granite Street group home first opened in 2007. The dilapidated house was originally purchased as a project for the boys to fix up. Source: http://www.lagrangenews.com/news/home_top-news/50338168/Group-home-employee-arrested-for-child-cruelty

Foster care agency directors charged with embezzlement District Attorney Jackie Lacey Al Seib / Los Angeles Times Los Angeles County Dist. Atty. Jackie Lacey, shown in 2012, has charged husband-and-wife foster care executives with misuse of public funds. Los Angeles County Dist. Atty. Jackie Lacey, shown in 2012, has charged husband-and-wife foster care executives with misuse of public funds. (Al Seib / Los Angeles Times) By [Garrett Therolf contact the reporter TheftAccounting and Auditing](#) Prosecutors say couple took over \$460,000 from Little People's World foster agency, hired by L.A. County Audit found directors of nonprofit foster agency used money on real estate, vacations, big salaries L.A. County kept using nonprofit foster agency despite troubling audit

and extra staff to improve oversight A husband and wife have been charged with embezzling more than \$460,000 from a taxpayer-funded nonprofit agency hired by Los Angeles County to help abused and neglected foster children, the district attorney's office announced Thursday. The couple, arrested at their Banning home Thursday, face 22 counts of misappropriation of public funds and embezzlement. Column [Related story: The voice of foster kids Jim Newton](#) Heather Whelan has been a foster mother to some 20 children. She has nurtured broken babies back to health and worked closely with parents to fix families. She has also cringed as social workers made life-changing decisions about her charges without consulting her. In one case, she says, the... Heather Whelan has been a foster mother to some 20 children. She has nurtured broken babies back to health and worked closely with parents to fix families. She has also cringed as social workers made life-changing decisions about her charges without consulting her. In one case, she says, the... (Jim Newton) A county audit in 2011 concluded that CSJ Kidogo, the executive director of the nonprofit Little People's World, and his wife, Hitaji Kidogo, assistant executive director, used agency money to purchase personal real estate in Northern California and Oklahoma. The couple also allegedly borrowed agency money without repaying it, funded personal vacations and collected salaries totaling \$269,000, according to the audit, which formed the basis for the criminal case. "Money intended to care for children in foster homes instead lined the pockets of the executives who ran the programs," said Los Angeles County Dist. Atty. Jackie Lacey. The couple did not respond to messages left at their home and business. [Related Local California not investigating foster care complaints promptly See all related 8](#) In recent weeks, the county's Department of Children and Family Services has declined to answer The Times' questions about Little People's World, which is paid higher rates than many foster home contractors because it accepts children with more severe behavioral and mental health challenges. The nonprofit operates two group homes in Compton and two in Riverside County that normally care for a total of 28 children. In all, the agency receives about \$2.5 million annually from the two county governments. The bottom line is that we didn't think safety was an issue.- Philip Browning, child welfare department director, on why the county kept using Little People's World for foster care after a troubling audit The district attorney's office said the 2011 audit wasn't referred to prosecutors for possible criminal investigation until last year. The county auditor-controller's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the delay. Prosecutors said the misuse of funds began in 2008 and continued into 2013. However, the county's child welfare department continued to contract with Little People's World despite the earlier critical audit and a pledge last year by the department's director, Philip Browning, to take financial improprieties at contracted foster agencies more seriously. His department also received additional funding from the Board of Supervisors to increase oversight staffing. Following Thursday's arrests, Browning said he continued to use Little People's World because he believed the children were receiving an appropriate level of care. "The bottom line is that we didn't think safety was an issue," Browning said. A DCFS operational audit completed earlier this year found Little People's World met standards in most categories. But the audit noted concerns, including buildings in disrepair and insufficient planning to ensure children's needs were being met. And it noted that some problems, including at least one child injury, weren't properly reported. DCFS has been criticized in recent years for poor fiscal oversight of its foster care contractors. Only about one-tenth of the more than \$11 million in inappropriate expenditures identified by auditors at foster care nonprofits between 2000 to 2010 has been recovered, The Times reported earlier this year. County auditors found that one agency, Teens Happy Homes in Los Angeles, spent funds on cigarettes and beer — 30 cases of the latter in one instance. Another foster care contractor, America Care, spent taxpayer dollars on alcohol, clothing from Nordstrom, tobacco, jewelry boxes, fine china, perfume and a martini set, according to county auditors. In recent weeks, social workers began to remove children from Little People's World homes, but at least seven children remain in the agency's care. The district attorney said the agency would be closing soon. Both defendants are scheduled to be arraigned on Monday. Prosecutors said they would ask that their bail be set at \$550,000 each. If convicted, each defendant faces up to 14 years in state prison. Follow [@gtherolf](#) for breaking news about the foster care system. Source: <http://www.latimes.com/local/countygovernment/la-me-foster-care-embezzle-20140919-story.html>

... **Former Counseling Center Head Sentenced to Prison** | KCRG-TV9 | Cedar Rapids, Iowa News, Sports, and Weather Former Counseling Center Head Sentenced to Prison Associated Press [Photos](#) Gavel. (MGN) Story Created: Sep 19, 2014 at 12:56 PM CDT Story Updated: Sep 19, 2014 at 12:56 PM CDT DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — The former owner of a mental health counseling center has been sentenced to a year in prison and more than \$700,000 in restitution after pleading guilty to charges of health care fraud and money laundering, the U.S. Attorney's Office announced Friday. U.S. District Court Judge Stephanie Rose on Monday sentenced Angela Shae Ellison, 47, of Centerville, to a year and one day in prison. She also was ordered to pay \$724,359 in restitution. Ellison had earlier pleaded guilty to carrying out a fraudulent billing scheme at Cornerstone Counseling Center in which Medicaid and health insurance companies were billed more than 6,000 times using names and identification numbers of doctors who didn't perform services as claimed on the bills. The Centerville counseling center submitted more than \$1 million in false bills and the insurance organizations paid over \$700,000 in claims. Read more at <http://www.kcrg.com/subject/news/former-counseling-center-head-sentenced-to-prison-20140919#AxBCiBKuRlStOFZv.99>

MERCER: Death changed juvenile system MERCER: Death changed juvenile system | Saved Save Article [My Saved Items](#) [Print](#) [Email](#) 2014-09-21T07:30:00Z MERCER: Death changed juvenile system Bob Mercer Journal columnist Rapid City Journal September 21, 2014 7:30 am • [Bob Mercer Journal columnist \(0\) Comments](#) PIERRE | South Dakota traveled a long way since Gina Score. The teenager's death came 15 years ago, during a forced run, at the State Training School for juvenile offenders at Plankinton. Boot camps were the fad then for dealing with many of the teenagers in trouble. Bill Janklow was governor. It took several very hard years to realize the mistake he made. Yes, there were letters from parents who saw improvements by their children. There were also many days when teenagers caused violent incidents while they were in the state system. Janklow went to the Marines as a teenager in trouble rather than finish high school. He thought the same treatment might make the difference for others. The boot-camp approach erupted into a fierce political war in South Dakota that went for years. If you looked into the faces of mothers and grandmothers at meetings where Janklow spoke, you could see he wasn't reaching many of them. In the end, he listened to his wife. Mary Dean said Plankinton's camp should be closed. After he finished his fourth and final term as governor, a new era gradually took root. The Legislature in 2003 revived an old panel and renamed it the Council of Juvenile Services. The purpose was to bring South Dakota into federal compliance. One of the first appointees was Carol Twedt of Sioux Falls. She was savvy and seasoned in politics, proven by 20 years on the Minnehaha County Commission. Twedt is still a member of the state council. At a recent meeting, she mentioned in passing that she wouldn't seek another year as the chairman, but she would like to be reappointed to one more term. She is a close friend of Mary Dean Janklow and was a big political supporter of Bill Janklow. That was Twedt on stage in Flandreau on a snowy night in 1998 when he announced he would seek a third term as governor. Another believer in the council is Arlene Ham Burr of Rapid City. She was a Republican senator in 2003 when the law was passed. She currently serves on the council. Another is Karen Jefferies, a Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe judge, who was appointed in 2005 to the council. Another is Doug Herrmann, who was at the Custer youth facilities during Janklow's time and now heads juvenile corrections. The council connected with the Annie E. Casey Foundation to bring the JDAI (Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative) to South Dakota. Recently the state court system took over responsibility for JDAI. The council is helping start-up programs on prevention in Aberdeen, Watertown and Sturgis. It's also sending money for researching why disproportionate percentages of minority youths are in contact with law enforcement in Rapid City and Sioux Falls. Youths in state facilities are on a gradual, long-term decline, as the state court system and prosecutors divert more kids in trouble into other forms of help and care. Numbers tell the story. Ham Burr leaned over to Jefferies as the latest meeting ended. "It's working," she told her. "It's working." Source: http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/opinion/mercer-death-changed-juvenile-system/article_94b663d7-c114-52e3-8907-3fcb4d72523.html (HEAL Comment: The question is: Are the changes that have been made enough to stop the exploitation and abuse of children? The answer is likely no because not all "boot camp" style facilities call themselves "boot camps". Many are called "wilderness programs." And, South Dakota refers to treatment as "correctional health" and "behavioral correctional health". The current system under which youth are adjudicated includes state run programs such as STAR Academy. "On December 21st, 2013, Dawn Folkens drove to STAR Academy in Custer, South Dakota to see her son Brady. It was almost Christmas and she wanted to surprise him, talk with him, and hug him. But when she arrived at STAR, Brady was in a hospital: jaundiced, with blood clots blocking a vein going to his liver, and on the way to shock. Nobody had told Dawn that he was sick before she arrived in Custer. She just wanted to see her son. Within 24 hours Brady was dead." Source: <http://dakotareporter.com/category/crony-connections/> No, this is not good enough, South Dakota!)

Data reveals problems at youth detention center in Middle Tennessee Associated Press 6:23 PM, Sep 22, 2014 6:29 PM, Sep 22, 2014 [southeast](#) Teenagers try to break into a building at Woodland Hills Youth Development Center in Nashville, Tenn., Thursday, Sept. 4, 2014. More than two dozen teens created a large disturbance Wednesday night in the yard of a detention center with a long history of violence, escape attempts and sexual-abuse allegations. Two days earlier, 32 teens escaped from the facility. (AP Photo/The Tennessean, Jason S. Lee) Jason S. Lee Copyright 2014 Scripps Media, Inc. All rights reserved. This

material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. Copyright 2014 Scripps Media, Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. Teenagers try to break into a building at Woodland Hills Youth Development Center in Nashville, Tenn., Thursday, Sept. 4, 2014. More than two dozen teens created a large disturbance Wednesday night in the yard of a detention center with a long history of violence, escape attempts and sexual-abuse allegations. Two days earlier, 32 teens escaped from the facility. (AP Photo/The Tennessean, Jason S. Lee) Jason S. Lee NASHVILLE — A troubled youth development center in Middle Tennessee was having problems in the months leading up to 32 teens escaping from the facility, according to recent data. The information obtained by The Tennessean newspaper shows that between January and early September, there were 145 reported incidents of violence at Woodland Hills. That included 39 assaults by teens on other teens, 51 assaults by teens on staff and 55 fights between the youths, who typically range in age from 14 to 19 and come from around the state. The teens who escaped on Sept. 1 did so by crawling under a weak spot in the perimeter fence. Two days later, riots broke out on the grounds of the facility, with teens brandishing fire extinguishers and sticks. All but two of the teens who escaped have been recaptured. Everett Parrish, an attorney appointed to represent the civil rights of youths at the facility, said he has received several reports from youths who escaped and returned, or were captured, that physical abuse had factored into their decision to flee. "I'm hearing enough consistent stories by enough youth that I'm deeply concerned about a very small number of guards at the facility," Parrish said. A special unit within the Department of Children's Services has opened investigations into abuse and neglect of teens at the center, officials said last week. Since the incidents, security officers have lodged complaints with the Tennessee State Employees Union about violence and chronic understaffing at the facility, according to executive director John Summer, who plans to reach out to DCS Commissioner Jim Henry and legislators with the security officers' concerns. "All assaults are concerning," said Monica Middlebrooks, DCS deputy commissioner for juvenile justice. Joel Player, DCS superintendent of facilities, said officials are working to rectify problems at Woodland Hills, but he cautioned the assault numbers alone don't tell the whole story. "Just so the numbers aren't misleading, a lot of those may not be as major as it seems," Player said, noting his department's policy requires reporting even non-injury incidents, such as teen placing his hands on a guard. Steps to make improvements at the facility include retrofitting all the doors to provide more security, adding additional metal plates to doors, and installing a low concrete buffer to surround the perimeter fence. The department has also requested a security audit be performed on all three of its youth development centers. The other two are in West and East Tennessee. The audit is part of a report that was sent to Gov. Bill Haslam earlier this month about improvements being made at the centers. Haslam spokesman Dave Smith told The Associated Press at the time that the governor had received the department's information and visited Woodland Hills. "The department is working hard at our youth development centers to get the balance right between helping young people to be able to re-enter the community ... and making sure the environment is safe and secure," Smith said. Source: http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/local-news/southeast/data-reveals-problems-at-youth-detention-center-in-middle-tennessee_24102026

Focus more on environments of young children Focus more on environments of young children By Bob Pringle, The StarPhoenix September 20, 2014 Pringle is Saskatchewan's Advocate for Children and Youth. I released an investigation this week into the life and death of a toddler in foster care. After he was apprehended when he was five months old, "Jake" was moved 11 times, ending up in a foster home with 11 other children under the age of five. He was slow to crawl and walk and had not learned to talk when he died just before his second birthday. Although health professionals and a foster parent expressed concerns about Jake's development, he was never properly assessed. The coroner was not able to determine how or why Jake died in December 2009. When I released the Two Tragedies report last May on the death of another child in foster care, I called on the government to develop comprehensive early childhood development and poverty-reduction strategies to advance the goals of its Child and Family Agenda. Extensive research on how children's brains develop, particularly from birth to the age of three, makes it clear that children do best when surrounded by stable, loving caregivers, be they parents and other family members, foster parents, childcare providers, teachers or others. Government spending on family support and early childhood programs benefits society as a whole, as extensive research has shown that investments in these areas are the most cost-effective way to reduce poverty and encourage economic growth. In Lost in the System, my report this week, I wrote about toxic stress and its effect on children's development. Coping with some stress is a normal part of life. If children have supportive caregivers, they can handle stressful situations, such as being immunized, and can bounce back without lasting damage from more stressful events such as a serious injury or a parent's death. Stress turns toxic when children are exposed to adversity and the adults in their lives are unresponsive, inconsistent or absent. This could be the case when parents struggle with mental illness, addictions or family violence, or when caregivers keep changing as children ping-pong through the foster-care system. Such stresses weaken the architecture of developing young brains, with effects lasting long after the children have been removed from stressful environments. That's why it's critical that we pay more attention to our children's early environment. As noted in our 2013 annual report, we know that one in three Saskatchewan children arrive at kindergarten "not fully ready to learn," according to the Early Development Instrument. Children who lag at the age of five may never catch up. Too many of our children live in poverty, which is highly detrimental to their development. A study based on 2006 census data found that two-thirds of status First Nation children in Saskatchewan live in poverty. This is a crisis. We need to take a good, hard look at where our youngest citizens are spending their formative years. Are they in unsafe foster homes, clamouring for attention? Are they being cared for by parents and other adults who are struggling with issues that render them unable to meet the considerable demands of caring for little children? Are they in unlicensed childcare homes, with little support for caregivers and accountability for parents? Most of our children are in such facilities. Despite increases in the past few years, we still only have licensed spaces for one in five young children. That's why I am recommending that the government license foster homes and establish overarching strategies to support children's development and reduce poverty. An early childhood strategy could help us address shortages in prevention and early intervention services for vulnerable children and provide more childcare, pre-kindergarten and other early-learning programs. We have a good beginning in the government's Child and Family Agenda and its goals: Children get a good start in life; youth are prepared for their future; families are strong; and communities are supportive. However, without a more comprehensive plan to accompany the agenda, sufficient resources and greater community buy-in, we cannot meet these goals. We all need to roll up our sleeves and do better. Source: <http://www.thestarphoenix.com/opinion/Focus+more+environments+young+children/10221203/story.html>

Plan to privatize Missouri youth psychiatric facility brings more uncertainty News Plan to privatize Missouri youth psychiatric facility brings more uncertainty Saved Save Article [My Saved Items](#) [Print Email](#) 2014-09-26T00:15:00Z 2014-09-26T09:10:06Z Plan to privatize Missouri youth psychiatric facility brings more uncertainty By Nancy Cambria nancy.cambria@post-dispatch.com 314-340-8238 stltoday.com September 26, 2014 12:15 am • [By Nancy Cambria nancy.cambria@post-dispatch.com 314-340-8238 2](#) [Fate of youth psychiatric center is tied to veto politics](#) Supporters are also pushing cost-savings plan to spare the Cottonwood Residential Treatment Center. [Read more Missouri psychiatric treatment center for youth closing under state budget woes](#) State will lose 38 beds for long-term treatment, but save \$2.4 million a year. [Read more Editorial: The collateral damage of Missouri's race to the bottom](#) This is what we have become. A low-tax (and get getting lower), state that doesn't take care of its neediest citizens, even as it contemplates... [Read more](#) It was not the rescue plan supporters of Cottonwood Residential Treatment Center had in any way hoped for. Employees say a new state plan to privatize and restructure the youth psychiatric facility may be better than a previous one to shut it down. But many suspect the cost-cutting plan will leave children and youth without appropriate treatment. This week, more than 90 employees at the facility in Cape Girardeau, Mo., began to digest a 17-page presentation released by the Department of Mental Health. It detailed Cottonwood's planned transition from a state-owned facility to one run by Community Counseling Center, a state contracted agency in the region that currently provides behavioral health services and referrals. The director of the Missouri Department of Mental Health said Tuesday the measures provide a greater array of treatment options and would cost about \$2 million less than the \$5.7 million the state spends annually to run Cottonwood. "The governor indicated he would really like to see Cottonwood and the services for those children to stay open, but it really had to be done in a more efficient way," said Keith Schafer. "I think it has tremendous implications for kids." But employees — most of whom expect to lose their jobs — said they are devastated for themselves and for the children. The restructuring proposes cutting the residential center's capacity by half while increasing home-based options. "I'm concerned there may not be enough beds for kids who need them," said Jeanie Dale, a Cottonwood therapist. Cottonwood had been in limbo since June when state officials announced they were closing the facility by year's end amid \$100 million in cuts and budget withholdings ordered by Gov. Jay Nixon. At the time, Schafer said the state had no hope of keeping the center open, due to the budget constraints and projected future revenue losses from tax cut bills passed in the last legislative session. But by August, a Nixon official said Cottonwood could potentially remain open if it reduced costs and if the Republican-led Legislature allowed Nixon's tax-cut vetoes to stand. Cottonwood employees and state Rep. Kathy Swan, R-Cape Girardeau, each submitted cost-cutting plans to the state. They grew more optimistic earlier this month when the Legislature failed to override the vetoes. Within days Nixon released \$241,404 in

funding for Cottonwood. Yet, nobody expected privatization would be the state's final move. "We were really blindsided by that one," said Candy Ank, a psychiatric technician at Cottonwood. "It's not what we fought for." Under the plan, all of the facility's employees will lose their jobs. Some with longer tenure will be given priority to fill jobs at other state facilities. Others will be encouraged to apply for jobs at the private facility, though it appears pay and benefits are lower. Some employees are even being encouraged — by Schafer — to open their homes to young patients and work as "professional parents" who are paid a daily rate to care for the children as they receive outpatient therapies. In the plan, the residential facility will be downsized to 16 treatment beds — half the number of children it can currently accommodate. The state will further contract with individuals to run six home-based facilities. Some will operate "professional parent homes," where individuals are paid to care for one child while the child undergoes intensive outpatient behavioral therapies. The others will be called "treatment family homes," where up to three children can be placed. Schafer said these are more beneficial to the youngest patients who should remain in a home setting. Cottonwood accepts children, 6 through 17. The facility has been increasingly accepting children 8 and under. But Ank said most of the kids, particularly the younger ones, have severe behavioral issues that require multiple staff to manage. "Treatment homes are so hard to find across the state, period. I don't see how we're going to establish six in this county," Ank said. Swan said everyone needs to stay positive. "We didn't get the 32-bed facility back, but there are the professional parent homes and the family treatment homes," she said. "The potential is there possibly to treat 34 children. While it may not be the ultimate result of what we hoped, we're still here." The state reopened Cottonwood admissions last week. Dale said there were 15 children already in care. Under the new 16-bed system, the facility could accept one more child. Source: http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/state-and-regional/plan-to-privatize-missouri-youth-psychiatric-facility-brings-more-uncertainty/article_4741ceb5-26a8-5de5-b4af-0b25fb735a21.html

Foster Care Task Force Working to Close System Gap By: Mitch Goulding 09/25/2014 03:59 PM Text size: [+](#) [-](#) TWC News: Foster Care Task Force Working to Close System Gap Play now Time Warner Cable video customers: Sign in with your TWC ID to access our video clips. [Sign in Get my TWC ID](#) [Get TWC service](#) [Read the FAQ](#) To view our videos, you need to enable JavaScript. [Learn how](#). install Adobe Flash 9 or above. [Install now](#). Then come back here and refresh the page. Williamson County Commissioner Lisa Birkman says recent deaths like that of toddler Colton Turner show kids are falling through gaps in foster care and child protection. "There have been unfortunately a series of deaths of kids either in foster care in Williamson County or from other places that are placed here," she said. After four foster care deaths in 18 months, Birkman sent out a call to attorneys, judges, and child advocates. The result a new task force, charged with identifying problems and creating solutions to send to state legislators, like State Rep. Tony Dale. Dale serves on the House Select Committee on Child Protection, created in May to address child abuse and neglect in the state. "Where the biggest problems lie are in broken homes, out of wedlock births, drug abuse and alcohol abuse," Dale said. "I've had people at CPS tell me if we could tackle those issues in a positive way, you can eliminate 90 percent of the calls that they make." Dale has already worked with CPS to streamline the court process. Williamson County will be the first in the state to pilot a program that gives county attorneys full access to CPS' case files. "We could rally the troops to address whether a placement is about to break down," Williamson County Attorney Dee Hobbs said. "Maybe we can keep it from breaking down. We can make sure that we get the best and most current information to the court." Dale hopes smarter policies will mean safer homes for kids. "Case workers are only spending about 29 percent of their time with children and families. It's too little," Dale said. "We need to peel back some of those policies and make sure we free up as much of the existing time as possible." In May, the Sunset Advisory Commission created the House Select Committee on Child Protection to look deeper into the issue of child abuse and neglect. Recommendations from the Williamson County task force will be submitted to members on that committee in November. The committee will then report back to the House in January with suggested changes to the foster care and child protection systems. Source: <http://austin.twcnews.com/content/news/305069/foster-care-task-force-working-to-close-system-gap/>

Student Protests Are A Bigger Deal Than You Think When hundreds of high school students across a suburban school district outside of Denver, CO recently walked out of classes to protest a history curriculum, it quickly became [national news](#). According to a [local reporter](#), the students took to the streets multiple days in a row "to voice their concerns over a proposed curriculum review panel they believe could stifle an honest teaching of U.S. history." But the story has now widened into a much larger controversy. The students' teachers got involved as well, staging a "mass sick-out" in support of the students. The national outlet for Fox News has since chimed in with an alarmist interpretation of the events, which prompted an immediate response from liberal news watchdog [Media Matters](#). Now, prominent national political leaders, like potential Republican presidential candidate [Ben Carson](#), are voicing their interpretations of the events, and even organizations as well known as [The College Board](#) have seen fit to take a stand. So this is a big story. But it's even bigger than you think. Protesting A 'Patriotism' Curriculum What's driving events in the Denver suburb of Arvada for sure is a controversial move by the local county school board to, as the [Associated Press](#) reported, "Establish a committee to review texts and coursework, starting with Advanced Placement history, to make sure materials 'promote citizenship, patriotism, essentials and benefits of the free-market system, respect for authority and respect for individual rights' and don't 'encourage or condone civil disorder, social strife or disregard of the law.'" Students who are alarmed to know they're not allowed to learn about civil dissent and protest have quite rationally chosen to protest. As other reports have noted, the controversy goes way beyond the borders of Colorado. The AP course that's causing controversy has become a favorite target of [right-wing extremists](#) on a national level. Valerie Strauss at [The Washington Post](#) explained, "Conservatives have said that the new history framework — being used this fall in classrooms around the country — does not highlight American achievements or mention key American historical figures but spends a lot of time talking about America's worst period. Top officials at the College Board, which owns the Advanced Placement program, have said there is nothing anti-American about the document." An analysis at [The Hechinger Report](#) meticulously explained what exactly had been changed in the course. Apparently, most of the changes are the result of a shift from giving teachers "a list of suggested topics" — without telling them which ones will be covered on the exam — to a "curriculum that outlines specific concepts that must be covered," such as, "Africans developed both overt and covert means to resist the dehumanizing aspects of slavery." These changes are likely related to new Common Core Standards, the Hechinger analysis concluded, that Colorado and most other states have adopted, at the federal government's urging. "The College Board has acknowledged that elements of the new course align with the goals of the new standards," and the course's emphasis on "developing students' ability to analyze historical texts ... dovetails with the Common Core." But there's more to the students' protests than just an extension of the War Over the Core between conservatives and education technocrats. More Than The Core In a news program broadcast by [MSNBC](#), host Melissa Harris-Perry interviewed two student leaders of the protest, Ashlyn Maher and Kyle Ferris. When Harris-Perry asked the students to explain their motivation to walk out of school, Ferris explained, "We wanted to get the school board's attention. They're not really listening to the concerns of the community." In the story's video footage, the protest signs the students brandished proclaimed, "Keep public schools public," and "Support our teachers." Commenting on this, Harris-Perry correctly jumped to the assumption that the issues might be broader than just the curriculum, and asked the students, "What else is all of this about?" Ferris replied there were indeed other issues including "teachers' wages, which they're messing with," and "funneling funds away from public into charter schools." Indeed, student protests around the country for some time have been nearly unanimous in their raising of specific issues: lack of student voice in school governance, mistreatment of classroom teachers, and funding austerity, including lack of resources and the redirection of public funds to private interests such as charter schools. [Beginning last school year](#), students in metropolitan school districts across the country began speaking out in prominent, headline-earning protests, using their social media and organizing skills to send hundreds of their peers into the streets to protest — including previous actions in Denver. To spur the protests, students in Philadelphia, Providence, Rhode Island, Portland, Oregon, and elsewhere have formed student unions that have developed attention-getting tactics, which have spread to a national scale. The issues students continue to rail against are school closures and budget cutbacks, widespread teacher firings and wage reductions, and top-down implementations of mandated standards and high-stakes testing. The rapid scaling up of student unrest prompted activist [Hannah Nguyen](#) to write at the time, "Students all over the United States, from [Portland](#) to [Chicago](#) to [Providence](#), are tired of feeling powerless when it comes to decisions that affect their education ... They've begun to organize together, forming student unions and fighting back against threats to their education, such as [budget cuts](#), [high stakes testing](#), and [school closings](#). From mass [walkouts](#) and sit-ins to creative [street theatre](#) and [flash mobs](#), these students are demanding that their voices be heard." **Student Protests Are Not Going Away** As the current school year rolls out, the protests are likely to continue and to build in intensity as school "reform" — including resource deprivation, top-down standardization, and autocratic rule — continues to plague the public education system. As the news site at [The Nation](#) devoted to student activism documented at the beginning of the school year, the slaying of Michael Brown, an unarmed African American teen, by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri set off [a wave of student led actions](#) in schools calling for racial justice in both the education system and society at large. "On August 18," The Nation reported, "more than 100 members of the [Chicago Students Union](#), alongside parents, teachers and elected officials, [marched on](#)

[Chicago Public Schools headquarters](#) demanding the [fair funding of schools](#) and a [democratically elected board of education](#)." In [September](#), Newark, NJ students organized a two-day boycott, demanding the resignation of Superintendent Cami Anderson's who is installing a school "reform" plan that "[disguises itself](#)" as a means of giving students more school choices while eliding [lack of funding](#), [accountability from the state](#) and the [voices of students](#)." The students "[shut down Broad Street](#), the busiest street in New Jersey's biggest city, laying down and chanting for nine hours." More recently, [The Guardian](#) reported about "a spate of revolts against school dress codes appears to be gaining momentum across the United States, with students staging walkouts and other protests to complain at the way girls have been 'humiliated' and forced to cover up. A vocal campaign has emerged after recent incidents angered students in New York, Utah, Florida, Oklahoma and other states, with some accusing schools of sexism and so-called 'slut shaming'." What's at the core of all these student actions is their call to have some say-so in how they are being educated in a system that increasingly imposes "sameness" and rigid "accountability" from remote authorities who seem unanswerable to anybody. The Adults Don't Get It The controversy over a history curriculum in Colorado is an argument over a very much bigger issue. It's about how we're treating our nation's youngest citizens with a substandard form of education that emphasizes fiscal efficiency over learning opportunity and standardization over individual needs and interests. And it's about how we treat students as learners, imposing education as something done to them rather than with them. Indeed, the arguments back and forth over the Denver-area high school protests treat the students as if they were inert objects rather than active agents in their own learning. For example, in trying to sort out the curriculum controversy, Jonathan Cohn at [The New Republic](#) wrote, "Conservatives want schools to emphasize faith and obedience, while liberals are more likely to care about teaching tolerance and curiosity. You can guess how each group would react to a curriculum that asked some hard questions about U.S. history." In other words, students are passive recipients waiting to be filled with right-ways of thinking, and it's up to the adults – liberal or conservative – to decide what to populate their empty minds with. That's so wrong. Students are not empty vessels waiting to be filled with prescribed content vetted by technocrats in government and well-funded think tanks. To treat them that way is both disrespectful to their humanity and bad education that doesn't reflect [the ways we know that human beings learn](#). You call your "reform" a "patriotism curriculum." You can call it "college and career ready." Either way, you're leaving the students out of the matter. And until we start putting the interests of students at the center of any type of "reform," we're getting our education policies all wrong. Source: <http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/student-protests-are-a-bigger-deal-than-you-think/>

Sense of invalidation uniquely risky for troubled teens [Enlarge](#) Doctors and psychologists may find the measure of invalidation helpful in identifying a higher suicide or self-mutilation risk within a group of teens already understood to be very troubled. Among the negative feelings that can plague a teen's psyche is a perception of "invalidation," or a lack of acceptance. A new study by Brown University and Butler Hospital researchers suggests that independent of other known risk factors, measuring teens' sense of invalidation by family members or peers can help predict whether they will try to harm themselves or even attempt suicide. In some cases, as with peers, that sense of invalidation could come from being bullied, but it could also be more subtle. In the case of family, for example, a teen who is gay may feel a strong degree of invalidation if he or she perceives that parents would either disapprove or be disappointed upon finding out, said study lead author Shirley Yen, associate professor of psychiatry and human behavior in the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. For the study, which appears online in the Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology, Yen and her colleagues followed a group of 99 [teens](#), each admitted to a psychiatric facility because they had tried to kill themselves or presented a serious risk of doing so, for six months of follow-up. Along the way they assessed the teens' sense of family and peer invalidation as well as other demographic and psychiatric data. They also tracked whether the teens (or their parents) reported new suicide attempts or related events by the teen, or whether the teen was engaging in cutting or other forms of self-harm. Assessing family invalidation involved asking questions such as, "Were there times when you did not feel accepted by your family? Or that you could not express your true thoughts and feelings? Or that if you did express your thoughts and feelings that you would be dismissed, punished, ignored or made fun of?" There were similar questions about peers. The researchers assessed invalidation upon hospital admission. Then, at the six-month mark, the teens were asked to recall the degree of such feelings anchored in notable events. Ratings were assigned for each week of that past half-year. After statistically accounting for other known risk factors such as low positive affect or high levels of aggression, Yen found that a moderate to high perception of family invalidation proved a statistically significant predictor of a later suicide event among boys. A strong degree of peer invalidation, meanwhile, predicted engagement in self-harm behaviors in the overall group (boys and girls). "What this points to is the importance of assessing for the teen's individual feelings of invalidation," Yen said. "This is different than a lack of social support." Yen said doctors and psychologists may find the measure of invalidation especially helpful in the context seen in the study: identifying a distinctly higher suicide or self-mutilation risk within a group of teens already understood to be very troubled. Yen has worked for years to understand the different risk factors of suicide and self-mutilation among troubled youths. Her goal is to understand the key [risk factors](#), such as [family](#) and peer invalidation, well enough to produce new, effective clinical interventions or inform existing ones. Explore further: [Practicing Judaism could protect against suicide, study claims](#) More information: Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology, online.liebertpub.com/doi/abs/.../0.1089/cap.2013.0132 Provided by [Brown University](#) Source: <http://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-10-invalidation-uniquely-risky-teens.html>

Lawsuit: DSS placed girl with man who raped her By MEG KINNARD Associated Press By MEG KINNARD The Associated Press Posted: Saturday, Sep. 27, 2014 Modified: Saturday, Sep. 27, 2014 COLUMBIA, S.C. A South Carolina couple are suing the state's social services agency, claiming that case workers negligently placed their teenage daughter in the care of a male neighbor and that she was repeatedly raped over months. The federal lawsuit filed earlier this month in Charleston accuses the Department of Social Services of negligence in placing the girl with a man who wasn't a relative and had not been certified by the state as a foster parent. The girl, named in the lawsuit as Jane Doe, was 13 years old when she was removed from her family's Georgetown County home in June 2011 after an abuse allegation, according to the lawsuit. That allegation isn't spelled out in the lawsuit, and Bill Luse, an attorney for the girl and her family, declined to comment on it. At the time, the lawsuit says, social services workers "did not make any effort" to place the girl with a relative or someone who had been certified as a foster parent. Instead, her lawyer writes, the girl was sent to live with Rhett Tison, a neighbor who was 42 at the time. According to the lawsuit, the agency did not follow its own procedures, failing to run background checks on Tison or inspect his home. At the time of the placement, Georgetown County court records show that Tison had a series of debt collection judgments entered against him but had been charged with no criminal offenses. Over the year and a half that the girl lived with Tison, her lawyer says she was repeatedly sexually assaulted and, at times, locked in a bedroom to which only Tison had the key. Tison's attorney declined to comment. In a statement Saturday, DSS spokeswoman Marilyn Matheus said DSS only recently received the lawsuit. "We are in the beginning stages of the legal process, and we will respond to the allegations in the lawsuit in court," she said. In addition to DSS and local social services workers, the girl is also suing Tison, now 45, who was charged in September 2012 with several sex-related offenses, including criminal sexual conduct with a minor and lewd act on a minor. Police papers don't specifically tie those charges to Jane Doe, but they occurred during the time she was living with Tison, and Luse said they are related to the girl. The case is still pending. The lawsuit is one of several now ongoing against the embattled South Carolina agency, whose director resigned earlier this year amid escalating, bipartisan calls for her ouster. A Senate panel investigating the agency has told its acting director to create a plan within two weeks for getting certified and trained caseworkers on the job as soon as possible. Earlier this year, a girl, now 19, sued DSS for repeatedly placing her in the same foster homes as her brother, even though, she said, agency officials knew he was abusing her. In court papers, DSS and the youth homes where the children lived denied the allegations, saying they could not have anticipated the "alleged intentional and criminal conduct" of the girl's brother. Another lawsuit pending in Richland County accuses DSS of failing to protect a 6-year-old girl from a teenage foster child with known behavioral problems who was HIV-positive and admitted to sexually assaulting her. In that case, DSS officials say the agency investigated the situation, determined that treatment plans had not been followed and had subsequently disallowed the foster parent involved from having future foster children. The statement also said the foster child was regularly monitored and was in a "therapeutic" foster care home designed to meet his needs. In the new litigation, attorneys for 13-year-old Jane Doe say her mother complained to DSS that "something was not right" with her teenage daughter being placed in a home with a male nonrelative in his 40s, and asked that the girl be placed with an uncle in Michigan. The mother, according to the lawsuit, told the agency that her daughter and Tison "were acting like boyfriend and girlfriend." The lawsuit also accused Tison of repeatedly refusing to drop the girl off for scheduled visits with her mother. Luse said the girl is living with her parents again but is having difficulties trusting authority figures and is fearful of developing relationships with anyone. "It's a horrible thing, and I feel horrible about what happened," Luse said. [Copyright 2014 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.](#) Kinnard can be reached at <http://twitter.com/MegKinnardAP> Source/Read more here: <http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2014/09/27/5203258/girl-says-dss-placed-her-with.html#.VDNGucl0y1s#storylink=cpy>

Brown signs bills to help foster children September 30, 2014, 05:00 AM The [Associated Press](#) SACRAMENTO — Gov. Jerry Brown announced Monday that he signed a package of bills to help foster children in California by encouraging early placement with relatives and extending support to finish college. Among the bills Brown announced signing is AB1658 by Assemblyman Reginald Jones-Sawyer, D-Los Angeles. The bill is designed to protect foster youth from identity theft by requiring county child welfare agencies to request credit reports for children 16 years and older. AB1761 by Assemblyman Isadore Hall, D-Compton, encourages social workers to keep children with relatives when they enter the foster care system. Hall's office said the current law is not clear about placing abused and neglected children with a relative during the initial stages of an investigation. Such a move could help children avoid having to be placed in shelters or group homes. According to the Department of Social Services, there are currently 62,545 children in foster care in California. That figure is down from more than 100,000 in 2000, according to kidsdata.org, a program of the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health. The decline has been attributed to policies that emphasize keeping families together and finding permanent placement. SB1252 by Sen. Norma Torres, D-Pomona, allows counties to extend housing to foster youth up to age 25 for up to three years if they are completing college. The current eligibility cut-off age is 24 for up to two years, according to the senator's office. The Stuart Foundation, a San Francisco-based trust dedicated to the development of children and youth, found that 70 percent of foster children expressed interest in attending college but only 10 percent enroll. Just a projected 3 percent would graduate with a degree. Brown also signed bills that would help homeless youth. One bill, AB1733 by Assemblywoman Sharon Quirk-Silva, D-Fullerton, allows a homeless person to obtain an identification card from the Department of Motor Vehicles without a fee. Source: <http://www.smdailyjournal.com/articles/news/2014-09-30/brown-signs-bills-to-help-foster-children/1776425130868.html>

Foster Baby on Life Support After Choking Under Care - KWES NewsWest 9 / Midland, Odessa, Big Spring, TX: news9.com | Foster Baby on Life Support After Choking Under Care Posted: Sep 30, 2014 8:23 PM PDT Updated: Sep 30, 2014 8:44 PM PDT _Anum Valliani NewsWest 9 MIDLAND - Shock and grief surround a Midland Foster Home as a baby battles for his life after nearly choking to death. Executive Director at **High Sky Children's Ranch** Jalynn Hogan said it happened Thursday night as the foster parents were getting the child ready for bed. The one-year-old began to choke on a baby wipe. "Despite foster parents efforts to provide life saving measures and resuscitate the baby, he could not breathe," she said. EMS were called and the baby was taken to Midland Memorial Hospital. Afterwards it was determined the baby needed to be transferred to Covenant Hospital in Lubbock where the child now remains on life support, "and barring a miracle probably will not survive," Hogan said. In the agency's 51-year history, this is a first. "You're taken off guard when something that's common in your home can cause such a serious life altering event," Hogan said. Now we're told both the foster parents and High Sky are under the microscope. According to CPS a Residential Child Care Licensing (RCLL) investigation on possible abuse or neglect is underway. Any action needed will be determined after the investigation. It's unknown if the guardians were veteran or new foster parents. But Hogan claims based on what they know at this time, there was no foul play by the them. "They are shattered as you might imagine to have something like this happen," she said. "It's a struggle for all of us here. Whether you're at fault or not you know that is a concern that somehow people will perceive that you are." Now officials are just asking for some prayers for the child and his families. Source: <http://www.news9.com/story/26671854/foster-baby-on-life-support-after-choking-under-care>

Psych Meds and Foster Youth: Alameda County California Takes on a National Issue By [Daniel Heimpel](#), October 1, 2014 [Share on Tumblr](#) [PRINTER FRIENDLY](#) On September 29, around 50 foster youth advocates and mental health professionals crowded into a conference room in Alameda County California's Behavioral Health Care Services (BHCS) building to discuss the steps the county can take to reduce the overmedication of children in foster care. Of the 1,346 foster children in Alameda County in 2014, 290 had been authorized by the juvenile court to take psychotropic medications as of July 1, according to data presented by [Anna Johnson](#), the lead consultant on the county's project to assess psychotropic use by youth in foster care or juvenile custody. More than one-third (108) of these youth have three or more prescriptions, according to a report Johnson released along with the presentation. The data being presented did not count those children who had those prescriptions filled, but points to a common theme in Alameda County, across the state and throughout the country. Foster youth are being told to take psychotropic medications at questionably high rates. "There seems to be something bizarre about using this mode of treatment," said Dena Proctor, a public health nurse with the county. Proctor questioned whether or not such heavy reliance on medication amounted to "malpractice," and pointed to medical training that would allow psychotropic medications to be so prevalent. "My mouth is just kind of hanging open," she said. Three youth advocates who work for [WestCoast Children's Clinic](#), based in Oakland, joined the presentation and made it clear that there are alternatives to medication, including mentorship, healthy eating and exercise. Normal, everyday things that keep us all sane. Tamar Thomas, who experienced foster care and now works as a youth advocate, said that the young people she works with often say that when they take medications, "they feel off, or different. And that they were looked at differently." Thomas added that medication should not be the first response. "It's not always an illness," she said. "Just young people acting out." Among the attendees was Karen de Sa, an investigative reporter for The San Jose Mercury News, who has ratcheted up statewide attention on this issue through [her reporting](#) on the startlingly high rates of psychotropic medication for foster children. The newspaper's investigation found that one in four adolescents was receiving psychotropic drugs, "more than three-and-a-half times the rate for all adolescents nationwide." During the presentation, Johnson pointed to one possibly substantive step towards reducing the over-prescription of foster youth. She said that [The Medical Board of California](#) will start investigating whether or not Medi-Cal providers are writing prescriptions to foster youth based on a reasonable standard of care or are foregoing appropriate tests and a minimum of monitoring before doing so. [This was prompted in August](#), after de Sa's stories started breaking, and State Senator Ted Lieu (D-Sacramento) sent a request to the medical board asking for more information on how judiciously subscriptions were being administered. "Yes, we are working with the agencies, and will be investigating the issues," said Cassandra Hockenson, public affairs manager for the medical board. "We will be looking into the physicians involved." The overuse of psychotropic medication has been gaining steady national attention. Last May, the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth hosted a briefing on the issue on Capitol Hill, where TV [celebrity Dr. Phil emphasized the need for alternatives](#) to medication in dealing with mental health issues. Shortly thereafter Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) said the Senate Finance Committee – which he chairs – [would "play offense"](#) on the issue. Daniel Heimpel is the founder of Fostering Media Connections and the Publisher of The Chronicle of Social Change. Source: <https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/news/psych-meds-and-foster-youth-alameda-county-california-takes-on-a-national-issue/8235>

Mayor Bill de Blasio Signs a Series of Bills Into Law, Related to Youth in the Foster Care System, Tenant Protection, The City's Building Code, And Traffic Safety September 30, 2014 Mayor enacts Intros 104-A, 137-A, 187-A, 48-A, 129-A, 371-A, 472-A and 474 NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio today signed eight bills into law, related to youth in the foster care system, tenant protection, the City's building code, and traffic safety. "Each of these eight bills will help improve the quality of life in New York City," said Mayor Bill de Blasio. "From protecting tenant rights and ensuring positive outcomes for children in foster care, to raising the bar for our City's building codes and beefing up our Vision Zero efforts for safer roadways and streets, today we take a decisive step forward in increasing accountability across this administration and commit to lifting up more New Yorkers. I applaud the City Council, under the leadership of Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, for the swift passage of these critical pieces of legislation." The first set of bills requires the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) to report information related to youth in the foster care system on an annual basis. Specifically, Intro. 104-A, sponsored by Public Advocate Letitia James, requires ACS to submit information on youth aging out of foster care, including housing, education, and employment outcomes. Intro. 137-A—sponsored by Council Member Daniel Dromm—mandates ACS to report on its efforts in obtaining government-issued personal identification for foster care youth. Lastly, Intro. 187-A, sponsored by Council Member Laurie Cumbo, requires that ACS provide information regarding high school enrollment and graduation rates for youth in foster care. "Today, there are nearly 12,000 children and youth living in foster care throughout New York City. Nearly 1,000 young adults age out of foster care, only to enter back into City services because they weren't given the tools to succeed. Today, we take a definitive step towards improving the lives of those young adults through tracking them as they transition out of foster care, in order to better understand the problems that they might encounter, and provide them with the support they need to thrive," said Public Advocate Letitia James. "I thank Mayor de Blasio for signing this vital bill into law, and I look forward to continuing to work with our City agencies to improve the lives of New York's at-risk youth." "The enactment of Intro 187-A, my first piece of legislation, demonstrates our collective commitment to education and the success of all youth in foster care. Through increased transparency and accountability of the Administration for Children's Services, we can monitor the academic progression of our City's most vulnerable population to ensure that these young men and women will excel beyond their circumstances," said Council Member Laurie A. Cumbo, Chair of Women's Issues Committee. "Getting identification for youth in foster care is a step in the right direction for setting individuals up for a life on their own," said Council Member Daniel Dromm. "Government-issued personal identification opens doors to do all of the things many people take for granted, including accessing

buildings and schools, driving, crossing international borders and dealing with immigration authorities, interacting with law enforcement, opening bank accounts, and so on. I am particularly excited that the City's recently established municipal identification card program is included in this bill. Thank you to the many advocates, Speaker Mark-Viverito and Mayor de Blasio." "With thousands of New York's youth living in the foster care system, it is essential for us to ensure that the City provides the fullest possible array of support services for youth who are striving to overcome the barriers to achievement that they face every day," said Council Member Vanessa L. Gibson. "By expanding the data that's available to policymakers, the pieces of legislation being signed into law today by Mayor de Blasio will open the door to the development of an innovative mix of programs and services that will make a real difference in the lives of countless New Yorkers. Additionally, I want to thank Mayor de Blasio, Council Speaker Mark-Viverito, and Council Member Cumbo, the lead sponsor of the legislation, for their support of this important legislation." The second group of bills relates to tenant protection. Namely, Intro. 48-A, sponsored by Council Member Fernando Cabrera, requires the Housing and Preservation Department to create an information guide for tenants and owners of buildings that contain multiple housing dwellings. This guide—which would be offered by owners for tenants in their buildings—will include responsibilities of landlords related to heat, hot water, pest management, repairs and maintenance, tenant organizations, rent-regulated leases, rental assistance for elderly or disabled tenants, and housing discrimination. Intro. 129-A, sponsored by Council Member Margaret Chin, increases civil penalties against owners that harass tenants from between \$1,000 to \$5,000 to between \$5,000 and \$10,000, in addition to posting the violator's information online. "I am proud to join my colleagues and Mayor Bill de Blasio to sign these important bills into law," said Council Member Jumaane D. Williams, Deputy Leader and Chair of the Housing and Buildings Committee. "Two of these bills I sponsored at the request of Mayor de Blasio will make adjustments to the 2014 Building Code to ensure the code is solid and sound before implemented. In an effort to show how serious the Council is on tenant harassment, I also cosponsored a bill with Council Member Chin to combat harassment from landlords and will reduce the financial incentive to displace tenants out of their homes by raising violations. Though this bill is not meant to fine landlords the maximum penalty for every violation, it will give judges the discretion to levy the fine against the most egregious bad actors." "Today's signing of the Tenants Bill of Rights provides another important tool in the arsenal of protection for all New York City tenants," said Council Member Fernando Cabrera. The third series of bills, both sponsored by Council Member Jumaane Williams, relates to the 2014 Construction Code. Intro. 472-A will fix 33 minor non-substantive typographical errors and drafting inconsistencies in the 2014 New York City Construction Codes. Intro. 474 extends the effective date of the 2014 Construction Codes from October 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014, allowing design professionals additional time to prepare plans and specifications in compliance with the new provisions. The last piece of legislation—Intro. 371-A—allows for civil penalties for drivers who leave the scene of a crash without reporting their name, residence, license, and insurance information to the victim or a police officer. These penalties could be in addition to any other criminal or civil penalties under the State Vehicle and Traffic Law. Increased penalties for fleeing the scene of a crash are a key component of Mayor de Blasio's Vision Zero plan to eliminate traffic fatalities. "The Justice for Hit-and-Run Victims Act will save lives by deterring those who would even think of fleeing the scene of a collision and leaving a fellow New Yorker to die on the street," said New York City Council Majority Leader Jimmy Van Bramer. "By introducing civil penalties of up to \$10,000 for the first time to drivers found guilty of fleeing the scene of a hit-and-run collision, we are sending a strong message—if you break the law, we will track you down and bring you to justice. No family should ever suffer the loss of a loved one to a hit-and-run driver, and the signing of this bill will bring our City closer to ending this epidemic and making Vision Zero a reality." "This weekend we witnessed another callous and despicable hit and run in our city. Today we say no more, not in our city. The Justice for Hit and Run Victims Act will save the lives of thousands of New Yorkers by causing drivers to think twice before they abandon the victims of their reckless actions," said Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, Chair of the Transportation Committee. "We commend Mayor de Blasio and his administration's commitment to keeping our streets safe by signing this bill into law today." Learn more about each bill: Youth in Foster Care [Intro. 104-A](#) – A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the City of New York, in relation to collecting and reporting data related to youth and foster care. [Intro. 137-A](#) – A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the City of New York, in relation to requiring the Administration for Children's services to report on their success in obtaining government-issued personal identification for youth in foster care. [Intro. 187-A](#) – A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the City of New York, in relation to requiring the Administration for Children's Services to provide information regarding high school graduation rates of youth in foster care. Tenant Protection [Intro. 48-A](#) – A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the City of New York, in relation to a rights and responsibilities guide for tenants and owners. [Intro. 129-A](#) – A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the City of New York, in relation to remedies for breach of the duty of an owner to refrain from harassment of tenants. Building Code [Intro. 472-A](#) – A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, the New York city plumbing code, the New York building code, the New York city mechanical code, the New York city fuel gas code and local law number 71 for the year 2011, in relation to technical corrections and clarification of provisions of the New York city construction codes and, in relation thereof, repealing section 1107.5.6 of the New York city building code and section 7 of local law number 71 for the year 2011 and repealing and replacing section 301.6 of the New York city plumbing code, item 4 of section 314.2.3 of the New York city plumbing code, section 907.2.2 of the New York city building code, item 3 of section 1109.2 of the New York city building code, section 1609.7.3 of the New York city building code, section 1613.5.3 of the New York city building code, section 1613.5.4 and 1613.5.5 of the New York city building code, table 1704.3 of the New York city building code, table 401.5 of the New York city mechanical code, Section 304.4.1 of the New York City fuel gas code and section 504.3.20 of the New York City fuel gas code. [Intro. 474](#) – A Local Law to amend local law number 41 for the year 2012, local number 79 for the year 2013, local number 108 for the year 2013, local law number 110 for the year 2013, local law number 100 for the year 2013, local law number 101 for the year 2013, local law number 130 for the year 2013, local law number 141 for the year 2013, local law number 10 for the year 2014, local law number 12 for the year 2014, local law number 13 for the year 2014, local number 17 for the year 2014 and local law number 18 for the year 2014, in relation to extending the effective date for the 2014 revisions to the New York City construction codes. Traffic Safety [Intro. 371-A](#) – A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the City of New York, in relation to civil penalties for leaving the scene of an incident without reporting. pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov (212) 788-2958 Source: <http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/461-14/mayor-bill-de-blasio-signs-series-bills-law-related-youth-the-foster-care-system-#>

Sense of invalidation uniquely risky for troubled teens 07/10/2014 10:46:00 A study of 99 teens hospitalized out of concern about suicide risk found that a high perception of family invalidation – or lack of acceptance – predicted future suicide events among boys, and peer invalidation predicted future self harm, such as cutting, among the teens in general. PROVIDENCE, R.I. [Brown University] — Among the negative feelings that can plague a teen's psyche is a perception of "invalidation," or a lack of acceptance. A new study by Brown University and Butler Hospital researchers suggests that independent of other known risk factors, measuring teens' sense of invalidation by family members or peers can help predict whether they will try to harm themselves or even attempt suicide. In some cases, as with peers, that sense of invalidation could come from being bullied, but it could also be more subtle. In the case of family, for example, a teen who is gay may feel a strong degree of invalidation if he or she perceives that parents would either disapprove or be disappointed upon finding out, said study lead author Shirley Yen, associate professor of psychiatry and human behavior in the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. For the study, which appears online in the [Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology](#), Yen and her colleagues followed a group of 99 teens, each admitted to a psychiatric facility because they had tried to kill themselves or presented a serious risk of doing so, for six months of follow-up. Along the way they assessed the teens' sense of family and peer invalidation as well as other demographic and psychiatric data. They also tracked whether the teens (or their parents) reported new suicide attempts or related events by the teen, or whether the teen was engaging in cutting or other forms of self-harm. Assessing family invalidation involved asking questions such as, "Were there times when you did not feel accepted by your family? Or that you could not express your true thoughts and feelings? Or that if you did express your thoughts and feelings that you would be dismissed, punished, ignored or made fun of?" There were similar questions about peers. The researchers assessed invalidation upon hospital admission. Then, at the six-month mark, the teens were asked to recall the degree of such feelings anchored in notable events. Ratings were assigned for each week of that past half-year. After statistically accounting for other known risk factors such as low positive affect or high levels of aggression, Yen found that a moderate to high perception of family invalidation proved a statistically significant predictor of a later suicide event among boys. A strong degree of peer invalidation, meanwhile, predicted engagement in self-harm behaviors in the overall group (boys and girls). "What this points to is the importance of assessing for the teen's individual feelings of invalidation," Yen said. "This is different than a lack of social support." Yen said doctors and psychologists may find the measure of invalidation especially helpful in the context seen in the study: identifying a distinctly higher suicide or self-mutilation risk within a group of teens already understood to be very troubled. Yen has worked for years to understand the different risk factors of suicide and self-mutilation among troubled youths. Her goal is to understand the key risk factors, such as family and peer invalidation, well enough to produce new, effective clinical interventions or inform existing ones. In addition to Yen, the paper's other authors are Kevin

Kuehn, Katherine Tezanos, Lauren Weinstock, Dr. Joel Solomon, and Anthony Spirito. The National Institute of Mental Health supported the study (grant K23 MH06990). Source: <http://www.healthcanal.com/mental-health-behavior/55899-sense-of-invalidation-uniquely-risky-for-troubled-teens.html>

Concerned Silver Lake community gets answers at meeting with Vil - KTTC Rochester, Austin, Mason City News, Weather and Sports Concerned Silver Lake community gets answers at meeting with Village Ranch officials Posted: Oct 06, 2014 7:47 PM PDT Updated: Oct 07, 2014 6:27 AM PDT By Ali Killam, Reporter Email_Connect_akilam@kttc.com ROCHESTER, Minn. (KTTC) -- A community shaken by the news of a new troubled youth facility being constructed in their neighborhood fired their questions at program officials on Monday. The main concern from community members was the lack of communication leading up to Monday night's meeting, and the lack of trust they have moving forward. However, it's clear this is an issue that Village Ranch officials want to amend in the future. It was quite the surprise when Silver Lake residents learned what was being constructed just feet away from their yards. "When I heard that there was going to be a group home in town, for troubled teenagers, how much supervision they were going to have, what it was going to do to our property value?" said concerned resident, Cindy Grenier. Outrage quickly ensued after the discovery -- leading to Monday night's community meeting with Village Ranch Child and Family Services officials. Many voiced concerns over the small lot housing 12 teens plus staff being too close for comfort. "Can you imagine what all of us people are going to do around here?" voiced resident and former Rochester mayor, Dewey Day. In the end, it all came down to trust for residents, who were frustrated with the delay in receiving any information on the project. It's something Village Ranch pledges to work on. "Yes, you have a legitimate beef that this meeting didn't happen before now," said Village Ranch executive director, Scott Bakeberg. "All I can say is I'm sorry, I was wrong and I'll do whatever I can do to make sure this never happens again." Chuck Solseth, whose front yard is just strides away from the future troubled youth facility, admits the unknown is what worries him. "I just want to make sure my kids are safe in the neighborhood," he said. "I want to be able to walk up and down my streets without having to worry about, you know, thugs." After getting more information, he is increasingly receptive to his future neighbors. "I feel much more at ease now that I've heard a little bit more on how they operate," said Solseth. Still, some remain skeptical to the development and what it means for the community. "I feel like we didn't have a choice, it was kind of, here you are, deal with it," said Grenier. Those residents are planning to meet with city planning and zoning to discuss that future. Village Ranch has abided by all zoning laws. City and state officials have approved the group's plans to build on the lot they have selected. Bakeberg brought with him multiple copies of kind letters written by residents and organizations in the facility's other two locations in Cokato and Hutchinson. He said the teens housed in the facility would be there from a couple of weeks to nine months. Officials hope to open the facility by mid-February, which will have security cameras, alarms and round-the-clock supervision of clients. Village Ranch said the teens they house are very low-risk to the community, but have been either charged criminally, or been recommended by social services to the program. Source: <http://www.kttc.com/story/26719933/2014/10/06/concerned-silver-lake-community-gets-answers-at-meeting-with-village-ranch-officials>

Rikers Island is Eliminating Juvenile Solitary Confinement. Now What? By: Trey Bundy and Daffodil J. Altan | October 7, 2014 [View as "Clean Read"](#) ShareEmail [Print](#) Russ Nelson / Flickr At times, more than a quarter of Rikers' adolescent population (numbering in the hundreds) was held in prolonged solitary confinement — nearly always before being convicted of any crime. From [The Center for Investigative Reporting](#): For years, New York City's Department of Correction has worked to conceal its practice of putting adolescent inmates in solitary confinement. But last week, the agency announced plans to eliminate such confinement for 16- and 17-year-old inmates. The swift action indicates that juvenile solitary confinement has become a human rights issue that officials nationwide can no longer ignore. The changes come after several months of media scrutiny and a critical U.S. Department of Justice investigation calling on the agency to revamp its treatment of adolescents. The Center for Investigative Reporting was the first to report on the issue earlier this year. Here are some key things to understand about juvenile solitary confinement in the U.S. and the efforts to reform it. Most youth detention facilities in the United States use some form of prolonged isolation for teens. Solitary confinement often is the default intervention used for teenagers in lieu of adequate staff training and supervision and mental health services for inmates. While correction officers say solitary confinement is needed to control violent young inmates, our reporting found that teens are routinely sent for minor infractions. At Rikers Island, guards are permitted to isolate inmates for days or weeks for talking back, horseplay and possession of "unauthorized amounts" of clothing or art supplies. We know little about how many young inmates get placed in solitary, why and for how long. This is what Juan Méndez, the United Nations' special rapporteur on torture, called "a chaos of information." Juvenile solitary confinement is torture, he said, and no one knows how common it is. Because most U.S. facilities are not required to track or report their use of isolation for juveniles, the practice has flourished in the shadows. And because no federal laws prohibit isolating teenagers indefinitely for 23 hours a day, young inmates can spend months alone in their cells without anyone outside their facilities noticing. Many facilities suppress information and close their doors to scrutiny. New York City Councilman Daniel Dromm sponsored a recently passed bill requiring corrections officials to report detailed data about who is held in solitary, why and for how long, after officials refused to provide him with data he requested. His legislation could be a model for other jurisdictions seeking the access and information required to understand what is happening to teenagers in local facilities. CIR made dozens of requests to visit the isolation units in facilities that hold juveniles across the country, but only one, in Santa Cruz, Calif., opened its doors and talked openly about efforts to reduce the use of solitary confinement. Officials at the Santa Cruz County Juvenile Hall have kept isolation data for years, tracking a decline in the practice so drastic that officials from jurisdictions all over the country travel to California to see how they did it. Most corrections officers are trained to take a law enforcement approach to what often is a mental health problem. The fact that so many facilities refuse to open their doors to scrutiny points to an institutional awareness that troubled teens are not being treated for the root causes of their problems, but merely controlled until they are inevitably released back into their communities. Norman Seabrook, president of New York City's powerful correction officers union, told CIR last year that teenagers did not belong at Rikers because guards there were not trained to manage young inmates, about half of whom have mental health diagnoses. Seabrook also said punitive segregation, Rikers' term for solitary confinement, was the only tool his officers had to control young inmates. "We don't use punitive segregation enough," he said. What we found in New York City was particularly alarming. At times, more than a quarter of Rikers' adolescent population (numbering in the hundreds) was held in prolonged solitary confinement — nearly always before being convicted of any crime. The Department of Correction tried to deflect CIR's questions for a year, claiming that Rikers was not suitable for a story about juvenile solitary confinement because the facility is an adult jail, even though it continues to hold hundreds of teens younger than 18. Agency officials also said that the department had nothing to hide in its adolescent units and that young inmates were flush with rehabilitative services. In truth, Rikers, like many jails, prisons and juvenile halls, has long been a dangerous place for teenagers. Young people there often are stabbed, beaten by inmates and guards, and locked alone in 6-by-8-foot cells for weeks or months at a time. The Department of Justice's report in August concluded that Rikers' treatment of its teen population was unconstitutional and gave the department 49 days to make changes. Now that Rikers Island, the nation's second-largest jail, is saying it will ban juvenile solitary confinement, it's possible that other jurisdictions will follow suit. A growing chorus of mental health experts claims that isolating teenagers makes them more violent, and more relationship-based and trauma-informed approaches to managing teens will lead to safer facilities and safer streets. Although Rikers Island officials have been privy to such perspectives for years, it took months of media scrutiny and a federal investigation for them to acknowledge the damage their practices have caused and commit to changing them. The question now is whether others will voluntarily work to find new ways to manage troubled teens, like officials did in Santa Cruz, or whether they will wait for government probes and media attention. This story was produced by The Center for Investigative Reporting, a nonprofit news organizations based in the San Francisco Bay Area. More at cironline.org. Reach the reporters at tbundy@cironline.org and daltan@cironline.org. Follow CIR on Twitter [@CIRonline](https://twitter.com/CIRonline). Source: <http://jije.org/rikers-island-is-eliminating-juvenile-solitary-confinement-now-what/>

Lawsuit filed against former Jacksonville group home owner and employee after patient found injured | members.jacksonville.com Lawsuit filed against former Jacksonville group home owner and employee after patient found injured By [Dan Scanlan](#) Wed, Oct 8, 2014 @ 2:51 pm The family of a 29-year-old mentally handicapped man has filed a lawsuit against a Jacksonville group home, its owner and an employee for criminal neglect, according to attorney Curry Pajcic. Michael Rodriguez was severely injured Feb. 13 at Herlea's Residential Care Facility at 3334 Sheridan Road. Owner Leathia Bonner and employee Linda Pickens Ginn left Rodriguez with a broken elbow and severe road rash for 14 to 18 hours without treatment, according to the lawsuit filed Wednesday. Another caregiver found him the next day in his bed, unable to move and covered in urine, blood and pus. Police charged Bonner and Ginn with culpable negligence of an elderly person, and the facility on Sheridan Road was closed down. Rodriguez was hospitalized and underwent surgery to repair his broken elbow. Bonner pleaded guilty in September and was sentenced to one year of probation, 50 hours of community service and a mandate that she not be

employed in any facility that cares for the elderly or disabled, court records show. Ginn also pleaded guilty and is scheduled to be sentenced Friday. Source: <http://members.jacksonville.com/news/crime/2014-10-08/story/lawsuit-filed-against-former-jacksonville-group-home-owner-and-employee>

State suspends Troy group home's license Charles E. Ramirez, The Detroit News 1:24 p.m. EDT October 10, 2014 2 State officials have suspended services at an Oakland County group home for adults and plan to revoke its license. Michigan's Department of Human Services Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing issued the suspension order against Pioneer Rehabilitation Specialists Inc. in Troy earlier this week, officials said Friday. The move comes after the agency investigated the home, on Tutbury Lane near North Adams and East Square Lake roads, and found violations of the state's rules regarding the care of residents at adult care facilities. Bob Wheaton, a spokesman for the department's licensing bureau, said the agency can't divulge specifics about the allegations. However, he said the violations didn't result in death or serious injury. After an on-site inspection in February of this year, the bureau of children and adult licensing cited the group home for 10 violations. Among them: ■Staff failed to take universal precautions when passing out residents' medications. ■Staff failed to dispense one patient's medication as prescribed. ■Bleach and other cleaning supplies were stored under a kitchen sink and were unsecured from the residents. ■Two residents of the opposite sex, identified as brother and sister, shared a room. ■The door to the home's fuse box was broken. Imran Khan, who is listed as the licensee for Pioneer Rehabilitation Specialists, was not available for comment Friday. Under the order, Pioneer Rehabilitation is banned from operating the group home and from accepting new residents. It also had to inform all guardians of the adults in its care that its license was suspended and it could no longer provide services at the facility as of 6 p.m. Wednesday. State officials said Pioneer has had its license since August 2011 and was authorized to care for six adults. At the time of its license suspension, five adults were being cared for at the facility, Wheaton said. He also said the department's Adult Protective Services division helped place those adults in other licensed residential facilities. In the meantime, the agency will forward the case to the state's Administrative Hearing System. Pioneer has the right to appeal the suspension. cramirez@detroitnews.com Source: <http://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/oakland-county/2014/10/10/troy-group-home-license-suspended/17037961/>

Major Firm Closing Group Homes In State By [Josh Kovner](#) [contact the reporter](#) [Finance](#) Dispute over finances, quality of care leads firm to shut group homes. A major player in the business of providing housing and health care to people with intellectual disabilities is leaving Connecticut, saying the state isn't paying enough to do a difficult, labor-intensive job in an industry characterized by sub-par wages and high turnover. REM Connecticut also has been cited for lapses in nursing care and other services, and has been accused of over-billing the state by at least \$879,000. REM, which denies the billing accusation, was paid \$11.6 million in fiscal year 2014 to manage 28 group homes and apartments for the Department of Developmental Services. It wasn't enough, the company says, and it had to operate at a financial loss to serve about 85 DDS clients. REM is a for-profit company in a field dominated by nonprofits, but the bottom line is the same, say other operators and industry lobbyists: In an era of heightened public scrutiny of group-home staff and a large list of families waiting for openings in group homes and other programs, the lack of annual cost-of-living increases forces companies to operate on the very margins of their budgets, or beyond. REM, part of a national company that operates in 36 states, says it is leaving only because of DDS' rate structure, and that the departure after 15 years "is a last resort." But a fair number of group-home providers, large companies and small, have been able to function within the constraints. And there has been no shortage of interest from other operators in picking up where REM is leaving off — provided the rates will cover staff, training, supplies and other expenses, said Julia Wilcox of the Connecticut Association for Nonprofits. REM's departure will be complete by the end of the year, and REM workers are still staffing group homes during the hand-off. [Comments Got something to say? Start the conversation and be the first to comment. Add a comment 0](#) An industry source confirmed that about dozen operators have expressed interest in REM's sites, although DDS declined to discuss the selection process. The money that the operators receive is based on the needs of the clients. DDS establishes a budget for the annual care of each person. The more medically needy, the higher the individual budget — but also the more staff and specialized care the group-home operators must provide. Given adequate funding, "there is absolutely the desire and capacity in the provider network" to take on new work, Wilcox said. DDS spokeswoman Joan Barnish did say that several companies will be chosen to take over the homes that were managed solely by REM, and that no one company will have more than a few of the homes. REM managed sites in Winsted, Middletown, Lebanon, Haddam, Windsor, Stafford Springs, North Granby, Manchester, and Bloomfield, among other places. Ron Cretaro, executive director of the association for nonprofits, said many group-home workers haven't had a raise in five or more years, and that some companies have stayed afloat by cutting benefits. The development director of one large provider with a successful track record in Connecticut said the company couldn't stay in business without private donations to supplement state funding. In a series last year on preventable deaths of developmentally disabled people in group homes and other facilities, The Courant reported on the high turnover of workers, a disparity in the quality of group homes across the state, and gaps in training, medical oversight, nursing care and other specialized services. After a group-home worker in East Hartford was caught on videotape abusing a client in July 2012, many members of the public wondered aloud about the hiring and screening of workers, and the supervision inside group homes. There have also been instances of a worker fired for sexual abuse or other transgressions being hired by another group-home operator. Terrance Macy, the DDS commissioner, has said on several occasions over the past two years that he wants to see the emphasis shift from the classic group-home model to family-based services, in which a family or several families could receive the funding to hire caregivers and specialists. But the demand by parents and relatives for well-run groups for their loved ones remains high. There are 686 people on a waiting list for immediate group-home placements or other services, and another 1,157 who are expected to need the placements or other services within the next two or more years. Vacancies in the homes are filled as soon as they open. So REM is leaving an atmosphere of high demand, but precarious funding. In a letter to REM Connecticut dated Sept. 19, DDS officials said the state would withhold about \$879,000 from REM's 2015 funding for what the state called improper charges by the company. Asked what DDS was prepared to do to recover the money since REM is leaving, Barnish said the department "is continuing to review prior-year expenditures and, until the reviews are complete, we will not comment on potential actions." REM officials said they have been using the same accounting and auditing procedures for 15 years with no issues before now. Paul Cataldo, executive director of REM Connecticut, said the company hasn't "received a request from DDS for a payback related to prior fiscal years, but we remain confident that we have consistently complied with state reimbursement rules." Company officials acknowledged that REM was placed on "enhanced monitoring," or a heightened level of scrutiny by DDS, over lapses in nursing service one year ago. But the company said the matter was quickly addressed. "While we had successfully served very complex individuals for many years, we experienced a brief period during which our nursing services did not meet either our own internal standards or the department's," said a statement issued by company spokeswoman Sarah Magazine. She said REM tapped into expert services from the national company and partnered with a contract nursing service. "We are confident that our collective efforts have resulted in significant improvements in the caliber of nursing services we provide," the statement said. But Barnish said "enhanced-monitoring decisions are drawn from a broad overview of supports. Nursing is only one facet of a much larger support system." Barnish said REM remains on enhanced monitoring, which means DDS case managers, financial experts and other personnel have been visiting REM group homes and apartments on a frequent basis, and are continuing to examine company operations. Several state committees are working to reduce the DDS waiting list and help program providers cope with more than \$15 million in additional cuts and Medicaid adjustments that are coming soon. Wilcox, who is serving with two of the groups, said for years some group-home providers have received lower rates than others. She said one of the committees is trying to devise a way to equalize the rates, which would help some of the providers. Source: <http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-group-homes-disability-violations-1011-20141010-story.html#page=1>

How to Turn Around Troubled Teens Research reveals that get-tough tactics may worsen rates of juvenile delinquency Oct 16, 2014 |By [Scott O. Lilienfeld](#) and [Hal Arkowitz](#) ISTOCKPHOTO More In This Article [Parent Training Can Improve Kids' Behavior](#) Mike S. (not his real name) was 13 years old when one of us (Lilienfeld) met him on an inpatient psychiatric ward, where Lilienfeld was a clinical psychology intern. Mike was articulate and charming, and he radiated warmth. Yet this initial impression belied a disturbing truth. For several years Mike had been in serious trouble at school for lying, cheating and assaulting classmates. He was verbally abusive toward his biological mother, who lived alone with him. Mike tortured and even killed cats and bragged about experiencing no guilt over these actions. He was finally brought to the hospital in the mid-1980s, after he was caught trying to con railroad workers into giving him dynamite, which he intended to use to blow up his school. According to psychiatry's standard guidebook, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (now in its fifth edition), Mike's diagnosis was conduct disorder, a condition marked by a pattern of antisocial and perhaps criminal behavior emerging in childhood or adolescence. Psychologists have long struggled with how to treat adolescents with conduct disorder, or juvenile delinquency, as the condition is sometimes called when it comes to the attention of the courts. Given that the annual number of juvenile court cases is about 1.2 million, these efforts are of great societal importance. One set of approaches involves "getting tough" with delinquents by exposing them to strict discipline and attempting to

shock them out of future crime. These efforts are popular, in part because they quench the public's understandable thirst for law and order. Yet scientific studies indicate that these interventions are ineffective and can even backfire. Better ways to turn around troubled teens involve teaching them how to engage in positive behaviors rather than punishing them for negative ones. You're in the Army Now One get-tough technique is boot camp, or "shock incarceration," a solution for troubled teens introduced in the 1980s. Modeled after military boot camps, these programs are typically supervised by a drill instructor and last from three to six months. They emphasize strict rules and swift punishments (such as repeated push-ups) for disobedience, along with a regimen of physical work and demanding exercise. According to the National Institute of Justice, 11 states operated such programs in 2009. Indeed, Mike S. was sent to a boot camp program following his discharge from the hospital. Even so, research has yielded at best mixed support for boot camps. In a 2010 review of 69 controlled studies, criminologists Benjamin Meade and Benjamin Steiner, both then at the University of South Carolina, revealed that such programs produced little or no overall improvement in offender recidivism. For reasons that are unclear, some of them reduced rates of delinquency, but others led to higher rates. Boot camps that incorporated psychological treatments, such as substance abuse counseling or psychotherapy, seemed somewhat more effective than those that did not offer such therapies, although the number of studies was too small to draw firm conclusions. Another method is "Scared Straight," which became popular following an Academy Award-winning documentary (Scared Straight!), which was filmed in a New Jersey state prison in 1978. Typically these programs bring delinquents and other high-risk teens into prisons to interact with adult inmates, who talk bluntly about the harsh realities of life behind bars. Making adolescents keenly aware of prison life is supposed to deter them from criminal careers. Yet the research on these interventions is not encouraging. In a 2003 meta-analysis (quantitative review) of nine controlled studies of Scared Straight programs, criminal justice researcher Anthony Petrosino, now at the research agency WestEd, and his colleagues showed that these treatments backfired, boosting the odds of offending by 60 to 70 percent. The verdict for other get-tough interventions, such as juvenile transfer laws, which allow teens who commit especially heinous offenses to be tried as adults, is no more promising. In a 2010 summary, psychologist Richard Redding of Chapman University found higher recidivism rates among transferred adolescent offenders than among nontransferred ones. Perils of Punishment Psychologists do not know for sure why get-tough treatments are ineffective and potentially harmful, but the psychological literature holds several clues. First, researchers have long found that punishment-based strategies tend to be less effective than reward-based strategies for lasting behavioral change, in part because they teach people what not to do but not what to do. Second, studies indicate that highly confrontational therapeutic approaches are rarely effective in the long term. For example, in a 1993 controlled trial psychologist William Miller of the University of New Mexico and his colleagues found that counselors who used confrontational styles with problem drinkers—for example, by taking them to task for minimizing the extent of their drinking problem—had significantly less success in helping their clients overcome their addictions than did counselors who used supportive styles that relied on empathy. Similarly, a 2010 review by criminal justice researcher Paul Klenowski of Clarion University and his collaborators found that delinquency programs that involved confrontational tactics, such as berating children for misbehavior, were less effective than programs that did not use them. What is more, adolescents with conduct disorder often enter treatment angry and alienated, harboring feelings of resentment toward authority. Get-tough programs may fuel these emotions, boosting teens' propensity to rebel against parents and teachers. Finally, some programs may inadvertently provide adolescents with role models for bad behavior. For example, some of the at-risk teens exposed to prisoners in Scared Straight programs may perceive them as cool and worth emulating. These results show that merely imposing harsh discipline on young offenders or frightening them is unlikely to help them refrain from problematic behavior. Instead teens must learn enduring tools—including better social skills, ways to communicate with parents and peers, and anger management techniques—that help them avoid future aggression. Several effective interventions do just that, including cognitive-behavior therapy, a method intended to change maladaptive thinking patterns and behaviors, and multisystemic therapy, in which parents, schools and communities develop programs to reinforce positive behaviors. Another well-supported method, aimed at improving behavior in at-risk children younger than eight years, is parent-child interaction therapy. Parents are coached by therapists in real time to respond to a child's behavior in ways that strengthen the parent-child bond and provide incentives for cooperation [see "Behave!" by Ingrid Wickelgren; Scientific American Mind, March/April 2014]. The negative data on get-tough programs remind us that we should be wary of our subjective impressions of strategies that simply seem right or that we feel ought to work. Although we lost track of Mike S., we now know that a concerted effort to teach him more adaptive behaviors would have been more likely to put him on a productive path than would any attempt to scare him straight. This article was originally published with the title "Kid Gloves for Young Offenders?." Source:

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-to-turn-around-troubled-teens/>

Shelters too often home for Tucson's abused kids Shelters too often home for Tucson's abused kids Saved Save Article [My Saved Items](#) [Print Email](#) Respond: [Write a letter to the editor](#) | [Write a guest opinion](#) » 2014-10-11T20:00:00Z 2014-10-11T23:10:37Z Shelters too often home for Tucson's abused kids By [Patty Machelor](#) Arizona Daily Star Arizona Daily Star October 11, 2014 8:00 pm • By [Patty Machelor](#) [Patty Machelor](#) [pmachelor@azstarnet.com](#) [Loading...](#) Abused and neglected children in Pima County are placed in group homes and emergency shelters rather than foster families at the highest rate in Arizona and more than twice the national average. Group care, where several children live in a home run by a staff, should be used only for children who need therapy or rehabilitation, said Tracey Feild, director of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Child Welfare Strategy Group. "You can paint the walls as brightly as you want, but it's not a family and it's not a home," Feild said. "If they don't need therapy, they shouldn't be in a group home. They should be with a family." Putting a child in a group home should be temporary — a transition to returning home or to foster care, for example. But in Arizona, records show that 90 percent of children and teens in group care aren't there because they need these extra services — they're there because of the state's critical shortage of foster homes. As of May 2014, an average of 2,101 children and teens were being placed in group care each month statewide, with only 10 percent in therapeutic group homes or residential treatment. Pima County, as of March, had 741 licensed foster families with 1,709 total beds — and 3,356 children in out-of-home care, state records show. Some relief could be coming. The Arizona Department of Child Safety in August asked for greater flexibility with its foster-care funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the waiver was approved last week. ADCS Director Charles Flanagan applied for the waiver in order to reduce the state's reliance on group homes and shelters. He'll do that by focusing on recruiting and retaining more foster families, he said, as well as improving services that help children stay home while the family gets help. Keeping more children and teens out of group care would be a critical step for Arizona, experts say. A glance through just about any scholarly piece on the topic shows the disturbing variety of things that can, and do, happen to children at higher rates in group homes: sexual abuse, sex trafficking, physical or emotional abuse by staffers or other children. Studies have also shown a higher risk for delinquency as well as over-reliance on psychotropic medication to keep children from acting out. Pima County leads the state in group placement, with 31 percent of children here winding up in group care the first time they are taken into state custody. In Maricopa County, the rate is close to 20 percent, and in Pinal County, it's about 12 percent, records show. Nationally, the average number of displaced children in group care is 15 percent, the Casey Foundation reports. "There are plenty of states that have gotten that number down much lower, and plenty are at 5, 6, 7 percent," Feild said. Of those children in group care statewide as of May, 8 percent were younger than a year old, 11 percent were ages 1 to 5, 20 percent were ages 6 to 12, and 50 percent were ages 13 to 17. When a state relies on group care at such high rates, Feild said, it's usually because it has "greatly underinvested in their foster-care system or their kinship care." That's what happened in Arizona, where a lack of foster homes has led to a reliance on group care. Crushing workloads for child-welfare workers coupled with a stressed system often result in foster parents and adoptive parents being poorly supported and taken for granted, said Flanagan, who has headed the child-welfare agency for less than a year. "We're all focused on producing better outcomes. Is it fast enough for me? No," Flanagan said. Source:

http://tucson.com/news/local/tucson-s-abused-neglected-kids-being-put-in-shelters-not/article_6afbc558-df90-52ab-887f-00dc56181d4a.html

Families Discuss How Child Welfare System Has Failed Them Posted: Oct 15, 2014 3:46 PM PDT Updated: Oct 15, 2014 4:37 PM PDT By Lacie Lowry, News 9 [BioEmail](#) [Connect Biography](#) [lacie.lowry@news9.net](#) You need to download the latest version of flash player to use this player [Need Help?](#) The report came out the same day several Oklahoma families gathered at the state capitol to explain how the state's child welfare system has failed their families. OKLAHOMA CITY - A [new report](#) released Wednesday from three experts slams Oklahoma's Department of Human Services. DHS promised to make changes after settling a class action lawsuit two years ago involving the welfare of children in state custody. The new report stated DHS is getting worse in some areas. The report came out the same day several Oklahoma families gathered at the state capitol to explain how the state's child welfare system has failed their families. "I'm very frustrated, I'm hurt and I have no faith in the Department of Human Services," Victoria Ransom said. Ransom said she was not allowed to adopt her three nephews, and instead, a foster family adopted the boys. She said the reason was lack of income, although she was never told there was an income requirement and therefore did not have a chance to better her financial situation to meet an income requirement. [3/30/2012 Related Story: Oklahoma](#)

[Leaders Announce Plans To Improve DHS, Child Welfare](#) “The Department of Human Services is not interested in keeping children connected to their family whatsoever,” Ransom added. When children are removed from their homes, DHS said the majority are placed with relatives or people the kids know. However, Leslie Lambeth said she was not allowed to adopt her grandson after she said she passed all the requirements and background checks. “It hurts, it really does,” said Lambeth. “I could understand if I was a person who wasn’t qualified, but I’m overqualified,” the former prison guard and corrections officer said. “Very frustrated being allowed to do things for the state of Oklahoma and not for my own family, it really took a toll on me,” Lambeth added. DHS was further criticized in a new report by the three experts appointed to monitor DHS’s improvement. The state has devoted more than \$93 million so far to the DHS reform plan, called the Pinnacle Plan, but the agency’s performance was poor in several areas like: very high caseloads inadequate supply of foster homes backlog of abuse/neglect investigations long delays responding to abuse/neglect calls overuse of shelters for kids over six The DHS Director, Ed Lake, said the agency still has a long way to go before it is completely satisfied with its services, but points to progress like: decreasing shelter placements for kids under six more caseworker visits with children better trained abuse/neglect investigators DHS also said it has seen a 40 percent increase in the past two years in the number of children coming into the foster care system. Abuse and neglect calls have also increased, all of which stresses resources, but the agency said it is confident it can keep making the necessary improvements to ensure the safety of Oklahoma children. The Department of Human Services released the following statement: The Oklahoma Department of Human Services received the third commentary from the “co-neutrals” overseeing the Department’s implementation of the Pinnacle Plan, a five-year improvement plan for its foster care system. DHS settled a class-action lawsuit in January 2012 by agreeing to make good faith efforts to achieve targeted improvements in a range of areas to improve services for children in its care. Under the settlement agreement, the co-neutrals are required to provide commentary twice a year on DHS’s overall progress and good faith efforts to achieve substantial and sustained progress toward the outcomes identified in the settlement agreement. “We are absolutely committed to implementing the Pinnacle Plan in order to improve the way we care for the children in our custody,” said DHS Director Ed Lake. “We have a myriad of efforts underway which are already showing positive results. (See Child Welfare Services Efforts to Improve Services to Children and Families). “While we still have a long way to go before we can be completely satisfied with our services, we are making progress to make this system better for kids and families,” said Lake. “We have increased in-home services to families in lieu of foster care. When children must be removed from their homes, the majority are placed with relatives or people the children know. Younger children are being kept out of shelters. Our workers are making required visits to the children in their caseloads and kids are moving less frequently between placements. “As we continue to make improvements, it is important to remember that we have seen a 40 percent increase in the past two years in the number of children coming into the foster care system,” Lake said. “Abuse and neglect calls to the agency have increased as well as the numbers of children involved in those calls. This demand has stretched DHS’ available resources and slowed the implementation of our plans for improvement. Despite these challenges, we are confident we can continue to move forward and make the kind of improvements Oklahoma needs.” DHS is making smart investments of taxpayer resources and laying a strong foundation that will be sustainable over time. Working with national child welfare experts, DHS is building services and partnerships with private contractors, community partners, and other state agencies--partnerships that did not exist two years ago. (See list of Child Welfare Partnerships – Pre and Post Pinnacle Plan) Accomplishments and Progress: Shelter placements for children under the age of six have nearly been eliminated. The number of youth ages 13-18 years old who have been kept out of shelters is increasing (See chart – Youth Age 13-18 Years with a Shelter Stay during SFY) More than 50 percent of all the children being served are in kinship homes with family members and people with whom children already have established relationships. (See charts – Percent of Children by Placement Type on Last Day of SFY and Number of Children by Placement Type of Last Day of SFY) More children and families each year are receiving in-home services in lieu of foster care placements (See chart - Number of Children in Family Centered Services cases) Children are being visited by their caseworkers as required and most are being seen by their primary workers. (See charts – Frequency of Worker/Primary Worker Contacts) Children are moving less. The placement stability of children in foster care is improving. (See three charts – Placement Stability Measures) Significantly improved Office of Client Advocacy (OCA) investigative practices. OCA has made a number of changes to its investigations of abuse and neglect allegations of children in residential settings such as group homes, shelters and treatment facilities (does not include foster homes). OCA now follows the same time frames and criteria as other child protective services investigations, and these are now tracked and reported in the same system as other abuse and neglect investigations. DHS provided Child Welfare Specialists two pay raises and foster parents with two rate increases in 2014--three increases respectively since state fiscal year 2013. DHS has also significantly streamlined the hiring process for child welfare specialists. (For current pay and rates, see Rate Increases - Pinnacle Plan page, okdhs.org website) Although the number of foster homes recruited by the private partners has not met Pinnacle Plan targets, the quality of the homes is high. Foster families are being better supported and the children are experiencing positive placement changes. Challenges: Adequate supply of foster homes – Contracts with private foster care partners have been in effect since August 2013; however, agencies were not able to begin recruitment efforts in earnest until November 2013. (DHS did not send referrals to foster care partner agencies until they were ready to begin work, contrary to the commentary.) The agencies have reported facing similar challenges DHS faces in recruiting and hiring high-quality staff. Foster care partners report a collaborative working relationship with DHS as well as frequent and high quality communication. DHS has worked continuously with agencies to quickly remove any barriers and solve problems as they are encountered. High caseloads for staff – Increased demands on the child welfare system have made it more difficult to reduce workloads. However, several significant initiatives are underway to reduce entries to foster care and help children already in care to reunify with their families or reach adoption faster. Since 2012, 772 additional child welfare specialists and assistants have been added to the workforce. In addition, supervisor to worker ratios have been reduced to 1:5, experienced specialists have been trained to mentor new employees, and smaller caseloads are being assigned to new workers. The hiring process has been dramatically streamlined and overtime compensation widely approved to support staff in handling cases. Child Welfare Services has also recently engaged the Children’s Mental Health Services Research Center of the University of Tennessee to implement research-based methods to improve service quality, child outcomes, and organizational support of its front line employees. (See line graph showing the increase in numbers of CWS staff). Shelter use for children older than six years old – DHS agrees that all children need to be in family-like settings. DHS has several initiatives to address this including the expansion of intensive in-home prevention and reunification services to keep more children home safely with their families in lieu of foster care placements; continuing to work with foster care partner agencies on the recruitment of more foster homes. Backlog of child abuse investigations – DHS, along with the assistance of Eckerd, reduced the backlog of Child Protective Services assessments and investigations from almost 3,600 a year ago to 1,200 today and the work continues. Source: <http://www.news9.com/story/26797780/families-talk-about-how-child-welfare-system-has-failed-them>

Group-care trend worries Arizona auditor general Group-care trend worries Arizona auditor general Saved Save Article [My Saved Items](#) [Print Email](#) Respond: [Write a letter to the editor](#) | [Write a guest opinion](#) < > 2014-10-16T00:00:00Z 2014-10-16T13:59:51Z Group-care trend worries Arizona auditor general By Emily Bregel Arizona Daily Star Arizona Daily Star October 16, 2014 12:00 am • By [Emily Bregel](#) [Emily Bregel](#) ebregel@azstarnet.com [Follow @emilybregel](#) [Loading...](#) Related Documents [Auditor General report](#) Tennessee’s experience Tennessee reduced its congregate care use from 22 percent in January 2001 to 9 percent in January 2009 in part by requiring providers with congregate care contracts to maintain an array of placement options to best meet children’s needs. The state paid the providers the same no matter where they placed the child, giving an incentive to place children in family-based settings because they are less expensive. SOURCE: “A Special Report to the Department of Child Safety,” Arizona Office of the Auditor General Spending on congregate care in Arizona has nearly doubled since 2009, with the state spending \$79 million to care for children in group homes, emergency shelters and residential treatment centers in fiscal year 2013, a new state report says. “Not only is congregate care expensive ... but it may adversely affect the children because it delays permanency and may pose threats to a child’s safety and well-being,” said the report, released Wednesday by the Arizona Office of the Auditor General. Arizona’s increased reliance on congregate care is due to a shortage of foster homes, as well as systemic problems at the Arizona Department of Economic Security, or DES, said the report. Up until this year, the DES oversaw Child Protective Services until details emerged of 6,600 reports of abuse that were never investigated. This year, the Department of Child Safety was created to oversee child welfare, and much of the DES staff transferred to the new department, overseen by Charles Flanagan. The report noted systemic departmental problems over the past five years, including: Inadequate planning for how to get children into permanent placements with adoptive families; Assumptions that older children in care may not be adoptable; Poorly matched children and foster homes; Overuse of congregate-care placements, suggesting that the CPS staff was overwhelmed by a surge in kids coming into state custody. That resulted in “high staff caseloads, caseload backlogs, high staff turnover, ineffective management practices, insufficient staff training and a culture that allowed individual judgment to substitute for standardized processes,” the report said. Smaller caseloads would allow employees to be more successful in finding permanent homes for children, the report said. The report recommends that Department of Child Safety learn from the experience of other states to reverse

these worrisome trends. The agency did not respond to a request for comment Wednesday afternoon. **ARIZONA IS AN OUTLIER** While most other states have seen reductions in the number of children in state custody, the foster population in Arizona has exploded, including in congregate care, said the report, which was conducted in response to a legislative request issued last year. Arizona's foster-care population has surged by 56 percent, from 10,100 in late 2009 to 15,750 in March 2014. In that time, the population in congregate care grew by 73 percent. Children are also staying in these group settings for longer, the report found. As the Star reported Sunday, Pima County places more children in congregate care than any other county in Arizona. In Pima County, 31 percent of children are put in group care the first time they are taken into state custody — more than twice the national average. Group homes are the least ideal placement for vulnerable children who have been removed from their families due to abuse and neglect, child advocates say. "Kids do not belong in congregate care. It's not a family. It's an institution in a neighborhood," Kris Jacober, foster parent and executive director of the Arizona Association for Foster and Adoptive Families, said Wednesday. Congregate care can cause lasting damage to children, the report said. "Studies indicate that children who were cared for in congregate-care settings were more likely to be arrested, continue problematic behaviors and have lower levels of education and more substance-abuse problems than children cared for in foster homes," the report said. They are also more vulnerable to being abused by staff members or other children, studies show. Congregate care is also much more expensive than foster care. A congregate-care placement can cost the state \$40 to \$327 per day, depending on the placement type, the report said. Regular foster families now get less than \$20 per day, following 2009 budget cuts. About 15 percent of the Department of Child Safety's annual budget is eaten up by placements in congregate care, says the state's application for a waiver from some funding guidelines, which was recently approved by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The waiver gives the state more flexibility in its use of federal foster-care funds, allowing the state to redirect money to prevention and interventions, the Star reported Sunday. The goal is to reduce the flow of children into the system and keep more families intact. **CUTS TO PREVENTION** The Legislature's deep cuts to preventive services and support for families, like child-care subsidies, has resulted in a surge of children coming into state custody, Eric Schindler, CEO of Child and Family Resources in Tucson, said Wednesday. Most of the new CPS cases following the budget cuts were reports of neglect, not physical abuse. "You reap what you sow," Schindler said. "There's nothing new here (in the report). We're just finally getting more media attention and more appropriate shining of the flashlight on what happens when you slash prevention, early intervention and the support services that used to be part of our social safety net." **FOSTER-HOME SHORTAGE** The shortage of foster homes is directly related to the increase of kids ending up in group homes, the report says. While Arizona's population of kids in state custody has grown by 56 percent since 2009, the number of Arizona foster families has only increased by 9 percent, the report said. Foster families are not well-supported — financially or otherwise — by the state, Jacober says. In 2009, foster-family reimbursements rates and allowances for clothing and other needs were put on the chopping block. The budget cuts strained foster families, who also struggle with getting timely responses from overwhelmed or inexperienced CPS caseworkers, Jacober said. Many struggle to secure behavioral health care for their troubled foster kids. Annual allotments for emergency clothing were cut from \$300 to \$150 a year in 2009. "You can't make that happen without going into your own pocket," Jacober said. Last year the Legislature restored some funding for preventive and family support services, but it wasn't nearly enough, said Linda Lopez, director of Child and Family Services for the Easter Seals Blake Foundation in Tucson. "It was a band-aid for a gaping wound," she said. "It's absolutely imperative that they get that funding restored for prevention services. Otherwise, we will never get ahead of this problem." Contact reporter Emily Bregel at ebregel@tucson.com or 807-7774. Source: http://tucson.com/news/group-care-trend-worries-arizona-auditor-general/article_2e3f36b7-d46f-511a-9a18-2d6dda4e78d9.html

Blue Sky group home now facing backlash in Botwood [CBC News](#) Posted: Oct 17, 2014 3:49 PM NT Last Updated: Oct 17, 2014 3:49 PM NT Blue Sky CEO Anne Whelan, seen here in a file photo, hopes a new location can be found in the Town of Botwood to operate a group home for children and youth. (CBC) Related Stories [Stephenville taking Blue Sky appeal decision to Supreme Court](#) [Blue Sky application back with Stephenville council](#) [Blue Sky wins appeal for Stephenville youth home](#) The Blue Sky group, which operates group homes for children and youth in the province, is facing criticism in yet another municipality. This time it's the Town of Botwood, which has ordered the private company to end its operations at a group home in town. This follows similar disputes in Stephenville and Marystown. In May, the company set up an emergency placement group home on a quiet street in Botwood, but shortly after the first youth began arriving, so too did the conflict with area residents. Mayor Jerry Dean said there have been instances of vandalism, and people in the neighbourhood feel unsafe. "We find ourselves here today, just one too many times, seeing the RCMP called up there, for things just not going well, and for that operation not settling in as we had hoped it would," said the mayor. The town council agreed the home could operate on a six-month provisional permit, but the town has now revoked the permit. Officials with Blue Sky chose not to appeal the decision. CEO Anne Whelan acknowledged that all has not gone well, referring to what she described as "significant incidents in recent weeks that were unusual in their severity." Whelan said she is in talks with town officials, and hopes to find another suitable home in a different part of the town. Meanwhile, Mayor Dean lashed out at the provincial government for its handling of the situation. He said the government awarded a contract to the company to establish groups homes in the province, and required that the company sign a "non-disclosure agreement" that prevented it from revealing its plans until the just before the home was ready to go into operation. "Government made no effort to engage us," he said. "It's so very disappointing for a government that has always talked about transparency. "I'm at a loss as to why they didn't see it coming," added Dean, who has publicly stated his intention to seek the Liberal nomination in the riding of Exploits for the next provincial general election. In a statement issued to CBC News, the Progressive Conservative government said the company and municipalities must work together to obtain the necessary permits. According to its website, Blue Sky employs 300 people, and is the first accredited child and youth care residential program provider in the province. Source: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/blue-sky-group-home-now-facing-backlash-in-botwood-1.2803689>

Disabled child's July death due to injuries from 2008, official rules By [Doug Donovan](#), The Baltimore Sun [contact the reporter](#) [Trials and Arbitration](#) [Shootings](#) [Child Abuse](#) [Johns Hopkins Hospital](#) Death of disabled foster child under care of LifeLine group home caused by severe abuse more than 6 years ago. The state medical examiner has ruled that the death of 10-year-old Damaud Martin in a state-regulated group home in July was caused by complications from cerebral palsy and past head trauma — severe conditions stemming from abuse the Baltimore boy suffered more than six years ago. With the medical examiner's autopsy complete, Baltimore police and prosecutors are investigating the disabled foster child's death as a homicide. The findings, which were released this week, will also factor into a probe by Maryland health regulators into the death. [Related story: Disabled foster child's death ruled a homicide](#) [Doug Donovan](#) The July death of a 10-year-old disabled foster child has been ruled a homicide / six years after the Baltimore city boy's mother was accused of shaking him into a coma-like state, Baltimore police announced Monday. The July death of a 10-year-old disabled foster child has been ruled a homicide / six years after the Baltimore city boy's mother was accused of shaking him into a coma-like state, Baltimore police announced Monday. ([Doug Donovan](#)) While it is not unusual for a medical examiner to say a recent death was caused by injuries suffered years earlier, most of those cases in Baltimore involve shooting victims. In a similar high-profile case, the death of James Brady in August was ruled a homicide, even though the shooting occurred during the assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan in Washington in 1981. Allie Phillips, deputy director for the National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse, said there is no data on how many cases like Damaud's are investigated and prosecuted as homicides. "It certainly doesn't happen very often," Phillips said. "It's difficult to match what happened when the child was 3 to what has happened now seven years later." But "it absolutely can be done" based on good medical testimony, she added. The Baltimore state's attorney's office, the medical examiner and city police declined to comment because of the ongoing homicide investigation and the probe by health regulators. Damaud's mother, Tamekia Martin — who was convicted in 2009 of child abuse that led to her son's injuries — continued to maintain her innocence Thursday. "I didn't do it," she said. [Related Sun Investigates](#) [Sun Investigates: LifeLine, Inc.](#) [See all related 8](#) Police have made no arrest in the new investigation, and Martin, 34, said authorities have not informed her about the homicide determination. If they do, she said, she'll be ready to name the person who is responsible for the boy's injuries. "Everybody's coming after me, but I didn't hurt him," she said. Cerebral palsy is typically a condition children are born with, but it can be triggered by child abuse that causes severe brain damage, as in shaken baby syndrome, medical experts say. A doctor at Johns Hopkins Hospital who cared for Damaud in 2008 told police and prosecutors then that the boy's "brain injury and the bleeding on his brain were consistent with child abuse [and] shaken baby syndrome," according to a police report. The boy was 3 years old. Damaud Martin **MARTIN FAMILY PHOTO** / Baltimore Sun The death of Damaud Martin, shown in this 2008 photo, was caused by injuries sustained years ago, according to the state medical examiner. The death of Damaud Martin, shown in this 2008 photo, was caused by injuries sustained years ago, according to the state medical examiner. (**MARTIN FAMILY PHOTO** / Baltimore Sun) In May 2009, Martin agreed to an Alford plea, which means she did not admit guilt but acknowledged there was enough evidence to convict her. Court documents show that she and her daughter, then 7, told police that Martin's friend pushed Damaud down the stairs at

their Northeast Baltimore rowhouse near Clifton Park. Martin, who was jailed for 13 months after being arrested, said she agreed to the plea deal to end her incarceration. Her conviction resulted in a suspended 15-year sentence. "I didn't know it was going to cost me my life," she said, referring to losing custody of her children. She and her mother, Rosita Martin, hired an attorney in August and he has notified the state of their intention to take legal action against the government and LifeLine, the state contractor that ran the group home. [cComments Got something to say? Start the conversation and be the first to comment. Add a comment 0](#) At the time of Damaud's death July 2, regulators were in the process of removing 10 disabled foster children from LifeLine's care. Weeks earlier, state inspectors had told LifeLine that they were going to revoke its license because of problems with care. The company's chief executive responded by saying that she was closing the home because state payments were too low. One of the problems at LifeLine that inspectors found before Damaud's death was inadequate staffing. A Baltimore Sun investigation showed that the state awarded contracts worth millions of dollars to the company despite numerous issues: problems with medical care, a founder imprisoned for arson, unpaid taxes, and police reports of abuse and neglect unknown to regulators. Dr. Mary Case, chief medical examiner for four counties around St. Louis, has studied the issue of abusive head trauma for most of her four-decade career. "They're not very common," Case said. "We'll see four or five traumatic head injuries a year." Most result in death shortly after the injuries, she said. Case has seen three deaths similar to Damaud's in the past five years. The most recent — and extreme — came last week: She ruled a 21-year-old man's death a homicide stemming from a brain injury he suffered when he was 5 months old. "It's much less common to have them survive" for years, she said. "There's no time limitation. If the injuring event was done by another person it's considered a homicide." She said such injured children — who survive with feeding and breathing tubes — are vulnerable to pneumonia, seizures and other conditions. While those conditions might lead to death, she said, the cause still stems from the original injuries. Martin's comments about her son's injuries have changed over the years. At one point, she said in an interview that he hit his head on a curb after being pushed off a bike and that he also fell down stairs. She later said in court papers that someone who lived with her pushed him down the stairs. At her 2008 arraignment, she pleaded not guilty. Her public defender wrote in a motion for bail reduction that Martin's daughter, Sandoria, "gave four different versions of what happened to her brother" but that "all were consistent" in blaming another adult in the home for causing the injuries. The motion said Martin lied to police about being the only adult at home because she "was terrified" of the other person. On Oct. 15, 2008, she sent a handwritten letter to the court stating why her \$850,000 bail should be reduced. "I didn't do any wrong to my son," she wrote. "I didn't hurt him so why do I have to pay for something that I didn't do." In August 2013, she asked the court to reconsider her conviction, writing that "the attorneys misrepresented my case. I am not guilty." The court rejected the motion. ddonovan@baltsun.com Source: <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/bs-md-child-abuse-cause-20141016-story.html>

Troubles hit Maryland group home for disabled children Second Family Inc. CHIAKI KAWAJIRI, For The Baltimore Sun Joseph Labule, the executive director of foster care provider Second Family, stands in front of one of the company's group homes in 2004. In the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2013, Labule received total compensation of \$187,000 for Second Family-related work. Joseph Labule, the executive director of foster care provider Second Family, stands in front of one of the company's group homes in 2004. In the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2013, Labule received total compensation of \$187,000 for Second Family-related work. (CHIAKI KAWAJIRI, For The Baltimore Sun) By [Doug Donovan](#), The Baltimore Sun [contact the reporter Laws and Legislation Theft Homes Real Estate Charity Law Enforcement](#) Prince George's County group home employees fired for abusing autistic child. "These children can't speak for themselves." More troubles at Maryland group homes for disabled children. A Prince George's Co. group home was cited 118 times in 2011, 2012 and 2014 and continued to operate. When state officials removed several disabled foster children from an Anne Arundel County group home in early July — after a 10-year-old boy died there — they placed most of the children with Second Family, a Prince George's County nonprofit that is Maryland's largest contractor for such care. Three weeks later, state lawmakers gathered to discuss findings of a Baltimore Sun investigation that revealed long-standing problems with the company that ran the troubled Anne Arundel facility. One lawmaker asked regulators if the children's new homes were better managed. "As far as I'm aware, we're certainly comfortable with the state of those providers," Maryland Health Secretary Dr. Joshua Sharfstein told the two dozen legislators. "This situation has led me to ask the inspection office to make sure, to take a much closer look." [Related story: Group home for disabled children struggled to provide adequate care Doug Donovan, The Baltimore Sun LifeLine, which landed millions in state contracts, had been disciplined for inadequate care LifeLine, which landed millions in state contracts, had been disciplined for inadequate care \(Doug Donovan, The Baltimore Sun \)](#) But The Sun's ongoing examination shows that the new homes, run by Second Family of Landover, have had their own problems — including neglect and abuse incidents that led to three employees being fired this year, before Sharfstein spoke. Two of those employees had hit and kicked a mute autistic child, according to a state inspection report. State officials say Second Family, which has been awarded about \$69 million in state contracts since 2002, has generally complied with health and safety regulations. They also say they are still reviewing its performance "to identify new ways to promote high-quality services." After the review they plan to make recommendations to the General Assembly to strengthen oversight of all group homes for disabled foster children who require around-the-clock nursing care. Advocates for foster children say such a review is overdue. [Related Readers Respond It takes more than money to care for vulnerable children and adults See all related 8](#) "These children can't speak for themselves," said Joan Little, chief attorney for Maryland Legal Aid Bureau's Baltimore child advocacy unit. "Once you know there's been a breach of confidence, the state shouldn't rely on the reporting of the [providers]. They should be digging deeper." The Sun's examination of inspection, police, licensing and other reports obtained through Maryland Public Information Act requests found: •In late January, two Second Family employees were captured on video slapping, kicking and pushing a "non-verbal" autistic child, an inspection report shows. After the workers were terminated, state regulators issued a citation to Second Family. Then, on July 16, another employee was terminated for an incident in which neglect resulted in a child's injury, state records show. These children can't speak for themselves. Once you know there's been a breach of confidence, the state shouldn't rely on the reporting of the [providers]. - Joan Little, chief attorney for Maryland Legal Aid Bureau's Baltimore child advocacy unit •Half of Second Family's group homes were owned by its three top executives even after a state rule prohibited lease-back deals as of January 2008. The properties were eventually sold to a Bowie firm with ties to the charity. After The Sun informed state officials about the real estate deals, the matter was referred to the Health Department's inspector general to "determine whether there is a violation of the regulation," an agency spokesman said. •In June, the state approved a Second Family budget that boosted salaries — the biggest raises went to three top executives — while maintaining decreased spending on food, clothing and other personal expenses for disabled foster children living at the nonprofit's homes. The charity acknowledged that spending on some personal expenses was below state guidelines. [cComments CORRUPTION larrygr3 at 2:55 PM October 20, 2014 Add a comment See all comments 1](#) •Second Family's executive director, Joseph Labule — who earned \$155,343 at the nonprofit last year — pleaded guilty in 2001 to theft for stealing \$25,000 in workers' compensation pay. He received a one-year suspended sentence and repaid the money seven years later after a state agency garnished his wages. Labule did not disclose the conviction, as required by state rules, when Second Family applied for a \$25 million state contract last year. Second Family executives did not respond to requests for comment, but Kimberly Tarver, a lawyer for the organization, said the state contractor has abided by all state rules and regulations. None of the charity's executives was personally benefiting from real estate deals, she said, and the nonprofit was reviewing whether Labule's conviction had been expunged. She also said spending cuts were driven by a reduction in the number of children Second Family was serving. Questions about state oversight of group homes for disabled foster children arose this summer, after The Sun revealed years of problems at LifeLine, formerly Maryland's second-largest provider. The Sun investigation showed that the state awarded contracts worth millions of dollars to LifeLine despite numerous issues — problems with medical care, a founder imprisoned for arson, unpaid taxes and police reports of abuse and neglect unknown to regulators. The state moved the children after it determined that a child at LifeLine's group home in Anne Arundel County was receiving inadequate health care. Damaud Martin, who was from Baltimore, died July 2, a day before the last of the children was removed. State and local authorities continue to investigate his death, which has been ruled a homicide. Last week, the state medical examiner ruled that Damaud's death was caused by complications from cerebral palsy and past head trauma — conditions stemming from abuse suffered more than six years ago, well before he arrived at LifeLine's group home. Last year the state Board of Public Works, which includes Gov. Martin O'Malley, awarded a total of \$191 million in contracts for 794 group home beds, including those for foster children whose disabilities leave them entirely reliant on machines to breathe and eat. The group homes are only paid for beds that are occupied. Of that amount, the state authorized \$35 million for two-year contracts with Second Family, LifeLine and two small operators to provide 62 beds for disabled foster children in apartments or homes with around-the-clock nursing care. With LifeLine's closure, Second Family is now authorized to oversee nearly 85 percent of the beds approved last year. Its 10 group homes for children are located in Capitol Heights and Bowie, state records show. Advocates acknowledge that moving medically fragile group home residents is not the best option — it can be physically dangerous and mentally taxing for juveniles who have little stability in their lives. And with only three providers in Maryland, regulators should do more to improve oversight because there are limited alternatives for the children, advocates say. Advocates said The Sun's revelations about LifeLine and Second Family illustrate lax

state oversight that they have seen for years, even as the state has significantly reduced the number of foster children in group homes by emphasizing policies and programs that try to keep the children with their families. "You'd think with there being so few group homes left [regulators would] know exactly what's going on," said Melissa Rock, child welfare director for Advocates for Children and Youth. Second Family was founded in 1998 by Labule's wife, Shilda Frost Labule, who serves as president. Her sister, Marion Hailey, is clinical coordinator. Together the three registered nurses are the charity's top-paid employees — earning \$488,000 for the year ending June 30, 2013, tax records show. Unlike the situation with LifeLine, state inspection reports do not indicate problems with medical care at Second Family, according to documents the state has released under the Public Information Act. Some inspection reports, including those from 2013, have not yet been released. [Related Readers Respond It takes more than money to care for vulnerable children and adults See all related 8](#) Sharfstein and state Secretary of Human Resources Ted Dallas told lawmakers in July that their regulators need to improve oversight of health care providers to ensure that management problems do not jeopardize care. They are working with lawmakers to develop intermediate penalties that fall between written citations and the extreme step of closing facilities and transferring children. In an Aug. 28 letter to state Sen. Joan Carter Conway, a Baltimore Democrat who called for the July briefing about LifeLine, Sharfstein wrote that his department is reviewing all of its annual inspections, complaints and self-reported incidents for Second Family and the two smaller providers. He added that the multiple inspections over the years demonstrate his agency's "close oversight" to "protect the health and well-being" of the children. When testifying before lawmakers, Sharfstein said regulators rely on providers to police themselves. [cComments CORRUPTION larrygr3 at 2:55 PM October 20, 2014 Add a comment See all comments 1](#) "It's not our job to inspect quality. The quality has to come from the providers," he said at the briefing. "And so we have expectations for what they do when they see a problem. Problems happen. But we want to see that they have identified it, they've studied it." But advocates have said the state relies too heavily on self-reporting and some lawmakers called for more surprise inspections, rather than the scheduled visits by inspectors from Sharfstein's Office of Health Care Quality. In inspections of Second Family's group homes for children in 2011, 2012 and 2014, regulators cited the nonprofit 118 times for various breaches of state rules. Inspectors examined records related to 24 of the 112 children who lived there during those years. State regulators did not conduct an annual inspection in 2013 but did investigate complaints and incidents reported by Second Family that year. The formal inspections cited Second Family for a range of issues. For example, the charity could not show that it had trained many of its employees in "approved forms of discipline," and in 2012 it was cited for failing to report an "abuse/neglect" incident that resulted in an emergency room visit for a "severe injury." Inspectors cited Second Family this year for not ensuring that "all medicine which is prescribed by a doctor is always available." The most serious incident in the reports was the Jan. 26 abuse of a child whom a Prince George's County police report described as being diagnosed with "severe autism and is non-verbal." "A staff person pushed the individual and then kicked the individual on his lower leg," the state health inspector wrote after reviewing video of the incident. "This same staff person hit the individual on his back and shoulder with an open hand. A different staff person pushed the individual and hit him multiple times. On the same day, later in the tape this same staff person was observed sleeping in the living room on a large ball. During this time the children were also unsupervised." Both workers were terminated by Second Family, according to the state's inspection report. Shilda Labule, the nonprofit's president, declined to answer questions when reached by phone. Tarver, the organization's attorney, confirmed the inspection report's findings. The state report cited Second Family for violating regulations prohibiting such abuse and accepted its response to "continue to monitor and supervise staff" and "review the Abuse and Neglect Policy every six months." It's unclear when Second Family learned of the abuse. Such incidents are supposed to be reported to regulators within 24 hours after providers learn of them. State officials said Second Family became aware of the incident while reviewing surveillance video on Jan. 31, five days after the abuse, and properly reported it to an inspector conducting a visit that day. A police report, however, states that the incident had been reported to child protective services on Jan. 28, three days earlier. Nancy Pineles, managing attorney for the Maryland Disability Law Center, which is formally alerted to such incidents along with regulators, said the incident had still not been logged into the state database nine months later. She also criticized the way the issue was addressed by state regulators, saying, "After one individual was victimized by more than one staff, reviewing the abuse and neglect policy every six months is not an adequate response." The Legal Aid Bureau's Little said that after such a serious incident, regulators should have placed monitors at the homes and checked videos every month. Advocates also questioned the Prince George's County Police Department's handling of the incident. The detective who watched the videos reported a different version from that of the state inspector. In the police report, the detective wrote that he "observed one of the workers smack the victim on the back of the head with an open palm one time. This investigator did not find the open palm strike to meet the criteria of physical child abuse." A state database shows Second Family has reported 11 incidents this year, including one in July in which an employee was terminated for neglect that led to a child's injury. The state has not yet provided details about those incidents except to say they were all "triaged and investigated, as appropriate," according to a Health Department spokesman. Conflict of interest Some Second Family executives have had an interest in properties used by the charity, a conflict of interest that the state forbids. A Sun investigation in 2005 revealed that many executives and board members of group home operators — including the Labules and Hailey — were earning rent from the homes. To eliminate "any circumstance which would create a conflict of interest, personal or financial," the state adopted a new rule prohibiting such arrangements, according to the Dec. 23, 2005, Maryland Register. Employees and board members of companies licensed by the state's developmental disabilities agency — including Second Family and Second Family Adult Homes — were prohibited from owning property "that is leased back to the licensee," the regulation states. The state gave contractors until Jan. 1, 2008, to abide by the new rule. Shilda Labule owned three of Second Family's group homes and Hailey owned one until January 2009. The sisters sold the properties to a Maryland company called MJ&S Enterprises. Joseph Labule owned another home, which he also sold to MJ&S Enterprises in August 2008. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008, Second Family spent \$311,517 on "occupancy," which includes rent and utilities, tax records show. For the year ending June 30, 2009, the charity spent \$402,992. [Related Readers Respond It takes more than money to care for vulnerable children and adults See all related 8](#) Tarver said Second Family does not pay rent on property owned by any of the charity's executives. She said the Labules and Hailey are not shareholders of MJ&S Enterprises. In addition, she said, the corporate director of MJ&S Enterprises, Charles Ekoko, is not a Second Family employee. Ekoko is, however, a board member of Second Family Adult Homes, a for-profit arm that is a state-licensed contractor providing residential services to disabled adults. He did not respond to repeated requests for comment. State officials began looking into the real estate transactions last month, after The Sun alerted them to connections between MJ&S Enterprises and Second Family. [cComments CORRUPTION larrygr3 at 2:55 PM October 20, 2014 Add a comment See all comments 1](#) For example, MJ&S Enterprises owns a sixth Second Family group home in the 1400 block of Lancaster Lane in Bowie. State real estate ownership records filed with the Department of Assessments & Taxation for the house show that the mailing address listed for MJ&S Enterprises is a property owned by Shilda Labule and Hailey. The property tax bill for the Lancaster Lane house is mailed to the same property owned by the sisters, according to Prince George's County tax records. MJ&S Enterprises paid \$1.1 million to Shilda Labule for her three properties, \$402,000 to Joseph Labule for his house and \$371,000 to Hailey, mostly through bank loans, real estate records show. Sandra Miniutti, vice president of Charity Navigator, a national organization that rates charities, examined Second Family's tax records at the request of The Sun. She said in an email that there is no indication the charity reported in 2008 it was paying rent on properties that its executives owned. None of the organization's IRS forms listed such an arrangement in a section that asks for such information, she said. The sales of the homes also were not recorded on an IRS form detailing any business transactions that personally benefited executives or board members. "This definitely does not pass the 'smell test,'" Miniutti wrote. The Internal Revenue Service monitors the tax-exempt status of charities to make sure they are not operating for the personal benefit of executives. Experts in the field of nonprofits said the rental income, proceeds from real estate sales and salaries from an affiliated for-profit entity such as the adult homes company could call into question Second Family's tax exemption. "It is not consistent with best practices to have nonprofit leaders ever profit personally from the charitable activities of their organization," Greg Cantori, executive director of Maryland Nonprofits, said when asked about Second Family's operations. Questionable spending State inspections have raised no issues with Second Family's finances, but child advocates raise concerns about the charity's spending patterns. The state approved a \$9.2 million spending plan for Second Family in the 2014 fiscal year, which ended June 30. That was a nearly 14 percent increase from the \$8.1 million the state paid in fiscal year 2013. The biggest increase went to salaries and benefits, which jumped 18.5 percent. Meanwhile, spending on food, clothing and other personal needs for the children was cut 69 percent. In an email, attorney Tarver wrote that Second Family "had a substantial drop in its census (number of children in residence) which necessarily required across the board adjustments in all expenditures." Second Family served an average of 32 children in fiscal 2013, state documents show. The average for fiscal year 2014 was 35 children, a 9.3 percent increase, state officials said. In fiscal 2013, Second Family spent a total of \$120,388 for the personal needs of 32 children, state documents show. For fiscal 2014, the state approved spending of \$37,215 for 35 children, and the budget for the current fiscal year — which began July 1 and is calculated for 40 children — maintains the low spending rate while allowing for another salary increase. The charity explained some of the cuts in budget footnotes. It

acknowledged that the amounts for clothes and personal needs were below "state mandated guidelines." It added, "The majority of our children are medically-fragile and non-ambulatory. While we keep them clean and well dressed, their wardrobe needs are minimal and, in many cases, met by family members." "That makes me very upset," said Ann Marie Foley Binsner, executive director of Court Appointed Special Advocates of Prince George's County. "It is true that the kids who are nonambulatory do not need a vast wardrobe; however they do need more than [that] for an entire year." She also took issue with Second Family's assertion that the disabled foster children receive significant support from family. "This information, combined with the pay that the leadership grants themselves, is very concerning," she said. Tax records indicate that Second Family paid Shilda Labule \$159,868 for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2013, the most recent available data. She was also paid \$48,077 from Second Family Adult Homes. She received another \$15,785 in other compensation from both — a total of nearly \$224,000. She reported working 75 hours per week for the charity and eight hours at the adult facilities. Joseph Labule was paid \$144,792 for working an average of 88 hours per week at the charity, tax records state. His additional five hours per week at the adult homes earned him \$31,441, and another \$10,551 in other compensation brought his total pay to nearly \$187,000. Marion Hailey received \$140,451 for working 99 hours per week for the charity, tax records show. She did not receive any money from the adult homes, according to tax records. Criminal conviction As for Joseph Labule's criminal theft conviction, Sharfstein and Dallas said they were not concerned because the charge is 13 years old and has nothing to do with harming individuals. Labule, 56, admitted to taking workers' compensation while he was working two other jobs, which is illegal. He fell behind in restitution payments and in 2001 the state garnished his Second Family wages until all of the money was repaid in 2008. [\[Related Readers Respond It takes more than money to care for vulnerable children and adults See all related 8\]](#) Labule signed an affidavit last September accompanying Second Family's application for a state contract that asserts he has never been convicted of various crimes, including theft. A Department of Human Resources spokesman said Labule told the agency his conviction was expunged and that its background check confirmed his claim. The spokesman added that the agency was double-checking the assertion about the expungement but later said it could not comment on such background checks. Tarver said Second Family was still reviewing the issue. Legal experts say such a conviction — which is still visible in online records of the Maryland court system — cannot be erased under the state's expungement rules. [eComments](#) CORRUPTION larrygr3 at 2:55 PM October 20, 2014 [Add a comment See all comments 1](#) "A [theft] conviction cannot be expunged," said Michael Pinard, a professor at the University of Maryland law school. Child advocates say the state should have higher standards for an executive with a contractor that controls millions in taxpayer dollars for disabled children. The state should be awarding contracts to providers that have "respectable business histories," said Little, of the Legal Aid Bureau. "If someone steals money from the state, I don't think that's the kind of person you want to have taking care of vulnerable people." [ddonovan@baltsun.com](#) Source: <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/sun-investigates/bs-md-second-family-20141018-story.html#page=4>

Group home director sentenced in abuse case RIVERSIDE — (INT) — The director of a Corona group home, who was initially charged with torture and abusing a 13-year-old boy, was sentenced Friday. Pastor Lonnie Remmers later pleaded guilty to two felonies, inflicting corporal injury on a juvenile and assault. A Riverside Superior Court judge ordered a 2-year prison term. Corona police said that the boy's mother had taken him to the home for 'guidance'. Story Date: October 20, 2014 Source: <http://www.inlandnewstoday.com/story.php?s=35272>

Little nice to say about foster care in L.A. County To the editor: I am somewhat surprised by the letter from Matty Nierenberg, who kindly bought a headstone for a 2-year-old girl beaten to death by a foster parent. I totally disagree with his support for the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services. ("[Helping foster kids before the unthinkable happens.](#)" Letters, Oct. 14) [Submit a Letter to the Editor](#) [Read the story](#) Of course there are many concerned social workers who do their best. But that is not the point. Rather, the system is dysfunctional and should be closed. Over 30 years I have seen so many children killed while in DCFS care. It is thoughtful to set up a fund to pay for the memorials of those who die destitute, but these kids should not be dying at all. William Brady, Sherman Oaks Source: <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/readersreact/la-le-1019-sunday-dcfs-20141019-story.html>

Former Phoenix foster parent pleads guilty to sexual abuse Jennifer Soules, The Republic | azcentral.com 10:28 p.m. MST October 20, 2014 Get the latest crime news on azcentral.(Photo: azcentral) A Phoenix man charged in the sexual abuse of seven foster children pleaded guilty Monday to some of the crimes in Maricopa County Superior Court, authorities say. The man pleaded guilty to one count of sexual abuse and one count of furnishing obscene materials to minors, a Superior Court statement says. The man also pleaded guilty to a reduced charge on two counts of child molestation. In all, the man faced 29 charges, including sexual conduct with a minor, kidnapping, molestation of a child, sexual abuse, aggravated assault, furnishing obscene material to minors and indecent exposure, court documents say. Authorities say the man and his wife fostered approximately 15 children, some of whom had mental handicaps, at their home near 19th Avenue and Union Hills Drive. The man was a licensed foster-care provider from 2005 to 2011, records say. The Republic is not identifying the couple to protect the identities of the children involved in the case. The investigation into the couple began in 2011 when one of their foster children, a 5-year-old boy, spoke up at a day care about claims of abuse, police say. Six additional victims, ranging from 5 to 17 years old, were identified during the investigation, police say. Multiple children told police that the man threatened them with harm if they told anyone, court documents say. The foster mother faced four counts of child or vulnerable-adult abuse, two of which were dismissed in a grand-jury indictment. She pleaded guilty to a reduced charge on the remaining two counts and was sentenced to 10 years of supervised probation, records say. The father's sentencing is Nov.20. Source: <http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/phoenix/2014/10/20/phoenix-former-foster-parent-charges-plea/17631359/>

GOP gubernatorial candidate Baker turns back money linked to owner of Fall River adult foster care provider Wife of man indicted on alleged kickback scheme co-hosted fundraiser in Medfield By Matt Murphy State House News Service The Herald News, Fall River, MA By Matt Murphy State House News Service Posted Oct. 20, 2014 @ 4:56 pm Updated Oct 20, 2014 @ 5:02 PM By Matt Murphy State House News Service Posted Oct. 20, 2014 @ 4:56 pm Updated Oct 20, 2014 @ 5:02 PM » [RELATED CONTENT LINKS • Owner, operator of adult foster care company arraigned on... • Gabriel Care LLC ran a Medicaid kickback scheme, Martha C...](#) » Social News By Matt Murphy State House News Service Posted Oct. 20, 2014 @ 4:56 pm Updated Oct 20, 2014 @ 5:02 PM BOSTON — Republican gubernatorial candidate Charlie Baker attended a fundraiser in Medfield on Sunday night co-hosted by the wife of a man indicted by his Democratic rival two years ago for Medicaid fraud. Dennis Etzkorn, the owner of the Fall River adult foster care provider Gabriel Care, was indicted in April 2012 by a Bristol County grand jury after allegedly paying kickbacks to clients and caregivers for referrals of new clients to his company who are MassHealth-eligible. His wife, Karen Etzkorn, co-hosted a fundraiser for Baker's campaign on Sunday night, according to an invitation obtained by the News Service. Baker's campaign said it was not aware of the case or Karen Etzkorn's relation to Dennis Etzkorn prior to the event. Queried about the charges against Dennis Etzkorn, Baker spokesman Tim Buckley said the campaign would not deposit a check collected from the couple on Sunday, but would keep other contributions made during the event. Buckley declined to say how much the Baker campaign raised at the fundraiser, which was held at AstraLuna, a craft distiller and distributor of vodkas and other spirits in Medfield, where the Etzkorns live. The fundraiser was co-hosted by Peter Biagetti, an attorney at Mintz Levin, Dover contractor Andrew McCabe, and Judith McDonough, the executive director of Edwina Martin House, a residential addiction rehabilitation facility for women in Brockton. Since the start of the general election campaign in September, Baker has enjoyed a sizable cash advantage over his Democratic opponent, Attorney General Martha Coakley. Both Baker and Coakley have been mixing small events like the fundraiser in Medfield with larger receptions such as the one hosted last Thursday for Baker when former Gov. Mitt Romney helped raise an additional \$600,000 for the Baker campaign. Coakley had an event with former President Bill Clinton the same night that netted her about \$200,000. Coakley's campaign declined to comment on Etzkorn's involvement in the fundraiser for Baker. Dennis Etzkorn pleaded not guilty in the spring of 2012 to charges that he and Gabriel Care program director Jennifer Nunes-Reid paid or offered to pay predetermined amounts of money to clients and caregivers for MassHealth-eligible clients referred to their company for at-home care. In a case publicized by her office in April 2012, Coakley alleged that, for at least 44 clients illegally procured by kickbacks, Etzkorn billed MassHealth for \$1.2 million in care claims. The case is due back in court on Oct. 31 for a status hearing. Karen Etzkorn does not show up in Office of Campaign and Political Finance filings, but Dennis Etzkorn is listed as giving \$500 to state Rep. David Nangle, D-Lowell, and \$200 to House Speaker Robert DeLeo in 2014. Etzkorn in previous years had also given to state Reps. Carole Fiola and Alan Silvia, both of Fall River, and former Boston City Councilor Rob Consalvo. Etzkorn also gave \$250 to Baker in 2010. Source: <http://www.heraldnews.com/article/20141020/NEWS/141029665/1994/NEWS>

State alters neglect case policy Tony Leys, tleys@dmreg.com 5:49 a.m. CDT October 21, 2014 Two-year-old Shelby Duis died in January 2000. Shelby's mother, Heidi Watkins, was convicted of child endangerment and sent to prison for up to 50 years.(Photo: File photo) 296 CONNECT [4 TWEETLINKEDIN](#) 14 COMMENTEMAILMORE A Warren County mother figured she knew what it meant when she received a dreaded call from the Iowa Department of

Human Services last spring. The agency was alerted that the woman had been charged with possessing a friend's prescription sedatives. The woman had a history of drug abuse. A state social worker would soon be visiting her home to talk about her 11-year-old son. "As soon as I heard 'DHS,' the fear and anger came through, and I got really defensive," she recalled later. The pills represented a brief relapse in several years of sobriety, she said, but she feared her son would be taken away. She was in for a surprise, thanks to a major shift in state policy. DHS social worker Sundi Smith determined in her first visit that there was no evidence the woman's son had been abused or was in danger. Smith made this determination after reviewing the woman's records and taking the boy aside for a private conversation. The woman said Smith told her that the state would not make a formal determination of abuse, and that the mother was not at risk of having her name placed on the child-abuse registry. Smith told her that instead of considering taking her son away, DHS wanted to help her get her life and family back on track. Smith and other state social workers are taking a new approach to such investigations. In many cases where there are questions about a family's parenting methods but no signs of abuse or imminent danger, the social workers don't launch formal investigations into the parents. Instead, they hook up parents with assistance, then step back from the cases. Examples can include a dirty house or a small child who slips away from a parent and is found wandering by a neighbor. The Warren County mother, who asked that her name not be published for fear of embarrassing her son, said she relaxed as soon as she realized Smith had no intention of taking him away. "The only thing I've ever really wanted to be was a mom," she said. Social worker can be helpful, not 'villain' In a report released this month, the Department of Human Services said its social workers used this approach 38 percent of the time when looking into concerns about children's well-being during the first six months of 2014. The idea, called "differential response," has been used in other states and became Iowa's policy this year after gaining legislators' approval. State officials say the gentler approach is not used if there is any sign that a child has been abused physically or sexually. It also is not to be used if there are signs that the child has been neglected to the point of danger, if there are signs that illegal drugs are being made or sold at the home, or if any child in the house is the subject of another open DHS investigation. Smith couldn't comment on the specific case involving the Warren County woman. But she said that in general, the new program lets her perform as a positive social worker instead of coming across as a villain. She said it can take some time for parents to understand that she's not intent on removing their kids from the home over relatively minor issues. "I think they're still nervous until we get out there and have the opportunity to explain it to them," she said. Hanging over all this is the specter that a child could be hurt after DHS officials decided to use their more informal method of interacting with a family. Smith said social workers can't say for sure that a parent accused of minor neglect won't wind up abusing a child later. "I'm not a predictor of human behavior. None of us are," she said. However, she said, she goes over each case with a supervisor to be sure it meets the standards. "I'm not some rogue person out there making decisions on my own." Smith said word has started getting around that state social workers are not always the enemy. A parent recently came to her office after hearing about the new approach. "They said, 'You helped my friend. Can you help me?'" she said. Child advocates vow to monitor change No one wants to see a repeat of the infamous case of Shelby Duis. The Spirit Lake toddler died of injuries in 2000 after several people warned DHS that she was being abused at home. The agency later said that it had tightened up its response to reports of abuse and neglect to ensure such a case did not slip through the cracks again. DHS leaders say the new approach would not affect the outcome of a case like Shelby's. Any allegations of abuse, as opposed to accusations of neglect, are still investigated the established way, and can lead to the removal of a child from a home and the listing of an adult on the state's child-abuse registry. Social workers also can still call police, who can file criminal charges. Two outside experts said they support DHS's new approach but will monitor it to ensure only appropriate cases are subject to the less confrontational approach. Both Stephen Scott, executive director of the group Prevent Child Abuse Iowa, and Charles Bruner, executive director of the Child and Family Policy Center, said the new approach should not lead to more cases like that of Duis. Scott said it wouldn't be right for state social workers to soft-pedal every report of neglect. "Many cases of child neglect can be as bad as physical abuse," he said. For example, he said, some parents have been known to leave young children with a caregiver who is too high or hung over to provide meaningful supervision. DHS leaders appear to understand that those situations pose imminent danger and should be handled the traditional way, he said. Scott said he agrees with the idea that DHS's less-confrontational approach to less-serious reports of child neglect could lead parents to be less defensive and more open to suggestions of services that could help them. The new state report indicates this is working. Nearly 1,400 more families accepted such services in the first six months of 2014 than in the same period a year earlier. Scott said the result should be more Iowa children receiving proper parenting. Bruner agreed. "In reality, a lot of these families are stressed and in need of services," he said. Bruner hopes the new approach leads to fewer children who are needlessly taken away from parents and placed in foster care. He said Iowa needs to keep addressing its relatively high rates of foster care, especially for African-American and Native American children. Foster care can be necessary if a child is in danger, Bruner said, "but it can cause harm to the child, too." — Shift in approach, by the numbers In the first six months of the Iowa Department of Human Services new "differential response" program, 38 percent of child abuse or neglect reports were addressed in the new, less-confrontational approach. -- 7,342 were investigated in the traditional way, known as "Child Abuse Assessment." -- 4,571 were investigated with the new "Family Assessment" approach. -- Of those, 532 were later switched to the traditional method, because of further concerns about the case. Source:

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/2014/10/21/iowa-department-human-services-alters-neglect-case-policy/17646809/>

More transparency, oversight needed for Md. group homes Maryland must not let the death of Damaud Martin be in vain. Advocates for Children and Youth couldn't agree more with The Sun's view that there needs to be more oversight and transparency for facilities caring for Maryland's disabled foster youth ("**More troubled group homes**," Oct. 20). We are hopeful that the General Assembly will do its part to help reform the oversight of these programs and prevent future tragedies. [Related Sun Investigates State proposes reforms to group home oversight](#) [See all related 8](#) Advocates for Children and Youth has been supporting legislation that allows disabled youth to keep the federal benefits that their disability entitles them to receive, rather than the current practice of the state keeping this money. We think that money is far more valuable as savings for when these young people transition out of the Department of Human Resources' care at age 21. We are encouraged if Damaud Martin's tragic death serves as a catalyst for important improvements in the care provided to Maryland's most vulnerable foster youth. Melissa Rock, Baltimore The writer is child welfare director at Advocates for Children and Youth. Source:

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/readersrespond/bs-ed-disabled-youth-letter-20141023-story.html>

South Windsor group home operator sued over boy's rape [Story Comments](#) [ShareShare](#) [Print](#) [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#)

[Larger font size](#) Posted: Thursday, October 23, 2014 11:35 am [South Windsor group home operator sued over boy's rape](#) By Alex Wood Journal Inquirer | [0 comments](#) The mother of a teenage boy who says he was raped by a fellow resident of a South Windsor group home is suing the nonprofit organization that operates the facility, alleging on her son's behalf that the rape occurred because of negligence by its staff members. Because of the nature of the allegations, Hartford Superior Court Judge Antonio C. Robaina has given the boy and his mother permission not to use their real names in court papers. They are referred to as John Doe and Jane Doe, respectively. The lawsuit says the rape occurred around Oct. 5, 2013, at the group home at 124 Woodland Drive in South Windsor, which is operated by Community Residences Inc., a Southington-based nonprofit. Source: http://www.journalinquirer.com/crime_and_courts/south-windsor-group-home-operator-sued-over-boy-s-rape/article_38bc2d00-5aca-11e4-ba25-2febdb10ba21.html

Former Marion Group Home Owners Arrested Updated: Wednesday, October 22 2014, 09:42 PM CDT MARION, IA (CBS2/FOX28) -- Police arrested the owners of Park Setting Elder Group Home after allegations of abuse. The owners, Donald and Peggy Berns are facing numerous charges, including neglect and abandonment of a dependent person, dependent adult abuse, and exploitation. In August, officials shut down the home after complaints that residents were locked in their rooms and given unauthorized medication. A report filed by state investigators and turned over to the Linn County Attorney indicated some residents were confined in their rooms by locks on the outside of their doors and that even after warnings the owners of the home still tried to confine one resident by using a board to block the door. Both Don and Peg Berns posted \$25,000 bond and were released from jail Wednesday morning. When contacted by phone, Peggy Berns said they have no comment right now, but intend to fight the charges and eventually will speak out to make sure everyone knows the truth. Source: <http://www.cbs2iowa.com/news/features/top-stories/stories/former-marion-group-home-owners-arrested-31131.shtml>

S. Bronx Group Home Under Fire After Abuse Claims October 23, 2014 at 12:00 AM SEVENTEEN WORKERS FROM the Union IRA home in the South Bronx (pictured) have been ordered to stay home with pay, pending the outcome of widespread abuse allegations. Photo by David Greene By DAVID GREENE A 17th staffer at a South Bronx home for special needs adults has been told to stay home amid a state investigation of alleged chronic abuse by employees. Family members for residents at the Union IRA group home at 570 Union Ave. in Mott Haven claim their loved ones were being assaulted and deprived of food while staying at the supportive residence. During a meeting with family members on Sept. 20, Sheryl Minter-Brooks, the state operations

director for the Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), the agency that oversees homes across the city, revealed that seven caregivers had been removed since the spring. "We are as sickened by this as everyone else is and we're working to get to the bottom of it," Minter-Brooks told an outraged crowd. "We have reason to suspect that something happened, it does not mean that it did happen." For now, staffers remain home with pay while the New York State Justice Center, an investigatory body, looks into the claims. A spokeswoman for the OPWDD declined to discuss specifics of the matter while it's under investigation. Anonymous Letter At least five family members received a two-page letter dated Aug. 20. The anonymous writer, claiming to be a worker at the home, detailed systematic beatings, food deprivation and one allegation of sex abuse by a female employee. According to the letter, claims of abuse were backed up by photos of staff members attacking residents. The letter claimed that one state employee was accused of assaulting a resident so bad it ruptured an eardrum. The whistleblower admitted to keeping silent on the assault, believing that speaking up or reporting assaults would "label me as a snitch." Families have remained vocal on the abuse charges, which they believed ran rampant at the home. Several family members of one resident accused staffers of refusing to stock a bathroom with toilet paper. Staffers believed the toilet would simply clog up. Zoraida's Case Before obtaining legal guardianship, Barbara Melendez was in limbo attempting to get her sister Zoraida out of the home. During Zoraida's stay at the home, Melendez claimed her sister suffered ongoing abuse that was brushed off by staff members. "They had all the power and I still needed my guardianship," recalled Melendez. On Oct. 2, Zoraida was discovered with bruises near her pelvis and breasts. She was later taken to an area hospital, where the NYPD was called. Officers took a report for an "unknown assault," but hospital officials told Melendez that there was a time-lapse in reporting, so a rape-kit wasn't performed. A history of abuse has followed Zoraida since last year, according to the letter. Some incidents involved a split lip requiring seven stitches while another incident involved staffers kicking Zoraida's legs until they swelled, according to the letter. Zoraida would be taken to local emergency rooms six more times between January and August this year for a bruise on her arm, a gash to her foot that required stitches and a black eye. "When I began to question it they would tell me, 'Oh she's accident prone,'" Melendez recalled. "So what could I say? They knew how to cover themselves." Searching for Closure Family members hope the investigation leads to arrests and dismissals even if they are cleared of all allegations. But Minter-Brooks of OPWDD said she "can't guarantee" any firings, citing the employees civil service contract. One family member recalled an incident involving her brother, telling the group, "We had an independent investigation that took many months and it's finally completed, but we're not allowed to get copies of the reports or know the results." Claiming that the safeguards are flawed, Melendez added, "If they are found guilty, they should never work with the disabled again." Despite apologies from Minter-Brooks, Melendez argued the sentiment was "a little too late to be sorry." Source: <http://www.norwoodnews.org/id=16017&story=s-bronx-group-home-under-fire-after-abuse-claims/>

City man convicted of sexually assaulting four boys under his foster care City man convicted of sexually assaulting four boys under his foster care By Daryl Slade, Calgary Herald October 23, 2014 A man who was chosen along with his wife as the local Foster Family of the Year in 2007 now faces a lengthy prison sentence after sexually assaulting four foster boys under his care. Court of Queen's Bench Justice Robert Hall on Thursday convicted Garry Dale Prokopishin, 56, of sexually touching the boys while in a position of trust between May 5, 1999, and Aug. 5, 2008. He also acquitted him of one charge and another count was earlier withdrawn by Crown prosecutor Gord Haight. Hall said the complainants' descriptions of 'Guys' Nights,' in which the teenage boys were taken to different towns outside the city, put up in a hotel, bought drinks, dinner and clothes and paid for sex, was a key part of the evidence. "The description of Guys' Nights by the complainants further corroborate the sexual nature of the relationship between the participants and the accused, even though these events occurred after the complainants reached the age of majority (18)," wrote Hall in his decision. One of the complainants testified that Prokopishin would usually pay him \$20 after the event. Hall said the complainants and others who lived in the home and provided similar fact evidence supported each others' stories about what happened, and he accepted it for the most part, with no serious concern of collusion among them. "The court is aware of the potential for collusion among the complainants," said the judge. "They could all contact each other and many indicated that they have done so. Two of the complainants are plaintiffs in a lawsuit against the accused and the government, and the others are aware of the lawsuit. There is at least a 'whiff of profit,' "Notwithstanding this possibility for collusion, the Crown has satisfied me that it has not occurred in this case. The evidence of any one witness is not tailored to fit that of others; indeed, there are inconsistencies between them that one would not expect if intentional collusion had transpired. Unintentional collusion as to the acts that occurred to each of them is simply not a realistic possibility." One complainant, now 26, testified he agreed to allow Prokopishin to perform sex acts on him when he was between 16 and 18 years old, generally for \$20 each occasion, and he would use the money to feed his crack cocaine habit. He told Haight the sex occurred regularly at the home, but also three or four times in hotels in Drumheller, Medicine Hat and Red Deer. After he moved to Kitimat, B.C., in 2008, the complainant said Prokopishin phoned him and said other kids had come forward and reporters were flooding around his house. He said he then went to Kitimat RCMP and reported the incidents. "They gave us drugs, cigarettes and money. There was always food on the table. It was a very good home. I didn't have an issue staying in the home," he said of the Prokopishins. Hall ordered a presentence report and a psychiatric report at the request of Haight and defence lawyer Ian McKay to be prepared for sentencing arguments on Dec. 19. The judge ordered Prokopishin into custody following a brief discussion, and he will remain there until sentencing. [dslade@calgaryherald.com](http://www.calgaryherald.com/news/calgary/City+convicted+sexually+assaulting+five+boys+under+foster+care/10319139/story.html) Source: <http://www.calgaryherald.com/news/calgary/City+convicted+sexually+assaulting+five+boys+under+foster+care/10319139/story.html>

Oct 23, 2014 5:48 AM Couple Sentenced to 1,500 Years in Prison ALABAMA - A federal judge sentenced a Lauderdale County couple to hundreds of years in prison for sexually abusing a minor child in their custody to produce images of child pornography. Patricia Ayers is sentenced to 1,590 years in prison. Her husband, Matthew Ayers, was sentenced to 750 years in prison. During the hearing the judge said, "I have been on the bench since 1998, and this is the worst case I have personally dealt with, including murders." Source: <http://www.kristv.com/news/couple-sentenced-to-1-500-years-in-prison/>

Big Money Taking Over Education Politics Most folks in the Democratic Party have a problem with the Citizens United ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court that permitted goo-gobs of corporate and private interest cash to be dumped onto our elections. The party's platform supports amending the Constitution to reverse the decision. President Obama has also called for such an amendment, and Hillary Clinton has said she would consider supporting it. Most Democrats are also alarmed by the enormous amounts of cash funneled into the electoral process by folks like Karl Rove and the Koch brothers who use corporate and private interest money to overwhelm citizen voice in elections and usurp democracy. But if you're a Democrat, you should know the influence buying unleashed by Citizens United and perpetrated by people like the Koch brothers are at work – with the blessing and participation of fellow Democrats – in education politics. Historically, elections that determine public education governance – from local school board races to contests determining state administrative leadership – have been fairly subdued affairs in comparison to mayoral and legislative races. That's not necessarily a good thing, because education has long been America's most collaborative public enterprise, affecting virtually everyone and determining how we nurture the next generation of citizens, workers, and leaders. But lately, these contests have grown more animated as a new element – money from big business and private individuals and foundations – is now altering the electoral process in new and fundamental ways. Examples of this new dynamic have surfaced in the upcoming 2014 elections at both the local school district level and at state level contests, and in each example, the big money often coming from people who associate with the Democratic Party. Further, these wealthy Democrats often collude with conservative Republicans in these school-related elections in ways they never would in other contests. This confluence of big money is often called "bipartisanship." But the results are apt to be the same we've seen in more popular elections – a distortion of democracy that leads to governance that is less progressive. Big Money Goes After School Boards As Valerie Strauss pointed on her blog at [The Washington Post](http://www.washingtonpost.com) recently, "For several years now local school board races around the country have attracted big money from outside the state — and sometimes from across the country — as school reformers and their supporters seek to elect like-minded public officials. In 2013, for example, [millions of dollars were spent](#) on school board races in Los Angeles and in 2012, outsiders [poured money](#) into a New Orleans school board race." In that post, Strauss pointed to an article by Minneapolis-based writer and former teacher Sarah Lahm, published by [In These Times](#), describing how big money is arm twisting the democratic process in her local school board election. Lahm explained how one of the candidates, Don Samuels, is benefiting from "extensive financing and canvassing support ... from several well-heeled national organizations, such as the Washington, D.C.-based [50CAN](#), an offshoot of [Education Reform Now](#) called [Students for Education Reform](#) (SFER)." Samuels has out-raised his main competitor, incumbent Rebecca Gagnon, by almost 4 to 1 including "tremendous support from outside of Minnesota. The D.C.-based [50CAN Action Fund](#) filed a campaign finance [report](#) in Minnesota showing that it was devoting \$14,350 in financial resources to the Minneapolis school board race, as well as in-kind donations valued in the thousands of dollars." Another report on who is influencing the Minneapolis school board race, from Beth Hawkins on the [MinnPost](#) website, described big donations coming into the race from former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and, again, 50CAN and Students for Education Reform. That report also mentioned another recipient to the

for 60 adult and 72 child patients, was one of the few places in the U.S. that could provide care for children who were both deaf and autistic. NDA attracted patients from around the country. But NBC News found that police, state regulators and disability advocates all said the number of complaints to officials and calls to police from NDA were “high.” Between 2008 and 2013, there were 506 “calls for service” from NDA to Mt. Dora police, which included everything from staffers reporting runaways to patients alleging abuse. A complete record of resolutions of the calls was unavailable, but of a list of 54 investigations between 2008 and 2014 provided by Mt. Dora police, 15 involved alleged battery, 10 involved alleged abuse, and three involved alleged sexual abuse. The only arrests listed, however, were for criminal mischief. [advertisement](#) Related [Disabled Workers Paid Just Pennies an Hour](#) [More Disabled Workers Paid Just Pennies an Hour](#) The Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) launched 99 of its own investigations into alleged abuse or neglect between 2004 and 2014. The central allegation in 35 of the cases was “physical abuse,” while “sexual abuse” or “molestation” were the principal accusations in 15. Other allegations included “asphyxiation,” “bone fracture,” and “bizarre punishment.” DCF found that five cases of alleged physical abuse and one case of inadequate supervision were “verified,” meaning “a preponderance of the credible evidence results in a determination that the specific harm or threat of harm was the result of abuse, abandonment or neglect.” Fifteen other investigations yielded “some indicator” that the accusations were credible, including six cases of physical abuse and one allegation of sexual abuse. Follow NBC News Investigations on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). In June 2012, the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), the licensing authority for health care facilities in Florida, made an unannounced visit to NDA and stated in an inspection report that the facility failed to report three out of six incidents of alleged abuse between April and June 2012 that were entered in its own internal “grievance log.” “Based on interview and record review (sic),” said the report, “the facility failed to report all incidents of suspected abuse.” [advertisement](#) There have been two deaths cited in lawsuits and one cited in a state report during the past five-and-a-half years at NDA. In 2009, according to a lawsuit, a developmentally disabled 18-year-old choked to death after she was allegedly left unsupervised during lunch. The suit has been settled, according to court records. A year later, a deaf patient on suicide watch fled the school grounds and was hit by a car. AHCA alleged that the Deaf Academy had failed to meet the “minimum criteria required by the level for which the facility is licensed, which is contrary to law.” NDA paid a fine of \$6,000. Another lawsuit alleges that in 2012, a diabetic teen died because NDA was negligent and didn’t provide the care outlined for the patient. The case has been settled for an undisclosed amount. “We Are Not Saying the Crime Did Not Occur” When John and Hannah visited the National Deaf Academy in 2012 while looking for a treatment facility for their autistic and bipolar 10-year-old, the Georgia couple knew nothing about allegations of abuse. They said their insurance company was willing to pay for NDA, and the campus and the staff impressed them. “We were just excited to see what they were going to do with our son,” recalled Hannah. NBC News John and Hannah are filing suit against NDA Behavioral Health Systems in Mt. Dora, Florida over alleged abuse of their son. [advertisement](#) But on their son’s first overnight stay with his parents outside NDA, said Hannah, he told them a staff member punched him in the face. Later, when she called her son at NDA, she said she heard staff members trying to keep him from talking. Hannah called her insurance company and said a representative told her there had been allegations of abuse at NDA. “In my heart, I felt so guilty as a mom because of that time when he told us of them hitting him,” said Hannah. “Because who wants to believe that their son is being hit?” John and Hannah rushed to Mt. Dora to get their son, and said that when they arrived he had [scabies](#) and had lost 22 pounds. Even before they arrived back home in Georgia, they say they found evidence of possible abuse. The couple said that on the trip their son talked about a staff member who said their son gave “the best massages,” and that he seemed to be in pain. According to a medical report provided to NBC News by the family, medical personnel at a Georgia emergency room found rectal bleeding and an abrasion, and said the boy had reported pain in his penis and in “wrong place #2.” Courtesy of John and Hannah family John and his wife Hannah are filing a suit against the National Deaf Academy in Mt. Dora, Florida where they claim their son, right, was abused. [advertisement](#) The couple has filed suit against NDA, alleging inappropriate touching, physical abuse and exposure to pornography. At the family’s request, Mt. Dora police investigated their suspicion of abuse, but did not file charges because they were not able to identify a suspect or find forensic evidence. “We are not saying the crime did not occur. We are saying that we cannot prove it,” a Mt. Dora police spokesperson told NBC News. “I Would Scream Because It Hurt” Daniel’s parents didn’t find out about his alleged abuse at NDA until long after he’d left the facility. In 2013, Christine Ogden and her husband learned there was a deaf boy with OCD, ADHD and PTSD housed at a psychiatric facility in Washington state whom they might be able to adopt. But Ogden said staffers at the facility told them they thought 13-year-old Daniel might have been abused at the last place he’d been housed -- NDA. According to Ogden, the Washington facility said Daniel had been “overmedicated” and a “zombie” when he arrived in 2010. NDA records obtained by NBC News show that the facility said he had acted out sexually, assaulted staff and self-harmed. When Daniel came to live with her in Virginia, said Ogden, he started to open up about his experiences at NDA, where he’d lived for nine months. Via sign language, said Christine, he told her about injections of powerful drugs that put him to sleep, having his hair pulled and being dragged into the shower. [advertisement](#) Through an interpreter, Daniel told NBC News about the hair pulling, the shower and the injections. “I would scream because it hurt,” he said. “They would take me down and then they’d give me the shot.” John Brecher / NBC News Christine Ogden of Alexandria, Virginia is suing NDA Behavioral Health System of Mt. Dora, Florida, also known as the National Deaf Academy, alleging that her adopted son, Daniel, now 14, was abused while he was housed there. Ogden said that a mental health workers had described Daniel to her as a “scared, feral” child. Said Ogden, who is suing NDA, “It makes me very angry because I often feel like if we had gotten Daniel before all this ... we would not have the same types of challenges that we’re having now. He’s so joyful, but he’s so broken.” A third family pulled their deaf child out of NDA after a 14-month stay in 2012 and 2013 when his grandmother said she saw abrasions on his neck and a bruise on his arm during Skype conversations. All three families are suing NDA, alleging abuse and neglect, and are being represented by [Jacksonville, Florida attorney Bruce Maxwell](#), whose severely handicapped daughter lived at a residential facility in Georgia until she died in 2012 – a facility he said was well-run. “I definitely have a spot in my heart for [special needs kids] and it drives my passion,” said Maxwell. [advertisement](#) “Mom, Please Help” Kyle Gilrain and Carol Savage, who worked at NDA as therapists in 2012, filed their suit against the Academy in 2013. They allege that they were fired after they reported abuse and neglect to corporate headquarters and to state officials. NDA denies all allegations and the case is pending. In a statement, an NDA attorney said, “Carol Savage and Kyle Gilrain were terminated because they were noncompliant with the obligations of their positions. They failed to follow procedures at the facility with respect to patient care as well as administrative duties and responsibilities. “NBC News Kyle Gilrain and Carol Savage say they were fired from the National Deaf Academy after reporting alleged instances of abuse and neglect. Gilrain went to work at NDA in 2012 because he knew then-CEO Deana Goldstein from another facility in Virginia where they’d both worked several years earlier. He told NBC News that after three or four months at NDA, patients started telling him they were being abused by the staff – physically restrained and coerced in ways, including chokeholds, Gilrain felt were excessive. [advertisement](#) “I had a patient that wrote home to his mother in a Mother’s Day card, ‘Mom, please help,’” recalled Gilrain. “And that was all the card said. [He was] severely autistic, deaf, and wasn’t able to communicate it to her any other way.” Gilrain said that he began to report alleged abuse, neglect and overmedication to the Department of Children and Families and the Agency for Health Care Administration. He provided information to Disability Rights Florida, a government-funded advocacy group for the disabled, and sent a letter to the compliance office at the headquarters of the company that has owned NDA since May 2010, Universal Health Services (UHS). He said his old friend from Virginia, Deana Goldstein, was upset that he was contacting the agencies. She told him via email that “All allegations of abuse are not reportable in FL as they are in VA,” and asked him to report the incidents on company forms instead of documenting them in the patient record. Not long after his letter to UHS, and nine months after he began work at NDA, Gilrain was fired. Carol Savage was coming in the door as Gilrain was leaving, and cared for some of the same patients. She said that within her first week, “they were telling me about being choked, being hit. Within the first week, I saw bruising.” She said that soon after that, she witnessed the use of brute force first-hand. “I’ve called the [DCF] abuse hotline before,” said Savage, who has worked at other treatment facilities. “I have never called the abuse hotline 12 times in a six-week period.” Savage said she was told specifically that she was not supposed to call the abuse hotline, and that Goldstein handed her a card with her cell number and asked her to call the number before she called the hotline. [advertisement](#) Carol said that two weeks after sending an email detailed alleged problems at the facility to an executive at UHS, and just six weeks after she was hired, she was fired. Savage and Gilrain made contact with each other after leaving NDA, and decided to file a whistleblower suit. Neither has landed a job since, and both have lost their homes to foreclosure. Gilrain said he doesn’t regret reporting the alleged incidents. “I’m not happy now because it’s hard to find a job and I really do like what I do. But I couldn’t have lived with myself.” Incidents “Isolated and Unacceptable” All of the incidents described by Gilrain, Savage and the three families suing NDA allegedly occurred while the Academy was being run by Deana Goldstein, who was CEO from 2009 to late 2013. Goldstein declined to comment to NBC News. In a statement, new NDA CEO Gregory Sizemore said that “the isolated and unacceptable” alleged incidents revealed in the NBC News investigation “are exceptions and do not reflect the high quality of care provided at NDA nor the hundreds of success stories of children whose lives have been enhanced by their time at NDA.” “Since becoming CEO in December 2013,” said Sizemore, “I have worked with our dedicated team to ensure that each patient receives the

high quality, individualized care that he or she deserves.” [advertisement](#) “All employees receive training on their obligations to report any incidents to the facility and/or regulatory agencies,” he added, “and employees who do not make these required reports or whose conduct fails to meet our high standards have been disciplined and even terminated.” NBC News NDA Behavioral Health System in Mt. Dora, Florida. NDA’s corporate owner, UHS, said in a statement that the Academy is “independently operated” but “expected to meet the highest standards of patient care.” “NDA serves an otherwise underserved community and we are confident that NDA has responded appropriately to address the alleged incidents referenced. NDA has a successful inspection record in its last three surveys conducted in 2013-2014 and we are confident that this trend will continue under its new leadership.” The number of patients housed at NDA, however, has apparently dropped in recent years. The facility has a 132-bed capacity, but housed an average of 76.7 patients daily in 2012, which fell to 72.5 patients in 2013. NDA’s year-to-date average daily population for 2014 is 63.9. 'Mom, Please Help': FBI Probing Alleged Abuse of Deaf, Autistic Kids First published September 14th 2014, 2:55 pm Source: <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/investigations/mom-please-help-fbi-probing-alleged-abuse-deaf-autistic-kids-n193846>

Broomfield man found guilty of pimping girl in foster care system 12:27 PM, Oct 24, 2014 Copyright 2014 Scripps Media, Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. GOLDEN, Colo. - A Jefferson County jury this week found a Broomfield man guilty of prostituting a 14-year-old girl over a period of two years. The verdict was returned on Oct. 22. Robert Felix Gonzales, 40, was found guilty of 17 counts including pimping of a child, kidnapping, procurement of a child, and soliciting for child prostitution. Gonzales met the girl in 2011 through a foster home placement and began having sex with her, grooming her to believe that she was in love with him. Continuing into 2012 and 2013, Gonzales provided her with methamphetamine and alcohol and forced her to have sex for money or drugs with men she did not know. He arranged for the motel rooms in which she would have sex with strangers. Sometimes he would join, the victim said. The money and drugs from the Johns went to Gonzales. The jury heard that the teen had a history of running away from her grandmother’s house or other foster placements. When Gonzales was prohibited from seeing the teen by her guardians, he took active steps to hide her from her family and police. At times, he hid her in a crawl space at his house, prosecutors said. Following a 7-day trial, the jury returned guilty verdicts on the following 17 counts, including 13 felonies: pandering of a child second-degree kidnapping soliciting for child prostitution procurement of a child pimping of a child keeping a place of child prostitution inducement of child prostitution patronizing a prostituted child 5 counts of sexual exploitation of a child contributing to the delinquency of a minor possession of a controlled substance violation of a protective order harboring a minor "We are extremely pleased with the verdict," said District Attorney Pete Weir, "Sexually exploiting a young girl is unconscionable. These cases can be very difficult, but we were able to bring justice for this young victim and stop this criminal behavior." The investigation was conducted by the Arva Source: <http://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/local-news/broomfield-man-found-guilty-of-pimping-girl-in-foster-care-system>

DCS addresses why foster kids are sleeping in state buildings - CBS 5 - KPHO DCS addresses why foster kids are sleeping in state office buildings Posted: Oct 24, 2014 9:20 PM PDT Updated: Oct 24, 2014 9:30 PM PDT By Adam Longo PHOENIX (CBS5) - CBS5 was able Friday to get a first look inside Department of Child Safety offices where children as young as 2 years old are sleeping on some nights. MOREAdditional Links The [CBS5 report Thursday night](#) first exposed this stop-gap measure and the practice has apparently been ongoing. The foster care system in Arizona is overloaded, according to DCS employees and non-profit groups that work to help foster children. This year so far 11 percent more kids are being removed from unsafe homes. There are more than 16,000 kids statewide in foster homes or group homes right now. Because most of those homes are at capacity, some kids end up sleeping inside a dozen or so DCS office buildings throughout Maricopa and Pima counties. "In the 17 years I've been here the biggest shock to me is when we bought cribs," says DCS program manager Gene Burns. Burns supervises the DCS after-hours units. When kids are removed from unsafe homes they are initially brought to the closest DCS office. They stay until suitable foster families or group homes are found. However, if those are full, and that's been happening a lot, there's nowhere else for those kids to go. "It's not ideal. The most ideal place for a kid to sleep is with a family. We are not a family," Burns said. "We have tried to make do with what we have. We have volunteers that bring in and donate food. We have beds here. We have cribs. We have a washing machine and dryer. We have a shower. This is not the place to put a kid." Kids are sometimes sleeping on cots placed between cubicles in the office. The word is going out to potential foster families that the state needs more space for kids. There's been emergency solicitations out to expand the number of group home beds. "The last week we only had five kids. Five to six girls spending the night where we've had considerably more," Burns said. "We want kids in a family setting. We obviously need placements for children in the community." Burns says the situation has improved somewhat within the past month. Fifty to 60 more beds have recently opened up at group homes. Case aides and child protection specialists volunteer to work overtime to help look after these kids on weekends or after hours. The agency is desperate for more foster families to step up. Copyright 2014 CBS 5 (KPHO Broadcasting Corporation). All rights reserved. Source: <http://www.kpho.com/story/26889110/dcs-addresses-why-foster-kids-are-sleeping-in-state-office-buildings#ixzz3HrxRDkXI>

Foster care, trafficking examined By Kim Grizzard The Daily Reflector Monday, October 27, 2014 The first in a series of conferences aimed at preventing human trafficking features a film that is not about trafficking. "From Place to Place" — presented by Eastern North Carolina Stop Human Trafficking Now and Partners Against Trafficking Humans N.C. — is a documentary about a group of people who are aging out of the foster care system. Story continues below advertisement Children’s Home Society of North Carolina Senior Director of Business Development and Advocacy Matt Anderson, who began working on the film in 2008 when he was a graduate student in Montana, has never showed it at an event focused on trafficking. But he is not at a loss as to why he was invited. For the complete article, please pick up a copy of The Daily Reflector. Current home delivery and electronic edition subscribers may [log in](#) to access this article at no charge. To become a subscriber, [please click here](#) or contact Customer Service at (252) 329-9505. Source: <http://www.reflector.com/news/foster-care-trafficking-links-examined-2694537>

Group home counselor again charged with abuse Gary Lee Toft accused of abusing 2 vulnerable men in his care [NEXT STORY Drivers scramble for cash from armored car](#) Text Size: [ASmall Text](#) [AMedium Text](#) [ALarge Text](#) Gary Lee Toft [View Large](#) Photos Gary Lee Toft PARKVILLE, Md. —A residential counselor at a group home in Parkville has been charged with abusing two vulnerable adults who were in his care, and it's not the first time that's happened. [Man charged in sex assault of disabled man](#) City police say a 63-year-old assisted living facility employee has been arrested and charged in the sexual assault of a 24-year-old developmentally disabled man, and police believe there may be more victims out there. [More](#) Baltimore County police said Gary Lee Toft, 63, of Baltimore, was charged with vulnerable adult abuse, perverted practice and numerous sex offenses in a case connected to a group home in the 4100 block of Taylor Avenue. Detectives said they learned about the allegations of abuse in September. Investigators discovered that Toft had abused two men in his care over several months. No other details about the case have been revealed. Toft is currently being held at Central Booking in Baltimore because of previous sex offense and perverted practice charges against him, according to court records. In that case, Toft was charged in September with sexually assaulting a 24-year-old developmentally disabled man at Creative Options, where Toft also worked as a residential counselor. Anyone with information about the Baltimore County case or other possible incidents involving Toft should call police at 410-307-2020. Because city police said Toft admitted to preying upon and assaulting multiple victims, specifically young men, police created a hotline for any additional victims to call and report any assaults that Toft may have committed. That number is 410-396-2269. Source: <http://www.wbalv.com/news/group-home-counselor-charged-with-abuse/29403660>

Grand Falls-Windsor Revokes Group Home Permit Wednesday , October 29 2014 | 5:25:25 PM The Blue Sky group home has until the end of November to close down the operation after council voted last night to revoke the home's permit. Mayor Al Hawkins says the town has been dealing with numerous complaints since the group home opened in July. He says council has dealt with over 80 complaints filed over the last four months. Blue Sky operates the group home which can house up to five residents. Hawkins says many of the complaints have been filed with the RCMP. Most of the complaints were about curfew, but there were some related to assaults and thefts. Hawkins says a month ago council asked Blue Sky to try to correct the problems. The company now has two weeks to file an appeal; if they lose, they will have to close the residence by the end of November. Source: <http://www.vocm.com/newsarticle.asp?mn=2&ID=50371>

Kidnapped for Christ Screens After Kate Logan Talks About Her Horrific Teen Center Film By Matt Coker Published Fri., Oct. 31 2014 at 6:37 AM Kidnapped for Christ LLC Anti-gay therapy is the pits. Biola University student Kate Logan went to the Dominican Republic to make a movie about a troubled teen center. But once in Jarabacoa she discovered teens had been kidnapped at the behest of their parents to attend a school where they'd undergo behavior modification and anti-gay therapy. Thus, the theme of Logan's documentary changed, something she'll talk about at a panel discussion in Long Beach Saturday night before Kidnapped for Christ screens. Logan, whose Kidnapped for Christ is now a Showtime film, will be joined on the panel by Dwayne Walker,

California coordinator for Human, Earth, Animal Liberation (HEAL), a Seattle-based organization that exposes institutional abuse throughout the nation. As Logan talks about her experiences filming, Walker will discuss how HEAL's Teen Liberty Campaign is helping to shut down programs like the one the filmmaker exposed. The panel discussion begins at 8 p.m. Saturday at The Center, 2017 E. 4th St., Long Beach, and Kidnapped for Christ starts 9 p.m. across the way at the Art Theater, 2025 E. 4th St. Tickets are \$11. Visit heal-online.org for more about the group and kidnappedforchrist.com for more about the movie. Source: <http://blogs.ocweekly.com/navelgazing/2014/10/kidnapped-for-christ-kate-logan.php>

Reform school survivors allege abuse of their personal files too Former students of controversial WWASP programs cannot locate documents needed for college, disability and legal action October 31, 2014 5:00AM ET by [Justin Higginbottom @justinHhiggin](#) SALT LAKE CITY — Ashley Astle left Spring Creek Lodge, a residential facility for troubled youths in Montana, over a decade ago. She has never been back. “I’m not sure how deeply you want me to go into my experience of the program, but I will give you the short version. Basically, it was terrible,” she said. Last winter she started to hear disturbing rumors that reopened old wounds. Spring Creek Lodge closed in 2009 after a wrongful death suit after a student hanged herself, and the school sat derelict in a Montana forest. According to another alum who allegedly returned to the facility, the abandoned school was still filled with fragments of past students’ lives — journals, progress notes, letters and medical and mental health records. The facility, part tough love and part behavior modification, had left a community of traumatized students connected through social media. So Astle organized a Facebook group she called Operation Spring Creek Lodge to galvanize former students in an attempt to retrieve their records or at least make sure they were properly disposed of. Many of those who heard about their efforts were disgusted that the school, which took so much from them emotionally, might retain a physical component as well. “The problem ... is that we have all been through so much trauma in and out of the program, and that’s a very private thing for most of us,” said Astle. “So for them not to properly dispose of these records is an incredibly low blow.” The for-profit residential youth treatment industry, often criticized for having lax regulation, has left former students seeking answers after [dozens of programs have closed](#) over the years. Schools that once operated under the umbrella of the World Wide Association of Specialty Programs (WWASP), with leadership and strong ties to the state of the Utah but with campuses around the world, have left a trail of shuttered programs and, for many students, unknown fates for academic and medical records. Former students seeking records for colleges, disability claims, lawsuits regarding past abuse or simply a sense of closure have had little recourse. Astle recalled spending time at Spring Creek in isolation in a room known as the hobbit hole, which was often covered in feces, urine and blood. She described the therapy seminars she was required to attend as brainwashing. She is now an active member of the online survivor community — which includes Facebook groups like [WWASP Survivors](#), [Stop WWASP](#) and [Spring Creek Lodge Survivors Community](#) — made up of mostly former WWASP program participants critical of the industry. In July a member of another group, [Cross Creek Survivors](#), posted a picture of a dumpster outside the Cross Creek Manor facility, another former WWASP school in southern Utah. The bin appeared to be filled with former students’ documents. Former students ignited the thread with requests for people to visit the area and confirm the documents — whatever they might be — were properly disposed of. Chaffin Pullan, a former administrator at Cross Creek, denied it was possible for students’ sensitive documents to end up in a dumpster. Recent academic records are stored off-site, and older records have been destroyed, he said. He acknowledged that hundreds of students have contacted him asking for their records, but he has been able to help only those who recently attended the school. Medical records, he said, including those for therapy sessions, are kept by the individual doctors. When asked about student concerns regarding records and documents left over from programs, former WWASP president Ken Kay said that what individual schools did with their records was not his organization’s responsibility. “I didn’t have any control over the schools,” he said, “how they stored their records or anything.” Academic records should have been forwarded to the Browning Academy, an online distance learning center, Kay said. A representative of Browning confirmed the academy sends out records when it has them. “There are many I do not have. It may take up to one month to process the request,” the person wrote in an email. The problem, according to Kay, is that some schools never forwarded their transcripts to Browning. “We weren’t responsible for [the schools], but we failed the responsibility to try to coach them,” he said. “We have all been through so much trauma in and out of the program, and that’s a very private thing for most of us. So for them not to properly dispose of these records is an incredibly low blow.” Ashley Astle former Spring Creek Lodge student Lilly Speerdecker spent three months at the troubled-youth facility Casa by the Sea, in Ensenada, Mexico, until it was closed by Mexican authorities in 2004. Now she runs the [Safe Teen Schools](#) website, which provides information on abuse at tough-love facilities like Casa by the Sea. She said former students from WWASP schools regularly contact her for advice on how to locate their transcripts in order to apply for college. “I don’t know how,” Speerdecker said. “I feel bad because there is nothing I can do.” In 2005, 34 states reported to the Health and Human Services Department’s National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System [1,503](#) incidents of abuse by government and private residential facility staffers — the majority alleging neglect or deprivation of necessities (44 percent), with physical abuse second (24 percent). Two years later, the Alliance for the Safe, Therapeutic and Appropriate Use of Residential Treatment (ASTART) [testified](#) on its findings of an online survey of hundreds of former students of residential youth programs. Forty-five percent of the surveyed students reported being emotionally, physically or sexually abused by staff. Over 90 percent had mail and phone calls monitored, and over 80 percent had letters or conversations restricted. More than half had experience in seclusion. The majority described feeling “a lot” of sadness, stress, anger, confusion, hopelessness and fear at their programs. In 2007 and 2008 there were several U.S. Government Accountability Office [reports](#) as well as hearings before Congress on abuse at youth residential treatment facilities. While there is no data on the exact number of children in residential programs, ASTART [estimated](#) there are hundreds of such facilities, with as many as 14,000 children in a peak year, with annual revenue of up to \$1 billion. However, there is no federal regulation of for-profit troubled-youth programs (other than federal HIPAA regulations regarding medical files), leaving oversight of the programs up to individual states. The Department of Licensing in Utah, for example, has no rules regarding facilities’ keeping documentation, said licensing director Diane Moore. The Department of Education in New York, tasked with regulating the Academy at Ivy Ridge, another WWASP-affiliated school now closed, requires schools to store student records for 50 years and “[take precautions to ensure the security of student academic records](#).” Some former students of residential facilities like the Academy at Ivy Ridge in New York want to see their records simply for a sense of closure after what they described as harrowing childhood experiences. Courtesy of former Ivy Ridge student But what Sean, a former Ivy Ridge student whose last name is withheld for his legal protection, said he found at his old campus was conflicting. In November of 2013, with help from urban explorers adept at sneaking into state asylums, Sean entered Ivy Ridge, which is off-limits but unguarded. In rooms with circled mold patches and Chinese characters (a Delaware corporation bought the building [in 2009 to teach English to Chinese students](#)) were rows and stacks of cardboard boxes and file cabinets. And inside those, he said, were copies of birth certificates, suicide watch forms, printed emails from students, records of medical visits, undelivered mail from families (including a set of family pictures he mailed back to its owner in Corpus Christi, Texas), DVDs of camera footage, documentation of what was known as the riot (which he referred to as “the uprising”) and his own records. Sean opened his files quickly, taking pictures of everything in case he couldn’t get them out. “I was able to get a lot of closure for myself,” he said, “but now I’ve taken on a new burden.” He wants to help other students get their records back too. Since then, he has returned, with others, to explore more rooms. “It’s like a big rock, and I’m trying to erode it down and disburse it out,” he explained. Not only does Nicole Booth not have school records from her attendance 22 years ago at New Beginnings, which is in Utah on the property of WWASP founder Robert Lichfield, but she also has no record of the school itself, she said. “It makes me nervous,” she said. “It’s almost like none of this ever existed.” Booth was sent to New Beginnings a month before her 18th birthday in order to finish high school. What she found when she arrived, she said, was nothing like what she had read in the brochure. In place of education was punishment, and the staff immediately degraded her verbally, she recalled. Shortly before her birthday in July, she said, she was chained to a log for hours in the Utah desert. Now 40 and diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, which she said stems from her time at the program, Booth said she cannot find a trace of the program on the Internet. She considered seeking legal action eventually, when she was ready, but is not hopeful, with the program — and any record of her attendance — possibly extinct. “It affects me. I don’t think about it every day ... but it’s made me who I am today,” Booth said of her time at New Beginnings. “I’m very leery of people. I would never send my kids, ever, anywhere, just because I’m scared they would get sent to some place like I was at.” “‘Closure’ is a good word for it,” said Mathew Foley, who was unable to track down records of his attendance at Spring Creek Lodge for his disability application. “I’d like to see exactly what they have to say, what they were telling my parents ... that was getting my parents to agree to keep me there.” Source: <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/10/31/missing-records-wwaspreformschools.html>

States Are Prioritizing Prisons Over Education, Budgets Show The Huffington Post | By [Rebecca Klein](#) Posted: 10/30/2014 11:29 am EDT Updated: 10/30/2014 11:59 am EDT Chris Ryan via Getty Images [Share 1148](#) [Tweet 534](#) [Email](#) | 36 Comment 78 [tumblr stumble reddit](#) If state budget trends reflect the country’s policy priorities, then the U.S. currently values prisoners over children, a new report suggests. A report released this week by the [Center on Budget](#)

[and Policy Priorities shows that the growth of state spending on prisons](#) in recent years has far outpaced the growth of spending on education. After adjusting for inflation, state general fund spending on prison-related expenses increased over 140 percent between 1986 and 2013. During the same period, state spending on K-12 education increased only 69 percent, while higher education saw an increase of less than six percent. State spending on corrections has exploded in recent years, as incarceration rates have more than tripled in a majority of states in the past few decades. The report says that the likelihood that an offender will be incarcerated has gone up across the board for all major crimes. At the same time, increases in education spending have not kept pace. In fact, since 2008, [spending on education has actually declined](#) in a majority of states in the wake of the Great Recession. According to the brief, rates of violent crime and property crime have actually fallen over the years, even while incarceration rates have risen. Therefore, it appears that states' more aggressive incarceration policies are behind the higher prison rates. Michael Mitchell, a co-author of the report and a policy analyst with the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, suggested that education spending could actually help lower incarceration rates. "When you look at prisoners, people who get sent to prison and their educational levels, [the levels are] typically much lower than individuals who are not sent to prison," he told The Huffington Post. "Being a high school dropout dramatically increases your likelihood of being sent to prison." "Spending so many dollars locking up so many people, those are dollars that inevitably cannot be used to provide pre-K slots ... or financial aid for those who want to go to college," Mitchell added. The report suggests that states' spending practices are ultimately harming their economies, while not making the states especially safer. The authors ultimately conclude that if "states were still spending the same amount on corrections as they did in the mid-1980s, adjusted for inflation, they would have about \$28 billion more available each year for education and other productive investments." "The types of investments to help people out of poverty and break that school-to-prison pipeline are investments in early education, helping youth stay in school and getting them college campuses," said Mitchell. Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/30/state-spending-prison-and-education_n_6072318.html

Former Utah youth home employee sent to prison for sexual abuse By [STEPHEN HUNT](#) | The Salt Lake Tribune First Published Nov 06 2014 10:00AM
 • Last Updated Nov 07 2014 10:30 pm Wade Russell Wade Russell ARTICLE PHOTO GALLERY (1) Crime » Judge orders one to 15 years on each of 12 counts. Share This Article A former employee of a Spanish Fork group home for troubled teens was sentenced to prison for up to 15 years Thursday for sexually abusing four teenage girls at the facility. Wade Russell, 60, had pleaded no contest in September to 12 counts of second-degree felony forcible sexual abuse. On Thursday, 4th District Judge James Taylor sentenced Russell to one to 15 years on each count, but ordered the sentences to run concurrently. The judge also fined Russell \$228,396. Russell sexually abused the girls, ages 13 to 16, while employed at Extended Family Services between February and November 2013. According to court documents, one girl said that on Nov. 3, 2013, her third night at EFS, Russell went into her room, lay down next to her bed and fondled her over her clothing, according to charging documents. Source: <http://www.sltrib.com/news/1792654-155/russell-abuse-counts-degree-documents-sexual>

A New Rebellion for Lunch and Recess! By [I AM AN EDUCATOR](#) on November 6, 2014 [The rebellion for lunch and recess is rocking Seattle!](#) Photos by Sarah Lang The rally to defend lunch and recess time at the Wednesday Seattle school board meeting was an overwhelming success. A few dozen parents, teachers, and kids rallied and testified with one message: eating and playing—lunch and recess—are human rights. The school district began the meeting by announcing they would form a task-force that would make a recommendation on lunch and recess times within eighteen months. This absurdly long timeline to grant students their basic rights only inflamed the passions of the protesters. Families from a diverse geographical representation of Seattle schools presented moving stories and convincing research to make an unassailable case to expand lunch and recess times in the Seattle Public Schools. One parent revealed that an audit conducted by parents in the [Lunch and Recess Matter](#) group over the last couple of weeks found some 50 schools in Seattle do not adhere to their own policy requiring a minimum of 20 min of time to eat. Parents announced that at one school, students at the back of the lunch line only had five minutes to scarf down their food before the bell rang. Others connected the loss of recess time to the increase in high-stakes testing. One African immigrant parent gave a first hand account of what it feels like to be starving and told the school board it was unacceptable that his son didn't receive enough time to eat and is then asked to throw away his food. He told his son that he was not allowed to throw the food away and a teacher would have to do it for him—and demanded that the school district allow his son the time he needed not to waste food. A student from a south end elementary school talked about recess, the wiggles, and how much fun it is to play. [Another parent delivered over 1,600 signatures that were collected on the "Save Recess" petition.](#) This movement is at the very beginning but has already shown great spirit and convincing arguments, [including this oped by two of the new parent leaders, Dayna Provitt and Jana Robbins.](#) The Lunch and Recess group has the potential to launch a whole new parent and teacher coalition to transform the schools to make them responsive to the communities they serve. Parent leader Deb Escher and Jesse Hagopian rally for their kids to have time for lunch and recess Here then is a round up of some of the media this new movement received in its first major action: KIRO TV: <http://www.kirotv.com/news/news/seattle-parents-kids-dont-have-enough-time-eat-lun/nh26x/> KUOW: <http://kuow.org/post/lunches-too-short-seattle-schools-say-students-and-parents> KIRO radio: <http://mynorthwest.com/11/2638000/Seattle-parents-protest-shrinking-lunch-recess-times> KING 5: <http://www.king5.com/story/news/local/seattle/2014/11/05/seattle-parents-protest-length-of-school-lunch-period/18561847/> Seattle Times: <http://blogs.seattletimes.com/educationlab/2014/11/05/lunch-and-recess-too-short-say-some-seattle-parents-and-students/> Save Seattle Schools Blog: http://savesattleschools.blogspot.com/2014/11/highlights-from-board-meeting_ Source: <http://iamaneducator.com/2014/11/06/a-new-rebellion-for-lunch-and-recess/>

Supreme Court refuses to hear group-home case The decision sends Newport Beach challenge back to lower courts. Costa Mesa, Laguna signed on in support. Email Share 34 By Hannah Fry November 3, 2014 | 4:13 p.m. The [U.S. Supreme Court](#) has rejected Newport Beach's request for a hearing on its group-home law, a move that will effectively force the city back into trial court to defend its ordinance. Newport Beach submitted a petition to the Supreme Court in August, asking the justices to reverse a 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruling that a municipal ordinance governing group homes could be challenged for discriminatory intent. The Supreme Court announced Monday that it would not hear the case. [Topics Courts and the Judiciary Trials and Arbitration U.S. Supreme Court](#) "We are still analyzing the court's decision and its potential impact on our ordinance," City Atty. Aaron Harp said. "Obviously, this is not the outcome we had hoped for, but from the beginning we knew review by the United States Supreme Court is rarely granted." Steven Polin, an attorney representing the group homes, said the high court's refusal to hear the lawsuit will allow lower courts to issue a judgment based on the case's merits. "The ballgame is not over," he said. "We're back where we always thought we should be." In January 2008, the city adopted a law that placed strict limits on group homes. The homes had previously been operating freely in residential areas, which led to complaints from Newport Beach residents about traffic issues, cigarette smoke, loitering and noise. The group homes contend that the motivation behind the ordinance was to make it nearly impossible to provide housing for recovering addicts. The law effectively prohibited new group homes housing seven or more residents from opening in most residential areas and required existing group homes to complete the same permitting process required of new ones, including an extensive public review process, according to court documents. The ordinance forced out many of the group homes because they could not qualify for permits. Harp estimated that the city has spent roughly \$4 million defending lawsuits from group-home operators since it implemented the law in 2008. Several other Orange County cities have also wrestled with limiting rehab homes in recent years. Costa Mesa and Laguna Beach, which have each dealt with their own issues, contributed funding toward the cost of filing amicus briefs, which are written arguments submitted by independent organizations, to the Supreme Court. They joined in support of Newport Beach. "If the Supreme Court would have given a ruling, it would have provided some legal precedent and feedback for communities that deal with this issue," said Costa Mesa city spokesman Bill Lobdell. Pacific Shores Properties, Yellowstone Recovery and Newport Coast Recovery first sued Newport in 2009. The organizations contend that the ordinance discriminates against recovering drug addicts and alcoholics, who are protected by the federal Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988. The act prevents discrimination against people who are in a "protected class," which courts have found includes recovering drug addicts and alcoholics, when they seek housing. Addicts and alcoholics in recovery are considered protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act. A U.S. District Court judge first ruled in 2010 that the nature of the ordinance was not discriminatory. The case was appealed by the group homes to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. In 2013, a three-person panel of the appeals court ruled that the ordinance may have illegally discriminated against group homes for people in recovery based on disability. However, other 9th Circuit judges maintained that the panel's decision inappropriately allowed a neutral law that was fairly enforced to be challenged based on an accusation of ill intent. The city agreed and appealed to the Supreme Court. "This case is and has always been about a city's right to enact non-discriminatory regulations to protect its residents from negative impacts associated with adjoining land uses," Harp said. "We remain

committed to protecting our residents' quality of life and ensuring land uses are compatible and contribute positively to our community." Source: <http://www.dailypilot.com/news/tn-dpt-me-1105-newport-group-home-lawsuit-20141103.0.4226447.story>

Jury finds foster mom guilty of capital murder in 2-year-old's death Posted: Tuesday, November 4, 2014 12:26 pm [Jury finds foster mom guilty of capital murder in 2-year-old's death](#) By Jordan Overturf jordan.overturf@theeagle.com The Eagle | [1 comment](#) UPDATE -- The jury found Sherill Small guilty of capital murder Tuesday afternoon for the death of her 2-year-old foster daughter, Alexandria Hill, in 2013. Small, 55, was immediately sentenced to life in prison without parole by Judge John Youngblood. Small's daughter, Amber Forester, cried and ran out of the courtroom when the verdict was announced. District Attorney Bill Torrey said he was confident that the jury would convict because "the evidence in this case was overwhelming." Defense attorney Shawna Roscom said Small's response was one of devastation. "I believe there is a tragedy any way you look at it," said Roscom, a Bryan-based attorney who assisted Norman Lanford, the court-appointed attorney representing Small. Roscom said an appeal will follow, though another attorney will handle that process. CAMERON -- The fate of a Rockdale foster mother charged with the July 2013 murder of Alexandria Hill is now in the hands of a Milam County Jury. Closing statements were heard Tuesday morning in the 20th District Court in Cameron, where Judge John Youngblood charged the jury with finding a verdict on three possible charges -- capital murder, criminally negligent homicide and serious injury to a child. If convicted of capital murder, the defendant, Sherill Small, 55, will face life in prison. The courtroom was half full on Tuesday, with Alexandria's family members present. Sherill Small's husband, Clemon Small, and daughter, Amber Forester, sat behind her as the attorneys made their final statements to the jury. Assistant District Attorney John Redington told jurors that Small didn't want to be a foster mom and that it was her sister-in-law's idea. "She was not doing this (fostering) for the right reasons. ... I think that Sherill Small murdered Alex Hill. Once you look at all the evidence and you listen to your oath as jurors, this case deserves a guilty verdict for capital murder," Redington said. Defense attorney Norman Lanford told jurors that Rockdale authorities rushed to judgment in their investigation of Small and by the end, they only had four-and-a-half pages of documents to prove the case. "As far as the authorities in this county are concerned, you can send somebody to prison for the rest of their life for four pages," Lanford said. He also said the prosecution failed to prove that his client caused Alex's injuries purposefully. "All you've got is an unexplained death and one person in the house when it happened. As far as Rockdale is concerned, if you're the only one present, then you committed capital murder," the former district judge said during his closing statement. District Attorney Bill Torrey told jurors in his final comments that the defense's medical experts admitted that some of Small's symptoms of dementia could have been faked. "This is an amazingly proved case. Sherill Small brutally murdered Alex Hill. And y'all know that," Torrey said. Jurors were set to begin deliberations after lunch. Source: http://www.theeagle.com/news/crime/jury-finds-foster-mom-guilty-of-capital-murder-in/article_7e07fb3a-644a-11e4-b84b-6f6d72e9392d.html

Lawsuit Claims "Kids for Cash" Foster Care Abuse | NBC Southern California Lawsuit Claims "Kids for Cash" Foster Care Abuse By [Kim Baldonado](#) Kim Baldonado reports for the NBC4 News at 5 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 6, 2014. (Published Thursday, Nov 6, 2014 • Updated at 8:50 PM PST One of California's largest private foster care agencies is under fire over allegations of torture and abuse that are outlined in a 76-page lawsuit. The suit alleges foster care children endured physical and mental abuse of a seven-year period, abuse allegedly covered up by the Rancho Cucamonga-based Interim Care Foster Family Agency, which recruited and supervised the foster parents. [Police Seek Victims in Alleged Craigslist Sex Assaults](#) "My old foster parents, they used to make special tools just to torture us, and I was under the age of 10 years old," former foster child Isaiah Sais said at a news conference Thursday. Sais is one of eight suing the agency, which is part of California's \$400 million a year private foster care industry. 2014 SoCal Images in the News "I have been abused verbally, physically and sexually when I was put into foster care," former foster child Shawna Adams said. The suit claims the children were "caught in an illegal, abusive, violent, concealed, unconscionable 'kids for cash' operation from 2006 to 2013." It goes on to say the foster children "suffered ongoing, unrestrained, terror, torture, corporal punishment, physical and mental abuse and neglect" at the hands of the foster parents that was "covered up/ unchecked by defendant Interim (Care Foster Family Agency)." [Tearful Families Welcome Marines Home](#) "We're letting you hear our voices now because we were silent for too long," former foster child Saleena Galvan said. "The lawsuit alleges a kids for cash operation that has bilked the government of hundreds of thousands of dollars," attorney L. Wallace Pate said. [Parents, Students Reportedly Fight at IE High School](#) The state pays private agencies about \$2,000 a month per child. The agencies are allowed to keep as much as 60 percent of the state money to pay for rent, supplies, and personnel to ensure foster children are being cared for, but Pate claims that was not the case with her clients. "The lawsuit alleges these children lived in seven different homes, none were certified," Pate said. "They were evicted from four facilities and were homeless." The two foster parents named in the lawsuit had their licenses revoked by the state, but Pate believes the same should happen to the agency which employed them. NBC4's requests for comment in person and on the phone to Interim Care Foster Family Agency about the lawsuit had not been returned as of Thursday night. Source: <http://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/Lawsuit-Claims-Kids-for-Cash-Foster-Care-Abuse--281880151.html>

Foster-care policy change modest given need for reform PTH 9:40 p.m. EST November 11, 2014 A foster father and son wash dishes. (Photo: TIMES HERALD) 70 CONNECT [2 TWEETLINKEDIN](#) 9 COMMENTEMAILMORE A new policy for child foster care placements was recently announced. It requires consideration to the attachment of infants and toddlers to their parents and/or caregivers when making placement decisions. This is only the tip of the iceberg in repairing a system that is horribly broken. Michigan had a little more than 14,000 children in foster care in 2011. That year, St. Clair County had 347 children between the ages of 0-5 under Child Protective Services supervision. As of April 2012, the county had 292 children in foster care. The CPS supervision number does not include children ages 6-17 so the actual number of children under supervision is higher. While there are children in need of care, the basis on which children come under supervision and/or are removed from homes is questionable. Child Protective Services and Department of Human Services workers do not have to substantiate their findings. If they believe a child is abused or neglected, even if there are no witnesses or records to substantiate their claim, what the worker says is accepted by the court. This is wrong and detrimental to families. The term "Child Protective Services" might not be good enough. A better one would be "Career Protection Services." If workers find children to rescue or protect, their jobs are secure. Foster care is a money-making system. By pulling children out of the home the county receives IV-E funding. If the child is left in the home and/or returned to the home, the county loses funding. When Michigan's case load of IV-E-eligible children declined between 2001 to 2006 it put a strain on state and county budgets, reducing eligibility to only 29.5 percent. By 2012, Michigan increased eligibility to 37 percent by removing children from their homes and collecting IV-E funding. Are the best interests of each child being properly met? When a child is under the supervision of CPS/DHS, a legal guardian ad litem (LGAL) is assigned to represent the child's best interests. Here in St. Clair County, there is only one LGAL that appears in court on neglect cases, and you will also find her listed for delinquency proceedings. In a four-week period the LGAL was scheduled to appear in court on 87 child protective proceedings and 26 delinquency proceedings -- a total of 113 court appearances in a 4-week period. That does not represent an entire case load. The process is repeated week after week, month after month. Children are constantly being added to the system. Each case may have more than one child. Each case has a court review every three months. How well can one LGAL represent the best interests of each and every child she is responsible for with a case load that is so substantial? If you sit in court, you will find the LGAL rarely offers any information regarding the children. It is a cookie-cutter process where the CPS, DHS or adoption worker presents their report to the court, the LGAL agrees with their findings, adds none of her own and the court accepts the case worker's report as valid. Rulings are made against family members without their input, medical needs of the children are not brought to the court's attention, recommendations and orders are not followed. If the LGAL has made a phone call to the home where the child is located but does not speak to anyone that still meets her requirement of a quarterly contact with the child/family. This is not acceptable. The CPS/DHS destruction of families must be stopped. The manner in which such cases are handled must change. Public awareness of a broken system is the first step towards repair. Source: <http://www.thetimesherald.com/story/opinion/columnists/2014/11/11/foster-care-policy-change-modest-given-need-reform/18878057/>

Task force considers changes in foster care by [Kate Morris](#) November 12, 2014 5:04 AM Do you like this? [RSS Print](#) × 1 of 2 Expand Task force considers changes in foster care × 2 of 2 Expand Task force considers changes in foster care [PrevNext](#) [Prev](#) [Next](#) Deaths prompt leaders to seek local fixes to system Amid growing concern for the state's foster care system, a task force in Williamson County is considering improvements that can be made on a local level. According to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, in the past two years there have been four abuse- or neglect-related deaths of children who were placed in foster care in Williamson County or who were from the county. "There's around 500 kids in foster care in Williamson County at any given time," Precinct 1 County Commissioner Lisa Birkman said. "I think a lot of people hear the stories of children dying, and they're appalled by it like everyone else but they really don't know what to do. I'm hoping we can get the message out of things you can do." A task force set up by Birkman held its first

meeting Sept. 25 to discuss the state of the foster care system in Williamson County and where gaps in care have developed. In its second meeting Oct. 10 the members identified how to close those gaps. The caseworker turnover rate was identified as a major issue in the foster care system, but the task force identified a lack of communication and collaboration among organizations to be the root of the county's problems. "There's a number of resources in the community that are all working parallel on a lot of public welfare issues, but there's not cross-talk," attorney ad litem Robert Maier said. "Recently my wife provided me a list of the services that are available here, be it mental health, medical, food banks, pantries—these resources are out there. But we were talking about consolidating this into some sort of a centralized list." Maier used himself as an example, admitting he learned about a valuable resource just by attending the first meeting. In 2013 the Texas Legislature put emphasis on attorney ad litem attorneys who provide legal services to children—to be responsible for the educational and medical needs of the children they are representing, in addition to their welfare and emotional needs, Maier said. Maier also said each school district is required by state law to have a foster care liaison to help with communication between a foster family and the school district. "[There] are foster care liaisons that are in the various school districts," he said. "From an attorney ad litem perspective, this is a resource. Now that we have a willing partner in the school district, we can have better communication." Other task force members include school district representatives, foster families and organizations that work with foster children—many whom were also meeting for the first time through Birkman's task force. "We have a lot of community resources just in Williamson County that we just don't know about," said Alisa De Luna, a task force member and executive director for the Williamson County Court Appointed Special Advocates, or CASA. "With the turnover in [DFPS Child Protective Services] sometimes the caseworkers just don't know [about available resources], and they don't make the requests of the child welfare board to get the assistance that a child or even sometimes the parents of the child need." Turnover creates care gaps. The Stephen Group is a consulting firm that was selected by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and DFPS in February to review CPS. According to an assessment on CPS compiled by The Stephen Group, CPS sees more than one-quarter of caseworkers leaving annually. Additionally, more than 43 percent of new employees leave within the first two years. "One of the issues that the state has is that the CPS worker's average stay is nine months in CPS for a caseworker, and three months of that is training—so they're in the field six months before they leave," Birkman said. "If you had a list of all of those [resources] and keep it updated, that would be a huge help, and that's not something the state's going to do, but the county could host that on our website." DFPS also recently underwent a periodical review by the state legislative Sunset Advisory Commission. As part of the review, which was completed in June, the commission identified CPS caseworker turnover as high priority. The SAC is a means for the legislature to take a closer look at state agencies and assess the continuing needs of those agencies to exist. In addition to stating whether to continue or abolish an agency, SAC identifies problematic areas within the agency in a report that is released to the public. The SAC is putting together a bill based on its findings that will be presented in the upcoming legislative session, which begins in January. "Some of the critical issues are making sure that the coordination and education of resources and the coordination among the various entities involved in our foster care system—such as the CASA volunteers and the CPS caseworkers and, of course, our legal system and the interest groups—are concerned about the welfare of our children," state Sen. Charles Schwertner, R-Georgetown, said. Schwertner and state Rep. Larry Gonzales, R-Round Rock, serve on the SAC. The two have also been working with Birkman and said they welcome input from the task force. "I think it's helpful and critical that we get information from people on the ground," Schwertner said. "I'm keenly interested in the results of the task force and hearing from people ... that have to deal with this on a daily basis." State Rep. Tony Dale, R-Cedar Park, who serves as a member on the legislative Select Committee on Child Protection, has also been working with the task force. The committee was created last spring by House Speaker Joe Straus to study abuse and neglect fatalities in Texas and make recommendations for protection. "My perspective is our committee is encouraging the Sunset Commission on some of the things related to CPS and what they should adopt," Dale said. "That Sunset bill is likely to pass, and that's probably the best vehicle for these things that need to be done legislatively ... instead of having a bunch of individual bills over here from members like me; it's basically a have-to-pass bill." Although he said some of the task force's proposed changes do not require new laws, he still welcomes input at the task force meetings. "Part of what I've learned from these meetings, I look at [the recommendations] and I can incorporate that into what I think needs to be done for CPS, so it's very helpful to me to get feedback, especially from people that are not just local but are directly involved," he said. "Unlike me—I'm at the policy level. I don't have foster kids; I don't have any interaction with the system, so it's different for me." Finding a fix One option being looked at to alleviate the problems in the Texas foster care system is the implementation of a computer program called Information Management Protecting Adults and Children in Texas. The IMPACT program was built in 1996, and modernization would allow for records and information to be centralized in a Web application. "IMPACT is very dated," said Jo Poenitzsch, executive assistant attorney to the county attorney. "The problem is that we don't have access as the county attorneys to this system, which would help tremendously in our cases if we could at any given point look into a case file [and] see what's been going on." According to DFPS, IMPACT would help caseworkers document cases faster and spend more time with foster families. Other gaps identified by the task force were a lack of mentor programs and resources to support foster and biological families as well as the state monetary reimbursement system for foster families. Birkman said the county has not done anything like the task force for the foster care system in the past, but it has had one for the mental health system. "Before I got on the court 10 years ago the commissioners decided the same sort of thing with mental health and formed a task force," she said. "That's been very successful. We're now one of the best mental health systems in the state." The task force meets again Nov. 17, and although it is scheduled to be its final meeting, Birkman said she hopes to make the meetings a regular occurrence. Additionally, she said she will continue to work with state officials to convey the messages of the task force, and interested parties are encouraged to email state representatives and senators or testify in person when the SAC bill is presented. "I think our role is to help define what is important to us in Williamson County," Birkman said. Source: <http://impactnews.com/austin-metro/georgetown/task-force-considers-changes-in-foster-care/>

Morristown group home complaints bring action [Story](#) [Comments](#) [Share](#) [Share](#) [Print](#) [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) Related Documents [Letter from Devereaux to Morristown Mayor Tim Dougherty](#) This letter was sent to Morristown Mayor Timothy Dougherty by the Devereaux Foundation on Nov. 6 addressing issues involving the group Home on Headley Road in Morristown. Posted: Thursday, November 13, 2014 12:15 am [Morristown group home complaints bring action 0 comments](#) MORRISTOWN – Although the Morristown Council has taken the step to ask the state to revoke the license of the Devereux Foundation's group home for teens on Headley Road, additional steps are being taken by both sides to make changes to how the house is run. The Council on Tuesday, Oct. 21, passed a resolution to ask the state to rescind the group home's license following months of complaints from residents the nonprofit Devereux Foundation is letting poorly supervised teenage boys roam the street where they harass and intimidate neighbors. Although the vote was unanimous, Councilwoman Alison Deeb, the lone Republican on the governing body, complained she was being left out of the loop regarding the council's decision-making process. "I hate to think it's political," Deeb said Friday, "but the Devereux house is in my (Fourth) ward." Nevertheless she said she felt progress has been made in the time since the council passed the resolution. She noted a private meeting was held between the neighborhood and Devereux representatives last Friday in which Devereux was to have discussed remedial steps it plans to make. "I do think the situation is moving in the right direction," Deeb said. "It is apparent now that Devereux wants to make productive changes, which is a positive thing. The mayor's office is engaged which is good." Among the steps the council is taking, besides asking the state to rescind the license, is having town attorney Vij Pawar look into whether the town can charge for "excessive" calls out to town authorities. "It has been observed that Devereux lacks the appropriate level of security and should be held accountable," Deeb said. "Since we require bar owners to provide extra security a precedent has been set. Why can't Devereux provide their own security? If not, why shouldn't they pay for ours?" She added if the town charged for services, it would mean "we hold Devereux accountable and reduce taxpayer burden since Devereux does not pay any taxes yet has exorbitant demand for our municipal services." Joanne Farrell, who has lived next door to the group home for 20 years, said for the first 18 years there was no issue. "They were fine," she said. "It has only been in the last two years things have gotten out of hand." Farrell said the issue is not of being unwelcoming to the teens, all of whom are mentally disabled in some way. "We're not unwelcoming. I'm a teacher. I understand and am sympathetic to their needs. It's the lack of supervision and the physical deterioration of the building that is the issue." She noted one of the boys had smashed all the windows in the front of the house. "There was a time all the windows were boarded up," she said. She also noted the porch step railings had been torn out. "One boy was found wandering all alone," she said. Farrell said she attended the Friday meeting and said the residents and Devereux had discussed where things stand now. "No one seems to know," Farrell said. "We know the council wants the license revoked but the two sides seem to be talking with each other." Devereux supplied a letter Chief Executive Director Robert Krieder sent to Mayor Timothy Dougherty on Nov. 6 addressing the group home. It is attached to this article. Krieder notes the teens have behavioral issues but criticizes the community for not being welcoming to the teens. Farrell commented that because Krieder is not experiencing the issues doesn't really understand them. "Devereux may be a fine organization but the CEO is not here to see what is happening," she said. On its website it describes itself as "one of the oldest and largest nonprofit providers of behavioral healthcare in the country. Across its national

network, Devereux partners with families, schools and communities in order to help some of our nation's most vulnerable individuals achieve happiness and personal fulfillment. We provide a continuum of care for children, adolescents and adults faced with intellectual and developmental disabilities, autism spectrum disorders and mental health challenges, including psychiatric hospitals, residential and day treatment programs, community-based group homes, respite care programs, supervised apartments, foster care homes, special education day schools, and vocational and pre-vocational training. These programs and services positively impact the lives of thousands of individuals, and their families, each year." Source:

http://newjerseyhills.com/morris_news_bee/news/morristown-group-home-complaints-bring-action/article_84aa6d5d-430b-596b-903c-c24bd83da380.html

Proposal for Intercept youth treatment facility in Roanoke County is withdrawn Intercept Youth Services shifted gears amid neighborhood opposition and an unfavorable planning panel decision. [Story Comments Image \(1\) Print Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) [Previous](#) [Next](#) ERICA YOON | The Roanoke Times ey interceptyouth 110314 p02 Chairman Martha Hooker of the Roanoke County Planning Commission speaks during a public hearing with a proposal from Intercept Youth Services. A public comment period was also undertaken during the meeting on Nov. 3. Related Documents [Withdrawal letter 111014](#) Posted: Wednesday, November 12, 2014 8:41 pm [Proposal for Intercept youth treatment facility in Roanoke County is withdrawn](#) By Carmen Forman carmen.forman@roanoke.com 981-3334 roanoke.com A company proposing a residential youth treatment facility in Roanoke County has withdrawn its rezoning application in the face of neighborhood opposition. Intercept Youth Services, in a letter dated Monday, withdrew its application to create a residential treatment facility for at-risk kids ages 5 to 17 on Airport Road. Intercept purchased the land and the 49,000-square-foot building for \$1.8 million, but it needed a high-intensity commercial designation and a special-use permit from the county government before it could become a treatment center. The proposed facility would have been office space and a 16-bed center that could expand in the future, and would provide counseling and treatment services to socially or cognitively impaired youth who do not have drug or alcohol addictions or display violent behavior. When the application went before the county planning commission in a public hearing Nov. 3, the [commission recommended denial](#) to the board of supervisors. The application was scheduled to go to a public hearing before the supervisors next week. "If there is neighborhood opposition to what we're doing, we don't want to operate that way," Intercept CEO Mark Bogert said. "We want to be a part of the community in a productive way, whatever it takes to do that." At the planning commission meeting, about a dozen neighbors spoke about why they were opposed to having Intercept in the area. Ultimately, the commission unanimously voted to recommend denial of the application for land-use reasons instead. Rezoning the property would take away some of the county's small amount of industrial-zoned property, Director of Economic Development Jill Loope said at the planning commission meeting. Less than 2 percent of county property is industrially zoned, which means it can accommodate machinery and equipment that are taxable and bring in higher revenue, she said. "It's really common for companies to re-evaluate zoning positions," Loope said. "A lot of time on the front end, they picture a project looking a certain way. They often refine that." The property was zoned industrially in the 1980s when it was first occupied by Stone Printing. Advance Auto bought the building in 1995 and vacated it in 2009. When it was most recently on the market, there was not a lot of interest in the property, Loope said. The planning commission overwhelmingly agreed the property was too valuable in its current zoning designation to rezone. Intercept officials are going to rethink the project and possibly reapply at a later point if and when the community feels at ease about the facility, Bogert said. If Intercept officials still want to create a similar facility, they will have to wait a year from the day they withdrew their application to reapply for rezoning and any special-use permits, Deputy Director of Planning Philip Thompson said. "It doesn't happen a lot, but it does happen," Thompson said. "This was controversial, and I guess they thought it was in their best interest to withdraw rather than keep going in the process." Neighbors had concerns about Intercept from the beginning because the zoning application said the facility would be a halfway home. That inaccurate designation was the closest description the county had for the facility that would encompass the residential part of the treatment center. People showed confusion and fear of the proposed facility at a community meeting and at the planning commission meeting. Misinformation is something Bogert hopes to correct and in doing so, he hopes the community will warm to the facility. "We could have pursued passing it with the supervisors because I think the justification of what we request to do is absolutely valid," he said. "But, I thought it might be much better to spend some time in the community so they understood better what we are and what we're trying to do. We don't have to do this now." In the meantime, Intercept will use the current office space in the building and may rent out some of the space for storage, Bogert said. Source: http://www.roanoke.com/news/local/roanoke_county/proposal-for-intercept-youth-treatment-facility-in-roanoke-county-is/article_8f22c702-4ffc-54fe-8057-93e998397752.html

2 group home counselors indicted in abuse of disabled resident Published 5:43 pm, Thursday, November 13, 2014 1 of 2 Yosmarvi Tovar (New York State Justice Center) Yosmarvi Tovar (New York State Justice Center) Dominique Mortimore (New York State Justice Center) Dominique Mortimore (New York State Justice Center) Page 1 of 1 NISKAYUNA — Two counselors working for a group home operated by the Center for [Disability Services](#) are accused of abusing a man with developmental disabilities, according to the state [Justice Center for the Protection of People](#) with Special Needs. While trying to compel the man to take his daily shower, Yosmarvi Tovar, 43, and [Dominique Mortimore](#), 21, allegedly opened a window and let cold air into the room. When that failed to get him off the couch, the counselors tipped it forward and the man fell to the floor on his hands and knees, according to the Justice Center. The date of the incident could not be determined. Special Prosecutor [Patricia E. Gunning](#) said a Schenectady County grand jury handed up a two-count indictment against Tovar and Mortimore. They were arraigned on one felony and one misdemeanor charge of endangering the welfare of an incompetent or physically disabled person. Tovar and Mortimore, who were fired from their jobs, pleaded not guilty and were released under supervision, officials said. The case is being prosecuted by Justice Center Assistant Special Prosecutors [Christina Calabrese](#) and [Renee Behrens](#). The Niskayuna facility is certified by the state [Office for People With Developmental Disabilities](#). The incident came to the attention of law enforcement officials when it was reported to town police and the Justice Center's Vulnerable Persons Central Register hot line, which is 1-855-373-2122. The Justice Center has primary responsibility for tracking, investigating and prosecuting serious abuse and neglect complaints for facilities and provider agencies that are operated, certified or licensed by six state agencies — the [Office of Mental Health](#), Office for People with Developmental Disabilities, Office of Children and [Family Services](#), Office of Alcoholism and [Substance Abuse Services](#) — and for certain adult homes operated by the [Department of Health](#) and residential schools and programs certified or operated by the state Education Department. Source: <http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/2-group-home-counselors-indicted-in-abuse-of-5891398.php#photo-7139834>

Brooklyn man sentenced to 16 years for group home sex assaults By John Penney jpenney@norwichbulletin.com (860) 857-6965 The Bulletin By John Penney jpenney@norwichbulletin.com (860) 857-6965 Posted Nov. 14, 2014 @ 12:46 pm Updated Nov 14, 2014 at 10:20 PM Ellis K. Hagstrom File/ Connecticut Department of Correction By John Penney jpenney@norwichbulletin.com (860) 857-6965 Posted Nov. 14, 2014 @ 12:46 pm Updated Nov 14, 2014 at 10:20 PM Zoom Ellis K. Hagstrom File/ Connecticut Department of Correction » RELATED CONTENT • [Chinese food delivery driver robbed and assaulted in New ...](#) • [Police: Willimantic man "naked from waist down" with juve...](#) • [Police charge R.I. man in pair of Davville bank robberies](#) • [Police: Heroin dealer kept drugs in cars](#) • [Police: Man stopped in Danielson had stun gun in car](#) Local Social Network Tweets related to this article Local NewsNation & WorldBusinessLocal Life & EntertainmentEntertainmentLocal SportsSports [D Kramer DesireeSeattle](#) @Nero Milo have you ever been sexually harassed at work? Do you think that shirt might make women feel unsafe to be near this man at work? Nov 15 Wopjob wopjob @Warchant Another great win for police departments seeking to aggressively cover up sexual assault cases everywhere. 1/5 young women will be a victim of sexual assault while they are in college. Here are resources to prevent/respond Police searching for man who sexually assaulted woman on Biloxi Bay Bridge | Crime | The Sun Herald sunherald.com/2014/11/15/591... Nov 15 By John Penney jpenney@norwichbulletin.com (860) 857-6965 Posted Nov. 14, 2014 @ 12:46 pm Updated Nov 14, 2014 at 10:20 PM DANIELSON - A 60-year-old former Brooklyn man was sentenced on Friday to 16 years in prison for repeatedly sexually assaulting two mentally challenged women while working in a state-run group home in Killingly. Inside Danielson Superior Court, Ellis Hagstrom was sentenced to four years in prison for each of the four second-degree assault charges he pleaded guilty to last month. Hagstrom entered the plea under the Alford Doctrine, which means he disagrees with the prosecutors' version of events, but acknowledges there is enough evidence to convict him at trial. The individual sentences were ordered to be carried out consecutively and will be followed by 20 years of probation. Windham County State's Attorney Patricia Froehlich called Hagstrom's crimes "horrible, despicable, wicked, inhumane acts" that justified the previously agreed on sentence. "For what he did to these vulnerable women, he should serve every minute of those 16 years," she said. Police began investigating Hagstrom after workers at a state Department of Developmental Service group home noticed a bruise on the inner thigh of a patient Hagstrom was responsible for bathing and dressing. Hagstrom confessed to police he developed a "sexual attraction" to two patients under his care, both who have severe mental and physical challenges — one victim is legally blind and the other a quadriplegic. Police determined the assaults began in 2000 with one victim and again in 2003 with the second woman. Hagstrom has been incarcerated since his arrest in

2011. Froehlich said Hagstrom, who worked at the group home since 1987, had sex with the victims repeatedly, sometimes using a condom. The victims were not identified in court proceedings and case file is sealed. "These victims were so totally helpless and the defendant was supposedly there to help them," Froehlich said. "And he purposely created a situation in order not to be caught. His conduct invokes a strong feeling of disgust and physical feeling of nausea. This is one of the most horrific case of sex assault in the region." Martin Weiss, Hagstrom's lawyer, said his client had cooperated with police and investigators, offering a confession to police shortly after first being interviewed. "He was not trying to be duplicitous," Weiss said. He said a civil lawsuit had been filed against Hagstrom and the state by one victim's family. Hagstrom, wearing an orange jumpsuit and leaning on a walker, declined to address the court on Friday. Froehlich said the state's case was complicated by a lack of sufficient DNA evidence and the victims' inability to testify. In imposing the sentence, Judge Michael Riley also ordered Hagstrom to register as a sex offender for the rest of his life. "This case is well beyond most types of sexual assault cases this court sees," Riley said. Source: <http://www.norwichbulletin.com/article/20141114/NEWS/141119713/1994/NEWS>

Monticello group home counselor indicted on sex charges MONTICELLO – A Sullivan County grand jury handed up a 13-count indictment against a Monticello group home counselor for allegedly having a sexual relationship with a female resident in his care while employed by the Orange/Sullivan Division of Rehabilitation Support Services. The group home is licensed by the State Office of Mental Health. Michael Cubero, 36, of Monticello, was charged with two counts of felony rape; three counts of felony criminal sexual act; two felony counts of endangering the welfare of an incompetent or physically disabled person; as well as two counts each of sexual abuse and sexual misconduct, as misdemeanors. He pled not guilty to the charges and was sent to the Sullivan County Jail in lieu of \$25,000 cash bail. He was fired from his job. The arrest was made following an investigation by the New York State Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs with assistance from the Monticello and State Police. Source: http://www.midhudsonnews.com/News/2014/November/14/Cubero_indict-14Nov14.html

Scotts Valley home for developmentally disabled youth to close 1/4 Cole Lawson's family was given two weeks notice that the group home for young people with autism he is living in would be shuttered. (Shmuel Thaler -- Santa Cruz Sentinel) Cole Lawson works on a spelling exercise with his instructor Jessica Kuhn at the Bay School this week. (Shmuel Thaler -- Santa Cruz Sentinel) Cole Lawson, 16, who has autism, is among the young people who have lost their place to live in a Scotts Valley group home that is closing, leaving the parents to scramble to find housing amid a housing crisis for people with developmental disabilities. (Shmuel Thaler -- Santa Cruz Sentinel) [See larger or additional photos here](#) Care provider Kat Steffen guides Cole Lawson on a bike ride near the group home he has been living in on Lockwood Lane in Scotts Valley Tuesday. (Shmuel Thaler -- Santa Cruz Sentinel) [By Samantha Clark](#), Santa Cruz Sentinel Posted: 11/12/14, 7:59 PM PST | Updated: 4 days ago [# Comments](#) Cole Lawson, 16, who has autism, is among the young people who have lost their place to live in a Scotts Valley group home that is closing, leaving the parents to scramble to find housing amid a housing crisis for people with developmental disabilities. (Shmuel Thaler -- Santa Cruz Sentinel) Lockwood House WHAT: A Scotts Valley Group home on Lockwood Lane for young people with developmental disabilities is closing Saturday after 20 years. WHY: NorCal Vocational Inc., the provider that managed the house, is shuttering business due to financial reasons. WHO: The house is home to five children and young adults. SCOTTS VALLEY >> Sixteen-year-old Cole Lawson was diagnosed with autism when he was 2. For the past year and a half, he has lived in the Lockwood House, a Scotts Valley group home for five children who are developmentally disabled. He shops for groceries, works out at the gym and attends the Bay School in Santa Cruz for young people with autism. His life now is a far cry better than before, when he lived with his family who feared his outbursts of aggressive behavior. "His mood is generally happy," said Christine Kiebert-Boss, Cole's mom and a single working mother who splits her time between the East and West coast working as a freelance home product designer. "But he has broken windshields and gone after me. He's just a wildcard. It just colors your whole life. If he falls apart, everything falls apart." Seventy percent of Californians with autism live with their families. But not living at home may be best, especially if they need around-the-clock care like Cole. "If you're an aging parent and your son or daughter is getting older, your ability to take care of them at the family home becomes more difficult," said Eileen Richey, director of the Association of Regional Center Agencies, which represents California's 21 nonprofit agencies funded by the state to provide housing, treatment and habilitation services to people with developmental disabilities. But with two weeks notice to families, Lockwood is closing Saturday after 20 years due to financial reasons. The provider managing the house, NorCal Vocational Inc., is shuttering all of its programs, which serve more than 150 people with developmental disabilities in the Bay Area. NorCal has not returned calls seeking comment. "The rug has been pulled out from under us, and we're really scrambling," Kiebert-Boss said. "I'm in such a panic during the weekdays on the phone, trying and trying to figure it out." Advertisement Her efforts and those of the state to find Cole a new home have been fruitless. Even if she finds a place by Saturday, the long process can take weeks, and Cole, like the other Lockwood residents, will move back with his family and a caregiver provided by the state. His mother often travels to New York City for work, which would leave Cole potentially alone with his 84-year-old grandmother, physically no match for the nearly 6-foot-tall teenager. "I'm scared to be alone with him. I really don't want him to be alone with my mom," Kiebert-Boss said. Cole cannot move back to chaotic New York City, where he grew up, and his mother does not want him to change schools. His father is out of the picture. "He's got to stay here because he's doing so well," she said. "Cole doesn't speak and is cognitively at the level of a 3-year-old. He can't be placed anywhere." Kiebert-Boss and other parents are rallying to keep the house open until all of Lockwood's five residents find new homes. But waiting lists at other facilities run long. Programs serving the developmentally disabled statewide are closing due to shrinking budgets amid exploding demand for lifelong care. Cole, who turns 17 next month, is part of the wave of children diagnosed with autism in the 1990s starting to move out of the school system into the adult system. The number of people with severe autism eligible for state services grew from 3,900 in 1982 to 72,000 in 2014. At the same time, the \$5.2 billion budget for state developmental services has been cut more than \$1 billion since 2009. "We are facing ever-increasing numbers of disabled, very dependent adults who cannot take care of themselves," said Jill Esher, president of Autism Society San Francisco Bay Area. "Hardly any new group homes are opening. Many that are opening are in the constant threat of closure due to lack of funding." NorCal was a contracted vendor with the San Andreas Regional Center, one of the 21 regional agencies that serves Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito counties. "They didn't have the capital to run," said Javier Zaldivar, director of the center. "We are disappointed to lose another children's home in Lockwood." While five homes opened, 13 for adults and two for children locally have closed in the past two years because of funding. Zaldivar said service providers such as NorCal say rates the state pays for service have not kept up with inflation and California's high costs and new legislation are unfunded mandates from the state and federal government, creating the housing crisis for the developmentally disabled. Through the Lanterman Act, California guarantees care for people with developmental disabilities and must soon grapple with the impending public costs. Source: <http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/health/20141112/scotts-valley-home-for-developmentally-disabled-youth-to-close>

Kelli Yanuzzi: Fort Pierce foster-mother arrested for breaking foster child's leg - wptv.com Kelli Yanuzzi: Fort Pierce foster mother arrested for breaking foster child's leg [Meghan McRoberts](#) 6:20 PM, Nov 13, 2014 6:19 PM, Nov 13, 2014 Foster care mother arrested on child abuse WPTV FORT PIERCE, Fla. -- A Fort Pierce mother is facing an aggravated child abuse charge after her two-year-old foster daughter was rushed to the hospital with a broken femur. St. Lucie County deputies arrested 29-year-old Kelli Yanuzzi after they say she threw her foster daughter to the ground when she wouldn't take a nap. An arrest affidavit says Yanuzzi told deputies "If the victim had taken a nap like she was supposed to, none of this would have happened." A spokesperson for **Devereux** says Yanuzzi became a licensed foster parent this summer, and was also caring for the two-year-old's 9-month-old brother. Both children have been placed in a different home. Yanuzzi has posted a \$20,000 bond and has been released from the St. Lucie County jail. This is the second case of foster care abuse on the Treasure Coast in less than two months. Port St. Lucie resident Michael Beer is currently in jail on no bond after being charged with killing his 2-year-old foster son, Trystan Adams. Police say the boy died from injuries inflicted by Beer. "It's hard to see who's going to be a good parent and who's not going to be a good parent," said Ken Frederick with New Horizon's on the Treasure Coast. Frederick has spent years working with children and families. "Sometimes foster parents have this impression that they're going to get this perfect child," Frederick said. Yanuzzi and Beer were both screened by DCF. "What stress may be on that foster parent now may not have been there when they were tested." Frederick is stressing the importance for foster parents to reach out for help when times get tough, rather than becoming physical with children. Frederick says many organizations, such as his, offer services and training to parents, both foster and biological. He also recommends calling 2-1-1. "A 2-year-old, if someone knows children, they know that's a difficult age. The terrible two's is a well known fact." Source: <http://www.wptv.com/news/region-st-lucie-county/fort-pierce/kelli-yanuzzi-fort-pierce-foster-mother-arrested-for-breaking-foster-childs-leg>

The Tulsa Test-defyers: We won't give tests that "rob children of their educational liberties." By [I AM AN EDUCATOR](#) on November 22, 2014 "It's about watching kids cry. And throw chairs. And pee their pants. And scratch their face until it turns red or they bleed. That's what it's about. That's all that it's

about.” —[Nikki Jones, on the impact of high-stakes tests on children and why she won’t administer them](#). Karen Hendren and Nikki Jones Karen Hendren and Nikki Jones teach first grade at Skelly Elementary School in Tulsa, Oklahoma—and they are refusing to trade in their job titles for “test prep tutor.” Declaring that they will refuse to administer a battery of tests (including the infamous MAP test, the same test I helped to organize a [boycott against in Seattle](#)), these educators have become the most recent test-defiers in a growing movement of conscientious objectors to standardized tests. The “testocracy” is determined to reduce the intellectual and emotional process of teaching and learning to a single score that they can use to deny students promotion, destabilize the teaching profession, label schools as failing, and turn them into privatized charter schools. Karen Hendren and Nikki Jones were quickly threatened with disciplinary measures by their Superintendent. If you have a message of solidarity for them, [please send it to me](#) and I will pass it on to them. The brave actions of Karen Hendren and Nikki Jones are sure to inspire other educators around the nation who believe that education has to be about more than eliminating wrong answer choices. The civil rights movement to reclaim and redefine education has only just begun. Below is the letter they sent home to families explaining why they refuse to administer these exams. — To the Families of the Children in our Classrooms, First of all, we want to thank you for the opportunity to work with your children. We understand that it is difficult to drop your most precious belongings off in the hands of someone else. We understand that you are trusting us to use the best practices in teaching in order to ensure the most success for your child. Our number one goal in teaching is to keep the best interest of your child at the heart of all we do. We hope our passion, education, and dedication is evident daily. Quickly, we want to take a moment and talk about ourselves. While we don’t want our bios to be the focus, we do want our parents and the community to have an understanding of our behind-the-scenes work and passion that we put into our jobs. We want you to know about our accomplishments, research, and experiences in order for you to have an understanding of our background and professionalism. My name is Karen Hendren and I am currently a 1st grade teacher at Skelly Elementary. I graduated from Oklahoma State University with a degree in Elementary Education. I have teaching experience at Educare, Sand Springs Early Childhood Center, and overseas at Feltwell Elementary in England on the military base. I was assigned the Lead teacher position for First Grade. The District has entrusted me to teach Professional Development over both Reading and Math. My evaluations have always shown me to be an effective teacher. My name is Nikki Jones and I am also a first grade teacher at Skelly Elementary. In addition to first grade, I have taught Pre-K and K for the district. I graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a degree in Early Childhood Education. Recently, I was recognized on the cover of NAEYC’s magazine, The Young Child, as the feature teacher. Last spring, I was utilized by TPS as a model for Early Childhood in an NPR story airing over Tulsa success in implementing Early Childhood Programs. Most recently, I received the national award for Outstanding Classroom Practitioner by the organization, NAECE, and Cengage Publishing. I serve as the State Rep for UOO as an advocate for children and their families in diminishing the High Stakes Testing monster. All of my evaluations have shown me to be an effective teacher. Both Karen and I continually pursue knowledge and understanding and have been trusted by the district to lead and represent multiple aspects of Early Childhood Education throughout our years of service. Unfortunately, in the recent years, the mandates have gradually squelched the creativity and learning from our classrooms. The problem is that we are having to spend WAY too much time on formal assessments. All of the testing is required and some of it is classified as High Stakes Testing (HST). A high-stakes test is any test used to make important decisions about students, educators, schools, or districts, most commonly for the purpose of accountability—i.e., the attempt by federal, state, or local government agencies and school administrators to ensure that students are enrolled in effective schools and being taught by effective teachers. In general, “high stakes” means that test scores are used to determine punishments (such as sanctions, penalties, funding reductions, negative publicity), accolades (awards, public celebration, positive publicity), advancement (grade promotion or graduation for students), or compensation (salary increases or bonuses for administrators and teachers). (Glossary of Education Reform, 2014) This year, in first grade, your child is being asked to participate in the following assessments: Literacy First Assessment: This takes anywhere from 40 minutes to over an hour per student to administer. This is a one-on-one assessment that is to be conducted quarterly or more for progress monitoring. “Where to Start Word List”: This assessment correlating to the F&P screening. The purpose of this screening is to level each child and ensure they are given reading instruction on their level. After going through the word lists, then the child is screened using a book on the assigned level. This assessment is done quarterly or as needed to progress monitor. It takes 20-30 minutes per child is also a one-on-one assessment. Eureka Math: Children are to be given a whole group, 60 minute math lesson that has an “exit ticket” assessment at the end of each lesson. Yes, they want first graders testing daily over the lessons. This exit ticket is not long, but it still takes time. It equilibrates to daily testing for 6 and 7 year old children. This math curriculum also had a mid-module assessment and end of unit assessment. iRead: iRead is a software program that the district requires children to be on for 20 minutes a day. It comes with an abundance of software issues and frustrations. The district has been working diligently on trying to get this programming to run successfully, but so far, to no avail. Part of this computer based program is a literacy screener. This screening takes place at the beginning of the year, and last 30-45 minutes per child. MAP: Map is a computer based test that was designed as a tool for progress monitoring students in both math and literacy. This is the High Stakes Test that the district also utilizes for our teacher evaluations. It is completely developmentally inappropriate and does not provide valid data in the early childhood domain. All of these tests, plus assessments that we utilize to document their understanding of certain content, are going on in your child’s first grade classroom. I believe you are getting the point... assessments, assessments, assessments! In our classrooms the children spend, on average, 1,510 minutes (25 hours) completing assessments. 720 minutes of those assessments are one-on-one. That means that we are tied up assessing students for at least 17, 280 minutes a school year. Your children are losing 288 hours of time with their teacher because of mandated testing. When you break down our days and count for specials, lunch, and recess, we end up with about 4 hours of instruction time. So, 288 instructional hours, or 72 days... yes, 72 days of our school year we, as teachers, are tied up assessing students with the mandated assessments. Why are our schools failing? Why are children not learning how to read? We think the numbers above answer those questions. We understand the need for assessments. We want to progress monitor our students in order to meet their differentiated teaching needs. We value data. However, we went to college for an understanding on how to do this. We both build in-depth, all-encompassing portfolios that are a TRUE picture of the growth of our students. These portfolios do not just show math and literacy, they also show growth in cognitive development, writing, understandings of every state standard, art, identity of self, science, social studies, social-emotional development, and more. We do these portfolios so that we can have an accurate measure of each child across every domain. We have authentic assessments, off-the-shelf scholarly assessments, summative assessments, and formative assessments; all of which are paired with some sort of work sample or media documentation. Believe us, we know where our students are. We want to share with you 4 experiences of children in our classroom during the implementation of MAP testing. The names and descriptions of these children have been changed to uphold their rights to privacy. They will all be referred to in the masculine form, but not necessarily male. The reference is strictly utilized for the flow of speech. Student 1: This is one of the sweetest students a teacher could ask for. This student is gentle, calm, and collected. This student is learning English, but does not yet have any academic English. The student sat in front of the computer screen and tried his very best. We watched his eyes well up with tears. We watched the student nervously pull at his hair. Eventually, the student scratched red marks down his face in distress over the test. He is the oldest of the siblings. He can cook, clean, and take care of a baby better than some adults. The student knows all of his alphabet and the letter sounds in English now. This student loves writing books and can dance like no other. He is now comfortable enough to get up in front of the class and perform a talent or recite a poem. This student scored in the 1% range. Student 2: This student has special needs and should be allowed accommodations. He looked around the room and noticed everyone clicking away even though he was still on question 6. He raised his hand and said “Why am I counting apples and he has math with lots of numbers?” He then stood up and threw his chair. I have NEVER seen this child upset to a point of acting out in this manner. This student likes Minecraft because he loves to build and is a problem solver. This student can tell you descriptive details about all characters in a story. His comprehension is far above grade level. If I give him a project over something of interest, he produces the work and utilizes problem solving skills across all content areas. He can fold paper into anything. This student scored in the 1% range. Student 3: This student struggles with confidence in himself and because of this, is a pleaser. This student is smart; but, the test is smarter. The test is designed to adjust with the learner to meet their zone of proximal development (ZPD). However, it increasingly gets harder and harder until eventually, the student cannot answer the questions. The test is designed to reach a failing point for each child. This particular student quickly noticed that each question he answered correctly generated a more challenging question. Once out of his ZPD, the student laid his/her head down in tears and clicked through the test randomly selecting an answer, then clicking the arrow to proceed. We are talking about a student that is funny and happy. He can tell us jokes all day long. He takes care of the classroom and is in tune with peoples feelings. This student knows when he is respected and when he is not. He loves having his own personal whiteboard. He writes on it almost all day long. In doing so, he recently took what we had taught him about numbers and addition and figured out multiplication all on his own. He constructed his own knowledge of numbers to go beyond the standards. He is wise beyond his years. I believe he scored in the 11% range. Student 4: This is a child that could be considered gifted and talented. He is reading above grade level. He does not care about a test on the computer screen. He is six years old.

Ask him about nocturnal animals. Ask him about the elements in the Earth. Ask him about outer space. Ask him about anything interesting to him. Do not grade him on one test. Do not track him on one test. He takes care of all the pets in our classroom. (Rat, birds, turtle, and fish) He researches their needs and meets them on a daily basis. He teaches other students about how to care for them. He can teach over us in the content of certain animals, no doubt. He scored in the teens percentile range. Over 85% of our students failed the MAP test. We had to meet with most of you to discuss your child's "at risk" path and the retention they will face in third grade if they do not begin to show higher test scores. Was that a constructive meeting? No. Here is why we feel that way. The data is not valid in an early childhood setting, especially with the demographics of our community school. The test is 55 questions long in both math and reading. Our state and district want your child to be able to sit through a 55 question test that is designed to be frustrating. They make no accommodations for language or IEP's. How can they say the data is valid when they are not even tested in the language they speak? How can they say the data is valid when they ignore what the research says about early childhood developmental capabilities? Is the data provided from MAP ever going to surpass the data that we collect, as the professionals, in our classrooms? Should we allow a child to scratch their face, throw a chair, pee their pants, lay their heads down in defeat... all over taking a test that is designed to make them fail? Nobody feels successful after taking this test because of the nature of it. Should the results of that test be an evaluating measure for how effective we are as teachers? Then, there are the student surveys we recently were told to administer. We switched classrooms with each other and spent 2 and 1/2 hours proctoring student surveys. That looks like reading every single question aloud to every single student and instructing them on to complete a bubble sheet. There are SEVERAL questions that are unreasonable and irrational. One of the student survey questions that really got to me was "are you sleepy at school". Yes, some of our students have erratic home lives. It's not your fault, as parents. We are all doing the best we can do. But, life happens and sometimes children come to school after a rough night and are sleepy. The children have no time for daily naps or opportunities to rest and their bodies are growing and tired. So, what are the supposed implications of this question about being tired? Then, the surveys have an entire back page that appears to be for data collection purposes only and violates the privacy of your family. Parents, you deserve a say in whether or not your children take the surveys. Well, its actually your right as a parent under HB 1384 and COPPA. The surveys are disrespectful to the student- teacher relationship. We don't want our students to question our relationship or dedication to them. Putting them on the grading side does just that. It trivializes our interactions into three narrow categories: yes, no, and sometimes. How did that child feel right then in the moment? That's what those are taking a gauge of. A "precise estimate" in the words of MAP testing. Well, a precise estimate doesn't carry much clout with us. We know extensively what happens in our rooms, and we trust our administrators (the ones who hired us) to do the job they are trained to do and tell us if we are doing well or not. Why doesn't the system trust the administrators? Why are we doing Student Surveys in 1st grade? Why do we feel these surveys are valid and not a complete waste of time with negative implications on the teacher-child relationship? Why are parents not informed of the private questions their child will be asked to answer? We have so many unanswered questions about WHY we are forced to utilize MAP and Student Surveys. Last week, in search of some clarification, we submitted a letter to Dr. Ballard. He never responded personally; but, we do appreciate that he sent someone to meet with us about our concerns. However, the resolution was that we really work together to study MAP deeper. The suggestion was that we teach the test to the students. The advice was that in order to make the test less stressful for the students, we should run them through practice tests and mini computer based MAP lessons that will aid them in being more successful in taking the MAP. We are not sure how in doing so we would have a true picture of the students growth. But, moving on, basically, the districts answer was to take away more high-level learning experience and replace us, the professionals, with a computer program. The district did not address our concerns with the surveys at all. So, families, here we are. We want you to know that we whole-heartedly love your children. We value and respect them. Your children are more than a number to us. They deserve more time in a rich learning environment, interacting with others, and growing deeper across academic and developmental domains. They do not deserve to be plugged into computers like robots. We, in keeping with best practices, are unable to administer the MAP and student surveys to your children. They simply deserve a better educational experience than what either of those elements bring to the table. We informed the district of our decision last week. However, we felt like you had the right to know as well. Education is about finding the deeper meaning. Education is about acting upon curiosity and utilizing creative attributes to figure something out. Education is about highlighting multiple intelligences and valuing uniqueness. Education is not squelching. Education is not standardization. We realize that we are just two teachers in a sea of many. In being conscientious objectors to these two items, we realize we are a number, just like the students in our classroom where the SDE is concerned. We realize that we are jeopardizing our jobs. But, if keeping our jobs means harming children and squelching them during a prime developmental span, then we want no part. When we walked across the stage and accepted our diplomas, when we received certifications from the state to teach, when we signed contracts with TPS, when we represented the model for early childhood education for the nation, when we accepted awards and recognition, we simultaneously accepted responsibility to uphold ethical practices and do what is in the best interest of children. The SDE has robbed us of our ethics. They are robbing children of their educational liberties. Thank you for the opportunity to work with your children. Thank you for trusting us and valuing us as professionals. This is about what is in the best interest of the child. When education steps away from the child, all purpose is lost. It saddens us to put these experiences into words. It is with a heavy heart that we address our families in this way. However, we are hopeful that the district will understand the concerns and look at the research on standardized, high stakes testing in early childhood. We are hopeful that the district will stand with us in doing what is best for your children. Sincerely, Miss Karen Hendren Mrs. Nikki Jones Source: <http://iameducator.com/2014/11/22/the-tulsa-test-defyers-we-wont-give-tests-that-rob-children-of-their-educational-liberties/>

Children Strip-Searched At New Philadelphia Family Courthouse November 21, 2014 4:05 PM [Share on email](#) [43 View Comments](#) (Artist's rendering of the new Philadelphia Family Court building, at 15th and Arch Streets. Image provided) Related Tags: [Cherri Gregg](#), [Jodge Kevin Dougherty](#), [KYW Newsradio 1060](#), [Philadelphia Family Court](#), [Strip Searches](#) Cherri Gregg Cherri Gregg is the community affairs reporter for KYW Newsr... [Read More](#) By Cherri Gregg PHILADELPHIA (CBS) — Multiple sources involved in cases in Philadelphia Family Court say sheriff's deputies improperly strip-searched juveniles in both criminal and DHS custody cases who were appearing at the court for hearings earlier this week. And once court administrators discovered what was going on, they put a stop to it. According to multiple sources, juveniles in county custody for both criminal and non-criminal matters who were making courtroom appearances at the new Family Courthouse, at 15th and Arch Streets, were first strip-searched by sheriff's deputies as a security measure all day Monday of this week and possible part of Tuesday. These sources say the searches occurred individually and in small groups, and that the juveniles were asked to remove all their clothes, to squat, and to cough. Multiple sources tell KYW Newsradio that the juveniles complained about the practice and, when court administration learned what was going on, administrative judge Kevin Dougherty put a stop to it. The new courthouse officially opened on Monday. A spokesman for Philadelphia Family Court issued a statement today that said, "On Tuesday morning of this week, in response to concerns raised by child advocates over allegations of strip searches of juveniles, the leadership of Philadelphia Family Court directed the Sheriff's Office to cease and desist all strip searches pending further notice. Today, Family Court issued new rules governing the screening and detention of juveniles that the Court developed in collaboration with the Sheriff's Office." Our sources were unable to say how many juveniles were searched and/or whether any practice of this sort was in place at the old courthouse. But they did tell us that not all of the young people searched were in custody on a criminal matter — some were in group homes and others in dependency care because their parents were in custody. The sources said the main concern of adults who complained about the procedures was ongoing traumatization of the children, since some of these juveniles may have already been victims of physical, sexual, or other abuse. Source: <http://philadelphia.cbslocal.com/2014/11/21/sources-children-strip-searched-at-new-philadelphia-courthouse/>

At least 4,000 aboriginal children died in residential schools, commission finds Truth and Reconciliation Commission officials expect toll to rise as more records reviewed Kimberly Murray, executive director of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Parliament Hill. The commission has confirmed the deaths of at least 4,000 aboriginal children died in residential schools. Photo: Dave Chan/Postmedia News [Mark Kennedy](#) Published: January 3, 2014, 12:00 pm Updated: 11 months ago [A A A A A](#) OTTAWA — Thousands of Canada's aboriginal children died in residential schools that failed to keep them safe from fires, protected from abusers, and healthy from deadly disease, a commission into the saga has found. So far, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has determined that more than 4,000 of the school children died. But that figure is based on partial federal government records, and commission officials expect the number to rise as its researchers get their hands in future months on much more complete files from Library and Archives Canada and elsewhere. The disturbing discovery has cast a new light on the century-long school system that scarred the country's First Nations peoples. Residential school students at Fort George cemetery, November 3, 1946. HANDOUT/Truth and Reconciliation Commission Evidence has been compiled that shows residential school children faced a grave risk of death. "Aboriginal kids' lives just didn't seem as worthy as non-aboriginal kids," Kimberly Murray, executive director of the commission,

said in an interview. "The death rate was much higher than non-indigenous kids." The commission has spent the last several years studying a scandal considered by many to be Canada's greatest historical shame. Over many decades — from the 1870s to 1996 — 150,000 aboriginal children were taken from their families and sent by the federal government to church-run schools, where many faced physical and sexual abuse. A lawsuit against the federal government and churches resulted in a settlement that included payments to those affected and the creation in 2008 of the commission. Its job is to hold public hearings so people can tell their stories, collect records and establish a national research centre. Students pose for photo outside Metlakatla Indian Residential School in Metlakatla, B.C. Commission. HANDOUT/Truth and Reconciliation The commission has also established "The Missing Children Project" to assemble the names of children who died, how they died, and where they were buried. The list of names will be contained in a registry available to the public. Murray said the exact number of deceased children will never be known, but she hopes more information will come from churches and provincial files. "I think we're just scratching the surface." Many perished in fires — despite repeated warnings in audits that called for fire escapes and sprinklers but were ignored. "There was report after report talking about how these schools were firetraps," said Murray. She said it was well known that schools were "locking kids in their dormitories because they didn't want them to escape. And if a fire were to break out they couldn't get out." Many schools refused to spend money on fire escapes. Instead, they built poles outside of windows for children to slide down. But the windows were locked, and children were unable to reach the poles. "It's amazing that they didn't make those corrections in those schools. There are just so many deaths that I think could have been prevented if they had done what they were supposed to do." Some children died as runaways and were found frozen to death in snowy fields; others who tried to escape their abusers drowned in nearby rivers. Among the most famous incidents involved the deaths of four boys — Allen Willie, Andrew Paul, Maurice Justin, and Johnny Michael — who fled the Lejac residential school in British Columbia on New Year's Day, 1937. It was 30 degrees below zero. They were found frozen to death on a lake. An inquiry at the time found one boy, wearing summer clothes, had "no hat and one rubber missing and his foot bare." Murray said these types of deaths were far from rare. "There were quite a few examples of children who ran away and died." Many died from tuberculosis because they were malnourished and were housed in poorly-ventilated buildings. Some died of suicide, unable to bear the brutality of the schools. The commission has even heard allegations — unproven by the commission — of manslaughter and murder. "There are people who have been speaking out who say they've seen a child who was beat so brutally that they died. So there is that unanswered question: Whether the abuse was to the extreme that they were coming to their deaths at the hands of their abusers." "We have not found any records of confirmed manslaughter or murder but we have had people speak to that. Whether you are going to find that in a document is questionable." Residential school students at confirmation class at St. John's Indian Residential School in Wabasca, Alta. HANDOUT/Truth and Reconciliation Commission What happened to the thousands of children who died? Schools and the government would not pay to have bodies shipped back to their families. And so they were placed in coffins and buried near the schools — some in marked graves, some in unmarked graves. Often, their parents in far-away reserves were never told what happened. Murray said that although many of the deaths occurred up until the 1950s, children were continuing to lose their lives in more recent years. "I think people can make it OK in their minds when they tell themselves it happened a really long time ago. I think it makes it easier for them to accept. But that's not the reality." When the commission releases its report — likely by June 2015 — the massive document will chronicle the saga of deceased children. Murray said the saga has left an "open wound" with First Nations communities. "We hear from survivors and family members how important it is that they know what happened to their loved ones and to know where their remains are located." On Friday afternoon, a spokesperson for the federal government issued a written statement through email pertaining to the issue. Andrea Richer, director of communications to Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt, made reference to Prime Minister Stephen Harper's 2008 apology in the House of Commons on residential schools. She wrote that this apology "recognized that the Indian Residential Schools policy is a dark chapter in Canada's history." "These are abhorrent examples of the dark pages in that dark chapter, and that is why we must continue the important work of reconciliation," wrote Richer. mkenedy@postmedia.com [Twitter.com/Mark_Kennedy](https://twitter.com/Mark_Kennedy) [Read more Articles from Mark Kennedy](#) Source: <http://o.canada.com/news/national/at-least-4000-aboriginal-children-died-in-residential-schools-commission-finds>

Foster care in need of better inter-agency communication Brian Rash Posted: 11/14/2014 09:00:00 PM CST Editor's note: The following is part two of a multi-part series examining the state of foster care in Young County through several different perspectives. Graham resident Erin Harvey said recently that, at least as the system functions now, she's done fostering children. She would love to do it again, but after a heartbreaking experience in 2010 fostering a teenage girl that she hoped to make a permanent member of her family, she's lost faith in any kind of support offered through agencies charged with placing foster children in homes and assisting foster families. It hurts her even more, she said, because her own mother grew up in a foster system, a piece of her family history she said currently informs her desire to help children in need of homes. When Harvey began fostering kids, she had to go to Wichita Falls to be trained in procedures such as CPR and other mandatory health certifications. This was in 2002, when she fostered 10-year-old Joey Davis, who eventually became her adopted son. Now, she said, there are still no training programs in Graham for those wanting to foster children. Adding to the difficulties, Harvey said that when she reapplied to foster children in 2010, all of her files were lost. "The second time around, I had to get re-certified," she said. "They (CPS) lost all of my files, so all of my criminal history checks, everything, it all had to be completely redone, which took three times longer than the first time. So, I had a foster child in my home with no financial aid for eight months because they couldn't find any of my files." According to many who count foster care as at least some aspect of their profession, Harvey's represents a growing complaint among foster parents. Administrators at Virginia's House in Graham, for example, say that foster care in Young County is in dire need of foster homes. Virginia's House CASA Coordinator Heather Graham pointed out that a looming communication barrier exists between agencies that work to advocate for and place foster children, as well as those agencies and the foster parents. It's a problem, local experts say, that contributes to an overarching problem of foster parent retention. Read the entire story in this weekend's Graham Leader. Source: http://www.grahamleader.com/ci_26939020/foster-care-need-better-inter-agency-communication

Clark County may settle child welfare lawsuit for \$2 million Clark County may settle child welfare lawsuit for \$2 million (Thinkstock) [image](#) By YESENIA AMARO LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL Seven former foster children alleging abuse and neglect in the child welfare system may soon receive a settlement in excess of \$2 million from Clark County. Clark County has spent \$1.4 million on attorney fees, which covered outside counsel, and other costs in defending the case, according to Clark County spokesman Erik Pappa. The \$2.075 million settlement will go before the Clark County Commission for approval during its Tuesday meeting. "These children and youth, who are subject of the settlement, were injured physically and mentally," Bill Grimm, the attorney representing the children, said Friday. "Every single one of them went down this long road because they entered (the lawsuit) to improve the system for the children that came after them. They certainly remain hopeful that they will send a message to the system." The federal civil rights lawsuit aimed at improving Clark County's child welfare system had dragged on since 2010. Grimm is a senior attorney at the Oakland, Calif.-based National Center for Youth Law, which filed the lawsuit. The lawsuit alleged the county's child welfare agency failed to provide adequate care and safety for its foster children. A federal judge threw out the case a few months after it was filed, saying it failed to show why county and state officials should be held liable for the problems, which included over-medication of children with psychiatric issues and physical abuse while in foster care. In 2012, a federal appeals court reinstated the suit. Thirteen children were originally part of the lawsuit, which has undergone several changes and no longer names the state as a defendant. Six plaintiffs were dropped and the remaining seven plaintiffs range in age from 5 to 20. Four of them are under 18, Grimm said. Of the settlement, \$1.6 million will directly benefit the seven former foster children, while \$500,000 will cover attorney's fees and costs for plaintiffs' counsel, according to the agenda item. "It's a very positive outcome for our clients and we think it will make a meaningful difference in their lives," Grimm said, adding that the former foster children will have resources many of them never thought they would have available to help them recover. Some of the claims date back 20 years, which includes 10 years when the state of Nevada was responsible for providing foster care, according to a summary of the settlement from Clark County officials. The county has made policy and procedure changes to address deficiencies in the system as transferred to the county from the state in 2004. Some of the seven foster children were on multiple psychotropic drugs and some of the younger children were abused in their foster homes, Grimm said. When the lawsuit started, it sought injunctive relief that would make system changes to benefit all foster children. Grimm said he hopes county officials have learned from this case and added that the National Center for Youth Law will keep a close eye on what comes out of the recently formed blue ribbon committee to examine problems in the county's child welfare system and courts. Nevada Supreme Court Justice Nancy Saitta appointed the committee. "We'll be watching closely ... with the hope that it will provoke further changes in the system," he said. Contact Yesenia Amaro at yamara@reviewjournal.com or 702-383-0440. Find her on Twitter: [@YeseniaAmaro](#). Source: <http://www.reviewjournal.com/news/las-vegas/clark-county-may-settle-child-welfare-lawsuit-2-million>

Group home counselor charged with rape of resident By Heather Yakin Times Herald-Record recordonline.com By Heather Yakin Times Herald-Record Posted Nov. 14, 2014 @ 8:28 pm Cubero By Heather Yakin Times Herald-Record Posted Nov. 14, 2014 @ 8:28 pm Zoom Cubero » Social News By Heather Yakin Times Herald-Record Posted Nov. 14, 2014 @ 8:28 pm MONTICELLO – A Sullivan County grand jury has handed up an indictment on rape charges and other felony sexual offenses against man who worked as a counselor at a group home in Monticello. According to the New York State Justice Center, which oversees facilities and programs that care for people with special needs, Michael Cubero, 37, of Monticello subjected a woman resident in a group home licensed by the Office of Mental Health to a sexual relationship. Cubero was indicted Thursday on two counts of third-degree rape, three counts of third-degree criminal sexual act and two counts of first-degree endangering the welfare of an incompetent or disabled person, felonies; and misdemeanor counts of sexual abuse and sexual misconduct. Cubero, who worked as a counselor for the Orange/Sullivan Division of Rehabilitation and Support Services, has been fired. The abuse was reported via the Justice Center's hotline. The Justice Center, along with Monticello police and New York State Police, investigated the case. The Justice Center said investigators discovered Cubero engaged the woman in an ongoing relationship from June to December 2013. Cubero was arraigned in Sullivan County Court, where he pleaded innocent. He is being held at Sullivan County Jail in lieu of \$25,000 bail pending further court action. Justice Center spokeswoman Diane Ward said the Justice Center took on the prosecution because the agency got the initial report and its staff members are specially trained to deal with vulnerable people. The Justice Center oversees certain facilities and programs run, licensed or certified by the Office of Mental Health, the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities, the Department of Health, the Office of Children and Family Services, the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services and the State Education Department. The Justice Center's toll-free 24-hour, seven-day-a-week hotline for reports of abuse or neglect of people with special needs is 1-855-373-2122. [hvakin.com/th-record.com](http://www.hvakin.com/th-record.com) Source: <http://www.recordonline.com/article/20141114/NEWS/141119581/101019>

Adult home caregiver arrested for rape of 83-year-old resident BY [Tim Haack](#) on November 14, 2014 @ 11:29 am (Updated: 12:54 pm - 11/14/14) [inShare0](#) Family members were concerned about the possible abuse of their 83-year-old relative at an Auburn group home. They called police after reviewing images on a surveillance camera they set up in her room. "They were actually able to capture sexual abuse of their family member on camera," said police commander Mark Caillier. Police arrested a 67-year-old caregiver at Auburn Adult Care Thursday. He's jailed on suspicion of second degree rape. Caillier said the elderly woman suffers from dementia or a similar problem. With nobody left to run the business, the woman and eleven other residents were moved out of two adjacent buildings Thursday night. It's not known if other residents were abused. "You can't overburden one hospital with 11 new patients and so we arranged for their care at several different facilities in the area," said Caillier. The state Department of Social and Health Services, which is responsible for licensing and regulation of group homes, is investigating. Source: <http://mynorthwest.com/11/2643869/Adult-home-caregiver-arrested-for-rape-of-83-yearold-resident>

Complaint filed against LMPD officers involved in troubled boy's - wave3.com-Louisville News, Weather & Sports Complaint filed against LMPD officers involved in troubled boy's summer camp Posted: Nov 14, 2014 1:26 PM PST Updated: Nov 14, 2014 2:09 PM PST By Katie Bauer [BioEmail Connect Biography kbauer@wave3.com](#) LOUISVILLE, KY (WAVE) – A few months after two employees of a summer program for troubled young men blow the whistle on alleged abuse, a new complaint against Louisville Metro Police Department was filed by a teenager and his mother. According to LMPD the mission of the Gentleman's Academy is assisting young men to be more responsible by teaching skills that will empower them, but the complaint states the program wasn't as advertised. "Somebody needs to comment on this, somebody needs to be held accountable for it and if the only way we could do it is take them to court than that's what we are here to do," said Thomas Clay, attorney. [\[VIEW: Complaint filed against Gentleman's Academy\]](#) In a more than 10 page complaint, Clay filed suit against Louisville Metro Police Deputy Chief Yvette Gentry and two other officers on behalf of a 14 year old boy, his mother, and her friend. The teen was enrolled in the summer of 2014 Gentleman's Academy. The program is sponsored by LMPD and U of L. Clay says that six week program has affected him to this day. "He is scared to death to the point where he is sleeping under his bed and in his closet and one of these officers is assigned to the school where he is enrolled currently and he is terrified of him," said Clay. [\[PREVIOUS STORY: Gentleman's Academy employees suing over alleged abuse\]](#) The complaint alleges Officer Clayton Reeves grabbed the teen by the neck and woke him at 3 in the morning to do pushups for hours and refused the boy water. Officer Johnathan Harden is also named in the complaint. "They were exercised to an extent that I think was highly inappropriate and there was never supposed to be any kind of boot camp atmosphere in this academy," said Clay. Erica Buckner and Alexis Keen worked at the Gentleman's Academy while they were students at UofL. They said they were punished after they tried to expose the alleged abuse earlier this year in a separate lawsuit against LMPD and UofL. "This is about power and control and feeding that and having that power and control over someone who is weaker than you and doesn't have a voice," said Buckner. LMPD says they are unable to comment due to pending litigation. Child Protective Services was called in to investigate, but at this time their findings are still unclear. Copyright 2014 [WAVE 3 News](#). All rights reserved. Source: <http://www.wave3.com/story/27389104/complaint-filed-against-lmpd-officers-involved-in-troubled-boys-summer-camp>

DHS on notice to make good-faith improvements in foster care [Story Comments \(3\)](#) Print [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) Related Documents [Pinnacle Plan report](#) The Oklahoma Department of Human Services has not made a "good faith effort" at attracting new foster homes, bringing down caseloads for workers, reducing shelter use for children older than 6 and finding permanent homes for foster children, according to a report issued Oct. 15 by an independent oversight panel. Posted: Tuesday, November 18, 2014 12:00 am [DHS on notice to make good-faith improvements in foster care](#) By GINNIE GRAHAM News Columnist TulsaWorld.com | [3 comments](#) The monitors overseeing the state's agreed-upon improvement plan for the care of foster children have issued a written warning to the Oklahoma Department of Human Service to start meeting its goals. A three-person panel released a remedial order taking DHS to task for not making good-faith efforts in several areas of the Pinnacle Plan, which is the settlement agreement in a federal class-action lawsuit alleging abuses in foster care. The order focuses on attracting new foster homes, lowering worker caseloads and reducing the backlog of investigations. Of those, the caseload goals received the most detailed directions. This includes the production of a weekly report containing data such as caseloads for every worker and vacancies available. The monitors — Kevin Ryan, Kathleen Noonan and Eileen Crummy, all of whom live out-of-state — were appointed by agreement of both sides and are considered experts in the field. The panel releases opinions periodically about how DHS is progressing in the improvements of 15 areas of the plan. This includes target dates for benchmarks toward the overall goal. It is a five-year plan. The monitors, also called co-neutrals, have released three commentaries — in October 2013, April 2014 and October 2014. The last report used strong language stating DHS "must confront immediately" five areas where it was not making "good faith" effort. The agreement gives the monitors the legal power to issue these types of orders. If DHS does not comply, the monitors can return the case to federal court for sanctions, which could range from fines to individual contempt of court findings. "It is unfortunate that even after being sued and entering into a court order to address the problems that led to the lawsuit, Oklahoma continues to fail its most vulnerable children," stated Tulsa attorney Fred Dorwart, co-counsel for the plaintiffs in the lawsuit. "Fortunately, the settlement of the lawsuit gives the co-neutral experts the authority to hold the state accountable, to direct further specific action, and to obtain further court orders against the state which the plaintiffs can then enforce." The three-page order instructs DHS Director Ed Lake to appoint a person by Nov. 30 to be a liaison between the agency and the monitors in each of the three areas of concern. It asks for remediation plans to bolster what is being done to meet the goals. The Pinnacle Plan started implementation in 2012 after the New York-based nonprofit Children's Rights filed a federal lawsuit in 2008. The plan is an ambitious, long-term strategy for protecting children taken into custody due to abuse and neglect. After the plan started being put into place, director Howard Hendrick resigned. Then voters abolished the state oversight commission in favor of a governor-appointed director. The child-welfare section of DHS underwent a transformation of structure and staff. In the middle of the changes, a sharp increase in foster care placements began. About 8,500 children were in foster care when the Pinnacle Plan was written. That number has now reached more than 11,500. A written statement provided by DHS spokeswoman Sheree Powell said: "DHS recognizes the importance of the objectives addressed in the remedial order and will work to implement these specific processes which we also believe will be helpful to our efforts. For almost two and a half years DHS has been working diligently to achieve progress with its Pinnacle Plan. "The agency welcomes the experience and input of the co-neutrals and appreciates their guidance to help DHS progress in its efforts to recruit foster homes and reduce worker caseloads." Ginie Graham 918-581-8376 ginnie.graham@tulsaworld.com Source: http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/state/dhs-on-notice-to-make-good-faith-improvements-in-foster/article_36d28c5a-40b8-592e-baa4-b65d70c6fa34.html

Oklahoma DHS must make overhauls, improvements, say monitors of foster care safety plan THE ASSOCIATED PRESS First Posted: November 17, 2014 - 4:14 pm Last Updated: November 17, 2014 - 4:16 pm [AAA](#) We also have more stories about: (click the phrases to see a list) Subjects: [Legal](#)

[proceedings](#) (3263) [Law and order](#) (4733) Places: [Oklahoma](#) (553) TULSA, Oklahoma — The Oklahoma Department of Human Services must review plans to develop new foster homes, prepare weekly caseload reports and develop a remediation plan to reduce a Child Protective Services backlog, a new report released Monday states. Those are among the improvements ordered by neutral monitors charged with supervising Oklahoma's settlement of a class-action lawsuit. The lawsuit alleged DHS victimized foster children by failing to find safe homes for them and inadequately monitored their safety because employees were overworked and poorly managed. The so-called Pinnacle Plan is Oklahoma's \$153 million blueprint for remaking the system over the next five years. The requirements, listed on a report dated Friday, come after a progress report issued last month by the monitors found that the department's shortcomings included more than 1,000 child abuse and neglect investigations that were overdue, among other alleged faults. "It is unfortunate that even after being sued and entering into a court order to address the problems that led to the lawsuit, Oklahoma continues to fail its most vulnerable children," Marcia Robinson Lowry, an attorney for the plaintiffs and the director of a national children's advocacy organization, A Better Childhood, said in a statement. "Fortunately, the settlement of the lawsuit gives the co-neutral experts the authority to hold the state accountable, to direct further specific action and to obtain further court orders against the state which the plaintiffs can then enforce." A spokeswoman for the agency says the objectives in the order will be addressed. "DHS recognizes the importance of the objectives addressed in the remedial order and will work to implement these specific processes which we also believe will be helpful to our efforts," agency spokeswoman Sheree Powell said in a statement Monday. "For almost two and a half years, DHS has been working diligently to achieve progress with its Pinnacle Plan. "The agency welcomes the experience and input of the (monitors) and appreciates their guidance to help DHS progress in its efforts to recruit foster homes and reduce worker caseloads," she said. Source: <http://www.dailyjournal.net/view/story/e0ac59554eeb4137ab4e45d96880ae29/OK--Oklahoma-DHS-Settlement/>

Judge gives state final order to complete Braam reforms Superior Court Judge Charles Snyder told DSHS last week that the agency has to actually complete all 21 required foster care reforms before claiming compliance. [Print Email](#) Whatcom County Superior Court Judge Charles Snyder tells state to finish foster care reforms. Credit: voting forjudges.org Related Stories Mon, Jul 21, 4:31 p.m. [Judge wants court to keep supervising state on Braam foster care reforms.](#) The court will monitor foster care reform until the state meets all the requirements from the '98 Braam v. Washington suit. Tue, Jul 16, 10:07 a.m. [Protecting kids through transparency](#) How are Washington State's foster kids doing? Thanks to the 10-year-old Braam class-action settlement, we can all find out. To follow our at-risk youth series, visit the [Kids at Risk page](#). By [John Stang](#) Close isn't good enough. That was the message from Whatcom County Superior Court Judge Charles Snyder last week, when he signed a final order giving the state 12-14 months to finish its work on foster care reforms. Judge Snyder's Nov. 7 order ruled that Washington State's Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) cannot claim that nine of its 21 required foster care reforms are legally completed just because it has come close to complying. This written order echoes Judge Snyder's verbal ruling on July 20 of this year. Judge Snyder's decision is the latest action in the 1998 Braam v. Washington lawsuit, which [accused DSHS](#) of failing to meet its constitutional duties to provide proper foster care. Jessica Braam, one of the 13 plaintiffs, and the impetus for the original suit, had lived in 15 foster different homes between the ages of 2 and 12. (Plaintiffs in the Braam case are represented by the National Center for Youth Law and [Columbia Legal Services](#).) As part of the 2004 settlement, both sides agreed to set up a panel of child welfare experts, which would oversee reform of the state's foster care operations. The panel supervises efforts by DSHS to implement 21 improvements. In a [Sept. 30, 2013 report](#), DSHS claimed that 13 of the 21 are in place and that at least four more of the required improvements are within 15 percent of completion. Plaintiffs argue that the agency has not met nine of the Braam requirements, and that coming close to a target is not the same as hitting it. The dispute involves caseload sizes, the frequency of state visits to foster children, training upgrades and a reduction in the number of children who run away from foster homes and how long they remain missing. Columbia Legal Services estimates that the Braam ruling affects some 10,000 children and that the state is obligated to implement all aspects of its mandated reforms. "The Court's order affirms that the clear promises made to foster children to improve care must be kept," said Columbia Legal Services attorney Mary Van Cleve in a press release. "While the State has made some significant improvements under this case, key areas still need fixing. As a result of the court's order, the State should redouble its efforts." According to the Columbia Legal Services press release, the state recently announced that it will need an additional \$10.1 million over the next two years in order to fully comply with the Braam reforms. DSHS plans to ask lawmakers for that funding in the 2015 legislative session. "The Department has achieved 13 of the 21 outcomes in the Braam revised settlement and exit agreement," said DSHS spokeswoman Mindy Chambers, including reducing the number of placements for foster children and keeping siblings together when possible. "We remain committed to achieving the remaining eight [improvements] enforced by the Court and to continuing our good performance in the ones we already have met." Chambers also notes that the Department "has been able to make these improvements to the state's foster care system despite substantial budget cuts over the years." DSHS won't be the only state agency asking for more funding in 2015. Braam reforms will join public education, transportation and a host of other pressing — and in cases such as Braam, court-mandated — demands awaiting state lawmakers when the legislature reconvenes in January. Source: <http://crosscut.com/2014/11/17/Kidsatrisk/122821/judge-final-order-braam-reforms-john-stang/>

Group Home Closed: Residents Sexually Abused, Medications Missed Posted 10:39 pm, November 17, 2014, by [Sonya Heitschusen](#). Updated at 06:01am, November 18, 2014 URBANDALE, Iowa — Sixteen-year-old Joe Buerckley didn't get a good start. His adoptive mother says his biological parents abused and neglected him, which left Joe with a brain injury and psychiatric problems. "He has an IQ of 63. He has reactive attachment disorder. He has borderline autism," says his mother, Suzie Buerckley. Buerckley and her husband began fostering Joe when he was four and adopted him two years later. They tried to care for him in their home, but three years ago they decided a group home, located at 3505 Hillsdale in Urbandale, would better serve his needs and help him live more independently. "Joe needs to know that at 8:10 every morning he brushes his teeth, at 8:20 he's going to have breakfast and now that he's in school, that at 8:30, the bus is going to come," said Buerckley. At school, Joe enjoys working with his rabbit. Cleaning out its cage is one of his chores. It gives him purpose and is part of his highly structured day. Suzie has never worried about Joe at school. In fact, she says the teachers and counselors at Urbandale High School were the first to alert her to potential problems at the group home Joe shared with two other young men. Suzie Buerckley recalls the time Joe came to school and said he didn't feel right. He told the teacher "they made me take a pill that wasn't mine." That pill turned out to be lithium, which isn't prescribed to Joe. "It was for another child that lived in that group home," said Buerckley. That was in January. Three months later, teachers told Buerckley her son was being placed in "time out" more frequently. His behavior was so erratic, counselors weren't sure he'd be able to remain in school. Buerckley soon realized why. "Twenty-six or 27 days out of April they mis-medicated my son. It was a schedule two medication... which is by law to be counted every eight hours," said Buerckley. "So, three times a day someone signed off saying that that med was given to my son and it was never given." The incidents were documented, but Buerckley says she didn't find out about the medication errors until the Iowa Department of Human Services contacted her. [REM Iowa](#), the company in charge of Joe's group home, declined an on-camera interview but issued a statement, saying in part, "REM Iowa is committed to providing quality of life enhancing services to the individuals we are privileged to support. We take our obligation to ensure the safety and well-being of those we serve very seriously." But Buerckley says the situation only got worse. "The house just went out of control ... Joe would call me and say this child showed me his penis." Reports to the DHS show a resident at the home sexually abused Joe and another resident on at least three occasions. "And I went and I said, how are you going to guarantee that my child is not going to be sexually assaulted in this home. And they said, 'Well, we can't guarantee that.'" REM Iowa blames the staff at the home. "Despite our best efforts we faced a continual challenge in recruiting and retaining the caliber of staff we believed were necessary for meeting the unique needs of children served in this program." In August, REM Iowa decided to close the home. Buerckley received 30-days notice that she would have to find a new place for Joe to live. With a limited number of group homes in the state, Buerckley was forced to pull Joe out of school and bring him home, which for a child like Joe, is easier said than done. "Joe will try so hard," said Buerckley, tears welling up in her eyes. "He will try. He will try really hard. And he will try to be what he says is 'good' because he doesn't understand emotion ... he will try to be good, but at some point it won't be good and when it's not good, it's awful." Source: <http://whotv.com/2014/11/17/group-home-closed-residents-sexually-abused-medications-missed/>

Child Advocate: 'We Need All Hands on Deck' to Stop the Savagery of Child Sex Slavery Nov. 19, 2014 1:44pm [Sara Carter](#) 2.4K Shares Email this story to a friend By the time Kala was 8 years old, she had been repeatedly raped by her father and other members of her family in the Philippines. When her father would leave the house, she would sit for hours, naked and bound by her ankles and arms, like an animal. If she protested, her father would burn her with the tip of his lit cigarette, scarring her small arms and legs. It wouldn't be long before her father, who was a drug addict, sold Kala to a sex trafficking ring. For the next two years, Kala would continue to live in a special hell, raped repeatedly by older men seeking sex with children. AP She was forced to traffic narcotics

for those who enslaved her. By age 10, she was pregnant. In her short decade of life, Kala had seen the worst of mankind and desperately yearned for something unknown to her: safety and love. Remarkably, Kala's will to survive was not broken. She had lost the baby, but before her 11th birthday, Kala escaped. She managed to slip the ties that bound her hands, broke through a window and ran for her life. She found a place of sanctuary with [Unlikely Heroes](#), a nonprofit organization named for child survivors like herself. It began with a fighter named Erica Greve. Greve, a social worker and counselor from San Francisco, started Unlikely Heroes after a 2011 encounter at the hospital where she was working when she counseled an 11-year-old girl who had been kidnapped and raped by an older man. "There was no place I could find that had the resources necessary to deal with her type of trauma and emotional pain," Greve said. Unlikely Heroes helps get children out of brothels and prostitution rings around the world and establishes rehabilitation homes to provide food, medical care and teach life skills to victims of sex trafficking. The group has set up homes in Thailand, the Philippines and Mexico. Rescued children attend school and receive on-site tutoring; many have already graduated from high school. The organization has a list of therapists and counselors who work with the children to overcome the emotional, mental and spiritual hardships brought on by their traumas. "I focus on the success stories and I love to celebrate life," Greve said. "I love to celebrate our teams that are giving their lives to do this every day on the front lines of this war against children. We fight with love and every victory is worth it. That is what fuels me and keeps me going." Greve told TheBlaze TV's For the Record that she was stunned to find how few resources there were available for children of sex trafficking and slavery. "With all of our homes, we provide the kids with rehabilitation and the resources they need to survive," Greve said. "Knowing that more and more people are becoming aware of the horrors of child trafficking and wanting to do something about it gives us hope. We need all hands on deck. This is the biggest human rights violence that mankind has ever known. We need everyone to say, 'We're not going to tolerate children being violated.'" Unlikely Heroes founder Erica Greve sits with three Nigerian schoolgirls who escaped their captors earlier this year after being kidnapped from their school in Chibok, Nigeria. (Photo courtesy Unlikely Heroes) Greve frequently travels to the homes Unlikely Heroes has established to ensure the rescued children are being well cared for. Known as "Mama Greve" in the Philippines, she's hands-on with the survivors and enlists locals to take her into the seedy world of sex traffickers to let children know there is a place they can find help and safety. She traveled to Nigeria after the militant Islamist group Boko Haram kidnapped nearly 300 schoolgirls in Chibok in April and provided counseling to three young girls who [managed to escape their captors](#). Most of the other abducted girls have not been found. Last year, a newborn baby boy was found wrapped in a plastic bag, his umbilical cord still attached, by the trash outside the Unlikely Heroes home in the Philippines. He was just 2 hours old. He was rescued by Bing, the woman who runs the home, and taken to the hospital for medical care. The boy had been left by a 14-year old girl who had been forced into a sex slave ring and was forced to abandon her baby. The women at the home named him Eric Joseph, in honor of Greve. Baby Eric Joseph was found abandoned last year outside the Unlikely Heroes group home in the Philippines when he was only 2 hours old. He had been left by a 14-year-old girl who had been forced into a sex slave ring. (Photo courtesy Unlikely Heroes) "I think what makes Erica Greve so effective is she loves the girls more than she hates the perpetrators," said Toure Roberts, pastor at One Church International in Los Angeles. "Love is the strongest force on the planet, love is stronger than anything." The nonprofit relies on private donations and proceeds from several fundraisers held throughout the year. Greve says the average annual cost to care for a rescued child is \$5,000, though it can vary by location and the extent of the services a child requires; each home can house about a dozen children and costs approximately \$50,000 a year to run. Unlikely Heroes founder Erica Greve with Eric Joseph on his first birthday. (Photo courtesy Unlikely Heroes) All of the organization's group homes are ready to be expanded, and there are plans to build another home in Thailand in order to provide long-term care for children who have already been rehabilitated, so they don't have to relive their trauma every time new children are brought in. The existing home in Thailand is a trauma center and serves as the model for the other homes: the facility provides intense therapy and has also provided workplace training and schooling for more than 700 underage girls. "It's a beautiful home and all the kids there go to the private school to better protect them from the traffickers they escaped from," Greve said. "All of the kids in our program go to high school, but the girls in Thailand are threatened many times and this school provides the appropriate protection. The youngest children are 6 and 8 years old." Greve said her work is far from done, and she hopes people around the world will join in the fight against child trafficking and sexual abuse. "The one thing that sticks with me is how grateful the victims are that have been rescued," she said. "There's such a gratitude for the help they're receiving. They want to go back and rescue other girls because they can't imagine other girls are living the way they were forced to live. They feel they can't move forward unless they help rescue others. That feeling is what keeps me moving forward. They want to see every child be free, and so do I." ♦ ♦ ♦ Facts About Child Sex Trafficking and Human Slavery • More than 35 million people are currently enslaved worldwide, according to the [2014 Global Slavery Index](#). • Thirty percent of all human trafficking cases involve children being sold in the sex trade. • The average cost of a human slave is \$90. Human sex trafficking is a \$150 billion annual business. • According to the U.S. State Department, 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders every year. More than 70 percent are female and half are children. Source: <http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2014/11/19/child-advocate-we-need-all-hands-on-deck-to-stop-the-savagery-of-child-sex-slavery/>

Foster care in need of better inter-agency communication (part 3) Brian Rash Posted: 11/21/2014 09:00:00 PM CST Editor's note: The following is part three of a multi-part series examining the state of foster care in Young County through several different perspectives. Graham resident Erin Harvey considers herself someone who honestly cares, especially about children in need of foster care. She's fostered several kids, two of them through formal channels including Child Protective Services. Others she's fostered and continues to foster more informally, acting more as support. After her last experience fostering a child through CPS in 2010, Harvey said that she'd rather not legally adopt anyone until the gaping cracks in the system are repaired. "I took foster children in, and I would have gladly taken more in," she said. "I took older children in, which CPS desperately needed." But four years ago, after a distressing series of events that included a major relocation of CPS staff that left her feeling alienated from the agency she felt she was helping out, she decided she didn't want to do it anymore. "I started way back," Harvey said of her history as a foster parent. "My youngest son, Joey, he was my first. I got him when in 2002. They finally allowed single parents to take in foster kids. That was the first time I went through it." Harvey said that when she decided to adopt Joey, he was already 10 and she knew he was going to require much of her attention. She stopped taking foster kids after adopting him because he took a lot of extra energy. After Joey and her birth son grew up and moved out, she decided to try again, this time with a young girl who was already a teenager. The statistics on foster children in the U.S. show that their numbers are rising. One study from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services shows that the number of American children who were in, entering or exiting foster care grew from 399,546 in 2003 to 520,000 in 2012. More closely related to Harvey's situation, a study conducted for University Research Company by Lisa Hutton titled "The effects of Older Child Adoption on the Family" concluded, among many findings, that not only do problems within adoptive families increase the older the adopted child is, but the older the adopted child is, the more the foster parents need support and outreach. "A family that adopts an older child is affected by these problems faced by the child," the study says. "Though they may not realize it, the adoptive parents are also affected by their own childhood and past experiences, which may involve neglect, abuse, or hurt. All of these things must be taken into account when the adoption of an older child is being considered. However, in order to enable a greater number of older children to be adopted, measures should be taken and programs developed by counselors and therapists to further assist families and children through the many challenges involved in older-child adoption." When Harvey began fostering a 14-year-old girl in 2010, she said that she had at least some of the support Hutton refers to in her study. Her case worker lived in Olney and visited frequently. Even though her new foster daughter had behavioral issues, Harvey felt that her CPS case worker was doing a good job. But then, she said, CPS restructured its staff. Read the entire story in this weekend's Graham Leader. Source: http://www.grahamleader.com/ci_26986798/foster-care-need-better-inter-agency-communication-part

Watchdog calls for tighter regulation on foster care prescriber relationships with drug companies By Karen de Sá kdesa@mercurynews.com Posted: 11/24/2014 05:45:56 PM PST [PST0 Comments](#) Updated: 11/24/2014 08:12:23 PM PST Drugging Our Kids [Read the Bay Area News Group investigation about psychiatric drugs in the California foster care system](#). Scrutiny of doctors who prescribe psychotropic drugs to California foster children intensified Monday, with growing calls for regulators to consider whether financial relationships with pharmaceutical companies may be driving the excessive use of medication. The outcry came from a leading consumer advocacy group as lawmakers stepped up their efforts to rein in reckless prescribing and the California Medical Board vowed to widen its investigation in response to this newspaper's ongoing series "Drugging Our Kids." On Sunday, the newspaper reported that prescribers in the foster care system received more than twice as much as the typical California doctor in payments from big drug companies for meals, gifts, travel, speaking and industry-sponsored research. The newspaper also found that last year doctors who prescribed the most to California foster youth, on average, accepted almost four times as much as those who fell in a lower-prescribing group. "We've known for years that the problem of drug manufacturer payments to doctors appears to have an out-sized influence in their prescribing practices," said Carmen Balber, executive director of the nonprofit group

Consumer Watchdog. "But this investigation was particularly disturbing because of the patients it affects. The conflict of interest is clear in these cases, and we think that action is long overdue." Advertisement In a letter to the California Medical Board sent Monday, Balber's Santa Monica-based organization called on the state licensing agency to expand its current investigation of doctors who may be overprescribing to foster youth "to determine if children are inappropriately being prescribed or overprescribed because of drug manufacturer payments to their physicians." Balber said the prescribing has not only cost taxpayers millions of dollars in payments for possibly unneeded drugs, but has also put the children's health at risk. The newspaper's report on industry ties, she added, "makes clear that the state has failed to take the steps necessary to protect children." Kimberly Kirchmeyer, executive director of the California Medical Board, noted there is no law prohibiting doctors from accepting drug industry promotional funds. The newspaper found pharmaceutical companies spent more than \$14 million to woo foster care prescribers from 2010 to 2013. But the payments may constitute "unprofessional conduct," Kirchmeyer added, and that could warrant additional scrutiny. She said the agency plans to look into whether these doctors "have a reason to prescribe, are they appropriately prescribing, or are they prescribing medication inappropriately to support the pharmaceutical company?" The medical board has been looking into whether specific doctors are overprescribing psychotropic medications to foster youth since the newspaper published its first installment of "Drugging Our Kids" in August, which revealed that almost 1 in 4 foster teens are prescribed psych meds. Many of the drugs are being prescribed to control troublesome behavior instead of the severe mental illnesses they are approved to treat. They can have debilitating side effects, such as rapid weight gain, higher risks of diabetes and severe lethargy. The newspaper's original findings drove state Sen. Jim Beall, chair of the Senate Human Services Committee, to push for more detailed information from the state Department of Health Care Services on prescribing practices to foster youth. On Monday, Beall, D-San Jose, met with California's director of social services, Will Lightbourne, to discuss the request he and Los Angeles Democratic state Sen. Holly Mitchell submitted to health care officials last week. The two senators have called on Health Care Services Director Toby Douglas to release geographic and demographic information on prescribing patterns, including tallies of foster children on multiple medications and high doses, as well as those being prescribed drugs for conduct "disorders" -- more information than the state has been willing to release so far. Beall said he will use the data to draft legislation aimed at improving the oversight and monitoring of psych medication use in foster care. The bill could require regular reports and analysis of county-level prescribing trends and establish a hotline for lawyers, judges, doctors and other caregivers who need guidance on medication. On Monday, after the newspaper's latest report, Beall said he also wants doctors' interactions with drug companies to be better monitored. "The Social Services Agency should take all steps to ensure that there's no conflict of interest in medical care for any of our foster kids -- and if that's happening right now, we're going to take action in the Legislature to make sure that doesn't happen," Beall said. Marilyn Benoit -- the former president of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and current chair of the academy's task force that proposed guidelines on relations with drug companies -- said the newspaper's unique look at foster care prescribers' link to drug companies is "concerning." "This is a capitalistic country -- you're supposed to market and advertise the products you make -- there's nothing wrong with that," said Benoit, a child psychiatrist who oversees a Pennsylvania-based behavioral health center that treats foster youth. "But as prescribers, we have to be more scrutinizing and understand the difference between marketing and real scientific information about the medication we use." Yet Benoit cautioned that although "research clearly shows that doctors can be influenced by gifts," her organization is advisory only and has no enforcement capabilities. She said doctors must take personal responsibility to draw the line. "When you're tied to the pharmaceutical industry," Benoit said, "then there could be a conflict of interest in your prescribing behavior." Contact Karen de Sá at 408-920-5781. Source: http://www.mercurynews.com/breaking-news/ci_27005492/watchdog-calls-tighter-regulation-foster-care-prescriber-relationships

Tucumcari foster parent arrested for abuse, sex charges - KFDD - NewsChannel 10 / Amarillo News, Weather, Sports Tucumcari foster parent arrested for abuse, sex charges Posted: Nov 25, 2014 12:55 PM PST Updated: Nov 25, 2014 3:44 PM PST _Manuel Preciado, 64 Amarillo, TX - A foster parent in Tucumcari, New Mexico faces several charges involving abuses against children. 64 year-old Manuel Preciado is charged with kidnapping, criminal sexual contact of a minor in the 3rd degree, abuse of a child, false imprisonment, and enticement of a child, after New Mexico State Police say he inappropriately touched a 16 year-old boy. Reports show the incidents ranged from August to October of this year. Police confirm that all children who were under Preciado's care at the time have been removed and placed into homes with other foster care providers. Preciado was booked into the Quay County Detention Center. Source: <http://www.newschannel10.com/story/27481027/tucumcari-foster-parent-arrested-for-abuse-sex-charges>

Congressional priorities: The future of our nation's foster care system By Rita Soronen 6758116_0 Earlier this month, voters turned out to voice their opinion on the current state of our country. Issues of foreign policy and ISIS, the economy, health care and immigration were discussed at length. Largely ignored were the issues faced by our country's children. With more than 100,000 children waiting in the foster care system for adoptive families, a record number homeless and an alarming increasing number of children in this country going hungry, it is time to make positive, permanent changes on behalf of children. Two child welfare priorities need to be top of mind for policymakers: children continue to age out of care at alarming rates, and for those who are adopted, we continue to fail to provide adequate resources, services and connections for families in need of assistance once the adoption is finalized and to keep the family intact. ADVERTISEMENT As members of 114th Congress begin their initiation and develop their policy agendas, it is my hope that they will join the Congressional Coalition on Adoption (CCA) and the Congressional Foster Care Caucus to be a part of the solution. These caucuses work with organizations across the country that are dedicated to increasing the awareness of the vulnerable children living in the foster care system, addressing critical policy needs, tackling child welfare finance reform, and elevating foster care and adoption evidence-based best practices for our children and youth. The First Focus Campaign for Children recently recognized [100 Members of Congress](#) for leadership on issues important to children during the 113th Congress. These Members have voiced their dedicated support for our country's most vulnerable children and families, introduced or supported legislation to meet children's needs and simply made an effort to understand and elevate children as a Congressional priority. They understand -- like many in our country -- that our children are the future. And now, with a new Congress in January, it is time to encourage every member of Congress to be a champion for children in their communities and across the nation. Last year, more than 23,000 children aged out of the foster care system without families. They were "emancipated" from the state, the only support they had was that of the government letting them go. We made a promise to the hundreds of thousands of children in the foster care system that the day they were permanently separated from their families, we would find them new ones. We are failing at a high rate -- not because lack of trying, there are thousands of dedicated and skilled social workers, adoption recruiters and agencies who have devoted their lives to care for these children, but because we lack the political leadership needed to drive the necessary policy, practice and financing reforms. We must, with the urgency that childhood demands, make significant and scalable changes to the foster care system to ensure that our country's children are not slipping through the cracks of an overwhelmed system. We need advocates and leaders in the 114th United States Congress who will make it their business to drive change so that this country stops failing on its promise to our children. A promise that every child will be cherished, safe and able to thrive in a family and a home. Soronen is the president and CEO of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. Since 2001, she has worked to find adoptive families for each of the more than 134,000 waiting children in the U.S. and Canadian foster care systems. The opinions expressed in this commentary are solely those of the author. Source: <http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/civil-rights/225232-congressional-priorities-the-future-of-our-nations-foster>

11-year-old Milwaukee girl sexually assaulted in foster care —An 11-year-old girl placed in foster care for her safety wound up sexually assaulted and pregnant. Related [School leaders to help students cope... Shoppers hunt for perfect Christmas... Packers defeat Patriots 26-21 Packers hold off Patriots 26-21 Weekend Thaw Ends](#) WISN 12 News reporter Colleen Henry investigates how it happened and the larger concern about who's watching. [VIDEO: WISN 12 News Investigates: 11-year-old sexually assaulted in foster care](#) Last December, a mom got a stunning phone call from an urgent care clinic. "They were at urgent care because my daughter had been complaining about sore throat. She had been really sick," said the mom, who WISN 12 News is not identifying to protect the daughter. "She said, 'Well, your daughter's pregnant.' I said, 'What?'" The woman on the other end of the phone was the foster mother the state tasked with caring for her 11-year-old daughter. "They took my children away from me, saying I couldn't protect them. Then, she's placed in a home where something horrific like that was able to happen," the mom said. "I didn't know what to think. I didn't know which way to turn. I felt like my world was just coming down." State records show the state removed the 11-year-old from her home on Milwaukee's north side after allegations her mom abused her. It moved her to live with a foster parent trained to supervise kids with special behavioral needs. It was there prosecutors said the girl was sexually assaulted by that foster mom's 16-year-old grandson. WISN 12 News has learned he has special needs as well. "We took a child from a home where she was being physically abused, and put her in a home where she's now being sexually abused," state Rep. LaTonya Johnson said. Johnson sits on the Committee on Children and Families. She questioned why the girl was in that foster home. State records show two complaints against the foster mother. The one in 2008 was deemed unfounded. In

2013, the Wisconsin Department of Child and Families reported that "concerns existed related to the level of supervision provided by the treatment foster parent for the child." DCF said it addressed the concerns with the foster parent. "To me, that's an immediate red flag," Johnson said. DCF left the girl with the foster mom. Four months later, the 11-year-old was pregnant. As required by law, DCF posted a report of this so-called "egregious incident." When WISN 12 News asked for details, DCF said state law requires that "All reports be confidential" including "any document relating to the investigation, assessment and disposition of a report." "They tell you very little what the department did as a result. It doesn't tell you anything about whether the department messed up. If they dropped the ball. If they made the wrong call," Johnson said. "They claim that it's for the privacy and protection of the child," Johnson said the laws actually protect DCF. "We're protecting them from having to take the heat," Johnson said. "I couldn't imagine that. She's still a baby herself," the mom said. After the sexual assault, the state returned the 11-year-old to her mom's custody, and together they faced the difficult decision to terminate the pregnancy. "I didn't want her to have the baby and have the baby be a constant reminder of what happened to her," the mom said. She's speaking out in hopes no other family has to go through this. "I'm quite sure I'm not the only person they failed, and I'm quite sure I'm not the last person they're going to fail," the mom said. Last year, DCF reported 34 incidents considered "egregious" in Milwaukee County, including death. So far this year, there have been 15. The 16-year-old boy was charged with sexual assault but was never tried. The court found him mentally incompetent to stand trial. The biological mom was never charged with abusing the girl and went through parenting classes. She's relieved to have her daughter home. If you'd like to see the reports DCF makes public on egregious incidents in Milwaukee County and statewide, [click here](http://www.wisn.com/news/1/yearold-milwaukee-girl-sexually-assaulted-in-foster-care/29934276). Source: <http://www.wisn.com/news/1/yearold-milwaukee-girl-sexually-assaulted-in-foster-care/29934276>

Group home resident accused in attacks has violent past Steve Lieberman, slieberm@lohud.com 11:39 p.m. EDT June 27, 2014 Ethan Jimenez-Colon (Photo: Courtesy photo) 11 CONNECT [TWEET](#) [LINKEDIN](#) [COMMENT](#) [EMAIL](#) [MORE](#) A 23-year-old man accused of sexually attacking a fellow resident at a group home for people with mental illness then trying to blow the house up had other histories in his past. [Ethan Jimenez-Colon](#), who described himself as a rapper named "Etho the Destroyer" online and in [social media](#), spent four months in state prison for felony assault more than a year ago after violating his initial probationary sentence. Thomas Zimmerman, the chief operating officer for Loeb House, which operates the group home, said the placement of a parolee at a group home is not unusual and takes place after the person is evaluated by a team of mental health experts from the involved agency and law enforcement representatives like probation officials. In this case, the evaluators found Jimenez-Colon could live in a group home setting after being released from the Fishkill Correctional Facility, and he was placed at Lukens House at 78 Demarest Road in West Nyack. "We feel terrible about the whole situation," Zimmerman said. "Thank God, the most worst thing didn't happen." Zimmerman said he could not discuss Jimenez-Colon's specific case but agencies like Loeb House, which is licensed by the state Office of Mental Health and has a contract with Rockland County, face a juggling act when deciding whether to serve people with mental illnesses who have criminal histories. "This is where all providers struggle," Zimmerman said. "A lot of these individuals have histories from the legal system. We accept people who don't have a severe history of violence. They cannot be a threat to themselves or other people." Zimmerman said [Jimenez-Colon's](#) arrest has Loeb House re-evaluating its procedures with such placements. A state Office of Mental Health spokesman, Benjamin Rosen, said he could not discuss Jimenez-Colon's case, citing state and federal privacy laws. However, he said, the state Justice Center and the Office of Mental Health "may undertake investigatory actions and require a provider to take appropriate and immediate action to protect the safety of individuals under their care." In Jimenez-Colon's case, a Rockland County indictment handed up Wednesday accuses him of breaking into a female resident's bedroom through a window and attempting to rape her on May 28 between midnight and 5 a.m. The next night he is accused of sexually assaulting her, then turning on four stove burners and lighting the oven in an attempt to blow up the house. The 23-count indictment includes 13 counts of attempted murder because 10 residents and three Loeb House staff members were inside the house. Jimenez-Colon is being held without bail in the county jail. He was convicted of second-degree assault in Rockland in 2011 for punching another person during a fight and was placed on five years probation. He was sent to state prison Nov. 2, 2012, for a maximum of two years for violating probation on the assault charge and was released March 5, 2013, according to the state Department of Corrections. Jimenez-Colon boasted about his nine months of sobriety in an April 27 [Facebook](#) post. He wrote: "All i know is that I'm happy and thats all that matters. I haven't had this much control over my life in a while and i know I'm not above others for my choice but i don't plan on ever going back to the stupid decisions i did in the past." On May 10, he wrote that "shooting a gun is really fun." Source: <http://www.lohud.com/story/news/crime/2014/06/26/loeb-house-ethan-jimenez-colon-sexual-abuse-attempted-murder/11417813/>

Teen missing from North Carolina wilderness therapy camp found dead after breaking hip in stream: autopsy The body of 17-year-old Alec Lansing was found in a creek inside the Nantahala National Forest Saturday. Lansing was last seen alive by a [Trails Carolina](#) counselor on Nov. 10. BY [Nina Golgowski](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Wednesday, November 26, 2014, 4:28 PM A A Facebook 3 Twitter Reddit Email Comments 3 Share Print Share this URL Alec Lansing, who had been missing from a southwest North Carolina wilderness therapy camp since Nov. 10, was found dead inside the Nantahala National Forest Saturday. A two-week search for a 17-year-old boy who wandered away from a North Carolina wilderness therapy camp has ended with the recovery of the boy's body, according to local reports. Alec Lansing's body was located in a creek inside the Nantahala National Forest Saturday after breaking his hip in a possible fall from a tree and dying of hypothermia, [WYFF reported](#) citing an autopsy's results. Because of his grave injury, authorities don't believe he was able to move. The teen, from Atlanta, had been a camper at Trails Carolina when he was reportedly last seen walking away from a counselor on Nov. 10. [trailscarolina.com](#) The 17-year-old had reportedly been a student at Trails Carolina in Lake Toxaway, N.C. before he wandered away. The camp describes itself as offering long-term help for troubled youth. The camp describes itself as offering long-term help for "troubled youth experiencing school failure or families looking for crisis intervention," according to its website. It's not clear how long Lansing was a student at the camp. A request for comment was not immediately returned by the camp or the Jackson County Sheriff's Department. Source: <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/teen-missing-n-therapy-camp-found-dead-article-1.2025238>

Ex-Group Home Employees Sentenced In Abuse Case By [Hilda Muñoz contact the reporter Crime](#) Two ex-employees at an East Hartford group home were sentenced for their roles in the abuse of residents. MANCHESTER — Two former employees at an East Hartford group home for developmentally disabled adults have been sentenced for their roles in the abuse of residents. Stephanie Jones, the former assistant manager at the home, was sentenced to six years in prison, suspended after 20 months and three years of probation. She pleaded guilty in September to two counts of inciting injury to a person. Jevaun Phillips was sentenced to six months in prison and two years of probation. He pleaded guilty to first-degree unlawful restraint and second-degree intimidation due to bias. A third worker, Angelica Rivera, was sentenced in March to 10 years, suspended after three, followed by three years of probation. She pleaded guilty in January to first-degree unlawful restraint, third-degree assault on a disabled person and cruelty to persons. The woman she abused has autism and mental disabilities that cause her to function at the level of a fourth-grader, police said. The assaults, at a home operated by Options Unlimited, were captured in cellphone videos recorded by Jones in 2011 and released to the company and a television station a year later after Jones and seven others had been fired for abusing patients. According to Jones' 2013 arrest warrant, Rivera tipped off investigators to the videos that Jones kept in computers at her home. Rivera said Jones was the leader of the employees who engaged in misconduct and recorded staff members abusing residents, the warrant states. In some of the videos, Jones is heard in the background laughing, yelling at residents and encouraging their abuse, according to the warrant. One of the videos is the one, shot in May 2011, that led to Rivera's arrest. In it, Jones laughs as Rivera strikes the victim and suggests that staff tie the woman up, according to the warrant. Jones also tells residents that they need a "whipping," the warrant states. In other videos Jones and Phillips taunt a male resident by threatening to pull out his toenail and his fingernails. Source: <http://www.courant.com/community/east-hartford/he-east-hartford-groupe-home-abuse-1127-20141126-story.html>

Accused told police he took in troubled teens KAT DUGGAN Last updated 09:12 02/12/2014 Share Relevant offers A Marlborough man accused of rape told police he used to take troubled girls in and put them back on the right track. The 66-year-old is on trial at the High Court in Nelson, facing 48 charges, including rape, sexual violation, indecent assault, making objectionable publications and the possession and supply of drugs. In a recorded interview in 2012, which was played to the court yesterday, Detective Constable Paul Soper asked the accused about two of the complainants. The man told Soper he could not remember much about his time with the first complainant, who he said he had a "short-lived" relationship with. The pair went on a road trip together, during which the complainant alleges the man raped her and took photographs of her naked while staying in a campervan in Kaikoura. She also claims the man twice supplied her with LSD, which she had asked for. "I don't know whether she was on drugs or not, I don't think so because I don't like girls having drugs . . . I don't understand why she said that I have drugged her because I'm absolutely against all that sort of stuff," the accused said in the interview. He told police he had confiscated drugs from people and told others to leave his property because they were taking drugs. He had fallen out with good mates and "ditched" many

of his former girlfriends because they were using drugs, he said. He struggled to remember details of the road trip with the 16-year-old complainant, including whether they stopped at Maruia Springs. "Actually we did, we went to Maruia . . . It's just I have been there with quite a few girls, lots of girls so I can't remember if it was her or not," he said. After about two weeks in a relationship with the teenager, he dropped her back home in Nelson, and had not heard from her again, he said. The accused told police the second complainant had been a family friend, and had lived with him for about three months before being taken away by social services. She alleges the man raped, sexually violated and indecently assaulted her, and supplied her with cannabis. He denies the charges, and told Soper the complainant stayed at his house when she was having problems with her mother. "Something you probably don't know about me is, we take a lot of people in . . . I like to get these girls and put them on the right track." He had taken the complainant under his wing, providing her with a job to pay for her board and often took her for driving lessons, he said. The man's interview was to continue before Justice Alan MacKenzie and a jury this morning. [Ad Feedback](#) His trial began on November 17 and was expected to continue for up to four weeks. - The Marlborough Express Source: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/marlborough-express/63733689/Accused-told-police-he-took-in-troubled-teens>

EON Awarded For 'Questioning The Charter School Hype' The following article authored by Education Opportunity Network Director Jeff Bryant [has been awarded](#) one of the "top 25 most censored or underreported news stories of 2014." The award came from [Project Censored](#), "a media research, literacy, and education organization established in 1976." The article originally appeared in [Salon.com](#). Imagine your 5-year-old boy went to a school where he was occasionally [thrown in a padded cell](#) and detained alone for stretches as long as 20 minutes. Or you sent your kid to an elementary school where the children are made to [sit on a bare floor](#) in the classroom for days before they can "earn" their desks. Or your kid went to a school where she spent hours [parked in a cubicle in front of a computer](#) with a poorly trained teacher who has to monitor more than 100 other students. Maybe you don't have children or send them to private school? So how do you feel when you find out the local school that you pay for with your taxes is operating a scam that [diverted millions of dollars through fake Medicaid billing](#)? Or the school used your tax dollars as "grants" to [start up other profit-making enterprises](#) . . . or [pay lavish salaries](#) - \$300,000, \$400,000 or more - to its administrators . . . or support a movement linked to a [reclusive Turkish cleric](#) being investigated for bribery and corruption. Welcome to the world of charter schools. Are there wonderful charter schools doing great things for kids? [Probably](#). Are all these cumulative anecdotes an unfair representation of the value that charter schools can bring to some communities? Maybe. But neither of those questions matters because of what the charter school movement has come to represent in the landscape of American education. Charter schools have been relentlessly marketed to the American populace as a silver bullet for "failed" public schools, especially in poor urban communities of African-American and Latino/a students. Politicians in both parties speak glowingly of these schools - which, by the way, their children seem never to attend. Opening charter schools has become the latest fad for celebrities including [athletes and rap stars](#). Huge nationwide chains - called education management organizations (EMOs) - now run many of these charters. A recent study by the [National Education Policy Center](#) found, "Students across 35 states and the District of Columbia now attend schools managed by these non-government entities." These for-profit and nonprofit EMOs - such as K12 Inc., National Heritage Academies, Charter Schools USA and KIPP - now account for nearly half of the students educated by charter schools. Substantial, well-funded nationwide organizations have rapidly developed to lobby for these schools. One such organization, the Alliance for School Choice, recently received a \$6 million gift from the [Walton Foundation](#), of Wal-Mart fame. Slick [marketing campaigns](#) have been rolled out in communities across the country to tout the coming of new charters. The actual academic results of these schools seems to matter to hardly anyone, despite [report after report](#) showing that these schools tend to do poorly on state and [national tests](#) and [fail at providing equitable education](#) to underserved students. Yet [lobbying](#) for more of these schools continues unabated with more money funneled into the [campaigns of politicians](#) who support charters and more efforts to press state lawmakers to [lift any provisions](#) currently in place to regulate how these schools operate and are held accountable to the public. As a result, charter schools now serve one in 20 students nationwide, despite ["mixed results"](#) at best. Yet how much is really known about how most charter schools operate on a day-to-day basis? Most of the people who witness what these schools actually do are students, who have little voice outside the classroom; teachers, who need to hold onto their jobs; and charter administrators, who can't always be depended on to blow the whistle on shenanigans. But as these institutions proliferate, so are troubling reports of what the charter movement has unleashed. Turning Our Backs on Abuse Keeping a running tally of charter school scandals could amount to so much cherry-picking if it weren't for the fact the tree is so loaded there's practically nothing but fruit. Two of the anecdotes cited above surfaced recently in schools operated by a nationwide chain called KIPP, which has been acclaimed for doing ["wonderful things"](#) to poor kids that most middle-class parents would not want to see done to their kids. The incident where a 5-year-old student was confined in school to a padded cell prompted Chicago (where the incident occurred) blogger [Mike Klonsky](#) to write, "Brutal forms of discipline have become routine for KIPP. 'No divergence is permitted and deviants are quickly labeled, punished or expelled. KIPP has the highest [student attrition rate](#) in the nation. I recall one KIPP school where African-American children were made to sit on a bench with a sign around their neck that said, 'CRETIN.'" Klonsky noted the nationwide chain's practice of using a behavioral technique, called "Slant," that "instructs students to sit up, listen, ask questions, nod and track the speaker with their eyes." It's "military style behavior," renowned educator [Debra Meier](#) remarked on her blog at Education Week. Meier explained how these schools rely on "public shaming" as a form of behavior control, which often includes "children being 'exiled' to a special table at lunch, required to wear their KIPP shirts backwards, and other forms of public embarrassment." James Horn, who came across the incident where students had to "earn" their desks by sitting on the floor, wrote, "KIPP requires the poorest urban children, those who have received the least in life, to earn everything at KIPP." Horn interviewed a former teacher from that KIPP school who recounted, "[The children] would sit there and do homework on the floor. They would fill in forms and pass them. And they had to all do it correctly, otherwise, they'd do it again and again and again . . . It was 100 [students]. It was all the fifth-graders in a classroom." Horn noted, "This is not the first time such educational atrocities at KIPP have been documented," and he linked to a "series of incidents" in [Fresno, Calif.](#), where the school principal was accused of "slamming students against the wall, placing trash cans over their heads, forcing kids to crawl on their hands and knees while barking, and enforcing unreasonably strict bathroom rules, resulting in students having accidents and vomiting on themselves inside the classroom." "How long will we turn our backs on this kind of abuse?" Horn asked. Rocketship to Nowhere The questionable practices of many charter schools go beyond classroom management. The charter cited above where students spent hours stuck in cubicles, in front of computers, is part of a nationwide charter chain called Rocketship. According to ed-tech media outlet EdSurge, "Rocketship Education is a charter school network in hot demand, courted by urban school districts across the nation. Both Kaya Henderson, Superintendent of D.C. Public Schools and New York City's outgoing mayor Michael Bloomberg have publicly said they'd welcome Rocketship schools in their districts." (emphasis added) Tech market enthusiasts at EdSurge claim, "Rocketship has broken down the traditional factory school model, rethinking things like the bell-schedule, the role of teachers, the way kids are grouped, and even the physical space itself." What does all this "innovation" look like in practice? As Samantha Winslow explained in the article cited above, Rocketship's allure comes mostly from cost savings because so much of the "instruction" is delivered via computers. "The company says it saves half a million dollars a year by using fewer teachers, replacing them with non-certified instructors at \$15 per hour . . . Half its teachers have less than two years' experience; 75 percent come from Teach For America." The chain "targets low-income students" with the claim it can raise their test scores by drilling them with computer-based instruction. "Instructors monitor up to 130 kids at a time in cubicles in the schools' computer labs. Rocketeers, as students are called, sit looking at computer screens up to two hours per day. "Skeptics say the Rocketship test scores just demonstrate the schools are focusing on test preparation at the expense of arts, languages, and real learning," Winslow noted. The Last Thing These Children Need In these types of high-tech-driven charters, where efficiency and driving down the costs of teachers are priorities, "there is never much time to actually teach," explained one teacher who had been employed at a virtual charter school run by the company K12. Writing recently at the blog site of Education Week edu-blogger [Anthony Cody](#), the teacher, Darcy Bedortha, recounted, "Each class met for 30 minutes in an interactive-blackboard setting one day each week. Fewer than 10 percent of students actually attended these 'classes.' Other than that time and any one-on-one sessions a teacher and student might set up (which, in my experience, almost never happened), there is no room for direct instruction. "I was an English teacher," Bedortha explained, "so my students would write. They wrote of pain and fear and of not fitting in. They were the kinds of young people who desperately needed to have the protective circle of a community watching over them. They needed one healthy person to smile at them and recognize them by name every day, to say 'I'm glad you're here!' . . . The last thing these young people needed . . . was to be isolated in front of a computer screen." The educational malpractices committed by charter schools aren't confined to the tech-driven ones. A tutor who had worked at a "no excuse" charter school in [Boston](#) recently wrote a letter to her former students on the edu-blog site Edushyster. She confessed, "What I saw at your 'No Excuses' charter startled me and still troubles me deeply. I was trained on how to discipline you, but not on the best way to help you understand material. I was lectured on how to turn your learning into data points, but was never told who you are and where you came from. Your school forced me to do things that I don't believe are in your best interest." A recent report coming out of [Ohio](#) told of

a charter management operation in Columbus where teachers failed to show for work because they hadn't been paid. There were bedbugs in the school, the food vendor stopped providing lunches, and an assistant principal was making less than minimum wage. The charter operator had two other charters it operated closed down by the state Department of Education in the previous month because "inadequate staffing led to fights among students and to lunch not being served on a set schedule." A "Perfect Storm" of Corruption In addition to questionable classroom practices, charter schools are dogged by corruption. The scandal cited above in which a charter chain defrauded taxpayers of millions of dollars in a Medicaid scheme presents a "[perfect storm](#)" according to one analysis, "of everything that might go wrong with private, for-profit 'educators' trying to make more than a buck from public education under the guise of charter school management." The D.C.-based firm Options Public Charter School managed to orchestrate a train wreck of corruption, including not only the Medicaid fraud scheme, but also payoffs of public officials and a local television news personality, diversion of funds meant for schools to personal accounts, business arrangements that siphoned funds to contractor partners, and bloated executive salaries. The charter scandal involving the Turkish cleric is especially bizarre. As the Washington Post's [Valerie Strauss](#) explained at her Answer Sheet blog, "The reclusive cleric is Fethullah Gulen, who has been linked to charter schools in some 25 states and to other schools in dozens of countries around the world." But Gluen is no mere charter operator. In fact, as [Al Jazeera](#) reported, he is the head of a powerful movement in Turkey involved in "the most extensive and sensational corruption investigations" of that country's recent history. "The public charter schools in what is unofficially known as the Gulen network," Strauss explained, "are believed to be operated by people – usually Turks – in or associated with the Gulen movement." Many of the schools have strong academic records, but have been the subject of frequent investigations of "whether some employees at some of these schools are 'kicking back part of their salaries' to the Gulen Movement." Strauss noted, "The New York Times and CBS News as well as PBS have reported on the Gulen charter network, citing problems such as whether these schools give special preference to Turkish companies when handing out contracts." No Scrutiny Please One doesn't have to dig deeply to find examples of charter school malfeasance. Indeed, all the above examples appeared in news stories and blog sites since the current school year began. In the meantime, charter promoters do all they can to avoid any [external audits](#) or legal consequences related to what they do. As education historian [Diane Ravitch](#) recently reported from her blog, when charter school operators in California were [convicted](#) of misappropriating over \$200,000 in public monies, the California Charter Schools Association entered an amicus brief stating the defendants were "not guilty of any criminal offense because charter schools are not subject to the laws governing public schools. CCSA says that charter schools are exempt from criminal laws governing public schools [because they are operated by a private corporation](#)." In the same blog post, Ravitch told of a case in [Arizona](#) where another charter successfully argued that it was a private corporation, not a public school. And in Chicago, when the teachers at a charter school wanted to form a union, "the [charter founder argued](#) before the National Labor Relations Board that the charter was operated by a private corporation and not subject to state labor laws." Wait ... and you thought charter schools were public schools? Movement Interrupted If it weren't for the great marketing job the charter movement has employed, this education "innovation" would be a P.R. disaster. So far, only the most well-informed fans of charter schools, who aren't wrapped up in the movement ideology it has become, have changed their minds about what's baffling schoolchildren and communities across the country. An impartial observer of charter schools, Rutgers professor Bruce Baker, once hoped charters would be a possible source of "some creative, energetic leadership ... that might be associated with a mission-driven start-up school, coupled with an ounce or two of deregulation." Recently, however, his perception has changed. "This whole movement has gotten way out of control – it has morphed dramatically – especially the punditry and resultant public policy surrounding charter schooling. Sadly, I'm reaching a point where I now believe that the end result is causing more harm than good." Recently, [Stan Karp](#) of Rethinking Schools wrote, "Nearly every teacher dreams of starting a school. I know I did. 'But I also know the charter school movement has changed dramatically in recent years in ways that have undermined its original intentions ... The counterfeit claim that charter privatization is part of a new 'civil rights movement,' addressing the deep and historic inequality that surrounds our schools, is belied by the real impact of rapid charter growth in cities across the country.' His conclusion? 'It's time to put the brakes on charter expansion and refocus public policy on providing excellent public schools for all.' Amen. Source: <http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/eon-awarded-for-questioning-the-charter-school-hype/>

Mercury News editorial: Doctors have incentives to drug foster kids Mercury News Editorial Posted: 11/28/2014 02:10:12 PM PST Updated: 11/28/2014 07:41:10 PM PST Drugging Our Kids [Read the Bay Area News Group investigation about psychiatric drugs in the California foster care system](#). "Follow the money" is the rule in politics for figuring out the real reason something not quite logical is happening. It appears to apply as well to the overdrugging of California foster youths, based on the latest in Bay Area News Group reporter Karen de Sá's ongoing series, "Drugging Our Kids" -- an analysis using both data and individuals' stories to illuminate the use of pharmaceuticals to control the behavior of foster children. Consumer advocates, lawmakers and the California Medical Board are taking this seriously. In earlier reports, de Sá exposed the use of powerful psychotropic drugs on foster children -- often to control kids' behavior rather than because of a clinical diagnosis. Side effects such as lethargy and massive weight gain can damage kids' lifelong health and their ability to get an education. Most doctors receive money or gifts from drugmakers for various reasons including travel, speaking engagements and drug trials. This is not illegal. But de Sá's investigation found that from 2010 to 2013, prescribers of psych medications in the foster care system received more than twice as much as typical California doctors. And last year, doctors who prescribed the most on average to foster youths accepted almost four times as much as those in a lower-prescribing group. The implication of preying on the most vulnerable of patients to boost drug sales is hard to discount. Advertisement State Sens. Jim Beall, D-San Jose, and Holly Mitchell, D-Los Angeles, have called on Health Care Services Director Toby Douglas to release more complete information about doctors prescribing and children taking psych drugs. It would include numbers of foster children on multiple medications and high doses, as well as children being given drugs for "conduct disorders." Consumer Watchdog's Carmen Balber told de Sá that her group has suspected that payments by drugmakers influence prescribing practices -- "But this investigation was particularly disturbing because of the patients it affects. The conflict of interest is clear in these cases, and we think that action is long overdue." The state medical board is investigating practices in treating foster youths exposed in de Sá's earlier reports. Now it will look at prescribing patterns to see if they are unethical. High prescribers have received more than \$10,000 a year on average from drug companies. And some other excesses stand out. A Sacramento doctor received more than \$310,000 in speaker fees over four years. Drug marketers know that doctors listen to other doctors. Foster children's lives are controlled by the state. The system is supposed to look out for them, but the human services agencies directly responsible for these children are failing them. Lawmakers and regulatory agencies need to step up. We will continue watching. Source: http://www.mercurynews.com/opinion/ci_27029973/mercury-news-editorial-doctors-have-incentives-drug-foster

State placed disabled children with nurses untrained in their needs By [Doug Donovan](#), The Baltimore Sun [contact the reporter Medical ResearchBankruptcyJohns Hopkins University](#) Maryland placed disabled children in home with untrained nurses The disabled foster children removed from a troubled Laurel-area group home this summer were placed by Maryland regulators in facilities whose their nurses lacked training for their complex medical needs, inspection records show. Health regulators did not learn of the training lapses — including the inability of some nurses to change breathing tubes — until they conducted an inspection nearly three weeks after moving the children. Officials were also unaware that half of the eight children ended up in emergency rooms shortly after being placed at the Prince George's County facilities operated by Second Family, the state's largest contractor for around-the-clock residential care for such children. [Sun Investigates: Lives on the lineOpen link](#) The Landover-based nonprofit was cited for violating state regulations that require contractors to report such hospital visits, for failing to properly train nursing staff and for neglect of a disabled child, according to July and August inspection records obtained by The Baltimore Sun through a Public Information Act request. "These reports look terrible," said Nancy Pineles, managing attorney for the Maryland Disability Law Center. "These kids are depending on these staff for their lives." The problems raise new questions about state oversight of the children, who suffer from conditions that can require breathing and feeding tubes. A Sun investigation has highlighted problems at both the Laurel-area apartments run by LifeLine Inc. — where 10-year-old Damaud Martin died July 2 — and the Second Family homes. The investigation, which revealed that regulators were unaware of problems at the homes, sparked reforms and a continuing examination of the regulation of such homes. [Related Politics State lawmakers call for committee probe of group home death See all related 8](#) Second Family's president, Shilda Frost Labule, did not respond to a request for comment. A routine inspection in September by the Department of Human Resources showed that the company had corrected most of the issues related to the "huge influx of new employees in July" that was "due to emergency transfers from a defunct provider," a report states. Still, some advocates questioned why the state moved the children before Second Family's homes were ready for them. State Sen. Joan Carter Conway also questioned why a contractor paid by the state to house medically fragile children employed staff who lacked proper training. "It wouldn't make sense," said Conway, a Baltimore Democrat who chairs the Senate committee that handles health issues. "If I'm providing the care and you're paying me millions, how did I get my license and

certification if my personnel and staff don't have appropriate training?" [Related story: Troubles hit Maryland group home for disabled children Doug Donovan](#)
[When state officials removed several disabled foster children from an Anne Arundel County group home in early July — after a 10-year-old boy died there — they placed most of the children with Second Family, a Prince George's County nonprofit that is Maryland's largest contractor for...](#) [When state officials removed several disabled foster children from an Anne Arundel County group home in early July — after a 10-year-old boy died there — they placed most of the children with Second Family, a Prince George's County nonprofit that is Maryland's largest contractor for...](#) (Doug Donovan) Maryland Health Secretary Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein released the inspection reports to Conway and Del. Peter Hammen, a Baltimore Democrat who chairs the House's health committee, along with a letter co-written with Department of Human Resources Secretary Ted Dallas. The health department licenses group homes and inspects health services; Dallas' agency awards contracts and evaluates providers. The two secretaries released the records as part of an ongoing review they announced at a July 24 legislative briefing in Annapolis. The meeting was spurred by the Sun's investigation, which revealed years of problems with LifeLine. The state had awarded about \$18 million in contracts since 2010 to LifeLine despite deficiencies in medical care, a founder imprisoned for arson, unpaid taxes, a bankruptcy filing, and police reports of abuse and neglect unknown to regulators. In 2011, regulators shut down LifeLine's homes for disabled adults after three residents had died, but allowed the firm to continue operating homes for children. [cComments](#) Please continue to investigate vulnerable populations. Virtually any family dealing with the inept social services agency are vulnerable. VirgilforDante at 12:21 PM November 30, 2014 [Add a comment](#) [See all comments](#) 2 At the briefing on July 24 — the same day health inspectors were discovering the emergency room visits and lack of training at the children's new homes — Sharfstein and Dallas told lawmakers they were comfortable with Second Family and two other smaller contractors that provide such services. "As far as I'm aware," Sharfstein said at the time, adding that he had asked his inspectors to "take a much closer look." But The Sun revealed in October that Second Family had its own questionable management issues — none of which were mentioned at the hearing. The nonprofit, which has been awarded at least \$69 million in state contracts since 2002, fired two employees in January for slapping, kicking and pushing a mute, autistic child. Another employee was fired July 16 after a disabled child rolled off a bed whose side rail had been left down; the child suffered injuries that required a hospital trip and inspectors cited Second Family for neglect in a July 18 report. The recently released inspection records from the Office of Health Care Quality raise questions about the thoroughness of the relocation process "and whether it was safe to move them all on that date," said Pineles, whose nonprofit organization is an official monitor of state care to disabled adults and children. Asked whether state officials realized before relocating the children that Second Family's nurses lacked training, health department spokesman Christopher Garrett wrote in an email: "This type of violation is determined after a child is admitted and a care plan is set. In this case, OHCQ cited the facility for gaps in training related to the nursing needs of the newly admitted individuals." Garrett said state officials and contractors "share the common goal of quality care for medically fragile children. Pursuing this goal has involved close follow-up since this summer." State inspectors found 16 regulatory violations in three inspections during July and August at Second Family, which cares for 34 children. One inspection, which took place July 23-25, "revealed that the staff had not been trained on the medical/nursing needs of the children," the report states. It found that nursing care plans for the eight LifeLine children "have not been updated." It also cited Second Family for failing to notify state regulators about the emergency room visits by four children. Providers are required to notify the state about incidents that require a response from police, fire or emergency officials. Two of the children were admitted to the hospital for treatment. The report did not include details about the emergency treatment or where it occurred. Second Family staff told inspectors that they had tried to report the incidents but that technical issues with the reporting system thwarted their attempts. An inspector following up on July 28 reported that "the incidents still had not been reported." Another incident on Aug. 8 provided a stark example of how a lack of training can lead to problems for children who breathe through tracheostomy tubes connected to ventilators. The "trach" tubes connect to a surgically created opening in the child's windpipe and periodically need to be changed and suctioned free of saliva and other fluids. A state inspection report says Second Family's chief executive told inspectors that two licensed practical nurses "froze" when a trach tube became dislodged, and were not able to reconnect it. "The staff then called 911," the report says. [Related Politics](#)
[State lawmakers call for committee probe of group home death](#) [See all related](#) 8 The inspector's detailed, eyewitness account showed how the two nurses fumbled their way through the patient's tracheostomy care: "Upon discovering that the Trach was not the correct size, the LPNs debated about using it until [a registered nurse] intervened telling them that using the incorrect sized trach was not appropriate," the report states. The nurses searched the entire house, including two emergency bags in a supply closet, but could not find any "extra trachs." "Both LPNs then gloved and attempted to perform trach care and broke the sterile field on several occasions," the report states. [cComments](#) Please continue to investigate vulnerable populations. Virtually any family dealing with the inept social services agency are vulnerable. VirgilforDante at 12:21 PM November 30, 2014 [Add a comment](#) [See all comments](#) 2 The inspector intervened to request that the registered nurse "immediately assign the task to another nurse to ensure the child's safety." The report states that the two nurses signed a form saying they had attended training on July 28 — a session held in response to the concerns of regulators. "Mandatory!! All-Staff Training, Monday, July 28" reads a Second Family flier detailed in inspection records. But direct observation of a second procedure revealed that the two "were not able to perform trach care safely," the inspection report states. "A conversation later with the executive director revealed that [the nurses] had not attended the agency's Trach and Ventilator training," the report states. Second Family was issued a violation for lack of staff training. Department of Human Resources inspectors wrote in September that six hospital visits had been reported in the July-to-September quarter. "Four were for reattachment of the J-Tube," the report states, referring to feeding tubes that are attached to children's stomachs. "This type of visit is routine for the medically fragile population." In their recent letter to lawmakers, Sharfstein and Dallas wrote that their agencies continue to work together to oversee group homes for disabled foster children. Inspectors with the Office of Health Care Quality continue to "maintain close oversight" of Second Family, "including unannounced on-site inspections," the letter states. The Nov. 21 letter noted that the agencies plan to hire a consultant to determine the training needs of Second Family and the state's two other contractors, and to ensure that the training is completed. Sharfstein is also hiring an additional employee to directly oversee group homes for disabled foster children. "We recently determined an independent consultant could enhance the delivery of services," Garrett wrote in his email. "The consultant will provide additional education, training, and support." State officials met with Second Family officials on Nov. 14 to discuss the organization's plans to correct the deficiencies cited in inspections. "These plans show that Second Family, Inc., is working to improve training and compliance in several areas," the letter states. Sharfstein submitted a five-point plan last month to the lawmakers, calling for ways to improve the oversight of group homes. He also started a task force that will report by late January on recommendations for more improvements. Dallas' agency created a form that all providers must fill out to alert regulators when significant financial problems such as bankruptcy and unpaid taxes arise. Both secretaries have acknowledged that their agencies must improve how they monitor financial problems before they affect quality of care. LifeLine experienced many of those problems throughout 2013 and this year. Sharfstein has announced that he is leaving in January to work at the Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health, so the next health secretary will have to tackle the issue. Damaud's death may also have further legal ramifications. The state medical examiner last month ruled his death a homicide caused by head trauma that the boy suffered in 2008, before LifeLine began caring for him. His mother was convicted of child abuse after entering an Alford plea, which means she did not admit guilt but acknowledged that city prosecutors had enough evidence to convict her. The full autopsy has not been released because law enforcement officials are still involved in a homicide investigation. ddonovan@baltsun.com Source: <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/sun-investigates/bs-md-second-family-inspections-20141129-story.html#page=2>

Food shortage, mold, rat droppings: Problems plague two Costa Mesa group homes [BY JENNA CHANDLER](#) 2014-11-28 21:58:34 COSTA MESA — The group home for adults with developmental disabilities on Knox Street seemed promising. It offered Katherine Slikker's adult daughter, who has epilepsy, a rare slice of independence: a bedroom to herself. So for the past two years, Slikker paid the standard monthly rate of \$2,271 to the company running the Costa Mesa home, California Community Care Facilities Inc. The fee was to cover her daughter's rent and food and other services, such as around-the-clock care, transportation and medication management. But when the woman the company paid to coordinate those services left in May and the company's owner, Steven Ness, took on her responsibilities, Slikker said her 53-year-old daughter and other residents began missing appointments because they weren't getting rides. Utility companies disconnected the TV cable and phone line because the bills were not paid. Over the past several months, their monthly allowances weren't made available to them. "He would promise you the moon and do nothing," Slikker, 79, said. A second home operated by Ness about a quarter of a mile away on Magnolia Street also had problems: scarce food, mold in bathrooms, rodent droppings in a pantry and beds without linens, according to a Register review of state documents. Now Ness is facing nearly \$7,000 in fines and his license is under review, according to the California Department of Social Services. In a recent interview, Ness explained the issues as a result of circumstance and logistical problems. "Quite honestly, it was just a matter of timing. I was going through some personal issues in my life," Ness said. "Unfortunately, just for me, there wasn't enough time to do it. They would argue probably against that, and

I understand that. I couldn't get it done fast enough." The homes are empty now. At the urging of the local regulating agency, the Regional Center of Orange County, all of the residents have moved out. The moves happened suddenly, putting stress on residents and their families. Those who lived on Knox were left to wonder if they would get back the allowance money provided by their families, about \$130 each per month, that Ness was required to have on hand. "We took his ledgers and are trying to figure out exactly what he owes," said Larry Landauer, executive director of the Regional Center. "It appears it's going to be substantial." 'FRUSTRATING' Ness said he is considering relinquishing his license. The license is from the Community Care Licensing Division of the California Department of Social Services for a residential facility for adults, ages 18 to 59, with autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, Down syndrome and other developmental and intellectual disabilities. There are about 400 such homes across Orange County with varying levels of care. "The issues found throughout the facility are not common at all. This is very frustrating," Landauer said. "We want consumers to have stable lives and be in safe environments." Since December 2013, the regional center has found issues at eight homes. Ness' were the only ones that rose to the level of advising families to leave, according to Landauer. LIST OF VIOLATIONS Ness, who is facing \$6,950 in penalties from the California Department of Social Services, refutes most of the inspection reports. He said he had kept \$200, or about one-quarter of the total allowance money, on hand and had put the rest at his Long Beach residence for safekeeping. He said he would turn it over to the regional center soon. Ness was first cited in March for leaving the front and back yard of the Magnolia property in disarray. Inspectors noted weeds, loose wires, bags of recycling and a tree in need of trimming. He eventually cleaned the yard, but in the summer and fall, new issues cropped up, according to state records reviewed by the Register. • In August, inspectors cited Ness for not having adequate staffing after the caregiver reported that she was on duty six days alone with no other help. They also found mold in the bathrooms, though Ness said his landlord, not him, was responsible for cleaning the mold. • During several visits in October and November, inspectors found rotting carrots, no fresh fruit or juices and no milk or bread. The refrigerator did not have a proper seal. • Several beds were missing sheets or the linens were stained. Two bathrooms smelled of urine and in one bedroom, instead blinds or curtains, a sheet was strung over a window. • There were spiders in the hallway and rodent droppings in the pantry. There was mildew in one bathroom and peeling, mildewed wallpaper and a curling gift ribbon was used for a drawer handle in another restroom. • A van to take residents on outings and to appointments and work needed maintenance, had expired tags, and the caregiver did not have a license to drive it. Residents reported they did not have access to their allowances. Nancy Leventhal's daughter lived at the Magnolia house. "It was like from the dark ages, it was so bad," she said. "I was frustrated and felt bad for my daughter and the other clients because it started out to be a really nice place." More often than not, the problems went unfixed, and Ness repeatedly missed follow-up appointments with inspectors, according to state records. "It's just a business that didn't go well," Ness said. FAMILIES TRY TO ADJUST A spokesman for the Department of Social Services would not comment on whether the agency was considering taking away Ness' license but said, in general, a history of repeated violations can cause a license to be revoked. The five residents at Magnolia moved out Nov. 6, followed by the six at Knox on Tuesday, when inspectors found a three-day eviction notice posted to the door. Ness said he was "absolutely not" behind on his rent payments. Residents at the Magnolia home had already paid for November room and board, and Ness said he had put reimbursement checks in the mail last week, but the two Magnolia home parents interviewed for this story have not received the money. "It's very disrupting ... most of them are scared, I know my daughter was. She cried and cried and cried," Slikker said. "I told her it was better this way because if it's not being run correctly, we'll find a place that is." Before the regional center intervened, Melinda Fliff was already planning to remove her 50-year-old daughter from the Magnolia house. She brought her daughter home to live with her and her 88-year-old husband in Laguna Woods. "It's hard for us to maintain and manage," Fliff said. "It's a lot of additional work." For Fliff, the first sign that the situation at the Magnolia house was deteriorating was a lack of food. "It was fillers: Top Ramen noodles, rice with chopped-up carrots and something in it, a medley, and a little bit of coleslaw, but nothing was substance, nothing was protein, vegetables and fruit." The bathroom was "filthy dirty" too, she said, there were no knobs on the door handles, no soap and no paper towels or toilet paper. "It was very disturbing," she said. "Steven (Ness) kept telling me things were going to turn around. Well, they never did." Contact the writer: jchandler@ocregister.com and @jennakchandler on Twitter Source: <http://www.ocregister.com/articles/ness-643736-daughter-magnolia.html>

County home to close Last updated: November 28, 2014 11:01AM - 766 Views By [Nathan Pilling](#) - npilling@civitasmedia.com Nathan Pilling | Greene County NewsThe Alpha Group Home Photo Nathan Pilling | Greene County NewsThe Alpha Group Home Story Tools: Font Size: Social Media: [Tweet](#) BEAVERCREEK — Greene County's last congregate living program for children in the custody of Greene County Children Services is closing after many years of operation. While no definite date for the Alpha Group Home's close has been set, it will close "sometime soon," according to Director of Greene County Department of Job & Family Services Beth Rubin. The program — currently housed at an aging building located in Alpha, Beavercreek, just off of US Route 35 — is closing down because of a number of factors: the US Route 35 expansion project (the home sits close to the highway currently), the need for numerous repairs at the building (an estimate put the amount of repairs needed at \$125,000) and the declining number of residents at the home (as the county moves away from congregational living programs to other methods of housing). Before deciding to shut down the program, the county looked at building a new facility, which would have cost about \$500,000, according to Greene County Administrator Brandon Huddleson. "Then we looked at what are our other options and how are we doing?" he said. "It caused us to look at the entire program holistically: What kind of outcomes are we getting? Where is the industry going?" With that look, it made sense to close the home in favor of other methods. "There's been a trend for many years both in Greene County and across the state to close group homes, because they're just not the model of service any longer," Rubin said. "Very few counties in Ohio still operate group homes. We were one of the last ones to have one open. That makes it particularly hard for us to close it, because we've got this tradition of having this group home and a lot of pride in the services that it provided." Greene County Children Services previously operated group homes in Fairborn, Xenia and Bellbrook, all of which have been closed over the years. Rubin said the county is focused on finding other types of permanent living arrangements for children, such as reunification with their parents when possible, adoptive placement and foster or kinship placements. "Those are more ideal than a congregate living arrangement," she said. She also said Children Services will focus more on its Independent Living Program, which serves children age 14 and older by helping to prepare them for emancipation when they turn 18. The group home currently houses three teenage boys, one of which will emancipate in about a month, according to Rubin. The other two boys will be moved alternative placements. Rubin said the county is working with the home's seven full-time employees to help them find employment before the it closes. According to Huddleson, the building will be marketed for sale once it is closed. "I think all of our staff are sad to see it go," Rubin said. "Even though we know that it makes the most sense to close the program ... we still certainly have emotional ties to this building and this program. It's sad for all of us to see it go." Reach Nathan Pilling at 937-502-4498 or on Twitter [@XDGNatePilling](#). Source: http://www.xeniazette.com/news/home_top/150666822/County-home-to-close

New Nebraska Foster Care Review Released By: WOWT 6 News [Email](#) Updated: Mon 2:28 PM, Dec 01, 2014 By: WOWT 6 News [Email](#) [Home](#) / [News](#) / [Headlines List](#) / Article Related Links [to view the complete report click here](#) The Foster Care Review Office has released its annual report concerning Nebraska Foster Care. This report contains independent data and analysis of the child welfare system in the fiscal year July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014 with recommendations for system [improvements](#). During fiscal year 2013-14, a total of 5,466 Nebraska children (not counting youth under OJS or the Office of Probation [Administration](#)) were in out-of-home care for some portion of their life. Improvements · In 97% of the cases reviewed there was [documentation](#) that caseworkers had contact with the children in the 60 days prior to the case file review. The FCRO commends DHHS for improving the documentation of this vital safety indicator. (See page 31). · There is more [collaboration](#) and problem-solving amongst child welfare system stakeholders. Issues: · Since the mandated transfer of DHHS-OJS youth to the Office of Probation Administration, reports on youth under Probation have not been provided to the FCRO tracking system due to a conflicting interpretation of statutes. The FCRO is working with the Office of Probation Administration and with members of the Legislature that plan to introduce a bill in the 2015 Legislative session. In the meantime, the statistics in this report do not include children under the Office of Probation Administration or children that have yet to transfer from DHHS-OJS. This makes comparisons of [trends](#) difficult, because OJS youth were included in most past out-of-home care measures. · 44 (6%) of the reviewed children that re-entered out-of-home care had been adopted prior to re-entering out-of-home care. (See page 71). · 68 (10%) of the reviewed children that re-entered out-of-home care had been in a finalized guardianship prior to re-entering out-of-home care. (page 71) · In 33% of the cases reviewed the DHHS case plan was incomplete or outdated. · 51% of school-aged children reviewed were either not on target in school or the FCRO was unable to determine if they were on target. (See page 104). · There are still deficits with many types of documentation. Examples, whether foster parents were given health and educational records, whether children were receiving needed medical/dental [treatments](#), sibling contacts, receipt of services, etc. The Executive summary includes the following recommendations: · Amend Nebraska statutes to permit the FCRO to review

children during the critical first six months after being returned to the parental home. · Amend Nebraska statutes to permit the FCRO to review all youth placed on probation that are in the out-of-home placements. · Ensure that the rights of fathers are appropriately addressed by all stakeholders and the courts from the time of removal. There has been an increase in the identification of fathers but not in including them in the juvenile court action or as a placement for the child. Do not wait until it is clear that the mother cannot or will not safely parent before addressing the father's rights. · Work with the Nebraska Children's Commission and other stakeholders to develop relevant and appropriate child well-being indicators. There needs to be the ability to assure that children are better off when they exit the child-welfare system than when they entered. [Analytic](#) software would help with this endeavor To view the complete report click on the link included with this story. Source: <http://www.wowt.com/news/headlines/New-Nebraska-Foster-Care-Review-Released-284370651.html>

--> **Judge says trying is not enough for foster care** Last Monday at 6:15 AM in [Local](#) Photo: clipart.com 1 1 0 0 KGMI News Reporting By Peter Wagner BELLINGHAM, Wash. – It's been a decade since the state Department of Social and Health Services agreed to numerous foster care reforms after news that some foster children weren't being cared for properly by the agency. In Whatcom County Superior court recently, the agency argued that getting close to those reform goals was good enough. DSHS says nine of their 21 reforms have been completed, and that trying should count for something. Judge Charles Snyder didn't agree and gave a firm timeline for the state to finish implementing the reforms. Those reforms will cost more money, which DSHS says they'll be asking the legislature for next year. - See more at: <http://kgmi.com/news/007700-judge-says-trying-is-not-enough-for-foster-care/#sthash.DROldUtdpuf>

The kid was in Totem Town for burglary. He died in a stolen car. By Mara H. Gottfried mgottfried@pioneerpress.com Posted: 12/01/2014 12:01:00 AM CST Updated: 12/02/2014 05:04:56 PM CST **John McAfee, the 15-year-old who crashed this car and died after fleeing from St. Paul police last week, had run away from Boys Totem Town a few hours earlier.** Police said they were pursuing the car early Wednesday, Nov. 26, 2014, because it had been stolen. (Photo courtesy of Fox 9 News) John McAfee III, 15, of St. Paul -- pictured in April 2014 -- died Nov. 26 after crashing a stolen car during a police chase. (Photo courtesy of Nicole Tisdale) A 15-year-old who died in a stolen car crash while fleeing St. Paul police last week was on the run from Boys Totem Town, his family said Monday. "I'm not condoning what he did, but I don't believe my son deserved a death penalty for stealing a car," said John McAfee III's mother, Nicole Tisdale. Police gave chase when McAfee was spotted in the stolen car about 2 1/2 hours after he slipped away from the unlocked St. Paul residential center for troubled teens about 9:30 p.m. Nov. 25. Tisdale said Monday that she and the boy's father have questions about what happened to their son. "I will get to the bottom of it," she said. "I'm not going to give up." Police said their investigation was continuing, but a spokesman said pursuing officers didn't know the driver was 15. McAfee, who was born and raised in St. Paul, had been living with his family in the Dayton's Bluff area for about five years. He had many friends, loved to sketch and was "very smart," his mother said, adding that his grades had slipped as he became interested in girls. He had aspired to be an architect, said Joseph Irving, McAfee's stepfather. McAfee was a 10th-grader at Humboldt High School before he was sent to Ramsey County's Totem Town, a residential treatment center where juvenile males convicted of crimes can be sent. McAfee had been close with his uncle, who died of cancer in 2010, and the young man struggled after that and got in trouble, Tisdale said. "I don't understand why John picked the road that he picked, because he has a big, loving family," Tisdale said. Advertisement McAfee was on probation in a theft case, and he'd been sentenced to Totem Town for four to nine months for a burglary, Irving said. He'd arrived at the juvenile center Nov. 4. McAfee had been "doing very well at Boys Totem Town," according to Chris Crutchfield, Ramsey County Community Corrections spokesman. "He'd been very helpful," he said, adding there were no indications that McAfee would run." But last Tuesday, as the young men at Totem Town were preparing for bed about 9:30 p.m., McAfee ran out a side door of a dorm, Crutchfield said. Opening the door tripped an alarm. Staff pursued McAfee to the edge of the property, which is their standard procedure, Crutchfield said. When they didn't catch him, they contacted St. Paul police. Totem Town is intended as an alternative to a more punitive state lockup; it is not locked or gated and staff is with youth at all times, Crutchfield said. The boys who are sent to Totem Town attend school there and participate in activities on- and off-site, Crutchfield said. "The care of our young people, keeping them safe and working with them, is something we take very seriously," Crutchfield said. Tisdale said she received a call from Totem Town last Tuesday night, reporting that her son had run away. "I wanted to get to the bottom of why was it so easy for him to run," Tisdale said. "If you removed him from my house, why did you put him in a facility that he can run from and where boys have been running from since the beginning of time? Why is it so easy for these boys to get away from there?" Community Corrections is conducting a review of how McAfee got away and how to prevent such incidents from recurring, Crutchfield said. There have been 31 instances of males running away from Totem Town this year, which Crutchfield said is about average. Totem Town is in St. Paul's Battle Creek neighborhood, a couple of miles from where a car was stolen Tuesday night in the 2000 block of Suburban Avenue. Police on patrol in downtown St. Paul found someone driving that car about midnight Tuesday. They followed it with red lights and sirens on. The driver fled, passed other cars and went into opposite lanes of traffic, according to police. It was a short pursuit, said Sgt. Paul Paulos, St. Paul police spokesman. McAfee reached an estimated 80 mph, according to emergency-radio traffic of the incident posted by Minnesota Police Clips. Police are investigating the driver's speed, Paulos said Monday. Police said that officers lost sight of the car as McAfee continued south on Robert Street but soon found the car had crashed into a commercial building that houses Captain Ken's Foods at 344 S. Robert St. on the West Side. Tisdale said she had not taught her son to drive and he hadn't taken driving lessons. She thinks he must have been scared because "police were chasing him in so many cars," Tisdale said. "I'm wondering why they didn't stop the pursuit and just block the roads. I'm pretty sure they could tell he was a young boy." But Paulos said officers could not tell the driver's age. Police had received a report about McAfee running away from Totem Town, though the officers involved in the pursuit were unaware of that case and didn't know the driver was McAfee, Paulos said. Tisdale saw a photo of the smashed-up car on a news station's website and couldn't believe that striking a building would have caused so much damage to the car. There was no visible structural damage to the building. Based on the amount of damage to the car, Tisdale said she believes officers used their squads to block McAfee's car and struck it with their squads. Paulos said on Monday that officers did not hit McAfee's car and that the squad cars were undamaged. When Tisdale and Irving were notified of the crash and got to Regions Hospital, they were told McAfee had a brain injury, broken neck and severed spine, Tisdale said. "They kept him on life support until the rest of the family could come and say their goodbyes," she said. McAfee died at the hospital later Wednesday. His funeral will be Saturday. "I don't want him to be remembered as a bad kid," Tisdale said. "He was a good, spirited kid who loved helping people. ... He's a teenager that made mistakes, just like a lot of other teenagers." Mara H. Gottfried can be reached at 651-228-5262. Follow her at twitter.com/MaraGottfried. Source: http://www.twincities.com/crime/ci_27046370/st-paul-teen-who-died-after-fleeing-chase

Residents say group home conditions were deplorable Owner of group home arrested December 2nd, 2014 Monday - Residents who live on the street near a Northside group home where 10 physically and mentally handicapped residents between the ages of 46 and 62 were found locked inside said the conditions there were horrible. Quick Clicks [False imprisonment arrest](#) Atakelte Admasu (pictured below), the owner of the group home, was arrested and charged with false imprisonment and negligence of disabled adults. The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office said the rooming house at 1346 Agnes St. was previously licensed as a group home, but that the business license fee hadn't been paid since 2011. Residents in the area said people would walk up and down the street looking for food, waiting for food and going through the garbage looking for food because they weren't getting it at the group homes. Calvin Winters lived in a group home across the street from the one that was shut down. His family said he was part of the group at the house and has mental issues. "What was it like in there?" News4Jax's Jim Piggott asked. "Hell," Winters said. "No hot water, no cold water, nothing." "Was there food?" Piggott asked. "No, I brought it out of the dumpster," Winters said. Residents said those in the group home were wearing the same clothes all week long. They said the home being exposed will be for the good of everyone and the neighborhood will improve. When firefighters and police arrived at the home, they found padlocked gates, food cabinets locked and deplorable conditions. Admasu said he locked doors and gates for the safety of residents. But the Department of Children and Families and the Agency for Health Care Administration did not see it that way. They are still investigating. "In a case like this, there are a lot of people we are going to need to talk to, including the people who are living there, friends and relatives and anyone else with direct operating knowledge of this facility," DCF spokesman John Harrell said. The facility was licensed by the Agency for Health Care Administration. Group homes are inspected every two years. This home was inspected a year ago and had some issues with staff training. The same training issues were documented in January and March and cleared in April. The latest situation shut the home down last week. Source: <http://www.news4jax.com/news/residents-say-group-home-conditions-were-deplorable/30021646>

New Nebraska Foster Care Review Released By: WOWT 6 News [Email](#) Updated: Mon 2:28 PM, Dec 01, 2014 By: WOWT 6 News [Email](#) [Home](#) / [Headlines List](#) / Article Related Links [to view the complete report click here](#) The Foster Care Review Office has released its annual report concerning Nebraska Foster Care. This report contains independent data and analysis of the child welfare system in the fiscal year July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014 with recommendations for system improvements. During fiscal year 2013-14, a total of 5,466 Nebraska children (not counting youth under OJS or the Office of

Probation Administration) were in out-of-home care for some portion of their life. Improvements · In 97% of the cases reviewed there was documentation that caseworkers had contact with the children in the 60 days prior to the case file review. The FCRO commends DHHS for improving the documentation of this vital safety indicator. (See page 31). · There is more collaboration and problem-solving amongst child welfare system stakeholders. Issues: · Since the mandated transfer of DHHS-OJS youth to the Office of Probation Administration, reports on youth under Probation have not been provided to the FCRO tracking system due to a conflicting interpretation of statutes. The FCRO is working with the Office of Probation Administration and with members of the Legislature that plan to introduce a bill in the 2015 Legislative session. In the meantime, the statistics in this report do not include children under the Office of Probation Administration or children that have yet to transfer from DHHS-OJS. This makes comparisons of trends difficult, because OJS youth were included in most past out-of-home care measures. · 44 (6%) of the reviewed children that re-entered out-of-home care had been adopted prior to re-entering out-of-home care. (See page 71). · 68 (10%) of the reviewed children that re-entered out-of-home care had been in a finalized guardianship prior to re-entering out-of-home care. (page 71) · In 33% of the cases reviewed the DHHS case plan was incomplete or outdated. · 51% of school-aged children reviewed were either not on target in school or the FCRO was unable to determine if they were on target. (See page 104). · There are still deficits with many types of documentation. Examples, whether foster parents were given health and educational records, whether children were receiving needed medical/dental treatments, sibling contacts, receipt of services, etc. The Executive summary includes the following recommendations: · Amend Nebraska statutes to permit the FCRO to review children during the critical first six months after being returned to the parental home. · Amend Nebraska statutes to permit the FCRO to review all youth placed on probation that are in the out-of-home placements. · Ensure that the rights of fathers are appropriately addressed by all stakeholders and the courts from the time of removal. There has been an increase in the identification of fathers but not in including them in the juvenile court action or as a placement for the child. Do not wait until it is clear that the mother cannot or will not safely parent before addressing the father's rights. · Work with the Nebraska Children's Commission and other stakeholders to develop relevant and appropriate child well-being indicators. There needs to be the ability to assure that children are better off when they exit the child-welfare system than when they entered. Analytic software would help with this endeavor To view the complete report click on the link included with this story. Source: <http://www.wowt.com/home/headlines/New-Nebraska-Foster-Care-Review-Released-284370651.html>

Task Force Releases Foster Care Recommendations By: Mitch Goulding 12/01/2014 06:37 PM Share This Facebook Tweet Email Text size: [±](#) TWC News: Task Force Releases Foster Care Recommendations Play now Time Warner Cable video customers: Sign in with your TWC ID to access our video clips. [Sign in](#) [Get my TWC ID](#) [Get TWC service](#) [Read the FAQ](#) To view our videos, you need to enable JavaScript. [Learn how](#). install Adobe Flash 9 or above. [Install now](#). Then come back here and refresh the page. For more than a year, Williamson County Commissioner Lisa Birkman has been working to increase communication between Williamson County's child advocacy groups. "There's a lot of different ways recommended to fix it, but it needs to be fixed," Birkman said. "There's a lot of different agencies, government, non-government and faith-based that work with foster care kids in Williamson County, and until now, there was not really a lot of coordination amongst them." That is until she kicked off a county-wide task force in September which brought many of those agencies together in one room. After three months of meetings, the group released a report identifying the two biggest problems as a lack of communication and coordination between agencies and a lack of support for parents, both biological and foster. The report will soon land in the laps of legislators who are already scrutinizing Child Protective Services at the state level. "We're meeting together to kind of see where we are and what the common area is, the common grounds are and how we can accomplish those goals," Republican Rep. Larry Gonzales said. "We have a long way to go still. The legislative process is a long one." State Representative Larry Gonzales sits on the Sunset Review Committee. It will make its own recommendations to improve CPS early next year. "A lot of what you hear people clamoring for are already in statute or already in the root. They're not being followed," Gonzales said. "The question is 'Why aren't they being followed?'" It's a question Gonzales says state legislators are still looking into and though Birkman's group has released its own report, it's a conversation she plans to continue both locally and with state lawmakers. County leaders will present the full report to the public Tuesday. Both presentations will take place at the Williamson County Courthouse, first at 9:30 a.m. and then again at 3 p.m. - See more at: <http://austin.twcnews.com/content/news/310029/task-force-releases-foster-care-recommendations/#sthash.ITNe0Vig.dpuf>

Michigan asks federal judge to end oversight of child foster care By [Rick Pluta](#) · Dec 2, 2014 Share [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Google+](#) [Email](#) Michigan wants out from under the court-ordered oversight of the foster care system. Credit iRon leSs / flickr Michigan says it wants out from under court-ordered oversight of the state's child foster care system. The Michigan Department of Human Services filed a motion today with the U.S. District Court in Detroit. Bob Wheaton is with the DHS. He says the state spends \$1 million a year in compliance costs that could be used for other things. Without federal oversight, Wheaton wants to see the money used on federal monitors for some higher-priority areas. "We could do things like expand our family reunification program services, which are designed to avoid foster care placements. We could nearly double families served by our abuse and prevention programs. There are things like that." The state was sued in 2006 by the group Children's Rights because caseloads were too high, and too few children were finding permanent homes. No word yet on how the group will respond to the state's motion. Source: <http://michiganradio.org/post/michigan-asks-federal-judge-end-oversight-child-foster-care>

Tribune uncovers shocking state failure to protect kids Wednesday, Dec 3, 2014 * [Tribune](#)... In residential treatment centers across Illinois, children are assaulted, sexually abused and running away by the thousands — yet state officials fail to act on reports of harm and continue sending waves of youths to the most troubled and violent facilities, a Tribune investigation found. At a cost to taxpayers of well over \$200 million per year, the residential centers promise round-the-clock supervision and therapy to state wards with histories of abuse and neglect, as well as other disadvantaged youths with mental health and behavioral problems. On any given day, about 1,400 wards live in the centers, although far more cycle through each year. In the best cases, the facilities rebuild and even save young lives. But the Tribune found that many underprivileged youths — most of them African-American — are shuttled for years from one grim institution to another before emerging more damaged than when they went in. * Just one [example](#)... At Indian Oaks, which specializes in treating children who have endured sexual trauma, the Tribune identified 17 reports of sexual assault or abuse during a 21/2-year period starting in September 2011. Facility reports to DCFS and police dismissed nearly half of those incidents as consensual, even when alleged victims were not old enough to consent or had cognitive impairments. * [And](#)... The state's beleaguered child welfare agency, which has had four directors in the past year and seen its budget sliced by more than 10 percent since 2009, is more than a year behind in analyzing facility performance records that show how many days kids go on the run from each center, or are sent to jail or psychiatric hospitals. [Go read the whole thing](#), but prepare to be thoroughly disgusted. - Posted by Rich Miller Source: <http://capitolfax.com/2014/12/03/tribune-uncovers-shocking-state-failure-to-protect-kids/>

Children attacked, abused at taxpayer-funded living centers By [David Jackson](#), [Gary Marx](#), [Duaa Eldeib](#), Tribune reporters In residential treatment centers across Illinois, children are assaulted, sexually abused and running away by the thousands — yet state officials fail to act on reports of harm and continue sending waves of youths to the most troubled and violent facilities, a Tribune investigation found. At a cost to taxpayers of well over \$200 million per year, the residential centers promise round-the-clock supervision and therapy to state wards with histories of abuse and neglect, as well as other disadvantaged youths with mental health and behavioral problems. On any given day, about 1,400 wards live in the centers, although far more cycle through each year. In the best cases, the facilities rebuild and even save young lives. But the Tribune found that many underprivileged youths — most of them African-American — are shuttled for years from one grim institution to another before emerging more damaged than when they went in. Reports of patient-on-patient sexual assault are commonplace at some of Illinois' largest and most relied-on facilities. Child prostitution schemes take root. Vulnerable children are terrorized by older ones and taught a life of crime. Some are preyed on sexually by the adults paid to care for them. And staggering numbers of wards, some as young as 10, flee to the streets. In the three years from 2011 through 2013, Illinois residential facilities sent the state Department of Children and Family Services 428 reports alleging a ward was sexually assaulted or abused while in their care, according to DCFS records not previously made public. The facilities submitted an additional 1,052 reports that a ward was physically assaulted during those three years — in some instances by staff but usually by a peer. And facilities notified DCFS of 29,425 incidents when a ward ran away or went missing. That is an average of nearly 27 runaway reports a day among wards in Illinois facilities. Out on the streets where they had no family, friends, money or life skills, some runaways committed carjackings, armed robberies and home break-ins, the Tribune investigation found. Others fell victim to gang rapes and sex trafficking. Placed in state protective custody at age 14 after she was kicked out of her home at gunpoint and then sexually assaulted, Singleton was sent in 2012 to the 112-bed Indian Oaks Academy in Manteno, Ill. There she was attacked by peers, repeatedly bullied and taunted, government reports show. Over the next year, Singleton ran away at least 11 times, government records show. She said she survived by prostituting herself in Chicago. Indian Oaks discharged her earlier "I'm hurting," she said. "I hate living like this, but the world isn't fair, and I have to make my

way." Operated by nonprofit agencies, for-profit firms or religious charities, Illinois' roughly 50 residential centers range in size from 10 to 150 beds and are spread from the North Side of Chicago to the farmland of southern Illinois. Some are large dormitories that occupy former state-run asylums and orphanages, while others are campuses lined with cottages. The violent conditions inside these facilities have largely been hidden until now because strict juvenile privacy laws shield basic reports of harm to youths from the public, the media and even many government regulators. Reporters pierced the secrecy by gathering more than 10,000 pages of confidential juvenile case files from sources across the state, and also using public records laws to get police and state monitoring reports. The Tribune also compiled internal DCFS data on facility discharge outcomes and rates of key events like runaways, detentions of youths, assaults and sexual abuse. Taken together, the records provide an unprecedented look at the chaos, drug abuse, violence and victimization within many of the taxpayer-financed centers. Serious child safety breaches emerged at facilities throughout the state, including several of the most respected institutions, the records showed. The Tribune's investigation centered on three of Illinois' most relied-on centers where officials continued to send wards despite persistent patterns of violence, sexual victimization and runaway episodes. •At the 48-bed Lawrence Hall Youth Services facility on Chicago's Northwest Side, young residents squared off in gang fights, coerced peers into sex, smoked marijuana in front of staff and routinely walked out of the facility to work as prostitutes, break into apartments, steal cars and rob passers-by, records show. DCFS kept sending in young wards even as the nonprofit lagged well behind other facilities in the department's performance measures. At the 59-bed Rock River Academy in Rockford, a facility for girls, former residents described being pummeled by peers upon arrival. During the most recent nine-month period, Rock River filed reports of aggressive behavior by state wards more frequently than any of the 50 Illinois facilities where DCFS places children and teens, according to a review of DCFS records. •At Indian Oaks, which specializes in treating children who have endured sexual trauma, the Tribune identified 17 reports of sexual assault or abuse during a 21/2-year period starting in September 2011. Facility reports to DCFS and police dismissed nearly half of those incidents as consensual, even when alleged victims were not old enough to consent or had cognitive impairments. When young wards are hurt, the Tribune found, police and state officials rarely share their investigative reports with each other, making it difficult to uncover patterns of abuse and act aggressively to protect children. The state's beleaguered child welfare agency, which has had four directors in the past year and seen its budget sliced by more than 10 percent since 2009, is more than a year behind in analyzing facility performance records that show how many days kids go on the run from each center, or are sent to jail or psychiatric hospitals. And DCFS does little to analyze or act on Unusual Incident Reports that facilities are required to submit whenever a ward is hurt or put in harm's way while in their care. "If you were getting these reports as a parent, you would be up in arms about the facility," said Cook County Public Guardian Robert Harris, whose office has filed court motions to remove individual wards from residential facilities for their safety. DCFS acting Director Bobbie Gregg said she was outraged and disappointed to hear the Tribune's findings, adding that she was not aware youths were repeatedly sent back to facilities plagued by assaults, sexual abuse and runaways. "What you're describing is not something that has been brought to my attention, but it is something that ... we should look into," Gregg said. "Whenever any of our children are harmed in our custody, I'm not satisfied." The Tribune provided DCFS with its findings before interviewing Gregg. At that interview she said she had begun exploring ways to safeguard wards in residential treatment. Although the agency has 16 employees monitoring such facilities, Gregg said she plans to require more stringent oversight of the Unusual Incident Reports sent by the centers. Acknowledging that the department does not have the ability to analyze those reports to quickly spot patterns, she said she was planning data upgrades. "I, too, am frustrated that it takes us too long to get data to be able to make meaningful changes in our system," she said. "Like so many things, it's a question of resources." She said she has set a goal of moving 165 wards from residential facilities to foster homes by Jan. 31. "Children should be raised in homes with families and not in institutional centers," she said. Source: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/watchdog/rte/ct-youth-treatment-crisis-new-met-20141203-story.html?dssReturnPage=1&z=37211>

Artesia foster parent sentenced to 15 years for molesting child in his care Police say victim was young girl placed in his care by state By Jessica Onsurez jonsurez@currentargus.com @JussGREAT on Twitter Posted: 12/04/2014 09:44:43 AM MST ARTESIA >> A little girl named "Sparkle" got justice Monday when her Artesia foster dad was sentenced to 15 years in prison for molesting her. Fifth Judicial District Court Judge Raymond Romero sentenced 39-year-old Todd Harper to 15 years in prison, negating a no contest plea agreement with the defendant by the District Attorney's Office. Judges are not required to follow the plea agreement. Harper was charged with one count of criminal sexual contact of a minor in the second degree for a child under 13. He pleaded no contest to the charge stemming from a 2013 investigation into allegations that he inappropriately touched the 7-year-old girl placed in his home by the state. "Sparkle," as the victim was dubbed by Guardians of the Children, an organization that advocates protections for children, to protect her identity, was placed in temporary foster care with Harper's family in May 2013. A spokesman for the Guardians of the Children said the sentence fit the "heinous crime." Harper's sentence includes credit for 69 days of time served and parole following his release for five years to life. Harper will also be required to register as a sex offender. According to the criminal complaint, the child told investigators that Harper had "tickled her where he wasn't suppose to." The complaint states that when asked to explain, the girl reportedly told investigators that Harper had used his hand to touch her private parts underneath her clothes and in one instance had her touch his genitals. Advertisement When interviewed by investigators, Harper said "it was a one-time thing and that it was a mistake," according to the complaint. Harper later told investigators this happened several times over the summer. It's a situation that the New Mexico Department of Children, Youth and Families said is rare in New Mexico foster homes. Public Information Office Henry Varela said that candidates for foster parents undergo extensive background checks and get home checks before having a child placed in their care. "It is a very uncommon situation to see abuse and neglect in terms of foster parent to child," Varela said. In cases in which they do receive a report of abuse or neglect, Varela said children are immediately removed from the home and an investigation is initiated. Jessica Onsurez can be reached at 575-491-4682. Source: http://www.currentargus.com/carlsbad-news/ci_27066729/artesia-foster-parent-sentenced-15-years-molesting-child

Harsh Treatment: Violence, runaways plague Utah facility for troubled youth By Medill Watchdog on December 2, 2014 By John Seasley and Alice Li First in a series of articles documenting the nationwide troubles of facilities meant to help youth with behavioral, emotional problems Police reports give a glimpse into what goes on behind the locked doors of Provo Canyon School. Boys and girls as young as eight hurt each other, themselves and staff members. They engage in sex acts, consensual and non-consensual. They try to run away. A Medill Watchdog investigation revealed a striking pattern of potential danger to the troubled youth sent for treatment – often at public expense – to the Utah residential treatment center, one of the nation's oldest and largest. Since 2011, police have responded more than once a week, on average, to one of the three campuses that collectively make up Provo Canyon School, which collectively can care for 274 youth at any time. The calls include at least 56 reports of assault and 25 reports of sex offenses. Five former staff members charged with caring for the youth confirm in separate interviews the picture of an institution where violence is common. They say that many of the youth, some of whom come from gangs or other violent backgrounds, regularly lash out at each other for trivial or imagined slights. They describe troubled youth who seek ways to self-harm, scratching themselves with carpet staples and cutting themselves with broken glass. Residents threaten and attack staff. At times, as at treatment centers across the country, the youth try to escape. The agency was put on probation for one well-publicized 2012 incident, when a boy escaped, stole a car and caused a fatal accident. But even after that, the incidents continued. Within four months another boy escaped, stole a truck and traveled more than 2,000 miles home to Washington, D.C. In February 2014, a girl ran away to a nearby gas station where, she later reported, she had sex with a truck driver. As troubling as the reports are, the Medill Watchdog investigation found the reports may not be a full picture. The probe, which included a review of state inspection reports, court records and police calls to the facility; and interviews with staff and former staff, former residents and their parents, police, attorneys and state officials, found on occasion incidents being reported belatedly. And state officials who oversee the agency have criticized the agency for reports that do not fully detail what happened during incidents. Medill Watchdog obtained more than 1,000 pages of documents during its investigation of Provo Canyon School. (Medill Watchdog/Robin Amer) In one incident, an emergency room nurse called police, concerned by the condition of a resident who was brought in with a black eye and a broken nose. The assigned police officer wrote in his report that he called the facility and instructed the receptionist that the assault should have been reported. In another case, the mother of one former resident said in an interview that it was only after she insisted that police were belatedly called about an incident in which her son was beaten unconscious and taken to the emergency room. In a third case, the mother of a resident twice called police frustrated because, she said, she was told by a staff member at the school that her son was bleeding after being assaulted by another resident. The police report states the woman "wants to press charges, the school is refusing to give her information about the fight." Eleven days later, the police records show, the police noted after the woman called again that the assault had never been reported by the school. Provo Canyon School has historically been a place where adolescents with significant behavior issues from across the country were sent for treatment and therapy in an idyllic setting, nestled in the valley below the Wasatch mountain

range. Since its founding in the 1970s the school has housed a combination of the children of wealthy families and children sent by schools or court systems, whose care is funded by public sources. The facility has been owned and operated since 2000 by Universal Health Services Inc., a Fortune 500 company. The company lists Provo Canyon in its February 2014 financial report as the largest of its 193 behavioral health care facilities. Experts in the behavior of troubled youth describe great challenges in operating centers like Provo Canyon, where the residents often have severe behavioral and emotional issues that pose a danger to themselves or others. "It's challenging," said Dr. Laura Gilley, medical director of the University of Utah Neuropsychiatric Institute's comprehensive assessment and treatment program, who has six years of residential experience herself. "We face kids potentially doing unsafe things in the facility." Provo Canyon School administrators declined requests for interviews. Karen Johnson, the senior vice president for clinical services at parent company UHS, said that Provo Canyon and other UHS facilities "do the best job that we can to take care of a very troubled group of kids." She noted that the company is dedicated to providing "the care each child deserves" and to help them find alternatives to misbehavior. In a follow-up prepared statement, the corporation said Provo Canyon exceeds state standards and said the facility serves as the "last resort/option...for youth with severe behaviors who simply cannot be treated elsewhere." The statement said that Provo Canyon has "from time to time" had deficiency notices, but is currently in good standing with state regulators. The statement added, "any alleged mistreatment by our staff would be treated as a serious occurrence with full disciplinary actions including termination." The Medill Watchdog review of state and local records found that between September 2012 and October 2013, at least five staff members have been terminated for inappropriate conduct toward the youth they are charged with guarding. Between 2011 and 2013, the state found multiple violations by Provo Canyon in its care of the troubled youth. Twice the state put the license for Provo Canyon School campuses on a provisional status because of violations. The first time was as a result of Tyrone McCoy's escape in May 2012. A TRAGIC EPISODE McCoy's flight to freedom ended in tragedy captured on the evening news: a resident ran away, stole a car and had a fatal accident. After reviewing videotape and conducting interviews with staff, state officials would later document just how easy the escape was for McCoy. Doors were left open that should have been locked. Staff did not maintain continuous supervision of residents. One Provo Canyon staff member was texting while on duty. The incident occurred after a staff member granted McCoy, then 17, permission to go sharpen a pencil, then left for a few minutes to get trays from the kitchen. When the staff member returned, McCoy was gone, and the door to the courtyard was left open. Over the next few hours, police reports show, McCoy broke into a house, then walked to an underground parking lot and stole an unlocked Mercedes SUV. He drove it back to the school, where he taunted staff and showed off for fellow residents, according to local news accounts. When staff members realized he was in the parking lot, they tried without success to detain him. Instead he drove off at breakneck speed, his flight ending abruptly when he crashed into a car stopped at a light. The collision critically injured the driver and killed his wife, who was in the passenger seat. McCoy later pleaded guilty to charges of manslaughter, theft of a vehicle, burglary and fleeing, all felonies. He remains in juvenile detention. Following the escape, the state banned the boys' campus in July 2012 from accepting new admissions for 30 days, and put the facility's license on a six-month conditional status. A lawsuit by the husband of the fatally injured passenger against the school and McCoy is pending. A HISTORY OF ESCAPES Like many residential treatment centers, Provo Canyon has been plagued by runaways since it opened; a pair of runaway boys sparked a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union in 1978 over the conditions of care. According to the lawsuit, the boys fled the facility to escape brutal treatment; the case ended with the judge's order that the facility stop using force or isolation, among other practices, absent exceptional circumstances. In the years since, runaways have continued to pose a problem, including a 2000 incident in which two boys escaped, stole a car and crashed it, killing one of the youth. Even after McCoy's tragic incident and the state sanction that followed, police records document more than a dozen additional calls regarding youth runaways. The school hired a fencing company following the escape to reinforce the south fence. But on Sept. 5, 2012 – while the Provo campus license was still on conditional status – another resident jumped that section, stole a fencing company truck and drove off. Police reports show the boy had told other residents of his plan to steal a car and drive to Washington, D.C., where his mother lived. Three months later, a social worker there called police in Utah to report the youth had been found in the capital. On Sept. 9, 2012, another boy ran away. And 13 days later, three boys escaped in two separate incidents hours apart. The school reports show the boys all were later found. Residents of the girl's campus also try to escape, often in groups. On Jan. 28, 2013, a group of girls rioted, damaging walls and windows. Staff called police early in the morning to report that six girls had escaped and "might have scissors and pencils as weapons." Police found all six of them. From the back of the police car, one girl hit an officer in the back of his head with his own handcuffs. She was booked into juvenile detention and charged with assault. On Feb. 26, 2014, staff called to report that two girls had broken a window, climbed a fence and escaped. They were found at a nearby gas station and returned in the early hours of the next morning. After they returned, one of the girls told a staff member of meeting a truck driver at the gas station who gave them cigarettes and beer, before he and the 17-year-old girl had what she described as consensual sex. In its statement, UHS said it could not discuss individual cases, citing privacy laws. But the company said that it reviewed cases raised by Medill Watchdog, and "in each case, the facts are very different than what you are reporting. We strongly dispute these allegations, but are prohibited by privacy laws from providing more detail about what really happened." ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ACTS Police reports document repeated allegations of sexual acts, both consensual and non-consensual at Provo Canyon. The police investigations often end short of arrest, hampered by witnesses and victims who are unwilling or unable to testify. In October 2012, a resident of the girl's campus told a police officer and social worker that a female staff member had hugged her, "made out with her" and then touched her inappropriately, according to a police report of the incident. The girl said they had kissed once before. Detective Jeff Ellsworth contacted the staff member, who told him that she had been fired for "inappropriate conduct with the girl," according to his report. But the dismissed staff member told Ellsworth that nothing more than hugging had occurred, and that she had refused the resident's request for a kiss. The woman told Ellsworth that she was cautious because she knew the resident had a crush on her, and wrote in a statement for police: "I have never kissed or touched" the victim or any girl, "other than an occasional hug." Ellsworth's report shows his investigation ran into dead ends. The girl was "very reluctant" to discuss what happened, and feared what might happen to her. She was unwilling to testify. The facility's therapist told Ellsworth that the girl's diary only spoke of "hugging," and said whatever cameras might have recorded would not still be preserved. As a result, Ellsworth wrote, he could not even establish what occurred, and was closing the case. In March 2013, Candice Gronberg called Springville police about an incident involving her son, then 10, at the center's facility for girls and younger children, police records show. Gronberg told the police, according to their report, that it had been more than two months since staff at Provo Canyon School told her that her son had been sexually molested by another student at the campus. As soon as Gronberg got that call, she told police, she hung up the phone and drove to Utah, where center officials told her the matter was under investigation. Gronberg removed her son from the school then, Officer Vincent Mendez's report shows, but was calling now because she had heard nothing about the results of that investigation. She told Mendez that she suspected the police had not even been told about the incident; the officer discovered she was right, his report shows. Mendez called the center's supervising therapist, who said the incident had not been reported because after gathering statements from residents school officials disbelieved that an incident had occurred. Mendez arranged to meet with the facility's director the following week, and told Gronberg he wanted her son to return to Utah to be interviewed. But days later, Mendez reported that he was closing the case after Gronberg "regretfully" asked that the matter be dropped. She said that her son did not want to go back, and his new therapists agreed that forcing him to do so only would traumatize her son further. Gronberg, reached by telephone recently, remained frustrated by the way Provo Canyon School handled the matter. "To me, the entire situation was a cover-up," she said. Also in March 2013, a staff member told police that two 17-year old boys had sexually assaulted other students in their beds. A staff member said that one of the victims told him that the suspects threatened to rape and physically hurt him if he reported them to staff. Boys who were victims or witnesses mentioned to police multiple occasions where the two suspects physically assaulted them or others. One boy said that the two suspects beat him daily. Another boy "stated that he was pushed into the corner and punched over and over," the police report notes. One of the suspects denied the allegations to police, saying "people say he did these things because people were annoyed with him." The second suspect provided police with a statement from his attorney invoking his Fifth Amendment right. But the investigation hit a snag when three of the boys who either were victims or witnesses were discharged from the school. Police records show the clinical director said she could not get approval from the parents of the discharged boys to contact the alleged victims. The assigned detective consulted the county attorney. "Due to there being no corroborating witnesses and this being a 'he said, she said' case prosecution is being declined," the officer's report states. NURSE ALERTS POLICE Sometimes the police are slow to hear about incidents of violence at Provo Canyon. An emergency room nurse at a local hospital called the police July 2, 2013 to report one resident had shown up with "a broken nose and black eye," according to the police report. The report shows the officer had little success when he then called the school: The receptionist would not provide information, and left the officer to leave a voicemail message for an administrator. Sheila Kirst contends the facility was slow to turn to police after the beating of her son, an event spelled out in a 2010 lawsuit against Provo Canyon. Kirst said she first learned of the March 2008 incident when a Provo Canyon nurse called to say her son, Michael Jacob Kirst, had been in "a little

altercation" but was "fine," she recalled in a recent interview. In fact, by then Jacob Kirst had been treated at a local hospital, where x-rays of his face revealed "multiple facial fractures of the sinus...nasal fracture...fracture of the right orbit," according to hospital records. Even before the nurse called, Jacob Kirst had written his mother, "I don't feel safe here at all," describing a series of violent incidents he had witnessed. (His mother provided a copy of the letter to Medill Watchdog.) After getting the phone call, Sheila Kirst headed to see her son, and saw instantly: "You could tell he'd had the crap beat out of him." Provo Canyon police records of the incident show the police dispatched at 1:40 p.m. on March 31, 2008 for an incident that occurred between 8:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. the night before; Sheila Kirst said that the police were only called at her insistence. The responding officer wrote that Jacob Kirst had "sustained several injuries including nine fractures to the face, bruising above his right eye and cheeks, swelling on his arm, scratches and scuff marks on his neck and shoulder, and a large swelling of his left knee. Also two brackets were broken on the upper left side of the braces for [Jacob's] teeth." The beating happened while Jacob Kirst was in the shower, according to reports. The assailant, who was charged with aggravated assault, allegedly entered the bathroom to confront Kirst after a heated basketball game earlier in the day. Sheila Kirst removed her son from Provo Canyon that day. But she said he was never the same, and he saw a series of specialists and became hooked on pain medications afterward. Jacob Kirst died of a drug overdose in 2011, after which the case was dismissed, according to court papers. Karen Johnson, the UHS executive, said that the company is committed to reporting and transparency, a commitment she said comes "from the highest level in our company." She said the agency ensures employees throughout the country are trained to honor that commitment. While the company said it could not respond to individual incidents because of privacy concerns, the company told Medill Watchdog/Chicago Tribune reporters: "You are receiving information from patients who have had often horrific life experiences and have mental health issues. Their characterization of issues and facts do not accurately reflect what really happened." **WORRIES AT NIGHT** Current and former staff say that they often were left feeling that there were too few employees to protect residents safely, especially at night. Heather Burns, a former girls' campus staff member, said that during her evening shift she was expected to escort around the building the 16 or more girls in one unit to dinner, study hall and therapy. "My frustration was, I did not feel we had adequate staffing for those situations," she said. "I feel like a lot of behaviors could have been prevented if we had more staff." The concerns were echoed by other former staff members. In its statement, UHS said that Provo Canyon, like all its facilities, meets or exceeds the staffing levels required by Utah. "UHS achieves financial success by providing quality care and treatment to our patients," the statement read. **AN ABRUPT RELEASE** Like many residential treatment centers, Provo Canyon's costs – upwards of \$120,000 a year – are far higher than what most families can afford. Public school special education funding pays for most residents, as it did for Coulter Slone. When that funding stops, as it did for Slone, Provo Canyon's treatment may come to an abrupt end. Slone, now 16, was admitted to Provo Canyon in December 2012 and his care was paid by the California school district in which his parents were residents. In a recent interview, his father, Joseph Slone, said that his Provo Canyon therapist had told him in early summer 2014 that his son was not emotionally ready to be released even for a weekend visit home. But things changed dramatically when the public funding stopped after the family moved to Indiana, Joseph Slone said. In early July 2014, Joseph Slone remembers getting several calls from Provo Canyon demanding that he pay money for his son's continued residency. Slone said he asked for more time from the school. But in mid-July, he said, Coulter Slone was brought back from Provo Canyon and handed off to his father at O'Hare International Airport, with a duffel bag of clothes and many medications. "There was never any concern about what was going to happen to Coulter when I got him home, nor was there for my family," said Joseph Slone. "It was like he was thrown home and done." Soon, after, the Slones received a bill charging them \$7,000 for July tuition. While Universal Health Services said it could not comment on individual cases, because of privacy laws, its statement said, "We have not, do not and will not ever sacrifice patient care for financial benefit." **ISSUES OVER RESTRAINTS** In April 2013, state records show, a female staff member complained to state officials over an incident in which a male staff member restrained a girl resident for seven minutes so that she could be strip-searched as she arrived at campus. The facility later reported to the state that the incident occurred after she refused to submit to a search to ensure that she was not bringing anything dangerous into the campus. State officials later concluded the staff did not follow approved program policy regarding strip searches "or take reasonable measures relative to ensuring the dignity of the involved client." Provo Canyon promised the state on May 1, 2013 that from then on, "restraints will be conducted by female staff." Two months later, a girl was hurt in a restraint involving a male staff member, after the girl and a companion tried to grab one staff member's keys to attempt an escape. The school later reported that two staff members involved in the incident were fired. The school also promised that male staff would restrain females only in emergency situations. Once again, in July 2013 the state put a Provo Canyon School license on conditional status for six months. Source: <http://medillwatchdog.org/blog/2014/12/02/violence-runaways-plague-utah-facility-for-troubled-youth/>

Mother of child abused by foster parent speaks out By Adam Wright • December 5, 2014 FORT MYERS, Fla.- For the first time, WINK News is hearing from a woman who says her 11-year old daughter was beaten with a belt by her foster mother. Kelly Paulsen hasn't seen her daughter in over a year and is worried for her safety. "I just want to squeeze her and tell her I'm so sorry, and that I think about her every day, every second of every day," said Paulsen. The Department of Children and Families removed Paulsen's daughter from her home 3 years ago. The child was placed in the care of Dunbar Christian Preschool Director Teresa Robinson. Police say Robinson beat her foster daughter with a belt back in November, causing serious injuries. A police report states a medical professional said the child's injuries were too numerous to count. Robinson now faces child abuse charges and the victim has been removed from her care. While DCF investigates, Robinson was told not have contact with the kids at the preschool she owns. WINK News found Robinson outside the preschool Friday, after bonding out of jail. DCF said she is allowed to be on the property but only if no children are present. Robinson declined to speak with WINK News. Meanwhile, Paulsen says her daughter was taken from her based on accusations that were never proven. She says she has been fighting to regain custody of her daughter with no luck. "I just hope that she's with someone that will take good care of her and not hurt her, because she's just a great little girl," said Paulsen. DCF tells WINK News they have had prior contact with Robinson but did not specify how many times they have contacted her or why. She has had a total of nine foster children in care since 2008. Source: <http://www.winknews.com/2014/12/05/dcf-investigating-fort-myers-woman-accused-of-abusing-foster-child/>

Former coach, foster parent charged with sex crimes Former coach, foster parent charged with sex crimes By Barb Pacholik And Janet French, Leader-Post, StarPhoenix December 6, 2014 The people of Nipawin know Don Mark as a hardworking maintenance man who coached pee-wee hockey in the 1980s. Now, Thomas Donald Mark, 74, faces nine charges for sex offences on two youths dating back to the 1980s and 1990s. "No community wants to see this happen. I definitely don't condone it. It's unreal," Nipawin Mayor Dave Trann said Friday. That's the same day the RC MP went public with the charges against the former foster parent, hockey coach and rink worker in Nipawin - and urged anyone else who may have something to share to step forward. "There is the potential that there may be more victims," RC MP spokesperson Mandy Maier told a news conference in Regina. The RC MP is also seeking potential witnesses. Mark is to make his first appearance on Dec. 17 in Nipawin Provincial Court. Arrested at his Codette residence on Nov. 23 and released on conditions, he is charged with two counts each of sexual assault, sexual interference, invitation to sexual touching, and sexual exploitation, as well as one count of engaging in anal intercourse. Maier would only say the offences allegedly occurred in the "mid-'80s and mid-'90s." A man first contacted the Mounties in August 2014 with a complaint about Mark. A second man came forward in October with a similar complaint. According to RCMP, that second man said he first met Mark at a Nipawin ice arena, where the accused worked in maintenance. RCMP did not disclose how the first man may have encountered Mark. "I can imagine even over a significant period of time that it was very difficult. We commend them for coming forward," said Maier. Trann was shocked when the RCMP told him a few days ago Mark, who lives with his wife about 10 kilometres from Nipawin, was facing sex charges. "It just came out of the blue," Trann said. Mark had worked as a caretaker for the East Pleasant View Community Club, which operated an outdoor rink, and in the summer at the regional park, Trann said. "He was just known as a hard worker that would get more done than anybody," he added. Trann said Mark was never a town employee to his knowledge. In the 1980s, and possibly the early 1990s, Mark coached pee-wee hockey with the Nipawin Hawks. He may have coached bantam players as well, said Trann, whose sons played hockey at around the same time, but never had Mark as a coach. Trann has been on town council for nearly 20 years and never heard rumours of unsavoury behaviour by Mark. "We're very concerned as a community. Just like everyone else, (we're) waiting to hear if there's any other allegations. We're hoping not," Trann said. Natalie Huber, an executive director in the Ministry of Social Services, said Mark worked as a "caregiver" for Social Services until 2008. "It appears that he was providing foster care services and perhaps some other services for youth in a caregiving capacity," she said. A "caregiver" could also include providing room and board, she added. The ministry is still trying to sort out when Mark began as a foster parent, and Huber couldn't specify how many children might have been in his care over time. Asked why that role ended in 2008 and whether or not Social Services previously received complaints about Mark, Huber said "that's not information I'm able to share." However, she added, "if there are issues or complaints that come forward

about a caregiver, those are reviewed and investigated thoroughly." A neighbour who knows Mark's wife said the couple had three children staying with them at one point. "That's crazy," said Codette resident Bonnie Haveron when she heard of the charges. "You think you know everybody and everything around." RCMP released a photo of Mark as he would have appeared in the time frame of the allegations, to assist people's recollections. Those with information or wanting to make a complaint can contact Nipawin RCMP at 306-862-6270. Persons who want to remain anonymous can call Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477), through SaskTel at *8477, or submit a tip online at www.sask.crimestoppers.com. bpacholik@leaderpost.com jfrench@thestarphenix.com © Copyright (c) The Regina Leader-Post Source:

<http://www.leaderpost.com/life/Former+coach+foster+parent+charged+with+crimes/10446147/story.html>

Sex Assault Charges Against Foster Care Provider Filed In Scott County December 8, 2014 3:37 PM MINNEAPOLIS (WCCO) - A foster care provider in Scott County is accused of sexually assaulting a girl who stayed in his home around 1994. In 2003, Daniel Alvin Hennen, 59, of Jordan was convicted of sexually assaulting four other girls entrusted to his care between 1985 and 2002. Now he faces new sexual assault charges related to a woman who contacted the Scott County Sheriff's Office in October. The sheriff's office said there may be additional victims. As many as 70 children were placed in Hennen's home. Those with more information are asked to call the sheriff's office at 952-496-8755 and ask for Detective Cade. Source:

<http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2014/12/08/sex-assault-charges-against-foster-care-provider-filed-in-scott-county/>

Former foster youths sue private agency, woman who took them in Isaiah Sais, Saleena Galvan and Shawna Adams Christina House, For The Times Isaiah Sais, 19, left, Saleena Galvan, 21, center, and Shawna Adams alleged in their lawsuit that they were abused by foster mother Lisa Oates. Isaiah Sais, 19, left, Saleena Galvan, 21, center, and Shawna Adams alleged in their lawsuit that they were abused by foster mother Lisa Oates. (Christina House, For The Times)

By [Garrett Therolf contact the reporter Crime](#) Eight former foster youths allege in suit that foster mother abused them For months, child abuse allegations have roiled a Victorville foster parent and the private San Bernardino County foster care agency that supervised her. In February, state regulators declared the parent responsible for more than a year of severe physical abuse — determining that she slapped, choked and struck some of her foster children with a baseball bat and forced others to crouch while holding heavy objects. As a result, 45-year-old Lisa Oates was banned from ever again participating in the foster care system.

Now, eight former foster youths sent to live in Oates' home have filed a lawsuit against her and Interim Care, the Rancho Cucamonga agency that recruited and supervised her under contract with San Bernardino County. [Related story: California not investigating foster care complaints promptly Garrett Therolf The state agency responsible for overseeing California's foster care system is violating its own rules by failing to promptly investigate complaints of children being mistreated or living in poorly maintained homes, according to records obtained by The Times. Nearly 1,000 complaints have... The state agency responsible for overseeing California's foster care system is violating its own rules by failing to promptly investigate complaints of children being mistreated or living in poorly maintained homes, according to records obtained by The Times. Nearly 1,000 complaints have... \(Garrett Therolf \)](#)

The youths also contend that they disclosed the abuse to at least 15 so-called mandated reporters — police officers, school counselors, social workers and other professionals who are legally obliged to initiate an investigation if they suspect mistreatment. Although some of their complaints resulted in investigations, the youths allege that they were always interviewed by authorities with Oates present and recanted out of fear she would retaliate. That allegation in particular has generated concern in the foster-care community. "There is a stereotype that youth are dishonest and just making complaints to manipulate the system, but I think youth have to be incredibly brave to actually report," said Jennifer Rodriguez, a former foster youth who is now executive director of the Youth Law Center in San Francisco. [\[Related L.A. Now Couple detained in Qatar welcomed home at Pasadena church service See all related 8\]](#)

Interim Care's chief executive, Sukhwinder Singh, is named as a defendant as well. Neither Oates nor Singh responded to calls seeking comment. The Times reported in June that Singh claimed to work a total of 120 hours a week at three nonprofit foster care agencies in 2009, receiving \$311,000 in pay, according to the agencies' tax returns. She also charged almost \$1.8 million in rent from 2007 to 2011 for properties she owned and leased back to her foster care agencies, according to financial statements filed with the state. State auditors have determined that she sometimes charged well above market rates. [Related column: Retirement brightens as San Dimas couple take in foster children Steve Lopez One night in mid-September, Gabriel and Elizabeth Cho couldn't sleep. The retired San Dimas couple were too excited about what the next day would bring. Mrs. Cho prayed, and she thought about preparing a second casserole, just in case one of her guests didn't care for kimchi jjigae. One night in mid-September, Gabriel and Elizabeth Cho couldn't sleep. The retired San Dimas couple were too excited about what the next day would bring. Mrs. Cho prayed, and she thought about preparing a second casserole, just in case one of her guests didn't care for kimchi jjigae. \(Steve Lopez \)](#)

Foster care officials in Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties continued to place thousands of children through the agencies because the homes appeared to meet safety standards. Now, officials say they are reassessing that because of the problems uncovered in the Oates home and others. The head of San Bernardino County's Children and Family Services agency denied mishandling the supervision of Oates' home, which at any one time housed up to six foster teens. "We have no information regarding any substantiated allegations of abuse or neglect for children currently placed with Interim," said director Randall Schulz. "If abuse or neglect is revealed, appropriate action will be taken." According to California Department of Social Services records, Oates beat children in her care between December 2011 and August 2013, sometimes causing them to bleed. [cComments @joshuaallenonline](#) The thing is, Sukhwinder is busy with all her multiple businesses in foster care that she owns, raking in salaries from several of them each year that she can't be expected to watch over all the places she gets a check from?! LOLLOLOLOLOLOLOL and the County seems to agree... Tasha J at 5:00 PM December 10, 2014 [Add a comment See all comments 28](#)

Oates also tried to pull one girl's fake fingernails off, "slammed" her to the ground and prevented her from fleeing up the stairs by dragging her back down, state investigators said. Finally, some of the youths ran away to a battered children's center last year and a state investigation was initiated that substantiated the allegations of physical abuse. The lawsuit contends that Oates would regularly wake the youths in the middle of the night if she decided that the house hadn't been cleaned well enough — and they wouldn't be allowed to return to bed for another two hours until the work was done. State regulators substantiated an incident in which Oates took one of her foster children into the Victorville desert where she choked her. Reandre Jones, now 18, said in an interview that Oates had been unhappy with the way she had been cleaning. "I thought [Oates] was going to kill me," she said. [Related story: L.A. County supervisors vote to hire 'child protection czar' Garrett Therolf The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday approved a sweeping reform of the county's troubled child protection operation, creating an independent office charged with improving how the region's abused and neglected children are treated. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday approved a sweeping reform of the county's troubled child protection operation, creating an independent office charged with improving how the region's abused and neglected children are treated. \(Garrett Therolf \)](#)

Another plaintiff, Isaiah Sais, now 20, said in an interview: "Someone was always getting beat There was no real reason. For her, it was like a game.... For any kid who went there, it was the worst time of their life." In their lawsuit, the former foster youths also allege that Oates was evicted from four of seven homes she had rented during her time as a foster parent and that they were homeless for six months while still receiving monthly payments that the state provides for the care of foster children. At the time, a social worker from the Interim Care agency was supposed to visit weekly, followed by a monthly visit from county social workers. Even when they had a home of their own, several plaintiffs said in interviews, there was often not enough furniture and the children would move beds and other belongings back and forth between Oates' home and the home of her boyfriend who was also a foster parent. "I would have to go and get a bed when they knew the social worker was coming," Sais told The Times. "When the social worker left, I put it back." The children were not allowed to eat with Oates, much of the food in the pantry was off limits, and they lived "in a constant state of hunger," the former foster youths alleged in the lawsuit. They now experience depression, anxiety and other after-effects from the abuse, the lawsuit said. "To the system, we were just fine that whole time," said Selena Galvan, now 21. "But we were anything but fine."

[garretttherolf@latimes.com](#) Follow [@gtherolf](#) for more news about child welfare. Source: <http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-abuse-allegations-20141209-story.html>

08 Dec 2014 05:32 **Governor Pat Quinn today directed the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to take further action in light of recent reports of disturbing issues within residential care centers for troubled youth.** The Governor today directed the Children and Family Services Advisory Council to convene immediately to assess the situation and develop necessary steps to resolve these issues. In addition, the Governor named a top expert as an advisor to the committee, which will meet Thursday. The Governor issued the below statement: “The recent revelations regarding some residential youth centers in Illinois are alarming and unacceptable. They must be addressed immediately. “Today I am directing the Children and Family Services Advisory Council to meet promptly to respond to the issues at these residential youth centers and develop a comprehensive action plan to address them. “Every necessary corrective action will be implemented and monitored by the Department and its advisory committee. Our most vulnerable are of highest priority and

must get the care and protection they deserve. "The Department must take every step necessary to prevent these harmful incidents to youth from ever happening again." The Governor directed the Children and Family Services Advisory Council to meet this Thursday, Dec. 11 to immediately address the issues at some of the state's residential care centers. In addition, the Governor today also named Dr. Robert R. Bloom as advisor to the Children and Family Services Advisory Council. Dr. Bloom, former longtime Executive Director of the Jewish Children's Bureau, previously served on the Child Welfare Advisory Board and is a widely respected expert on the topics of residential treatment and institutional child abuse. Additionally, as announced previously, the DCF is bringing in an independent expert to conduct a full investigation of the residential treatment centers with which the Department works. The results and recommendations from that review will be made public. The DCF is also conducting a comprehensive review of data from residential facilities to determine whether performance has improved since the timeframe examined by the Chicago Tribune and whether further sanctions or consequences are warranted. Lawrence Hall Youth Services and ERIC Family Services have both been placed on intake hold effective Dec. 4, 2014. Source: <http://www.enevsnf.com/latest-news/latest-local/57449-gov-quinn-directs-children-and-family-services-advisory-council-to-convene-on-residential-center-conditions.html>

Texas: Children's Advocacy Group Brings Class-Action Lawsuit Against CPS [Share on facebook5011002](#) [Share on email](#) [Share on google](#) [plusone](#) [share0](#) [Share on twitter212424](#) by [Lana Shadwick](#) 15 Dec 2014 24 Crystal Bentley, age twenty-three, spent sixteen years in the Texas foster care system. Her testimony in a federal civil trial being held in Corpus Christi casts even more shadows on the embattled Texas Children's Protective Services agency (CPS). The agency, formally known as the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS), is the subject of a civil rights class-action lawsuit. Bentley testified earlier this week that she was shuffled from home to home from the time she was two years of age, until she "aged-out" at the age of eighteen. She claimed she was repeatedly beaten and sexually assaulted while she was under the watch of CPS case workers who frequently didn't show up for monthly visits. Bentley claims that the assaults came from adults who were supposed to be caring for her, the children of foster parents and other foster children, and even her own relatives [according to](#) an article in the Houston Chronicle. When case workers did show up for monthly visits, her abuse would go unreported because they failed to speak with her privately. The class-action lawsuit was filed by a New York advocacy group called Children's Rights. About 12,000 children are included in the class-action suit. These children are in long-term care in Texas. The group seeks to have U.S. District Judge Janis Graham Jack order the State of Texas to enact reforms for its children's services. The group has been successful in fifteen of its nineteen previously filed lawsuits. Another former foster child, Jordan Arce, age 19, told his story about how he was placed in a facility with children who exhibited behavioral or emotional problems. Despite multiple placements and even a group home, Arce was able to maintain his straight-A record in schools. "I would lock myself in the closet, just so I could study, read, talk to myself," he said. "After I left, I struggled a lot with just connecting to other people." Frequent turnover of caseworkers and management problems are to be blamed according to a series of articles in a San Antonio Express-News investigation. Representatives for TDFPS tell a different side to the story. In testimony this week, Jane Burstain, the current director for TDFPS, cited statistics that show the department has made vast improvements in caring for foster children. She said Texas has made more placements in homes of relatives, and had more adoptions, fewer children in long-term care, and better training and retention of workers. "Texas, vis-à-vis other states in the nation, is in the norm with turnover, not significantly better or worse," Burstain said in an article written by Stoeltje for the [Express-News](#). "All child welfare agencies struggle with turnover." Burstain says that large caseloads are not necessarily tied to high worker turnover, or to bad outcomes for children. She said the plaintiffs were confusing "correlation with causation." The attorney for the Plaintiff Children's Rights organization disagreed. "You've heard over and over again about high caseloads leading to high turnover and bad outcomes, including in countless documents the (DFPS) has put out about it," said Paul Yetter, a Houston attorney hired to help represent the organization. Burstain suggested in several emails that "reasonable minds" could differ as to whether caregivers were at fault in some cases involving deaths in foster care during 2013. "I didn't say [the findings] needed to be changed, I said they needed to be reviewed," Burstain said. Judge Jack, who is hearing the case without a jury, asked, "Why review them if it's not to change them?" The class action lawsuit is focused on children in long-term care in Texas who have been harmed by a system that has overloaded caseworkers and other problems. A psychologist who testified on behalf of the state, addressed questions about an 8-year old boy who had been sexually assaulted by two 16-year-old boys while in a foster home. He said the boy had substantially improved while in the state's care. This witness received tough questioning by the state's lawyer, and the judge. A ruling from the judge is not expected for several weeks. Lana Shadwick is a contributing writer and legal analyst for Breitbart Texas. She has served the state as a family court judge and a CPS lawyer. Follow her on Twitter [@LanaShadwick2](#) Source: <http://www.breitbart.com/texas/2014/12/15/texas-children-s-advocacy-group-brings-class-action-lawsuit-against-cps/>

Colorado audit finds foster care check problems [Google Survey](#) [FAQ](#) 60 4 email 79 print Associated Press • Updated: December 18, 2014 at 1:04 pm • [Q](#) Close DENVER — Counties aren't properly conducting background checks before placing foster children in the care of relatives, according to a first-of-its-kind review by the Colorado Department of Human Services. Related Information Related Articles (1) [Denver parents charged after toddler tests for marijuana](#) Social workers are required to do four background checks on people in the homes of relatives who have been asked to take care of children removed by authorities from their parents' care. Workers from the department's child welfare division reviewed the records of 46 of the state's 64 counties that had kinship placement records and found that only 65 percent of the required checks were done, KMGH-TV (<http://bit.ly/1yZQrQ2>) reported Wednesday. Some smaller rural counties, including Delta, Rio Grande and Archuleta, were found to have performed a quarter or less of the checks. Weld, Broomfield, Boulder and Crowley were among the best counties for doing checks, with Broomfield and Crowley both completing all the required checks. The audit was done in response to the television station's report about how Denver placed four children with a registered sex offender and then a convicted child abuser. Denver was found to have completed 53 percent of the required reviews— an FBI criminal history check, a state child welfare database check, a Colorado Bureau of Investigation criminal history check and a fingerprint check. Julie Krow, director of the state's Office of Children Youth and Families, said auditors often had to stop their work to contact counties with missing checks to make sure children were safe. "This is the first time that we've ever done a review of this nature," she said. "This was a huge learning opportunity for the state and the counties." The state is planning visits to counties to help ensure they are complying with the law, but other needed changes will cost more money, Krow said. She said the state's 1980s-era computer reporting system needs to be replaced so it can provide real-time information, and many counties don't have enough caseworkers or supervisors. Information from: KMGH-TV, <http://www.thedenverchannel.com> Read more at <http://gazette.com/colorado-audit-finds-foster-care-check-problems/article/1543300#9UxbmlxEgtWVX4Oz.99>

How did a sex offender become a foster parent? Updated: 12/18/2014 2:39 PM Created: 12/17/2014 11:21 PM WHEC.com By: Lynette Adams - [@whcc_ladams](#) A foster parent in Avon is charged with raping a teenage girl and we've learned that the suspect was already a registered sex offender. Sixty-year-old Richard Cassada is accused of sexually assaulting an underage teenage girl. Cassada is already on the sex offender registry after a 2005 sexual abuse arrest involving a 15-year-old girl. We wanted to find out how a man with that criminal background was able to become a foster parent. Police tell us this case came to light when a 16-year-old girl told a trusted adult at school that she had had a sexual encounter with Cassada. Avon Police Chief Gary Benedict says, "He was arrested by our agency in 2005 for a similar incident." Chief Benedict says Cassada is a level two sex offender. Last week, Avon Police picked him up and charged him with third degree rape and third degree criminal sex act. Chief Benedict says, "It is frustrating for us and our agency and I believe probably everybody -- the school, CPS workers -- looking into something like this. When it would seem like it shouldn't have been allowed to go on." It begs the question how could a registered sex offender become a foster parent? It's a question Mindy Cromwell has had for four years. She says, "When I first moved here, and I found out he was a sex offender, I assumed he was labeled wrong because of the fact that he had foster kids." We went to Cassada's house to speak to his wife. She said she had no comment, but she did say "he didn't do anything wrong." The chief tells us Cassada and his wife adopted three girls and that they have been placed in the care of Child Protective Services. The victim in the 2005 case was a 15-year-old. Source: <http://www.whcc.com/news/stories/S3653205.shtml>

San Mar Children's Home Not Closing, One Therapeutic Group Home Did [Nicole Galbraith](#) 12/18/2014 05:05 PM 12/18/2014 06:37 PM San Mar Children's Home Not Closing, One Therapeutic Group Home Did [By Associated Press](#) 12/18/2014 06:37 PM The Jack E. Barr Therapeutic Group Home for Girls operated by San Mar Children's Home closed December 1st, but San Mar's CEO said that was misinterpreted by many people in the community who thought San Mar as a whole would be closing. BOONSBORO, Md - The Jack E. Barr Therapeutic Group Home for Girls operated by San Mar Children's Home closed December 1st, but San Mar's CEO said that was misinterpreted by many people in the community as San Mar as a whole would be closing. San Mar's CEO, Bruce Anderson, said the [Barr Home](#) closed due to a \$200,000 loss in revenue last year. "We realized even if we operate at full capacity, we're still going to operate at a very significant loss," Anderson said. The Barr Home served up to eight girls at a time and according to Anderson, all eight girls

living there before it closed were either placed into foster care, went back home with their family or taken to another group home. In general, a therapeutic group home serves kids with a trauma history and Anderson said the girls at the Barr Home would have to have a clinical diagnosis before staying. "When the kid comes in, we develop individual treatment plans and we'll develop whole plans of action to try to help this kid and their family get back on focus," Anderson said. San Mar's Educational Director, Millie Steinke, said a lot of great things occurred in the Barr Home. "We saw girls come in and there was a lot of nurturing that went on, a lot of support, including those from the school and we saw in my area, kids progress, graduate, and even go into college," Steinke said. According to Steinke, sometimes all a kid needs is attention, whether it's paying attention to their school, or how they feel about what's going on in their lives. "I know from personal experience that was happening in the Barr Home. It was a great tribute to the man who it was [named after](#), a great friend, a great person in the community, a person who definitely acted from the heart and I think that's what was happening in the Barr home, people were acting from the heart," Steinke said. With nearly 250 girls passing through the Barr Home being helped, Anderson said the building will still be used for other purposes like therapeutic sessions and foster family meetings. Anderson said he hopes to one day turn the Barr Home into a transition home for girls in their programs, who are going from adolescents into adulthood, so that they can learn life skills to live on their own successfully. Source: http://www.your4state.com/story/d/story/san-mar-childrens-home-not-closing-one-therapeutic/62173/W66R_Z8HwkSxE8SK7r84A

Sacramento parents seek answers in foster care death of their 2-year-old By Brad Branan bbranan@sacbee.com 12/19/2014 6:46 PM 12/19/2014 10:38 PM Allenia Bledsoe died in November. Officials are still investigating her death. Family photo [Story Comments](#) A Sacramento couple are upset about a lack of answers in the mysterious death of their 2-year-old daughter while in foster care. Allenia Bledsoe was found dead in an Elk Grove foster home Nov. 7, said Detective Josh Magdaleno of the Elk Grove Police Department. While it's not clear what killed the girl, there were no suspicious circumstances, he said. Any future investigation by police will depend on the outcome of an autopsy by the Sacramento County Coroner's Office, he said. The Coroner's Office doesn't expect to complete its investigation for approximately four weeks, said county spokeswoman Chris Andis. Autopsies for children often take longer than those for adults because more tests are conducted in the absence of clear causes of death, she said. Related The wait for answers has deepened the pain for Allenia's parents, Jayme Wimberly and Allen Bledsoe. They can't understand how a healthy child could suddenly die. They were only told that Allenia visited the dentist the day before, woke up around 5 a.m. the following morning from a bad dream and was found dead in her bed two hours later. "I want to know if she died from natural causes or if she was murdered," said Bledsoe. They have sought more details from Sacramento County Child Protective Services and the Coroner's Office. But officials have said they either can't comment or that the parents will have to wait for the coroner's investigation to be completed. They said they have gotten conflicting reports about how long that investigation will take. CPS spokeswoman Laura McCasland said confidentiality laws prevent the agency from commenting about the case, beyond releasing a written statement confirming Allenia's death while in foster care. She said all foster care deaths are investigated by the agency. Wimberly and Bledsoe said Allenia was a healthy girl with no history of illness. Allenia's grandmother, Alicia Bledsoe, also described the girl as vibrant, saying she and Wimberly visited her at New Horizons Foster Care Agency in West Sacramento every two weeks. New Horizons, a nonprofit, manages some foster care homes in Sacramento County. When contacted by The Sacramento Bee, a woman at New Horizons' office said she could not comment about Allenia's death, then declined to give her name and hung up the phone. In the last two years, the California Department of Social Services made 12 visits to the agency's properties in response to complaints, department records show. The department has sustained seven allegations against the agency, two for the "most serious type of violations in which there is an immediate risk to the health, safety or personal rights of those in care," and five for violations that could have turned into a risk if not corrected. In one of the more serious violations, a foster parent hit a child with a spatula as a form of discipline, records show. In another case, a foster parent blocked a child from entering the home. One of the violations considered less serious involved a foster parent who allowed a child to wander out of the home for a "significant amount of time" before realizing that the child was gone, records show. In another case, a foster parent was cited for keeping knives and cleaning products within easy access of children and for sleeping in the same room as children. Wimberly and Bledsoe said they lost custody of Allenia and her baby brother earlier this year because of domestic abuse and drug abuse. They said they fought one another but did not hit their children. They said they have been attending classes and taking other steps to try to regain custody of their children. "If she had been with us, she would still be alive," Allen Bledsoe said. Wimberly said she is eager to get her 1-year-old son out of foster care. "I want to get him out because I feel Child Protective Services isn't safe," she said. Alicia Bledsoe said she has also been trying for several months to get custody of the two children. CPS has a policy of placing children with relatives whenever possible. Alicia Bledsoe said CPS has visited her home several times and keeps making additional requests, such as saying her son and Wimberly can't live in the home, too. Alicia Bledsoe has a pile of toys and clothes she bought for Allenia because she assumed she would get custody. "I cry every time I see them," she said. Call The Bee's Brad Branan, (916) 321-1065. Follow him on Twitter [@BradB_at_SacBee](#). Read more here: <http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article4713789.html?storylink=cpy>

DHS sued on behalf of boys abused in foster care Photos WAILUKU, Hawaii —Hawaii attorneys are suing the state Department of Human Services on behalf of two boys who were sexually assaulted in a foster home. The lawsuit claims the department should have known from background checks that foster parent Florentino Rios, now serving a 20-year prison term for sexual assault, was not fit to care for children. [The Maui News](#) reports the boys were 14 and 15 when the abuse began. Attorney Matson Kelley says a 10-year-old also was molested but was left off the lawsuit so he wouldn't have to testify. Rios in February pleaded no contest to six counts of sexual assault. He is imprisoned at Halawa Correctional Facility. Department of Human Services spokeswoman Kayla Rosenfeld says the agency is aware of the issue but has no comment. Source: <http://www.kitv.com/news/dhs-sued-on-behalf-of-boys-abused-in-foster-care/30374138>

Foster Kids Have Big Plans for OR Legislature Public News Service - OR | December 2014 | The Oregon Foster Youth Connection says foster families often don't have enough money to supply equipment, transportation and other costs so kids can participate in extracurricular activities. The group will ask the Oregon Legislature to help. Photo credit: [surpasspro/FeaturePics.com](#). December 22, 2014 PORTLAND, Ore. – The process of seeing a new law passed can be long and complicated, but it's a challenge foster children in Oregon are taking on – even some children who aren't old enough to vote. Members of the Oregon Foster Youth Connection are current and former foster children, ages 14 to 25. In 2015, they want state lawmakers to pave the way for more foster children to take part in after school activities. Rachel Vandecoevering, who is part of the group, says there isn't always enough money in foster families' budgets to pay for activities and transportation. She says members of the Oregon Foster Youth Connection have already talked with some lawmakers about drafting the bill. "I felt pretty good – nervous at first, because I've never talked to a representative before – but I felt pretty good, and felt pretty hopeful that it will happen," she says. There are almost 10,000 foster children statewide. Another proposal from the group is allowing foster children to have their own savings account. Since many are in multiple homes during their years in foster care, James Barta, outreach director with Children First for Oregon, says their situation just doesn't fit the traditional banking rules. "It's a little tricky, because they're minors and so, they can't enter into a legally binding agreement," he explains. "So, who's going to be the cosigner? This may require legislation that allows them to have a contract, where they can have a bank account to call their own." Barta calls the foster youth very compelling advocates, and says lawmakers appreciate the young people's first-hand knowledge of the foster care system. The group also wants the legislature to require that youth aging out of foster care have access to an Independent Living Program (ILP), up to age 21, to help them launch into adulthood. At 19, Vandecoevering says for her, it's been a big help. "I'm actually part of the ILP program right now," she relates. "They talk about banking, and what are the necessities for being out on your own, like an apartment, the basic needs for becoming independent. I like it – it's helped me move forward a lot." The Oregon Foster Youth Connection developed a Bill of Rights for foster children that passed unanimously in 2013 and is now in effect. A Lobby Day for Foster Youth on Feb. 9 will give the group's members another chance to test their negotiating skills in Salem. Chris Thomas, Public News Service - OR - See more at: <http://www.publicnewsservice.org/2014-12-22/childrens-issues/foster-kids-have-big-plans-for-or-legislature/a43392-1#sthash.DY5jWgwQ.dpuf>

Former Group Home Worker Accused Of Running Off With Teenage Girl To Mexico December 24, 2014 12:24 PM [Share on Email](#) [3 View Comments](#) (credit: Ventura County Sheriff's Department) Related Tags: [Camarillo](#), [Camarillo Children's Learning Center](#), [Denisse Romero](#), [Oxnard](#) You've Earned Points for Reading! Claim points in our Reward Center, and earn more tomorrow. [Claim Points](#) CAMARILLO (CBSLA.com) — Police say a woman who worked at a children's group home in Camarillo is in custody after twice running away with teenage girl who lived at the home. Denisse Lisbeth Romero, 27, was arrested Monday after Ventura County Sheriff's investigators found her hiding in the closet of a family members' home in the 1900 block of Ginger Street in Oxnard, following an investigation that spanned several states and into Mexico, where the teenage victim was previously rescued, authorities said. Romero, who is being held on \$250,000 bail, faces charges of child stealing and sexual assault of a minor. She is scheduled to make her next court appearance on Jan. 6.

Investigators say Romero was working as a staff member in August at the Camarillo Children's Learning Center, where the 16-year-old victim was a resident. Romero and the girl began a romantic relationship, sheriff's officials said, leading to the girl running away from the home and Romero quitting the same day. Investigators found evidence the pair left California and ended up in Oklahoma City, Okla., where they were nearly captured. They were then found in Texas, where the girl was taken into custody by the San Antonio Police Department. Investigators say evidence suggested Romero fled to Mexico. The girl was returned to another group home in late August, but ran away the day after she arrived, authorities said. According to investigators, evidence suggested the girl ran away to Mexico, where she reunited with Romero. The pair apparently drove around Mexico and eventually moved into an apartment together in Ensenada. Ventura County sheriff's investigators contacted the FBI, who contacted members with the Mexican government. Mexican authorities located Romero and the girl, who was taken into protective custody, but Romero remained free because there was no formal extradition agreement in place, sheriff's officials said. The girl was returned to her legal guardian on Dec. 3. Source: <http://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2014/12/24/former-group-home-worker-accused-of-running-off-with-teenage-girl-to-mexico/>

Problem Solvers examine causes behind delays for hopeful foster parents in Missouri Posted 11:19 pm, December 29, 2014, by [Linda Wagar Facebook63 Twitter4 Pinterest Google LinkedIn Email](#) KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Missouri is at an all-time high for the number of children in foster care with 13,000 children in the system. So why has a couple who had hoped to become foster parents in time for the holidays been waiting seven months, and has yet to even start the training? A woman and her husband who live about an hour north of Kansas City hoping to become foster parents haven't had begun the necessary home study. What's more is that training classes have yet to be offered. "We were told we would be contacted within a month and no one contacted us," the woman said. She asked to have her identity hidden because she is afraid that speaking out will hurt her chances of ever becoming a foster parent. She agreed to share her story in hopes of shining a light on a foster care system that many accuse of being slow to respond to the thousands of children who rely on it for care. "I emailed the person who held the class and the only response I got was: 'we will give you information when we have information for a class,'" the woman explained. The foster care certification process takes from four to six months to complete, meaning if she were to start the process now, at least a year will have passed since she first signed up in May. "They should be getting in a training session immediately," said Jill Katz. Katz is a Kansas City attorney who represents foster parents and their families. "The social services department has a bad reputation within our state of providing services appropriately, timely and to the point of protecting children," she said. To address that problem, the State of Missouri privatized the foster care system in 2013 and put Cornerstones of Care in charge. The KC non-profit received \$3.5 million from the state and is responsible for licensing, training and recruiting foster families. So why then, a year after receiving the state contract, are there still long delays? "That's not how we want services provided. Certainly since this contract first started this year, we have had a learning curve. We tried to increase our services over time," said Sheila Rancatore, a spokeswoman for Cornerstones of Care. Rancatore said the non-profit was initially overwhelmed by the demand from people interested in becoming foster parents. "As of December we have tripled the number of staff that are providing services on this contract and are working to figure out how we can get services to families within 30 to 60 days," Rancatore said. Rancatore said it was hard to predict the demand for services because the state had kept very little data. She said that since Cornerstones of Care took over the training, 497 new foster parents have been certified and they are hoping to increase that number in 2015. However, some parts of Missouri seem more welcoming to potential foster parents than others. In northwestern Missouri where the hopeful foster mom in this story lives, the only provider for foster care services is Missouri Baptist Children's Home, which subcontracts with Cornerstones of Care. According to its website, foster families have to be evangelical Christians, which would rule out non-Christians, Catholics and even most Protestants from becoming foster parents. Katz was shocked when she saw the website. "No matter what religion you are, being a religious person doesn't make you a good foster parent, being a good person makes you a good foster parent," she said. Katz said a state contractor can't exclude foster families because of their religion. "Being a Christian is not a prerequisite to being a foster parent," she said. After Problem Solvers asked about the website, Cornerstones of Care asked Missouri Baptist Children's Home to remove the language. We checked back a few weeks later and it had been taken down. Also, just a few days after this interview was conducted, our would-be foster mom was contacted about starting the process to become a foster parent. She's hopeful that soon she'll be able to open her home to a child in need of a family. Source: <http://fox4kc.com/2014/12/29/problem-solvers-examine-causes-behind-delays-for-hopeful-foster-parents-in-missouri/>

Minnesota temporarily suspends foster care license of home where 6-year-old died Article by: [DAVID CHANEN](#), Star Tribune Updated: January 1, 2015 - 1:10 PM Brooklyn Park woman caring for 6-year-old when she died can appeal agency's decision. [hide](#) Kendrea Johnson, 6, died with a jump rope wrapped around her neck. Photo: Provided by Fox 9-KSMP, DML - [Star Tribune photo galleries](#) view larger resize text [print buy reprints](#) Share109 Days after 6-year-old Kendrea Johnson died with a jump rope around her neck in the bedroom of her [Brooklyn Park](#) foster home, the Minnesota Department of Human Services temporarily suspended the license of her foster care mother. Because of the girl's death late Saturday, the agency decided Monday that Tannise Nawaqavou cannot ensure the safety of the children she has under her care, the state said. Johnson's 1-year-old brother, Charles, has been removed from her home, and no other children remain in the house, the state said. Nawaqavou, 53, who was licensed in 2011, can appeal the department's decision. As recently as September, Kendrea's court-appointed advocate had recommended that Hennepin County consider alternative housing for the girl, court documents said. "She was a cute little girl who appeared well-cared-for to me," said Barbara Englund, her kindergarten music teacher in 2013 at Sheridan Arts Magnet School in [Minneapolis](#). "She never acted up in my class, and worked really hard. The teachers cared about her." But a report made in late November by the caseworker assigned to reunite Kendrea and her brother with their parents painted a more troubled life at school and with her various foster providers. The children had been in foster care for nearly a year. Nawaqavou had cared for them over the previous six months, Kendrea's uncle Willie Venzant said Wednesday. They were placed in foster care after child protection said their parents repeatedly failed to comply with efforts to keep the children safe, according to court documents. In August, a guardian ad litem said Kendrea wanted to live with her grandmother. The caseworker's report said Kendrea had an outgoing personality and a lot of energy while at home. But she also displayed unusually aggressive behavior at home and school for a child her age, had been suspended at school six times, and would try to run away from her foster care provider, the report said. The caseworker told the provider that if she continued to find it difficult to keep her safe at home, she should contact a hospital, the report said. The county was planning to have a personal care attendant help with the children. Venzant said his niece didn't act out at all when she was around the people she loved. He said his family hasn't planned her funeral yet because they remain in shock over her death Saturday. Details from the scene When Brooklyn Park police were called to Nawaqavou's home in the 9200 block of Queens Garden Avenue N., they found Kendrea not breathing. The details of what happened that night were in a search warrant made public this week. Her foster parents told police she went to bed about 8 p.m., her usual bedtime, according to the search warrant. A 30-year-old man who lives at the home checked on her 10 minutes later and said she had been coloring and that there appeared to be no problems. When the man checked on Kendrea at 8:30 p.m., she was hanging from a jump rope that was tied to the top support post of the bunk bed in her bedroom, the warrant said. He took Kendrea down and started to try to resuscitate her. The crime lab deputy found the knot securing the jump rope to be very sophisticated, and a deputy at the scene said he didn't believe a 6-year-old girl could tie that kind of knot, the warrant said. Blood, possibly from Kendrea, was found on one of the bunk bed's blankets. A white bucket that her foster parents said wasn't usually in the bedroom was found near the bed, the warrant said. Handwritten notes on torn book pages that appeared to have been created by a child were found on the floor. Kendrea's foster parents told investigators she didn't have a history of mental illness or of trying to hurt herself, the warrant said. But in August, her guardian had requested a mental health evaluation for the girl. Police said again Wednesday that the case is not being treated as a homicide, and that they continue to investigate. Brooklyn Park Police Deputy Chief Mark Bruley said his five investigators are working hard to uncover the facts. "Any death investigation is serious, but one involving a child is certainly concerning to us," he said. "Everybody would agree this is something [where] we have to figure out what happened." License sanction mulled Nawaqavou, who couldn't be reached for comment Wednesday, was notified Monday that her license would be temporarily suspended. Family Alternatives, a private agency that licensed her, learned that law enforcement and Hennepin County child protection were investigating her because of Kendrea's death, according to the Department of Human Services. Family Alternatives is a state-licensed foster care and adoption agency. It recruits, assesses and trains foster families, the agency's website said. Executive Director Joan Riebel didn't return repeated phone calls Wednesday. Nawaqavou's license suspension will remain in effect until any investigations are completed and a determination is made whether there will be a final licensing sanction, said Department of Human Services media relations manager Karen Smigielski. The department has 90 days to make its decision. If the license is revoked, Nawaqavou would be prohibited from holding any department license for at least five years, Smigielski said. Nawaqavou would have the right to appeal any final licensing sanction. Last year, the department issued five temporary suspensions of child foster care licenses and 53 revocations. In 2013, there was one suspension and 51 revocations. Success

cut short Englund, Kendrea's former music teacher, said she never knew her student was in foster care. The little girl liked music, memorized nursery rhymes and played rhythmic instruments, she said. Every quarter at the school, a student from each of the five different sections is picked to be honored at an assembly. Kendrea was one of those winners, beating out 125 other students in her section. "She was very excited," Englund said. "She had success in her life. And now that little success feels real sad when you think about her death." David Chanan • 612-673-4465 Source: <http://www.startribune.com/local/west/287222521.html?page=all&prepage=1&c=y#continue>

State Supreme Court upholds contempt order for HHS : Journal Star Breaking News State Supreme Court upholds contempt order for HHS 2 Saved Save Article [My Saved Items Print Email](#) 2015-01-02T12:58:00Z 2015-01-02T19:32:20Z State Supreme Court upholds contempt order for HHS The Associated Press The Associated Press January 02, 2015 12:58 pm • By MARGERY A. BECK / The Associated Press 0 × Related Photos [Buy Now » Buy Now](#) Courts logo 2014 Enlarge Photo A contempt of court order will stand against the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services over its handling of a state ward's foster placement, the Nebraska Supreme Court said Friday. The high court said the juvenile court's order ensures enforcement of other state laws governing the foster placement of children and guardians ad litem representing wards of the state. The case involves a 12-year-old boy who had been in foster care since he was 3, and who court records say suffers from fetal alcohol syndrome and other behavioral disorders. He had gone through at least 17 foster placements before being put in a Norfolk group home in 2012, where he got one-on-one care and showed significant improvement. A Douglas County juvenile court ordered the boy to remain in the program until further notice. In late September or early October 2013, the boy's caseworker was made aware that the Norfolk home's licensing was threatened by contract negotiations with the state. The caseworker failed to inform the county attorney, juvenile court or the boy's guardian ad litem about his possible removal from the home, later saying she did not believe such action was imminent. He was moved to a different foster home Nov. 1. The caseworker didn't tell the other involved parties until two days before he was moved and deleted emails related to his placement. The boy's guardian ad litem then sought a contempt order against HHS, saying it defied the court order to keep the boy at the Norfolk home, and against the private child welfare agency with which HHS had contracted. The juvenile court judge issued the contempt order, requiring the department and agency to pay a \$5,000 fine. That order could be purged, the judge said, only if the department issues a written policy requiring officials to be informed whenever a child's placement is threatened for any reason and forbidding the deletion or destruction of email and other correspondence between case managers and others regarding minor children for six months after the case is closed. The department appealed, saying the judge's order violated the separation of powers doctrine by imposing a rule or regulation that is solely the function of the executive branch. The high court upheld that order 5-2, with Justices Kenneth Stephan and William Connolly dissenting. "We've reviewed the opinion, and the department will decide either to pay the fine or purge the contempt order as ordered by the court," HHS spokesman Russ Reno said. Source: http://journalstar.com/news/local/911/supreme-court-upholds-contempt-order-for-hhs/article_8f28c105-3713-56d1-b149-c551059915dc.html

Illinois lawmakers say DCFS problems widespread, systemic - News - Journal Standard - Freeport, IL Illinois lawmakers say DCFS problems widespread, systemic Comment 0 By [Chuck Sweeney](#) The Journal-Standard Journal Standard By [Chuck Sweeney](#) The Journal-Standard Posted Jan. 7, 2015 @ 5:03 pm Updated Jan 7, 2015 at 7:28 PM By [Chuck Sweeney](#) The Journal-Standard Posted Jan. 7, 2015 @ 5:03 pm Updated Jan 7, 2015 at 7:28 PM » RELATED CONTENT • [Chuck Sweeney: Freedom isn't free: Machesney Park— Our View: Illinois must fix Department of Children and Fa...](#) Social News By [Chuck Sweeney](#) The Journal-Standard Posted Jan. 7, 2015 @ 5:03 pm Updated Jan 7, 2015 at 7:28 PM A joint Illinois House-Senate committee had the first of what could be many hearings Wednesday, sparked by a newspaper's series that investigated conditions at 50 youth facilities overseen by the Department of Children and Family Services. One of those is Rock River Academy in Rockford. Sen. Tim Bivins, R-Dixon, said new leadership at DCFS is desperately needed. Noting that the acting director said the alleged abuses are appalling and unacceptable, Bivins said, "why wasn't it appalling and unacceptable yesterday, or last year? It comes down to the kind of people you hire and leadership. Hopefully we'll get some leadership" under the new governor. According to a staff report prepared for Sen. Dave Syverson, R-Rockford, the Chicago Tribune series said that from 2011 to 2013, "Illinois residential facilities sent 428 reports alleging a ward was sexually assaulted or abused while in their care; the facilities submitted 1,052 reports that a ward was physically assaulted by staff or by a peer during those three years. The facilities notified DCFS of 29,425 incidents when a ward ran away or went missing. That is an average of 27 runaway reports a day." Sen. Steve Stadelman, D-Rockford, said by phone from Chicago during a break in the committee meeting, that the problems at DCFS are widespread and systemic. "This agency has had no continuity from the top down. It has had seven directors in three years," said Stadelman. Acting director Bobbie Gregg is resigning Jan. 19. Bruce Rauner, the incoming governor, will name a new director. "The hearing got started at 10 a.m.," said Stadelman at 3 p.m. "The committee is to serve as a fact-finding panel to gather information and look at legislation that will address our concerns." Stadelman said DCFS has had problems "going on for 20, 30, 40 years, and according to the Tribune things are not getting better. The issues are very complex. Workers at the residential centers tend to make low wages and they're dealing with very troubled and difficult kids." One glaring problem that came out during the hearing, said Stadelman, "was the lack of data. DCFS is a major agency but they don't have a handle on major problems like who has run away, who's missing, how many have been arrested. If you're going to address a problem, you need data, and DCFS doesn't have the data. It's unacceptable." Stadelman said there probably is not one, giant legislative fix, "but we have to make sure that staff members who are taking care of troubled teens have the ability to do their jobs. Yes it's complex, but if not dealt with, things will get worse."

Illinois lawmakers say DCFS problems widespread, systemic - News - Journal Standard - Freeport, IL Page 2 of 2 - Syverson's staff report said a December 2014 audit discovered DCFS "cannot properly account for thousands of runaway or otherwise missing foster care children, cannot properly keep track of runaways when they disappear, and can rarely show that proper authorities are contacted when they disappear." Also, "an estimated 2,800 to 3,100 foster children, or state wards, disappeared in 26,500 to 29,200 incidents. The agency did not differentiate between those who had runaway and those whose whereabouts could not immediately be determined." The DCFS budget is about \$1.2 billion, a reduction of \$86.6 million since 2005. But Syverson cautioned that before jumping to conclusions, "What we need to know is how widespread these things are. Normally when a case occurs you deal with it right away and make sure the people involved are held accountable. But is this more widespread than a few isolated cases, and was the severity of some of these issues kept under wraps? That's what we intend to find out." Syverson said that DCFS is the most difficult agency in state government, because its workers have to make gut-wrenching decisions about children every day. "It's the only agency where you are asked to play God, making decisions about whether or not to separate children from their families, and where to put them. You are dealing with very difficult children and sometimes impossible children." Chuck Sweeney: 815-987-1366; csweeney@trstar.com; <http://chucksweeney> Source: <http://www.journalstandard.com/article/20150107/NEWS/150109631/10286/NEWS/?Start=1>

Contempt order for Nebraska agency upheld OMAHA, Neb. —The Nebraska Supreme Court has upheld a contempt of court order against the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services over its handling of a state ward's foster placement. The case involves the removal of a 12-year-old boy from a Norfolk group home where a Douglas County juvenile court had ordered him placed. But a state caseworker last year failed to inform the court, the county attorney or the boy's court-ordered representative of the boy's possible removal from the program over failed contract negotiations with the state. The court found the department and a private child welfare agency with which it had contracted in contempt, and the department appealed, saying the judge violated the separation of powers doctrine. On Friday, the high court disagreed and upheld the contempt order. Source: <http://www.ketv.com/news/contempt-order-for-nebraska-agency-upheld/30501638>

NC must rethink changes in child care subsidies January 2, 2015 2015-01-03T00:12:59Z The News and Observer Facebook Twitter [Google Plus](#) More [Linkedin](#) [Reddit](#) [YouTube](#) [E-mail](#) [Print](#) [Order a reprint of this story](#) Stephanie Wells high-fives her grandniece Jazilyn Wells, 5. Wells, Jazilyn's legal guardian for four years, will lose her child care subsidy on Jan. 1. KARA BETTIS — kbettis@newsobserver.com [Today's Deal](#) [\\$40 Worth of Food and Drink!](#) \$20.00 [Buy Now!](#) Recent Headlines [Dwane Powell: The Berger ball of doom](#) 2 hours ago [NC should move on Medicaid](#) 2 hours ago [Another phase of Hillsborough Street improvements looks good](#) [Notable numbers: poverty, flu, alcohol deaths](#) [Elected bodies shouldn't need lobbyists](#) Republican lawmakers had a well-intentioned goal when they shifted eligibility standards for child care subsidies. Given the extensive waiting list for the subsidy, lawmakers reduced the family income eligibility for children between 6 and 12 years old so that more children under 6 would receive the aid. The idea was that younger children benefit more from child care than older ones. But with the arrival of the new year, that change is meeting reality, and it's having unfortunate and unanticipated consequences. Perhaps the most dramatic effect was described in a recent report by The News & Observer's Kara Bettis: Many relatives who take in grandchildren or nieces

and nephews will earn too much to qualify for a subsidy for after-school care. Those who can't afford the full cost face the prospect of having the child or children put into foster care. Stephanie Wells of Wendell has cared for her 6-year-old niece Jazilyn since the girl was 18 months old. "She's related, and I didn't want to see her go into a foster care home. I wanted to give her a steady place to live," Wells said. But now Wells, a state employee, may not be able to afford Jazilyn's full cost of after-school care, and she's wrestling with the prospect of having to turn her over to the foster care system. "She is like the daughter I never had," she told Bettis, her voice trailing off. "It's really tough." It's also counter-productive. Taxpayers will pay more to have the child in foster care, and her prospects for faring well afterward are diminished. North Carolina, unlike some other states, does not provide kinship support for children staying with relatives. Loss of the after-school subsidy will only increase the burden of trying to keep a relative out of foster care. And there are other problems with the change in eligibility. Rob Thompson of the child advocacy group NC Child said child care centers make money on older children who have fewer needs and lose money on infants and young children. As the change in eligibility pushes the age of enrollees down, child care centers are either closing or refusing to take younger children, Thompson said. The law also changed the measurement of family income to include not only the parent or parents but also the caretaker relative. When, for instance, a working grandmother's income is included, the subsidy is lost. Finally, the new law requires that families pay the full co-pay - 10 percent of family income - rather than a pro-rated share even if the child is going only to after-school care a few days or hours a week. That makes it too expensive for some families that used the service only during certain work shifts or family situations. Lawmakers thought they were getting more help to where it would do the most good when they changed eligibility standards. But the dynamics of real life show that the change may do more harm than good. In the upcoming session, the changes should be brought up for review and testimony taken from caregivers and social workers. The changes can then be reversed or modified. If lawmakers want more children from low-income families to have the benefit of child care, they should look for a way to fund that expansion with federal and state funds. Read more here: http://www.newsobserver.com/2015/01/02/4445704_nc-must-rethink-changes-in-child.html?rh=1#storylink=cpy

School District Administrator Charged With Dog Fighting, Animal Cruelty, Child Abuse By [Phyllis M Daugherty](#), Mon, January 05, 2015 Palmdale School District administrator Pauline Ruth Winbush and her boyfriend Kevin Ray Williams, have been charged with four felony counts of dog fighting, 17 felony counts of cruelty to an animal and one felony count of child abuse, according to Los Angeles County Deputy District Attorney Lyle Riggs. Additionally, the complaint includes seven Los Angeles County code violations, including unsanitary conditions and failing to license and vaccinate the dogs. Winbush was formerly Interim Superintendent of Schools and currently is employed as Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources for Palmdale School District, which is the fourth-largest elementary school district in California, serving 22,000, the Los Angeles Times reports. According to the prosecutor, Los Angeles County Animal Care and Control Officers discovered a horse belonging to Winbush and Williams roaming the streets on Oct. 29. The condition of the animal subsequently led to a search of the couple's Antelope Acres home on November 26, according to Deputy DA Riggs. At that time 19 Pit Bulls were discovered in the house—some with wounds and scars consistent with being used in dog fighting. The dogs were allegedly being kept in crates filled with feces and urine inside the house where Winbush, Williams and a minor child lived, the prosecutor added. The dogs were recovered from the home but were in such poor condition that they had to be euthanized, Riggs said. The couple surrendered to Los Angeles Sheriff's deputies on December 29, and Winbush and Williams were both arrested at approximately 3 p.m., on a warrant issued on December 24, reports the AVTimes. Winbush plead not guilty and has been ordered to return to court on Jan. 12 for a preliminary hearing to determine if there is enough evidence against her for the case to be tried in court. The judge set her bail at \$250,000, according to the Los Angeles Times. The prosecution recommended \$440,000 bail for Williams, who was scheduled for arraignment the following afternoon. In a statement issued Tuesday, Palmdale Superintendent Raul Maldonado announced that Ms. Winbush had been placed on paid administrative leave on December 1, the first business day after the discovery at her home. "We are deeply troubled by the November 26, 2014 raid on Ms. Winbush's home by local law enforcement officials and her subsequent arrest and arraignment," Maldonado said. He said that the District was also conducting an investigation of the circumstances that gave rise to the actions by local law enforcement and "closely monitoring the criminal proceedings against Ms. Winbush." If convicted of all charges, Winbush, 52, and Williams, 50, face a possible maximum sentence of 13 years each in state prison, according to the AV Times. Sources: [The AV Times](#), [LA Times](#) / Photo Credit: Palmdale School District Source: <http://www.opposingviews.com/i/society/animal-rights/school-district-administrator-charged-dog-fighting-animal-cruelty-child-abus>

Hancock County focusing on foster care 'crisis' By WES MULLER wmuller@sunherald.com January 5, 2015 2015-01-06T04:42:51Z By WES MULLER S BAY ST. LOUIS -- "We have a crisis," state Rep. David Baria said in his opening remarks at the Hancock County Youth Court Task Force meeting Monday night. A large crowd attended the meeting at the county's government annex building to voice their concerns and try to find solutions to having the worst per-capita foster care rate in Mississippi. In December, the county had 458 children in the custody of the Mississippi Department of Human Services, accounting for 10 percent of DHS's wards statewide. The newly created task force, spearheaded by Baria, is made up of state and local officials trying to find the underlying cause of the foster care problem. But that goal may have widened in scope after Monday's meeting. Chancery Judge Sandy Steckler said the task force should be "totally independent" and not answerable to any agency. The task force members decided to organize into five different committees: coordination of services, statistics, parent representation, public comment and Hancock County Youth Court review. Sheriff Ricky Adam said the task force should just focus on researching the cause of the high numbers. "That's going to be a hard enough mission in itself," he said. "If we can accomplish that, that will be something." Many making public comments said the DHS system in Hancock County is broken. Attorney Kelly Walker criticized youth court officials for acting too fast to take children into state custody. She said Hancock County is the only county that doesn't seek to house children with other family members when parental rights are suspended or terminated. Walker said instead of allowing the child to stay with their grandparents, the court "rips kids away" and places them in foster care if a parent fails a drug test. The sheriff supported Walker's claim. "When we go to seize a child, we don't even have the option to give them to the grandparents," Adam said. Dozens of parents voiced the same concern. Bay St. Louis resident Mindy Stigler said her daughter was seized from her in 2013, and despite having completed all of DHS's requirements to regain custody, her daughter is stuck in Michigan. Stigler said DHS required her to pass two random drug screens before she could visit her child. She said she has passed nine times and still hasn't been granted a visit. The task force's next meeting is at 4 p.m. Jan. 23. Read more here: http://www.sunherald.com/2015/01/05/6002107_hancock-county-focusing-on-foster.html?rh=1#storylink=cpy

Brother of malnourished toddler dies in foster care Filed on January 5, 2015 by [Associated Press](#) [Leave a Comment](#) [Tweet](#) CLEVELAND (AP) — The 10-year-old brother of a toddler whose death was attributed to malnourishment has died while in a Cleveland foster home. Authorities say Xavier Brothers-Bartholomew was found in full cardiac arrest Sunday and was pronounced dead at a hospital a short time later. The cause and circumstances surrounding his death are being investigated by the Cuyahoga County medical examiner and Cleveland police, which is normal procedure when a child dies. Xavier and his five siblings became the focus of attention in November 2012 when their 18-month-old brother, Isaac, was found dead in his crib in the family's home in Vermilion, west of Cleveland. Authorities ruled that Isaac had died of malnourishment and that his siblings had been neglected by their parents, James Brothers and Adrienne Bartholomew, and their grandmother and paid caregiver, Deborah Nelson. The parents and grandmother pleaded guilty last year to child endangering charges and are in state prison. Isaac, Xavier and three other siblings were born with a genetic disorder that causes physical and mental impairments. A lawsuit filed in November 2014 on behalf of Isaac's estate and the guardian for his siblings said the eldest child, a boy who is not disabled, often was left to care for the younger children. The lawsuit was filed against the parents and grandmother, officials in Erie County whose agencies were responsible for overseeing the children's well-being and doctors who had treated the children. The attorney who filed the lawsuit said the disabled children had begun to thrive in foster care and had doubled their weight. The director of the Erie County Department of Job and Family Services issued a statement Monday that said there was no indication that the boy's death "involved any concerns of abuse or neglect." The statement from Karen Balconi Ghezzi said Xavier, since November 2012, had been living with foster parents trained to care for the boy's medical needs. Social workers and medical professionals made weekly visits to the home, the statement said. The statement called Xavier's death "a very sad case." Source: <http://chronicle.northcoastnow.com/2015/01/05/brother-malnourished-toddler-dies-foster-care/>

New initiative aims to keep foster children among family Andrew Atterbury 9:44 PM, Jan 5, 2015 9:39 AM, Jan 6, 2015 [local news](#) | [faith and values](#)
Copyright 2014 Scripps Media, Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. SAN ANGLEO, Texas - More than three-fourths of children in need of foster parents around the Concho Valley are sent elsewhere, away from friends, family — their lives — by a lack of suitable homes. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services is attempting to buck that trend with a fresh initiative, already proven worthwhile in trial runs, that could help meet the immediate needs of families and children by reaching out to local churches. Through the state's Care Portal website, churches

will be able work directly with Child Protective Services caseworkers to provide needs such as financial support, child care, even a baby crib, for potential foster parents. Ideally, the program will make it easier for foster children to live with relatives, said Myrna Baquero, a foster/adoption supervisor with the DFPS. "Children need to be with their families as long as they're safe and protected," Baquero said. "If there is something that prevents them from being with a family member — furniture, food, whatever — churches want to be part of that, part of reuniting and keeping families together whenever possible." In Tom Green County there were 187 children in foster care as of Dec. 7, according to data from the DFPS website. Of those, 31 children were placed in Tom Green County. Once the Care Portal is fully operational, a state child welfare worker will identify a need and submit a request for help. Churches registered with the service receive an email detailing what is needed, allowing them to connect with their congregation to see who can meet that need. The DFPS would like for 15 churches from each city, including San Angelo, Midland/Odessa and Big Spring, to get the ball rolling. Those cities are the main hubs in Region 9, which encompasses 30 West Texas counties. Rural churches are also welcome among the Care Portal. So far the program has received positive reviews from users in Region 3 in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, the only region to use the portal thus far, said Art Mavrode, a faith based specialist for CPS. Faith-based initiatives have been a major cog in DFPS services for the better part of 20 years, Mavrode said. The state Legislature recognized they needed the community to help kids and couldn't do it alone, he said. As a pastor at Zoar Community Church of Rowena, Mavrode has seen for himself how church and family can be a support system for kids, he said. "We, as a state, know the real answer is with the faith communities," Mavrode said. "We have a passion for these children and for the families. What we're trying to do is reach out to the community and be partners." Mavrode hosts an informational meeting open to anyone interested in becoming a foster or adoptive parent on Tuesday at 6 p.m. in the San Angelo Visitors Center, 426 W. Ave. B. He will also touch on the Care Portal for any church members interested in their congregation joining the program. For more information or to register a church call 325-657-8917. To learn more about Care Portal visit bit.ly/1y257TE. Source: http://www.gosanangelo.com/news/local-news/new-initiative-aims-to-keep-foster-children-among-family_46760265

South Tucson rejects permit for treatment center South Tucson rejects permit for treatment center 6 Saved Save Article [My Saved Items](#) [Print Email](#) Respond: [Write a letter to the editor](#) | [Write a guest opinion](#) 2015-01-05T21:00:00Z 2015-01-06T09:48:19Z South Tucson rejects permit for treatment center By Luis F. Carrasco Arizona Daily Star Arizona Daily Star January 05, 2015 9:00 pm • By [Luis F. Carrasco](#) [Luis F. Carrasco](#) lcarrasco@tucson.com × Related Photos [« Buy Now »](#) Paul Diaz Enlarge Photo The proposed substance-abuse treatment center at the heart of the recall effort targeting South Tucson Mayor Paul Diaz will not receive the permit it needs to offer services to adult clients. Pasadera Behavioral Health Network recently acquired the property at 2820 S. Eighth Ave. from the Arizona's Children Association. The group had hoped not only to use its new location to consolidate administrative functions but also as an adult residential treatment center. While the association offered similar services to juveniles under a grandfather clause, expanding them to an adult population was considered a change of use and against current zoning, said interim City Manager Benny Young. "Political implications and neighborhood issues aside, this was a straight interpretation of the zoning code," he said. The planned treatment center is across the street from Mission View Elementary School and has been a divisive issue in the square-mile city since news of Pasadera's planned arrival broke about eight months ago. The controversy is at the center of a rift between Diaz and Councilman Ildefonso Green that led to recall petitions for both. A recall election for Diaz is scheduled May 19. Diaz said his support for Pasadera's move was not specific to the group but had more to do with the city's economic development. "Everybody's saying, 'Not in my backyard.' What are other companies going to say as they look to locate in South Tucson?" Raul Green, brother of Ildefonso Green and part of Comunidad Primero, the group that spearheaded the mayor's recall over Pasadera, said everyone was pleased with the decision but that it wouldn't affect the group's commitment to oust Diaz. "We don't trust him anymore; that's not going to change anything," he said. "It's amazing that this guy (Young), within two weeks of looking at it, he determined it wasn't the right deal." Young, who became interim city manager last month, said that while he didn't know the full history behind Pasadera's arrival, it was possible his predecessor believed the group's proposal was so similar to the location's historic use that it would be entitled to retain its exemption. "Once we delved into that more extensively, we reached a position that a close reading of the zoning code would say that's not the case," he said. The group may still apply for a change of zoning, Young added, and while ultimately the mayor and council would make that decision, he called the possibility unlikely. Pasadera CEO Chuck Burbank had no comment Monday but said in an email that his organization was happy to be in South Tucson and looked forward to working with the city. Source: http://tucson.com/news/local/south-tucson-rejects-permit-for-treatment-center/article_cfc980ec-e33c-585e-8dbe-3a5feb40a70d.html

LA County Supervisors asked to act fast on reforms to child welfare system [Andrea Gardner](#) January 06 2015 Audio from this story [0:59 Listen](#) Share this story [Share via Email](#) [Share on Twitter](#) | [Share on Facebook](#) 137 The blue ribbon commission votes on the language of a final report that took a critical look at L.A. County's foster care system on April 10, 2014. It is set to be presented to the L.A. County Board of Supervisors later this month. Karen Foshay/KPCC Leaders of a transition team for the new Office of Child Protection told Los Angeles County Supervisors Tuesday much still needs to be done to reform the county's troubled child welfare system - and asked that they do a few easy things now. The team's co-chairs said some progress was made in 2014, but many reforms recommended by a Blue Ribbon Commission last April haven't been implemented by the board - including writing up a mission statement and regularly evaluating the department's performance. The team, made up of seasoned volunteers, was formed last year to help the county execute the commission's recommendations and monitor progress. The board is in the process of hiring a "child welfare czar" to lead the new independent Office of Child Protection and oversee reform. "A mission statement at this point, would send a signal to potential candidates that the board of supervisors is committed to this important goal," Leslie Gilbert-Lurie, one of the leaders of the transition team, told Supervisors Tuesday. Some of the recommended changes are complex, and will take funding, legal counsel, and coordination with multiple county and state officials to accomplish. Supervisors agreed action was needed quickly, and that they would begin work on areas within their power. "What's lagging is implementation," said supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas. "It baffles me that we haven't moved any more quickly than we have to date." Supervisor Sheila Kuehl said she would begin work on a mission statement, and would continue working with state lawmakers on payments to guardians who are related to kids in the foster care system, which was another issue raised by the transition team. "I think the public confidence in what we're doing is very low," Kuehl said. "They haven't seen us doing much, and they don't know that we will do much. And all I can say is, we have five policy makers here, and I think, we're all, each in our own ways, quite devoted to this, and we will move it forward." Source: <http://www.scpr.org/news/2015/01/06/49114/la-county-supervisors-asked-to-act-fast-on-reforms/>

Heath counselor gets two-year prison sentence [Hannah Sparling](#), hsparling@newarkadvocate.com 10:01 p.m. EST January 6, 2015 Former guidance counselor Mackenzie Matthews hands off her wedding ring to attorney Kristin Burkett. Matthews, 34, was sentenced Tuesday to two years in prison, the result of a sexual relationship Matthews had in 2010 with a then- high school senior. (Photo: Michael Lehmkuhle/ The Advocate) Story Highlights A former Heath High School guidance counselor pleaded guilty Tuesday to sexual battery. Mackenzie Matthews, 34, was sentenced to two years in prison. Matthews will lose her teaching license and be classified as a Tier III sex offender. 1492 CONNECT [16 TWEET LINKEDIN](#) 17 COMMENT EMAIL MORE NEWARK – Before he handed down the sentence, Judge Thomas Marcelain said he hopes it sends a message: Student-teacher relationships are not OK, and teachers involved will be punished. Marcelain told Mackenzie Matthews, a former Heath High School guidance counselor, that she was in a position of trust and authority, and that she abused it. "It has happened too often by people in your position," Marcelain said. Then he sentenced Matthews to two years in prison. She also will lose her teaching license and be classified as a Tier III sex offender, meaning she'll have to register every 90 days for the rest of her life. Matthews, 34, was calm throughout the hearing, pleading guilty to a bill of information and only choking up when she delivered a brief statement to the court. It was her first public court appearance in the case. "I just want to sincerely apologize to the victim and his family, and to the Heath community and my school system," she said. "I want to apologize to my friends and my family and my children, and especially my husband. I want to express the remorse I have for this, and I accept the responsibility for my actions." Matthews was charged in November with one count of sexual battery, the result of a sexual relationship she had in 2010 with a person who was then a high school senior. She was facing up to five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. Her attorney, Kristin Burkett, requested probation, but Burkett said after the hearing that she and Matthews were prepared for the possibility of a prison sentence. "I think she's glad to move on to the next step," Burkett said. "There's some anxiety associated to not knowing, so now that she's here, she can move forward." Matthews was hired at Heath in 2005. She was the district's only guidance counselor and, apart from this incident, her personnel file contained no disciplinary action. She was put on leave in October and resigned shortly after she was charged. There is no official state database of teacher-student relationships, but in 2014, Ohio had 35 school employees either accused or convicted of inappropriate relationships with students, according to Drive West Communications, a Texas company that has been tracking the cases using media reports. Nationwide, there were at least 747 cases this past year, an average of more than two a day, according to Drive West. Aside from

Matthews', there have been two Licking County cases the past two years: Sonya Horn, a former Johnstown High School intervention specialist, was sentenced in January 2013 to four years in prison after she was accused of sexually assaulting an 18-year-old developmentally disabled student. Anthony Miller, a former Newark City Schools band teacher, was sentenced in August to four years and 10 months in prison for engaging in sexual conduct with at least three former students. In Matthews' case, the relationship was consensual, and the student was 18 at the time. However, because the sexual conduct occurred before the student graduated, it is illegal in Ohio. Any sexual conduct occurred off school property, according to Licking County Prosecutor Ken Oswalt. The victim and his family were not in the courtroom Tuesday — a conscious decision on their part to help protect the victim's identity, Oswalt said. He said the victim's parents were hoping for no prison time — not for Matthews' sake, but for her children — and the victim himself didn't want to weight in, leaving it completely up to the court. Matthews may be eligible for judicial release in six months, and Oswalt said he'll wait until it comes up to decide whether that's something his office will oppose. For Matthews' part, it might play in her favor that she pleaded guilty and didn't force the victim to endure a trial and testify, Oswalt said. "She didn't flinch about pleading, even though she knew prison was a distinct possibility," he said. "And she's got some lifelong consequences that she'll never get rid of." hsparring@newarkadvocate.com 740-328-8822 Twitter: @hksparling Source: <http://www.newarkadvocate.com/story/news/local/2015/01/06/heath-counselor-gets-two-year-prison-sentence/21345575/>

Illinois urged to reform programs for young wards; DCFS director steps down Gary Marx, Duaa Eldeib, David Jackson Chicago Tribune 8:41 PM CST, January 7, 2015 Advertisement Illinois authorities urgently need to overhaul the state's mental health programs for impoverished youth or they will only see more of the violence and abuse exposed by a recent Tribune investigation on residential treatment centers, a panel of experts told state lawmakers Wednesday. During the nearly five-hour-long special legislative session in Chicago, state child welfare chief Bobbie Gregg sent a stir through the packed hearing room when she called the Tribune's reports "both appalling and unacceptable," and then announced that she would step down from the troubled agency Jan. 19. Sitting alone at the long wooden witness table, Gregg told the 22 lawmakers that problems exposed by the Tribune date back years and are the result of broad and complex policy failures. "I sincerely hope that the current circumstances will serve as a catalyst for meaningful and comprehensive changes," Gregg said. "Please do not waste this opportunity to improve the condition of child welfare in Illinois." Wednesday's hearing is the first step in what legislators called a determined effort to finally reform a tattered web of state programs that fail to adequately serve juvenile state wards who suffered traumatic abuse and developed psychological and behavioral problems. Hundreds of wards are assaulted and raped by their peers each year at Illinois residential centers, even as authorities fail to act on reports of harm, the Tribune's "Harsh Treatment" investigation found. Prostitution became a fact of life at several centers where experienced residents introduced others to pimps, escort websites and street corners. Education and therapy fell by the wayside as low-wage staffers struggled with the most aggressive teens. Thousands of residents fled to the streets. Some were sexually assaulted, and dozens have never been found. "The sad truth that must be faced today is that the heartbreaking and appalling reports in the Tribune of abuse and neglect of state wards in residential programs are a symptom of larger problems in DCFS," said Ben Wolf, associate legal director of the ACLU of Illinois, which monitors DCFS as the result of a decades-old federal court consent decree. Illinois must "seriously consider (a) radical, redesigned foster care system," added Mary Shahbazian, president of the Allendale Association residential center and foster care network in Lake Villa. The state badly needs to increase the number of specialized foster homes equipped to care for youth with mental health problems, Shahbazian told the lawmakers. And, she said, the state must expand its network of community mental health programs so fewer kids are placed in institutions, and those who need intensive care don't languish there. In Illinois the percentage of wards who spend more than two years in state custody is nearly twice as high as in other states, said Casey Family Programs consultant Page Walley, who once ran the Alabama Department of Human Resources. "Once you get in, there is a challenge to get out." Walley said youth rarely benefit from long stays in residential facilities because the biggest gains are often made in the first few months. Former DCFS Director Bryan Samuels, who now runs the Chapin Hall research center at the University of Chicago, said that while Illinois is about average in its use of residential centers and group homes as a placement for juvenile wards, "what is distinct is the increase in the length of stay. The length of time that they spend in those programs is getting longer." Too many wards languish in the facilities because Illinois lacks clear and standardized criteria for measuring their progress so they can transition out of the institutions and into less restrictive settings, said Samuels, who is a former DCFS ward. And the state is not using the data it collects on youths' diagnoses and treatment plans to target the appropriate residential center for them. "Children with very different needs are being placed in exact same programs," Samuels said. Eight to 11 percent of all youth in residential centers were reportedly sexually abused or physically assaulted during the six years since 2009, and more than one-third attempted to run away or went missing, according to data Chapin Hall presented Wednesday. During that period, the levels of violence in the centers have remained fairly constant, that data showed. To deal with the high numbers of youth who run away from residential centers, several of the experts and legislators said Illinois should consider implementing more protective measures — including physical barriers such as locked exit doors — to safeguard children who frequently go AWOL and are known to be prostituted. Like some other states, Illinois has laws allowing residential centers to secure their exit doors to prevent escapes by youths whose behavior creates "an established pattern of foreseeable serious risk of bodily harm to self or others." But officials in Illinois have balked at authorizing the locks, saying it could violate the human rights of children placed in state protective custody through no fault of their own. "I am an advocate for having secure facilities, particularly for children who are being exploited," said Cook County Public Guardian Robert Harris, who cautioned that any use of locked facilities must be thoughtfully planned and applied on an extremely limited basis. "I don't mean lockups or jails," he said. Many other reform initiatives were aired at Wednesday's hearing. Among them: revamping DCFS' data systems so the agency can quickly spot problematic facilities and patterns of harm to youth, and contracting with experienced independent monitors to oversee the institutions. Several experts also said residential facilities must be able to pay their direct-care workers more than a minimum wage, while offering them better training and staff-to-resident ratios. Not all of these proposals will need an influx of cash, said Robert Bloom, an adviser to DCFS and former facility director. "Before we start talking about new money, let's stop wasting the old money," Bloom said. DCFS ward Tashyla Coleman, 20, said staff mistreatment of youth was one cause of the frequent runaways. She was one of five current or former wards who admonished lawmakers to heed the voices of youth as they shape legislation and policy solutions. "We need to be involved," she said. The panelists and lawmakers effusively praised Gregg and thanked her for her service Wednesday. "She inherited a train wreck," Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart told the lawmakers. Gregg was the department's seventh director in the past three years, and that unstable leadership has only hurt the agency's ability to protect and care for youth, said Anita Shannon, senior director at Casey Family Programs. "It is a travesty for the children and families in care," she said. Gregg told lawmakers she was notified her tenure would not be extended under Gov.-elect Bruce Rauner. Rauner's team is conducting a national search for a replacement, according to one child welfare professional with knowledge of the initiative. Rauner previously pledged a top-to-bottom review of child welfare in the state in the wake of the Tribune series, declaring: "We need to fundamentally reassess the way we approach child and family services in Illinois." Gregg said at the hearing that she is working closely with Rauner's team to ensure a smooth turnover of agency leadership. "It has been my privilege to serve," she told the lawmakers. "My heart will remain in child welfare." gmarx@tribpub.com deldeib@tribpub.com djackson@tribpub.com Twitter @garyjmarx Twitter @deldeib Twitter @poolcar4 Source: <http://www.redevechicago.com/news/local/chi-dcfs-director-resigning-following-harsh-treatment-investigation-20150107.04520727.print.story>

Group home task force wants better notification, screening [Story Comments](#) [Share](#) [Share](#) [Print](#) [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) Posted: Friday, January 9, 2015 11:51 am [Group home task force wants better notification, screening](#) By Kym Soper Journal Inquirer Journal Inquirer | [0 comments](#) MANCHESTER — A task force charged with recommending changes for how state group homes are sited in town says that more notification, and better screenings and training should be required. The task force made a preliminary report Tuesday to the Board of Directors, which had convened the panel following concerns over the disproportionate number of group homes in town and the amount of local resources they required. Established in November, the 13-member committee has so far identified challenges for both providers and mental health patients in the community, said co-chairwoman Mary Roche Cronin, director of human services. Source: http://www.journalinquirer.com/towns/manchester/group-home-task-force-wants-better-notification-screening/article_ba50730c-981f-11e4-b5de-c3db59702515.html

Teen beaten at Carrick youth home dies from injuries January 14, 2015 10:50 AM Michael Henninger/Post-Gazette The alleged altercation between the three teens took place at Circle C Youth and Family Services on Carrick Avenue in Carrick. Share with others: 0 [inShare](#) Related Media: [Family recounts troubled life of 16-year-old that ended with fatal beating at group home](#) [Assault on boy in Carrick occurred in a properly licensed group home](#) [Two residents charged with severely beating teen at Carrick group home](#) By Madasyn Czebiniak / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette The young man who police say was choked and beaten with a vacuum cleaner by two other teenagers at a youth home in Carrick died Tuesday night, an Allegheny County medical examiner's office supervisor

said. Nicholas Grant, 16, who resided at Circle C Youth and Family Services on Carrick Avenue, died at 10:17 p.m. at UPMC Mercy, where he was taken after the incident Saturday night. An autopsy is scheduled for today. The two teenagers charged in the altercation, Malik Crosby, 16, and Yusuf Shepard, 15, were taken into custody Saturday night. The two are being held at the Allegheny County Jail in lieu of \$100,000 bail each. They are each charged as adults with aggravated assault, attempted homicide and criminal conspiracy. Both are scheduled for preliminary hearings Friday. Mike Manko, spokesman for the Allegheny County district attorney's office, said the office will await the results of the autopsy before determining if further charges will be filed. Also, he said the DA's office is working "closely with the police and state officials to try and determine the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the assault at this home." Mark Bertolet, spokesman for the Allegheny County Human Services Department, said the agency is conducting its own investigation. He also said a multi-disciplinary review team will soon convene as required by state law in cases of suspected child abuse resulting in child fatalities and/or near-fatalities. Nicholas had just returned to the youth home on Saturday, having been previously removed because of a verbal fight with Yusuf, police said in a criminal complaint. The two argued again on Saturday, which instigated the fight. During the fight, police said, the suspects punched and kicked Nicholas, who threw a vacuum at Yusuf to protect himself. Yusuf put Nicholas in a chokehold, and Malik beat him in the stomach and ribs with the vacuum while an employee called the police, the complaint said. Officers found Nicholas in the kitchen, unresponsive, "turning blue around his lips, forehead, and fingertips." The two other teens were in the living room. Officers administered CPR until paramedics arrived, and Nicholas regained a pulse. He was taken to UPMC Mercy in critical condition, in which he remained until his death. An official with the police bureau's homicide unit declined to comment Tuesday night. Attempts to reach Pittsburgh public safety spokeswoman Sonya Toler for comment were unsuccessful. Circle C officials released the following statement this morning: "We are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Nicholas Grant following an altercation at our Carrick Group Home. Our focus has always been on providing safe environments for our residents and staff and that will never change." The group home said it is working with investigators to find out what led to the attack. Also officials said they are reviewing "all of our systems and processes." "The work we do for at-risk youth comes, not surprisingly, with many risks. We remain committed to helping Pittsburgh's troubled youth break these terrible cycles of violence so they can lead healthy and productive lives now and as adults," the group home's statement read. Staff writer Andrew Goldstein contributed. Madasyn Czebiniak: mczebiniak@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1269. Twitter: @PG_Czebiniak. First Published January 14, 2015 12:08 AM Source: <http://www.post-gazette.com/local/city/2015/01/14/Teen-beaten-at-Carrick-youth-home-dies-from-injuries/stories/201501140134>

Study Raises Questions About Group Homes For Kids January 10, 2015 5:37 PM [Share on email](#) [6 View Comments](#) (Photo by Sasha/Getty Images) Related Tags: [Carole Shauffer](#), [Children's Home Society of Florida](#), [Christina Spudeas](#), [Department of Children and Families](#), [Kristi Putnam](#), [Legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability](#), [Miranda Phillips](#), [OPPAGA](#), [Pinellas County](#), [Ready for Life](#), [Shelley Katz](#), [Youth Law Center](#) Top Features [CBS4 Weather App for iPhone & Android](#) [YourDay for iPhone and Android](#) [CBSMiami Text Alerts Follow Us On Twitter](#) Follow CBSMIAMI.COM: [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) TALLAHASSEE (NSF) – A new study shows that placing children in group homes instead of with foster families is much more expensive – and many children's advocates say it's also worse for the kids. The study, released last month by the Legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, found that slightly more than 11 percent of children who are removed from their families are placed in group homes rather than with relatives, friends or foster families. Group homes cost the state nearly \$81.7 million for approximately 2,200 children in 2013-2014 – more than \$37,000 per child. In comparison, the state rate when a foster family cared for a child aged 13 to 17 was \$515 per month, or \$6,180 per year. On Jan. 1, foster families got a cost-of-living increase to \$527 per month, according to the Department of Children and Families. "Clearly, group care is more expensive," said Kristi Putnam, a child well-being and permanency manager at the department. "It provides such a different level of staffing and services that we really need to be using it for the kids who are most appropriate to be there. ... We have a number of different things to consider when making placements." The OPPAGA study noted that the main purpose of residential group care is "to provide a setting that addresses the unique needs of children who require more intensive services than a family setting can provide. ... Community-based care lead agencies may place children in other types of group settings based on the child's needs, such as residential treatment programs, therapeutic group care or developmental disabilities group homes." The problem with that, advocates say, is that while many group homes are modeled on families, with live-in house-parents and smaller numbers of children, 57 percent of Florida group homes use shift workers who are less likely to develop positive relationships with the kids. "When we got in fights, they'd call the cops, and we'd get arrested," said Miranda Phillips, who lived in group homes from age 13 to 18. "People are going to fight, especially if you throw that many girls in a house together." Phillips is now 22 and works with Ready for Life, a Pinellas County program for kids who age out of foster care. She said the group home she lived in typically housed 40 girls. Calling the police to deal with fighting or other rule-breaking was common, she said, and often led to the teens being charged. "A lot of us wanted to be caseworkers or work with kids, and they can't do it because they have this (criminal) record," Phillips said. But Shelley Katz, chief operating officer of Children's Home Society of Florida, said some kids prefer group homes with shift workers. "There are kids who thrive with shift staff," she said. "We have some who have come back and worked for us." According to the OPPAGA study, about 25 percent of young adults who choose to stay in extended foster care after age 18 choose a group home. "Every kid is not the same," Katz said. "Some need on-site interventions all day, every day. ... In order to meet the need, we need a wide array of options." Group homes primarily serve older children and more males and minority children with identified behavioral health issues, the study noted. Physical aggression, running away, truancy and drug use were all more pronounced among children in group homes as opposed to foster families — but according to the study, those were the behaviors that landed them in group homes to begin with. Christina Spudeas, executive director of the advocacy group Florida's Children First, said she often hears that foster parents will refuse to take these "difficult to place" kids, or that the kids are so damaged they can't live in regular homes. "Foster parents have these kids and adopt them also," she said. "But foster parents need additional support and services to help them. The cost of helping them to provide a home for hard-to-place kids would be far less than keeping the kids in a group home." Carole Shauffer of the San Francisco-based Youth Law Center, who has fought against the use of group-home placements in Florida, said children who live in group homes generally lack models for parenting their own children. "How do you know how to parent?" she asked. "You already came from a home where parenting was a problem if you're in a group home." "The News Service of Florida Margie Menzel contributed to this report." Source: <http://miami.cbslocal.com/2015/01/10/study-raises-questions-about-group-homes-for-kids/>

Suit Alleges Widespread Deficiencies in South Carolina Foster Care By ALAN BLINDER JAN. 12, 2015 Inside [Continue reading the main story](#) [Continue reading the main story](#) [Continue reading the main story](#) Share This Page [Email](#) [Share](#) [Tweet](#) [Save more](#) [Continue reading the main story](#) In a new challenge to South Carolina's embattled foster care program, child-welfare activists filed a lawsuit in federal court on Monday claiming that widespread deficiencies in the system have endangered thousands of children. Eleven children, all in foster care, were listed as plaintiffs in the lawsuit, which was filed in Federal District Court in Charleston. "As a direct result of longstanding, well-documented failures, plaintiff children have been and continue to be harmed physically, psychologically and emotionally and continue to be placed at ongoing risk of such harms while in D.S.S. custody," the lawsuit said, referring to the Department of Social Services. "D.S.S. is re-victimizing the very children it is charged to protect." A spokeswoman for Gov. Nikki R. Haley said in an email on Monday that the governor would "continue to pursue reforms at D.S.S." "Governor Haley believes that protecting South Carolina's most vulnerable citizens, our children, is the state's most important job," the spokeswoman, Chaney Adams, said. "That's why the governor has been actively pursuing a new direction for the agency." In a separate statement about the lawsuit, the Department of Social Services said it would "fully evaluate the claims and respond in an appropriate forum." It also said the agency's employees were "completely dedicated and work hard every day to ensure that children in foster care receive the care that meets their individual needs." The lawsuit cited three "specific unaddressed deficiencies" in the state's foster care network: overwhelming caseloads for employees, poor health care services for South Carolina's wards and a scarcity of foster homes. The suit asks for a court-appointed monitor who would oversee caseload restrictions, the availability of regular health screenings and, for some children, sibling visitation privileges. The court filing portrayed the state's foster care system as one in which children are dehumanized, belittled and abused. In one instance, the lawsuit said, the foster parent of a teenage boy "called him the devil and choked and assaulted him in front of the private agency staff that provided the home under contract" with the state. But the filing said the South Carolina authorities did not investigate. The lawsuit also said another child reported that during a placement in a Williamsburg County foster home, she had been "forced to go up to the church altar against her will for an extremely long period in a ceremony that would remove the devil from the then 6-year-old's soul." A third child, the lawsuit said, lived in a Charleston County group home where feces remained on a shower's floor for more than a month and the food was "often expired or moldy." The lawsuit also said that employees at the same home would punish the girl, who has a history of mental illness, by withholding

her medicine. "There's got to be accountability when longstanding systemic problems, like a severe lack of mental health services, gross overreliance on institutions and high caseloads, continue to harm innocent children," said Ira Lustbader, the litigation director for Children's Rights, a New York nonprofit that is involved in the lawsuit and has previously sued South Carolina officials. The Social Services Department has been a persistent headache for Ms. Haley, a Republican, who last month named [Susan Alford](#) as the agency's director. At the [news conference](#) when she announced Ms. Alford's appointment, Ms. Haley acknowledged "a lot of issues with D.S.S.," but she also said, "There is not a D.S.S. in this country that is not seeing the challenges that we're seeing." During an appearance on Monday afternoon in Columbia, the state capital, to announce her budget proposal, Ms. Haley reiterated her administration's plan to hire 200 caseworkers. But before Ms. Haley appeared at the Statehouse, advocates involved in the lawsuit said the time had come to seek federal intervention. "Since South Carolina has repeatedly ignored its own admissions about the system, we have no choice but to act and demand reform," Sue Berkowitz, the director of the South Carolina Applesseed Legal Justice Center, said in a statement. Source: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/13/us/suit-alleges-widespread-deficiencies-in-south-carolina-foster-care.html?_r=0

Foster Care Fix Requested for Disabled [Share on facebookShare](#) [Share on twitterTweet](#) [Share on emailE-mail](#) [Share on printPrint](#) By Margie Menzel of WLRN It's been two years since Florida's Legislature passed a law extending foster care from age 18 to 21, for youth aging out of the system who want to stay. But the law has had some unintended consequences. Barbara Palmer, director of the Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities Credit Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities Children's advocates say extended foster care has been a success for young adults who need more time to complete school due to bureaucratic delays. But for those who also have disabilities have run into problems: specifically it's unclear which state agency pays for which services -- the Department of Children and Families or the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. "We've struggled with this for two years, and it shouldn't be this way," said said Barbara Palmer, director of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. "They shouldn't have to choose whether they stay in foster care or whether they want to get services from us." Listen Listening... 0:00 / 1:27 The idea behind the law was to give young adults more time to prepare for independence. But children's advocates say the state needs to come up with another strategy for those kids who can't live independently due to severe disabilities --- and who will need more services for a longer period of time. Palmer is asking lawmakers to fix that in the upcoming legislative session. "We want everyone, especially those in foster care, to get the services that they need, but also to have those nurturing families with them," she said. "We don't want them to have to make a choice." Margie Menzel is a reporter with [WLRN](#) in Miami. WLRN is a partner with [Health News Florida](#), which receives support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Source: <http://health.wusf.usf.edu/post/foster-care-fix-requested-disabled>

New screening law meant to prevent poor foster care By [MICHAEL VIRTANEN](#) Angel B., 15, sits under a board displaying past and present residents of Williams Cottage at the Children's Village campus in Dobbs Ferry. New York will now require local social service agencies to better screen potential foster parents to determine whether they will make good guardians. [Photo by AP](#), January 12, 2015 New York will now require local social service agencies to screen potential foster parents to determine whether they've had previous licenses revoked or children removed from their care and to state the reasons why. The new law takes effect in June and requires the local agency commissioner to review the history of removals and revocations to close information gaps in the current system, Assemblywoman Nily Rozic wrote in her sponsor's memo. "When a child enters foster care, the state assumes the responsibility of providing a safe and secure environment," Rozic wrote. "According to agency reports and hearing testimony, there continues to be instances where children are further abused or even killed by their foster parents." Screening has required checking prospective foster parents against crime databases and the statewide child abuse registry, but that only provides information on reported and investigated cases, Rozic wrote. Where caseworkers suspect but can't confirm abuse, children may be removed, but the foster parents can apply to another agency to get paid for taking in other foster children, she wrote. [Top Stories On MLK Day, two-thirds say race relations in NYS are only fair or poor; was 51 percent last year](#) [Landowners coalition weighs options in wake of fracking decision](#) [DiNapoli pledges to continue his watchdog role](#) [GOP hopes Assembly will follow Senate's lead](#) [In its first act of 2015, senate passes women's equality bills](#) [State comptroller pressures Monster to diversify its board](#) [Anti-tenure group launches social media campaign](#) [Teen's death spurs new push to ban conversion therapy](#) [Cuomo proposes \\$1.5B upstate economic competition](#) [Single most important challenge](#) [Cuomo to combine budget](#) [State of the State addresses](#) [Assembly GOP urges colleagues to pass WEA bills](#) [Senate passes 8 women's equality bills](#) [DiNapoli meets with reporters to outline goals for the coming year](#) [Extras e-mail this article link to a friend](#) [letter to the editor about this article](#) [print this article](#) [facebook](#) [twitter](#) [digg](#) [it](#) [share](#) [Larger](#) | [Smaller](#) The latest data from the state Office of Children and Family Services showed the incidence of child abuse and neglect declined from 2 percent of 41,023 children in foster care in 2009 to 1.2 percent of 34,679 children in 2012. OCFS separately reported 27 children died in New York foster care in 2008-2009, with 19 deaths attributed to natural causes, two to accidents, one homicide, and five deaths undetermined or causes pending. Later data were not available as of press time. In signing the bill this week, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said lawmakers have agreed to amendments that require screenings based on the statewide automated child welfare information system, a more comprehensive database than the child abuse registry. He noted that otherwise the records search could delay or prevent foster placements to homes where children were previously removed for valid reasons, like being returned to a biological parent or for mental health residential treatment. According to the OCFS, the welfare information system includes caseworker notes about foster care removals and is currently accessible to local social service commissioners in all 62 counties. The agency said the new law will essentially codify current practice. Another bill, signed by the governor this week, amends the social services law to allow local agencies to add written comments to child fatality reports. Legislative sponsors said those reports to OCFS do not detail circumstances that can include drug misuse, dangerous consumer products, drowning, fires, suicides, automobile crashes and window falls, or recommendations to prevent future incidents. The governor said legislators have agreed to an amendment that new law to clarify that family privacy will be considered and that added details don't disclose information confidential under other laws. Source: <http://www.legislativegazette.com/Articles-Top-Stories-c-2015-01-12-90449.113122-New-screening-law-meant-to-prevent-poor-foster-care.html>

Op-Ed: Phase out Southbury Training School and similar institutions By: Shelagh McClure and Tom Fiorentino | January 13, 2015 [View as "Clean Read"](#) [ShareEmail](#) [Print](#) Connecticut faces a budget crisis in Fiscal Year 2016, with a projected \$2.8 billion shortfall before the legislature even begins its work on the biennial budget. But we face another crisis too: the crisis facing thousands of families with sons and daughters on the [Department of Developmental Services](#) waiting list for residential services with no chance of placement unless there is an emergency. How did this happen? In large part, because Connecticut spends so much on its antiquated and inefficient public sector system that there is not enough money to go around for all of those in need. This is unacceptable even in good times. In the face of massive budget deficits it is intolerable; depriving our most vulnerable citizens of services while unnecessarily burdening taxpayers. The costs of segregated state-operated institutions far exceed the costs of private, community based settings, such as group homes. The state pays over \$350,000 per resident per year at Southbury Training School and over \$442,000 per resident per year at the Regional Centers - vs. around \$130,000 for a private group home. State-run group homes cost about \$338,000 per person per year. Despite these prohibitive costs, Connecticut continues to maintain these six institutions where over 500 intellectually disabled individuals live: Southbury Training School houses 319 residents, and the five Regional Centers house a total of 186 individuals. Also Read [Michelle Obama invites University of Hartford student to State of the Union](#) WASHINGTON – Not long ago he Anthony Mendez lived with his family in an homeless shelter, now he will sit with First Lady Michelle Obama her husband's State of the Union speech to the nation Tuesday night, Mendez, a University of Hartford freshman, was invited by the First Lady because he overcame serious challenges to become the first high school graduate in his family. [GOP wants to team up with Democratic treasurer to rein in 'bond premiums'](#) Republican legislative leaders hope they have a key Democratic ally in their fight to reform state budget practices tied to borrowed funds. Both Treasurer Denise L. Nappier, a Hartford Democrat, and nearly a half dozen GOP lawmakers have said they want to restrict how the state uses proceeds from bonds sold at premium rates. This is so even though 15 years ago, the [United States Supreme Court, in Olmstead vs. L.C.](#), ruled that segregated institutions violate the constitutional rights of disabled individuals to live in the community as fully participating members of society. Connecticut keeps these institutions open even though extremely well-researched longitudinal studies have established that a move from segregation into the community greatly enhances the quality of life of our formerly institutionalized fellow citizens. What are we saying as a society when we continue to segregate and isolate more than 500 of our citizens solely because of their disability? Last legislative session, after hearing the heartbreaking personal stories of parents who lay awake at night worrying what is going to happen to their disabled adult children still living at home, the General Assembly allocated \$4 million to DDS as a "down payment" toward addressing the waiting list. Ironically, the governor's recent budget recessions cut \$5 million from the DDS budget. Although it may seem counter-intuitive, the time is NOW to address the waiting list crisis, because families and advocates have shown state leaders that there is a way to do so within the current DDS budget. Here's how: The [Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities](#).

joined by [The Arc Connecticut](#), the [Office of Protection and Advocacy](#) and the [University of Connecticut Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities](#), have launched the 2020 Campaign. We are calling on the governor and the state legislature to close all state institutions that house individuals with intellectual disabilities by 2020 and to transition all residents to appropriate homes in integrated settings in the community. We have also called for all savings to be used to reduce the residential waiting list. If the state-run group homes are included --they cost more than double the cost of private group homes-- the savings could help eliminate the waiting list. The 2020 Campaign seeks to close state institutions because they isolate individuals solely because of their disability, and because they are budget busters, sapping hugely disproportionate resources from the system. This is not a new idea. In 2012, the General Assembly's Program Review and Investigations Committee issued a comprehensive report that unequivocally made the same recommendation --a recommendation that the governor and General Assembly, to date, have ignored. Perhaps the current budget crisis will get this report the serious consideration it deserves. To those who suggest that we who advocate closing institutions are doing so "at the expense" of those who now are living in state-operated institutions, the opposite is true. Our campaign expressly calls for moving residents to appropriate homes in the community, and we would not accept or support the loss of any needed service for those residents. To suggest otherwise is irresponsible. The time has come to do the right thing and close the institutions and move individuals living there into the community. And doing the right thing will save money, money that the Legislature then MUST redirect to expand residential services for adults with intellectual disabilities who currently are waiting for services. Shelagh McClure and Tom Fiorentino of West Hartford are the parents of an adult son with an intellectual disability who is on the Department of Developmental Services' waiting list for residential services. McClure is chair of the Connecticut Developmental Disabilities Council, the group that is leading the current campaign to close the institutions. Fiorentino is an advocate for the intellectual disabled, working with Families for Families, a group that is closely affiliated with ArcCT. Source: <http://ctmirror.org/op-ed-phase-out-southbury-training-school-and-similar-institutions/>

The State Considers Pausing Controversial Foster Care Reforms by [Beth Cortez-Neavel](#) Published on Tuesday, January 13, 2015, at 8:02 CST Vivan Farinazzo Back in 2011, when Texas legislators announced their plan to improve the child welfare system through privatization, advocates expressed alarm. In 2013, after partial implementation of the plan, an even larger chorus begged lawmakers to slow the rollout until it became clear whether it would work. Now, as the Texas legislature convenes again, a new voice is calling for a halt: the House and Human Services Committee. Last week, the key legislative committee suggested that the state temporarily stop the rollout of controversial reforms to the child welfare system. Opponents have said the partial privatization of the state system responsible for thousands of foster children—known as “foster care redesign”—is a hasty and potentially detrimental overhaul. In its [interim report](#), the Committee recommending that the Department of Family and Protective Services stop contracting with any new private companies to manage the sprawling foster care system. The committee said lawmakers and child welfare experts need more time to study how effective foster care reforms have been so far. That's exactly what stakeholders told the Observer last year, when we [reported on potential problems with redesign that have since come to pass](#). Foster care redesign is an effort by the Department of Family and Protective Services, which oversees administration and regulation of the foster care system, to keep children who are removed from their families due to abuse and neglect closer to their home communities. The “halt order” comes amid concern from critics about the cost of reform and safety of foster children in the new system. After a rash of child deaths in the system in 2013, child welfare advocates were wary reform efforts wouldn't keep kids safe. And last year, the redesign was called a “risky endeavor” by the Sunset Advisory Commission. The original 2011 legislation put into the motion the state's foray into foster care reform, with one caveat: the redesign must cost the same to implement as the old system. Since then only two lead companies have been tapped to take over portions of the system. But last time we checked, [the first two contractors were considerably over budget](#), and more money will be needed to provide new services. The first company, the for-profit Providence Services Corporation, [pulled out of their contract just 11 months](#) into the rollout, citing cost as one of their reasons. After a rash of child deaths in the system in 2013, child welfare advocates were wary reform efforts [wouldn't keep kids safe](#). And last year, the redesign was [called a “risky endeavor”](#) by the Sunset Advisory Commission, a legislative committee that monitors and has the authority to shut down government agencies. The reform set up goes like this: the Department contracts some administrative and regulatory duties to the different private lead companies. Those contractors, in turn, manage willing private child-placing agencies within their allotted region of the state, or “catchment area.” Before reform began agencies contracted individually with the state to manage and recruit foster families, or run group homes or intensive treatment centers for children who wouldn't do well in a family setting. Since Providence pulled out, only one company currently contracts with the state to provide services under the redesign model. The not-for-profit Our Community Our Kids, a branch of the 100-year-old not-for-profit ACH Child and Family Services, has managed a small seven-county region near Dallas since December 2013. The Commission's recommendation does not affect Our Community Our Kids' continuing contract and service in their area, it only asks that the Department keep from implementing reform in the other 247 counties in the state. Commissioner John Specia, who heads the Department of Family and Protective Services, said he has no plans to abandon foster care redesign. Department spokesman Patrick Crimmins sent the Observer this email response when asked what their plans were: “Our comment: We understand the committee's recommendation and we are proceeding very deliberately with [redesign], and continuing careful analysis of the data, and will not be expanding to any other catchment areas until authorized by the Legislature. We're continuing work on a long-term implementation plan for redesign as recommended by the Sunset Advisory Commission, and hope to have that completed in a few months.” Ashley Harris, with children's advocacy group Texans Care for Children, said the state should stop its privatization bid and called on the Legislature to give more direction on the issue. “It's been made pretty clear especially with this latest house interim report that the Department really needs to step back and get some things in order before they continue their privatization effort,” she said. “When it comes to kids in foster care maybe we should actually make well-informed decisions before moving forward with things that could be ultimately more detrimental, if not harmful to [kids'] stability and well-being.” Source: <http://www.texasobserver.org/state-pauses-foster-care-reform-efforts/>

Contra Costa County foster youth's mysterious death under investigation By Karen de Sá kdesa@mercurynews.com Posted: 01/12/2015 06:42:39 PM PST [0 Comments](#) Updated: 01/13/2015 07:29:56 AM PST 1/5 A portrait of the family of 16-year-old Steven Unangst, who died Dec. 19, 2014, in foster care. From left, the teen's grandmother Karla Garvey; his father Steven Unangst; and his cousins Jakob Cardon, 10, and Justice Cardon, 9, at Garvey's Pittsburg home. (Dai Sugano/Bay Area News Group) This family photograph, taken by his father, shows Steven Unangst on his 16th birthday in August 2014. (Courtesy of Steven Unangst) Steven Unangst shows text messages he received late last year from his 16-year-old son Steven, who died in an Antioch foster home on Dec. 19, 2014. The text conversation centered on the medications the teen was prescribed for anxiety. The phone number at the top was blurred out for privacy. (Dai Sugano/Bay Area News Group) During an interview with this newspaper, Steven Unangst, 39, sits by a skateboard he gave his 16-year-old son for Christmas the afternoon before he died suddenly in an Antioch foster home on Dec. 19. (Dai Sugano/Bay Area News Group) [See additional gallery images here](#). Karla Garvey, 66, of Pittsburgh, talks with this newspaper on Jan. 6, 2015 at her home in Pittsburgh. Garvey is concerned that her grandson did not receive proper medical attention as a Contra Costa County foster child. (Dai Sugano/Bay Area News Group) [Guestbook: Read and sign In memory of Steven Unangst](#) Related Stories Jan 15: [State takes action against Antioch foster mother after youth's death](#) ANTIOCH -- A 16-year-old foster youth who was taking psychotropic medications was found dead in his bed late last month -- and now police and state social services officials are investigating why he didn't receive medical care after he showed signs of being heavily impaired. Results of an autopsy and toxicology tests are weeks away, so investigators say it's still far from clear why the otherwise healthy teen died or what, if any, substances contributed. But Steven Unangst's alarming stupor and mysterious death underscore ongoing concerns about the care and supervision of California foster children who are prescribed potentially dangerous psychiatric medications -- a subject of this newspaper's yearlong investigation "Drugging Our Kids." Steven Unangst shows text messages he received late last year from his 16-year-old son Steven, who died in an Antioch foster home on Dec. 19, 2014. The text conversation centered on the medications the teen was prescribed for anxiety. The phone number at the top was blurred out for privacy. (Dai Sugano/Bay Area News Group) (Dai Sugano) Family and friends are now grief-stricken, and simultaneously angered over the Dec. 19 death of Steven, a floppy-haired skateboarder in his third year at Pittsburg High School. "A 16-year-old child does not just die peacefully in their sleep," said Steven's grandmother, Karla Garvey, who had cared for the boy for much of his life and was stunned to see him drooling and staggering around "like a drunken zombie" during a supervised visit the afternoon before he died. She said she begged the boy's social worker to take him to the hospital but was told his odd behavior may have been because he was adjusting to an increased dose of Zoloft, his prescribed antidepressant. Advertisement While psychiatrists consulted by the newspaper said it's highly unlikely that a modest change to his antidepressant could alone be responsible for Steven's death, experts say the tragedy should send a clear message to child welfare workers who care for emotionally fragile kids on psychiatric drugs. "The caregiver and the social worker, they need to feel the urgency and take action immediately to make sure the youth's health isn't in danger," said Jennifer Rodriguez, executive

director of the San Francisco-based Youth Law Center and a former California foster youth who felt neglected when she experienced debilitating side effects from psych meds. Drugging Our Kids [The full Bay Area News Group investigation, including a documentary video](#). Rodriguez said she often hears foster parents complain that they don't have enough training about "really scary side effects or how the drugs interact with over-the-counter meds or even street drugs." By all accounts, Steven's death is unusual. An average of three or four children died each year while placed out of their homes in foster care, according to state Department of Social Services numbers from 2008 through 2013. What is not rare is the questionable overuse of medication in foster care, which is now the subject of a statewide investigation by the California Medical Board, spurred by the newspaper's ongoing series. Nearly 1 out of 4 adolescents in state foster care receive psychotropic medications, the newspaper found, more than three times the rate for all teens nationwide. And since foster kids often bounce among caregivers who know little about their medical histories, experts worry they often don't receive enough monitoring. Steven had been living in the Antioch foster home of Dorothy Brown since his 16th birthday last August. Three other foster children have been moved from her home since Steven's death, according to state and county officials. Efforts to reach Brown and Steven's social worker were unsuccessful, and the agency that employed both of them -- Families for Children, a nonprofit adoption and foster family agency -- chose not to comment, as did the psychiatrist who prescribed his medication and had been treating him since 2013. At the time of his death, Steven had been prescribed Zoloft and the sedating antihistamine Vistaril to treat depression, anxiety and sleep problems, according to relatives and records. Zoloft is approved for use on children suffering from major depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder. Vistaril is sometimes prescribed with Zoloft to reduce the side effect of tremors, or to help with anxiety or sleeplessness, but it is generally used short term. Four child psychiatrists consulted by the newspaper about the medications prescribed for the roughly 5-foot-10, 150-pound teen, said they were not uncommon. But one cautioned that Zoloft and Vistaril together could cause dizziness, drowsiness and impaired thinking. According to the FDA, Vistaril can cause "hypersedation" and "stupor." Last year, Steven had been removed from his grandmother's home after police were called during a sibling's violent outburst. He had been increasingly missing school and scout meetings since then and told his girlfriend's father that he yearned to return to his grandmother. On Dec. 18, the day before his death, he slept until noon and was again absent from school. Later that afternoon, Garvey and Steven's father (who shares the same name) waited anxiously at a Subway sandwich shop for the teen to arrive for a supervised visit. They had planned to treat him to his favorite meatball sandwich and deliver his Christmas gifts. But Unangst and Garvey said they were shocked as Steven stumbled across the parking lot into the sandwich shop with his social worker's help. In a cellphone video taken by his father and shared with the newspaper, Steven struggles to eat his sandwich and keep his eyes open. He tells his father he doesn't know what's wrong and said he had taken his pill the night before, fallen asleep at 9 p.m., and slept until noon. "His eyes were rolling around in his head, he was slobbering, he couldn't sit up straight," Garvey said. "I said: 'This child needs to go to the hospital, something's wrong.' " Garvey said she convinced the social worker to call Steven's psychiatrist, but he was able only to leave a message and then took Steven to the foster home. "If this kid couldn't go to school and couldn't walk, why wouldn't you take him to the doctor?" said Todd Whitmire, Pittsburg High's principal, who described Steven as bright and highly capable. On Jan. 2, weeks after the boy's death, Garvey said she spoke with the boy's psychiatrist, who was "adamant" that the drug combination he was prescribed could not have been fatal or caused the symptoms Steven displayed in the sandwich shop. Garvey said the psychiatrist told her she had increased the dosage of Zoloft but that after hearing the social worker's phone message about an "adverse reaction," she recommended cutting it in half. Contra Costa County spokeswoman Lynn Yaney said local officials are awaiting results of the Antioch police investigation and autopsy reports. "Our job is to take care of kids and keep them safe, and when something like this happens it is absolutely devastating," she said. Meanwhile, Garvey has tried to explain to Steven's two younger cousins why he wasn't coming home. "God really, really needed him up in heaven for an important project," she said. "So the angels came and got him." Contact Karen de Sá at 408-920-5781. Source: http://www.contracostatimes.com/breaking-news/ci_27307607/contra-costa-county-foster-youths-mysterious-death-under

Brain injury to boy in foster care prompts lawsuit against county, state Brain injury to boy in foster care prompts lawsuit against county, state Kasandra Shamas, aka Kasandra Martinsen. (Courtesy/Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department) [image](#) By YESENIA AMARO LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL The mother and maternal grandparents of a boy who suffered severe brain injury in 2012 while in foster care are suing Nevada and Clark County. The federal civil rights lawsuit alleges Clark County's child welfare system isn't compliant with state and federal laws and claims the state fails to provide oversight. The lawsuit names Clark County Manager Don Burnette, Clark County Department of Family Services Director Lisa Ruiz-Lee, former director of the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services Mike Willden and Amber Howell, administrator for the state's Division of Child and Family Services. The lawsuit centers on Alexander Laws, [a 2-year-old who in 2012 was shaken so severely that his brain swelled](#), according to police at the time. The toddler had to have emergency surgery to remove a portion of his skull to allow his brain to expand. The boy now lives with his mother and grandparents, according to the lawsuit. His long-term prognosis is unclear. "In civil lawsuits, you hope that changes are made to policies and that the goal of protecting kids is the overriding goal," R. Todd Terry, one of the attorneys for Natalie Nelson, Alexander's biological mother, said Wednesday. Problems in Clark County's child welfare and court system are the focus of a state blue ribbon committee, which will hold its third meeting today. The committee is expected to announce five points of reform. The lawsuit was first filed in January 2013 in U.S. District Court in Las Vegas. A failed attempt was made in early 2014 to settle the case. Attorneys hope to go to trial late this year or in 2016. In a case like this one, there are a lot of witnesses to interview and it's a time-consuming process, Terry said. "We look forward to being able to have our day in court and have a jury of Clark County residents make decisions based on the evidence that we are obtaining," he said. Alexander is alleged to have been shaken by Osbaldo Sanchez, a male friend of [the boy's former foster mother, Kasandra Martinsen](#). Martinsen disclosed that she had left Alexander and another foster child with Sanchez while she worked a 12-hour shift. At the time of the incident, Clark County Family Services in a statement said the agency did not know that Sanchez was a caregiver for the boy, and emphasized that Martinsen never got approval from the department to have Sanchez baby-sit. However, according to the lawsuit, about a day after Alexander was placed in Martinsen's home, a caseworker noted a "male friend" at the foster home. Martinsen told the caseworker that the man, believed to be Sanchez, came to her house two to three times each week. "Upon information and belief, the agency caseworker did not conduct a background check on the 'male friend,' despite collecting his information," according to the lawsuit. Attorneys representing the family haven't seen any physical evidence that a background check of Sanchez was conducted, Terry said. The lawsuit also alleges that Martinsen was approved as a licensed foster mother around Oct. 15, 2012. A few weeks later, around Nov. 1, 2012, Alexander was placed in her home. She also had a 6-year-old foster child in her care. Alexander was removed from his home after his mother was taken into custody for an outstanding warrant for an unpaid taxi fare, according to the lawsuit. The lawsuit claims Family Services did not ensure it was placing the boy with an appropriate foster parent who would be able to care for him. "Martinsen knew that she was required to use the approved day care provider, but her shift was too long and the day care provider would not be able to extend the care for duration of her shift," the lawsuit reads. "The agency (Family Services) and the foster mother Martinsen were both aware that supplemental child care was needed for Alexander and the other foster child present in the home." Sanchez was arrested soon after Alexander was injured in 2012. The boy later suffered a stroke and a series of seizures before having parts of his skull removed, according to police. Gregory Coyer, a lawyer representing Sanchez, said his client's criminal trial is scheduled for April 27. He has pleaded not guilty to two felony charges, including child abuse, neglect or endangerment with substantial bodily harm. "He is still presumed innocent," Coyer said of Sanchez, who is not in custody. T. Augustus Claus, an attorney representing Martinsen, didn't return calls seeking comment. But court records show that Martinsen also pleaded not guilty to a felony charge for child neglect or endangerment with substantial bodily harm. She also is awaiting trial. Last year, Nevada child welfare officials told the Legislative Committee on Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice, that some of the most significant injuries to foster children are inflicted by people child welfare agencies lack the authority to screen. Ruiz-Lee said in March 2014 that Family Services does conduct background checks of people who are not residents of a foster home, but are regularly or routinely found there. Clark County spokesman Erik Pappa did not respond to questions Wednesday about whether Alexander's case prompted Family Services to implement those kinds of background checks. "We are very interested to see what policies were really in effect at the time that this occurred and what county employees believed those policies were," Terry said. Contact Yesenia Amaro at yamaro@reviewjournal.com or 702-383-0440. Find her on Twitter: @YeseniaAmaro. Source: <http://www.reviewjournal.com/news/las-vegas/brain-injury-boy-foster-care-prompts-lawsuit-against-county-state>

Kendrea Johnson: Foster Care Suicide? 6-Year-Old Girl Found Hanging From Noose Kendrea Johnson was found dead with a noose around her neck inside her foster home in Minnesota. The 6-year-old's grandmother does not think the [foster care](#) death was a suicide, but agency records show the child had homicidal and suicidal thoughts up to seven days per week. Police officers have reportedly stated that the manner of Johnson's death could not yet be determined. The [foster care suicide](#) occurred in Brooklyn Par, Minnesota, on December 27. Police are reportedly strongly considering that [Kendrea Johnson](#) committed suicide. In June 2013, the 6-year-old foster child was assessed by medical professionals, who determined that Johnson was having suicidal or

homicidal thoughts, and mental health treatment was ordered. Records reportedly also indicate that Kendrea Johnson also exhibited signs of "severe guilt" and allegedly felt she does not feel either "acceptable" or "lovable." Johnson also reportedly feels responsible for being removed from her home and being placed in foster care. The 6-year-old was placed in foster care last year, after a child protection agency accused the girl's mother of failing to adhere to an "action protection plan" and of drug abuse, according to the Star Tribune. While in foster care, Kendrea Johnson's behavior reportedly changed, and "one foster mother" said the little girl wanted to kill herself by jumping out of a window. Johnson also drew photos of a child hanging from a rope while at school. Healed ligature marks on the sides of her neck were discovered by Minnesota police investigators. The child protection agency report also indicate that while Kendrea Johnson had suicidal thoughts every single day of the week at one point, such feelings had allegedly dissipated to five days per week in the days leading up to the child's death. The same investigation report also states that the 6-year-old foster care girl was in "good mood" just a few hours before her body was found. Kendrea had enjoyed a second helping of her dinner, and then went to her bedroom to watch television. Johnson had been reportedly been looked in upon about 10 minutes before her lifeless body was found hanging from a rope. In the initial police report, an officer had reportedly noted that the knot in the noose appeared "too sophisticated" for a child so young to accomplish. Brooklyn Park Police Chief Mark Bruley said that law enforcement investigators ultimately decided that the medical examiner was accurate when stating that the suicide by hanging was "outside what a normal 6-year-old could think about." What do you think about the Kendrea Johnson death? Foster care suicide or murder? Source: <http://www.inquisitr.com/1758376/kendrea-johnson-foster-care-suicide-6-year-old-girl-found-hanging-from-noose/>

Foster Care: Where Precious Children Go To Die Neighborhood [DT](#) Section [Commentary](#) Where Precious Children Go To Die Foster Care in over 80% of cases does not help children. When a child is removed from biological family they lose contact with all relatives, not just their parents and siblings. These children are emotionally destroyed forever, affecting their entire lives. Over 60% of people in our prisons came through the foster care system. In America we are destroying our society by destroying our families. Tags [#child protective service](#) [#children](#) [#family](#) [#family court](#) [#foster care](#) Other articles by the same author THE FEED [Black Lives Matter starts local conversation about race](#) new [5th Annual WINTERWEST RETURNS TO GR'S WEST SIDE WITH CRAZY CARDBOARD SLED RACE](#) new [Olivia Mainville - "Some Other Day"](#) [Olivia Mainville - "Qualities"](#) [Catalyst Radio: Change U social justice series begins Jan. 23 with Confronting Structural Violence](#) [A home in Heartside: Guiding Light Mission offers food, shelter, way forward](#) [Foster Care: Where Precious Children Go To Die](#) updated [Christopher Titus to perform at Wealthy Theatre January 15](#) [Justice: Bryan Stevenson calls for new metric](#) [Disability 101 \(Part 1\): Disability as dialogue](#) [DGRI to bring champion of data-driven goals to speaker series](#) [Multiple locations available city wide to recycle Christmas trees](#) [View more »](#) by Citizens for Parental Rights ([Citizens for Pa...](#)) on Thursday Jan 15th, 2015 12:41am in [NONPROFITS](#) Child Protective Service / Family Court child removals also known as trafficking children for profit. Visit <http://youtu.be/P8PtKfS3Efo> and view some of the thousands of children who lost their lives in state care through Child Protective Service and the Family Court system. Across America the push is on to find more foster care homes for children who have been removed from their family. But there are questions that should be asked regarding foster care. Why do we need more foster homes? Why have children been removed? Do people bother to investigate a child's case before agreeing to foster that child? Do those who have a desire to foster truly understand what foster caring is all about? Do they desire to help a child or are they only desirous of the income received from fostering a child? After all, many children die at the hands of their foster caregiver. These questions are important. In this article we will be concerned with why any child would need a foster home. There are countless articles that address these questions. There are countless videos that address the questions. There are countless organizations that advocate for children removed from families. There are not countless people taking interest in why a child is removed from a family. Most of this information addressing the crisis of child removal is addressing how in this nation, its states or its counties, could there possibly be a need to remove so many children. <http://youtu.be/AMJJ4oCSMoU> There may be reasons most people are unaware of regarding child removals. In the 70's the "Child Abuse and Prevention Act" was adopted in Congress. In the 90's the "Adoption and Safe Families Act" was adopted. Therefore, most people believe that Child Protective Service (CPS) is providing a necessary service. To a degree that is true, but to a larger degree that is untrue. These acts provided for much federal funding being made available to Child Protective Service and their contracted agencies. Former Vice President Walter Mondale stated that he could see the Child Abuse and Prevention Act making it possible for the states to make a business out of child removals. That is exactly what has taken place across America. It is important to address this crisis of child removals right here in our own backyard of Kent County. Even now the Kent County agencies such as D.A. Blodgett, Bethany Christian Service, Lutheran Social Service, Holy Cross Children's Services and Catholic Charities are agencies involved in child removals. Most people believe these agencies are just adoption agencies and separate from Child Protective Service. However they are agencies contracted by CPS. Our Kent County Board of Commission is involved in Project 515 [http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/michigan/files/201310/Project_515 - Kent County Foster Care Purchase of Services Project Plan Final 9-30-13.pdf](http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/michigan/files/201310/Project_515_-_Kent_County_Foster_Care_Purchase_of_Services_Project_Plan_Final_9-30-13.pdf) which privatizes these agencies in the workings of Child Protective Service. This leads to control of child removals by the agencies. An Article by Richard Wexler, Executive Director (retired) of the National Coalition for Child Protection Reform (www.nccpr.org), regarding child welfare finance, titled "You Get What You Pay For" at <http://www.nccpr.org/reports/finance.pdf> is very eye opening. Reading on page 10 at page end and continuing through to page 12 is stated the following:the net work of private agencies that needs a steady supply of foster children to stay in business, and their allies, will continue with business as usual. These agencies often have blue chip boards of directors, larded with the business, civic and religious elite of their communities. They will make sure that the pressure remains on to take away at least as many children as before. Is it possible that these agencies are creating the need for foster homes by continually removing children from families unnecessarily? If we are to believe this, then we must consider why this is being done since parents are seldom if ever convicted of any crime against their children. In Kent County we have seven judges hearing CPS/Family Court cases. Are there really so many children being abused and neglected in Kent County to require a need for seven judges hearing child removal cases every day in Kent County? Could it be true that agencies and our courts wrongfully remove children for federal funding? Are they making a case, where there is no need, just to remove a child? It is stated that over 25 professions deal with child removals. These professions must have paychecks and the money for those paychecks must come from somewhere. <http://youtu.be/zEgMounuRU> The agencies have boards of directors which control them. They are mostly philanthropic people who are very knowledgeable in the workings of these agencies. An agency such as D.A. Blodgett proudly places the names of their directors on their website www.dablodgett.org under the heading of "Who We Are". Perhaps you may know some of these directors. Many families state that their children were removed wrongfully and therefore were legally kidnapped, such as this example of a D.A. Blodgett case: <http://www.wxyz.com/news/local-news/investigations/a-grandma-desperate-to-adopt-her-grandson-fought-the-state-and-lost> Citizens for Parental Rights is aware of many such cases wrongfully handled by D.A. Blodgett in Kent County. Nationwide over 80% of children are wrongly removed for the federal funding to states, which annually is many billions of dollars. Will Gaston, founder of "A Voice for Children" with his wife Pam wrote a book titled "Sui Juris". The last statement on page 16 speaks to the massive numbers of children kidnapped by the states in this nation. http://familyrights.us/bin/sui_juris If people do not rise up and stop this atrocity, we can expect untold numbers of children leaving their families. Thinking not yours? Think again! Many people who thought that way wish now they had thought differently. Joining Citizens for Parental Rights in Kent County is always an option to help change what is taking place with our children. If you do nothing then expect nothing, except maybe a knock at your door by CPS. Citizens for Parental Rights: falseallegations@mail.com "The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing" ~ Albert Einstein Source: <http://therapidian.org/foster-care-where-precious-children-go-die>

Brandi Edwards, social worker for troubled teens has sex with 16 year old student January 18, 2015 By [Christopher Koulouris](#) [Leave a Comment](#) What was Brandi Edwards thinking? Brandi Edwards, a 26 year old master's degree student working as a trainee social school at a school for troubled teens in Chicago has been [charged with criminal sexual assault](#) after having sex with a 16 year old student. During her appearance in court on Saturday the woman admitted she had a sexual relationship with the sophomore student at RISE Alternative High School starting in November. According to a report via the [Chicago Tribune](#) the relationship began when Edwards wrote her phone number on the boy's journal. Soon after, in November, Edwards allegedly picked the boy up and had sex with him in her car outside his home. Before the meeting, prosecutors say the two exchanged sexual text messages. Edwards and the boy would have sex a second time in her car and then a third time at a forest preserve. They had sex a final time at a hotel room, say investigators. [Told](#) the woman's linkedIn profile: 'I am an emerging social worker and I know that I will need to change what habits I am in order to best assess my client's needs,' 'I will also know that there will be times when I have to step back and separate personal from professional because I have such a big heart that I will not want my personal

persona to interfere with my client in any way.' Reflected Cook County Judge Adam Bourgeois Jr. during yesterday's court hearing: 'Some days, I'm baffled.' Judge Bourgeois ordered Edwards to wear an ankle monitoring bracelet and to stay in her Homer Glen home. 'You better not set foot outside that house,' the judge said. Edwards' police report would also indicate she was also employed as a substitute teacher at a Naperville school. Edwards' attorney, however, would tell the judge she was no longer employed. No reason was offered as to why she was no longer employed. Edwards was also ordered not to have any contact with the boy via social media and has since had bail set at \$250 000. Filed Under: [Scandal and Gossip](#) Tagged With: [Brandi Edwards](#), [Cook County Judge Adam Bourgeois Jr.](#), [RISE Alternative High School](#) Source: <http://scallywagandvagabond.com/2015/01/brandi-edwards-social-worker-for-troubled-teens-sex-16-year-old-student/>

Center for troubled girls will close, cites decision by DCFS **Caption'Scared to death to return'** Anthony Souffle / Chicago Tribune Michele Gans' daughter Emma, left, was attacked at Rock River Academy. The beating by peers left Emma with a broken facial bone and chunks of hair torn from her head. Gans brought her daughter home to western Illinois. Michele Gans' daughter Emma, left, was attacked at Rock River Academy. The beating by peers left Emma with a broken facial bone and chunks of hair torn from her head. Gans brought her daughter home to western Illinois. (Anthony Souffle / Chicago Tribune) [See more galleries](#) Caption'I was fighting every day' Anthony Souffle, Chicago Tribune Rock River Academy in Rockford is a 59-bed facility for juvenile state wards and girls with behavior problems. Many girls said they came out more damaged than when they went in. Rock River Academy in Rockford is a 59-bed facility for juvenile state wards and girls with behavior problems. Many girls said they came out more damaged than when they went in. (Anthony Souffle, Chicago Tribune) [See more galleries](#) CaptionWe felt caged Anthony Souffle, Chicago Tribune MsWhitney Holt said sexual violence was common at Rock River Academy. Today she is building a new life as a restaurant manager with a child and an apartment of her own. MsWhitney Holt said sexual violence was common at Rock River Academy. Today she is building a new life as a restaurant manager with a child and an apartment of her own. (Anthony Souffle, Chicago Tribune) [See more galleries](#) Caption'My experience was horrible' Anthony Souffle, Chicago Tribune MsWhitney Holt plays with her daughter at her apartment in Elk Grove Village. In one incident at Rock River, Holt recalled, "out of nowhere they came up and attacked me from behind." MsWhitney Holt plays with her daughter at her apartment in Elk Grove Village. In one incident at Rock River, Holt recalled, "out of nowhere they came up and attacked me from behind." (Anthony Souffle, Chicago Tribune) [See more galleries](#) Caption'It was a waste of time' Anthony Souffle, Chicago Tribune MsWhitney Holt says she had an eating disorder but got no effective therapy at Rock River. MsWhitney Holt says she had an eating disorder but got no effective therapy at Rock River. (Anthony Souffle, Chicago Tribune) [See more galleries](#) By David Jackson, Gary Marx and Duaa Eldeib Chicago Tribune [contact the reporters](#) [Crime Sexual Assault Prostitution Juvenile Delinquency University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign](#) Rock River Academy is voluntarily terminating its contract with the Department of Children and Family Services A prominent but troubled residential facility for youths is closing following Tribune reports that children inside the Rockford center were assaulted and lured into prostitution. The 59-bed, all-girls Rock River Academy issued a statement Wednesday saying it was forced to shut down after the state Department of Children and Family Services unfairly stopped placing juvenile wards in the facility last month. "This decision will regretfully result in the closing of the facility as Rock River does not have enough non-ward residents to remain viable," the statement said. [We felt caged: Seven stories of Rock River Academy](#) David Jackson and Gary Marx [In its investigation of Rock River Academy in Rockford, the Tribune examined thousands of pages of confidential juvenile case files and other records but also interviewed 20 former residents for their recollections of life inside the facility. In its investigation of Rock River Academy in Rockford, the Tribune examined thousands of pages of confidential juvenile case files and other records but also interviewed 20 former residents for their recollections of life inside the facility. \(David Jackson and Gary Marx.\) The Tribune's "Harsh Treatment" series, published in early December, documented dozens of alleged physical and sexual assaults of youths by other residents at the taxpayer-funded center, which serves girls with behavioral and mental health problems. Many teens fled the facility, and some were prostituted in Rockford, Chicago and beyond. DCFS quickly responded by sending monitors into Rock River, imposing the intake hold and demanding corrective actions. The facility says it will close in 90 days. As of Wednesday, 26 DCFS wards and one girl placed by another state agency remained in the center, according to state officials and the facility. Four additional residents were in hospitals, and a fifth was in detention. DCFS has completed full clinical assessments of all remaining wards and is working to place them in the roughly 50 other residential treatment centers across the state, a government official said. \[Related Harsh Treatment PDF: Rock River Academy announces closing\]\(#\) \[See all related 8\]\(#\) "We are disappointed in what's happened at Rock River," DCFS spokesman Andrew Flach said. "In the last few weeks, we feel that steps to improve the facility were taking place. Our focus is on ensuring the smooth transition and appropriate placement to address the individual needs for the youth currently residing there." The Tribune's reporting on the aggression and turbulence inside Rock River was drawn from interviews with dozens of former residents and workers as well as thousands of pages of confidential juvenile case files, police reports and other documents. Those records and interviews depicted a chaotic environment that not only led to physical assaults but often thwarted efforts to help residents with their therapy and education. Many young people spoke of developing relationships with trusted staff — only to see them quit or be fired. Others said workers mocked or ignored them, and few said they had been helped in any meaningful way or even kept safe. In its statement, Rock River said DCFS acted capriciously when it put the facility on intake hold following the Tribune articles. \[Actions prompted by Harsh Treatment series \\(timeline\\)\]\(#\) \[Chicago Tribune Graphics\]\(#\) \[Chicago Tribune Graphics\]\(#\) "The recent bed-hold placed upon Rock River by DCFS, which we strenuously dispute, was instituted without due process or fairness to the facility," Rock River said. "We have not been provided any specific information as to when or how the bed-hold will be lifted. ... This places us in an untenable situation in which we can no longer operate." A state official rejected the accusation of unfairness, saying DCFS does not put an end-date on intake holds, instead lifting those sanctions when state monitors see sustained improvement and believe residents are safe and properly cared for. State officials also said they met frequently with Rock River administrators to ensure their expectations for corrective action were clear. Rock River's statement said the facility had improved the lives of many youths. "It is unfortunate that recent media stories and DCFS's ensuing reaction have overshadowed these countless successes." \[cComments\]\(#\) Bohanan, I went thru this with my daughter she was at Rock River as you know and they allowed the children to make the rules, I could never get in touch with her meanwhile I live in NY really meanwhile we need to build a relationship instead they pulled her away from me and allowed her to... bohanan at 11:07 AM February 01, 2015 \[Add a comment\]\(#\) \[See all comments 20\]\(#\) Administrators said they hope to overhaul the facility for another use. "We hope to return sometime in the future," the statement said. The facility has disputed the Tribune's reports in recent weeks, telling Rockford media that the newspaper's account "focused on isolated cases and old allegations." The most recently available DCFS data show Rock River has remained among the most troubled facilities in Illinois by several key measures of harm to juvenile wards. During the five-month period from July 2014 through November, for example, Rock River had the highest rate of youths manually restrained by staff among the 52 residential treatment centers measured by DCFS. The rate of these physical restraints at Rock River was nearly eight times the median for all Illinois facilities. \[Graphic essay: A beating by peers, chaos during class and a bold bid for freedom\]\(#\) \[Chicago Tribune Graphics\]\(#\) \[Chicago Tribune Graphics\]\(#\) Rock River had the second-highest rate of self-inflicted wounds by wards and the second-highest rate of wards sent to a psychiatric hospital. In addition, it had the third-highest rate of wards detained by police or charged with crimes, and the fifth-highest rate of alleged aggressive acts by wards. Rock River is owned by Universal Health Services Inc., a \\$7 billion-per-year company that runs more than 190 behavioral health facilities across the country. Universal is facing a widening federal probe into conditions of care and billing practices at more than a dozen of its operations, including Rock River and three psychiatric hospitals in Illinois. Universal and its executives and staff have not been accused of wrongdoing. The Justice Department probe of Universal facilities in Illinois began in 2008 after the Tribune documented allegations that youths were sexually assaulted at west suburban Riveredge Hospital, which Universal subsequently acquired in a merger. At the time, DCFS commissioned the University of Illinois at Chicago's psychiatry department to examine conditions at Riveredge. The UIC team went on to produce critical reports of other Universal facilities in Illinois and alerted DCFS to problems at Rock River. Before the Tribune published its account of conditions inside Rock River in December, Universal issued a statement warning the newspaper not to rely on the accounts of former residents. "You are receiving information from patients who have had often horrific life experiences and have mental health issues," it said. "Their characterization of issues and facts do not accurately reflect what really happened." "That really makes me upset," said Cleanna Parker-Lewis, 20, one of the former residents who spoke out in the Tribune about her experience at the facility. "I was happy to speak up. I wouldn't want other females to go through what I went through." The facility's dismissal of the girls' accounts came as no surprise to another former resident, MsWhitney Holt, 23. She said juvenile wards like her had complained for years about the facility to juvenile court judges and caseworkers, to no avail. "They were saying that we were lying and none of this stuff was true," she said. Of Wednesday's announced closure, Holt said: "This should have happened a long time ago." Across Illinois, the Tribune investigation documented hundreds of assault and rape allegations in residential treatment centers each year as authorities failed to act on reports of harm and continued sending youths to the most violent facilities. \[Related Harsh Treatment PDF: Rock River Academy announces closing\]\(#\) \[See all related 8\]\(#\) Placed at the](#)

centers for safety and help, children instead were preyed on by hardened peers, subjected to gang violence and taught a life of crime — including prostitution — that affected the surrounding communities. Education and therapy fell by the wayside as low-paid and overwhelmed staffers struggled with the most aggressive teens. And some youths with histories of sexual abuse reported being attacked again by peers and even by their adult caregivers. DCFS placed four other centers on intake hold following the Tribune series. The hold on Cunningham Children's Home in Urbana has been lifted. Source: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/watchdog/rte/chi-youth-treatment-rock-river-20150128-story.html?page=2>

Attorney: Rape of Foster Girl Caused by Systemic Failure | NBC 10 Philadelphia Attorney: Rape of Foster Girl Caused by Systemic Failure By [Harry Hairston](#) and [David Chang](#) [View Comments \(\)](#) | Email | Print [NEWSLETTERS](#) Receive the latest investigations updates in your inbox [Privacy Policy](#) | [More Newsletters](#) Attorney: Rape of Foster Girl Caused by... Link Embed Email Copy Close Link to this video Copy Close Embed this video [Replay](#) More videos (1 of 9) «» As a man gets ready to go on trial for raping his 7-year-old foster child, NBC10 uncovers new information. The agency that placed her in the home allegedly knew of a prior sexual molestation investigation of Walter Scott, and had documentation that no other child should be placed in that home. NBC10's Harry Hairston has more. (Published Tuesday, Jan 27, 2015) Updated at 6:06 PM EST on Thursday, Jan 29, 2015 As a Philadelphia man accused of raping his 7-year-old foster daughter prepares for his trial, the girl's lawyer is speaking out, claiming the placement agency put the girl in the home after the man was accused of inappropriately touching another child. Walter Scott was arrested in 2013 after he allegedly raped his 7-year-old foster daughter on two separate occasions. He was charged with involuntary deviate sexual intercourse with a child and is currently out on \$100,000 bond. His trial is set to begin Thursday and he has denied all allegations against him. [Man Accused of Raping Foster Daughter](#) The girl's attorney, Nadeem Bezar, told NBC10 Children Protective Service investigators were looking into a complaint only days before the Presbyterian Children's Village, the foster care placement agency now known as the Village, placed the girl in Scott's care. "Presbyterian Children's Village has admitted that the child should not have been placed in the respite home in February, 2013," Bezar said. "Another child had complained that Mr. Scott had patted her backside and touched her a few times so she felt uncomfortable." [WATCH: Officers Foil Dunkin' Donuts Robbery](#) According to Bezar, the Village failed to investigate the allegation. Bezar also said Scott was not arrested until five months after the first alleged rape. Bezar later filed a lawsuit against Presbyterian on the child's behalf. A spokesperson for Presbyterian [denied the allegations against the agency when we first covered this story last year](#). [3 Hurt After Car Strikes Trolley: Officials](#) Bezar showed NBC10 a document, written Feb. 19, 2013, stating a case manager for the Village informed the Department of Human Services that "there will be no other children placed in the home." The letter referred to another child who accused Scott of inappropriate behavior inside his home on Feb. 18. Bezar told NBC10 the girl was still placed in Scott's home on Feb. 20 despite the report. [Councilman Jim Kenney to Resign: Is Mayoral Run Next?](#) "When you have a system that's supposed to stop placement in a home because it's under investigation and you go through that system and don't abide by it, it makes us all nervous," Bezar said. NBC10 reached out to the Department of Human Services but they had no comment. NBC10 also reached out to the Village regarding the most recent allegations from Bezar. [Local Police Asked to Look Out for Drone Use](#) "We are unable to comment because of federal and state privacy laws as well as the fact that this is an ongoing legal matter," a spokesperson wrote. Bezar said that what happened to the young girl was a systemic failure. [A 'Lyt' From Your Smartphone](#) "It is a stop sign that not just one person ran through but three, four, five people ran through," he said. "If our system is supposed to protect these children then you better go out and make sure you have the right people that are sitting and taking care of them." Bezar told NBC10 he plans on filing a motion seeking punitive damages against the Village. The Department of Public Welfare is the state agency that licenses foster homes. A spokesperson from the agency told NBC10 that any foster parent accused of abusing children is automatically placed on a list preventing them from contacting foster children. Read more: <http://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/Attorney-Rape-of-Foster-Girl-Caused-by-Systemic-Failure-290007381.html#ixzz3OYP8Ttcq> Follow us: [@nbcphiladelphia on Twitter](#) | [nbcphiladelphia on Facebook](#)

State official links troubled foster care system to human trafficking Kamala Harris Jae C. Hong, Associated Press Atty. Gen. Kamala Harris was twice elected San Francisco's district attorney. She is running to replace Sen. Barbara Boxer in 2016. Atty. Gen. Kamala Harris was twice elected San Francisco's district attorney. She is running to replace Sen. Barbara Boxer in 2016. (Jae C. Hong, Associated Press) By [Marisa Gerber](#) [contact the reporter](#) [UCLA U.S. Senate](#) State Atty. Gen. Kamala Harris says the foster care system is contributing to concern about human trafficking Speaking at a UCLA symposium on human trafficking Friday, California Atty. Gen. Kamala Harris talked about how the state's broken foster care system is contributing to the problem. [Related L.A. Now Andrew Do wins seat on Orange County Board of Supervisors](#) [See all related 8](#) "Human trafficking is not a monolith. There are many components," Harris said, adding that "of all the discrete parts contributing to our concern about human trafficking, our foster care system is a big one.... The foster care system in California is not working." [eComments](#) Foster care youth often have no where to go when they emancipate. Some estimate that as many as half will become homeless within 6 months of emancipation. Covenant House California is a non-profit agency whose mission is to reach out to at-risk homeless youth living on the streets and offer... CovenantHouseCA at 8:59 AM February 04, 2015 [Add a comment](#) [See all comments 9](#) During her address, [Harris said that 59% of children arrested on prostitution-related charges](#) in L.A. County spent time in the foster care system. The 2010 statistic drew audible gasps from the audience of more than 100 law students, county officials and victim advocates. Harris said she had witnessed the problem firsthand years ago, while prosecuting a gang rape case in Alameda County. The victim was a teenager who lived in a group home. "She was so vulnerable to anyone who would give her attention," Harris said, noting that, as is often the case with victims of human trafficking, the girl was a difficult witness. While testifying against her attackers, the girl crossed her arms, smacked her gum and avoided eye contact. Harris chose to address the girl's attitude during her closing remarks to jurors. "I said, 'I know you don't like her,'" Harris recounted. "'And I will tell you, that's exactly what those predators counted on.'" Harris won the conviction and said that when she thinks about that girl now it reminds her of the importance of labeling her -- and others like her -- as victims, not "teen prostitutes." "That reads: mini criminal," she said. "We cannot treat our witness like a criminal." A front-runner in the race to fill Barbara Boxer's U.S. Senate seat, Harris also touched on transnational crime issues during her speech. She recounted a 2011 visit to the border town of Calexico, where she saw elaborate tunnels used to smuggle drugs, weapons and people into the U.S. from Mexico. Officials at the border told her they'd seen kids as young as 5 being trafficked through the tunnels. One of the biggest ways to stop human trafficking, Harris told the crowd, was to keep caring about the issue and to educate others. "Part of what is insidious about human trafficking," she said, "is that people don't see what they're seeing." Source: <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-foster-care-human-trafficking-20150130-story.html>

Finally, Arizona's foster children take a stand [Laurie Roberts](#) Laurie Roberts, The Republic | [azcentral.com](#) 12:08 p.m. MST February 3, 2015 (Photo: Larisa Lofitskaya, Getty Images/iStockphoto) Tags [Arizona Department of Health](#) [PTSD](#) [1360 CONNECT](#) [41 TWEETLINKEDIN](#) [18 COMMENTEMAILMORE](#) Finally, the foster children of this state are standing up for themselves. Or more specifically, a pair of law firms and a national advocacy group are standing up for them. On Tuesday, [they filed a federal lawsuit against the state of Arizona](#), contending that the Departments of Child Safety and Health Services are abusing already-traumatized kids. The lawsuit, which includes 10 children as plaintiffs, paints an alarming picture of an overwhelmed system that is seizing far more children than it can properly care for. The result is hurting the very children the state is sworn to protect. "What you are seeing in the complaint and in the stories of these children is something that's been going on for a really long time," Anne Ronan, of Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest, told me. "It's just gotten exponentially worse with the 46 percent increase in kids removed." Actually, from March 2010 to September 2014, the number of children in foster care grew a jaw dropping 66 percent, according to state records. The lawsuit alleges: -Too many kids torn apart from their brothers and sisters and not just for a few days but for years. -Too few children helped with basic needs, like eyeglasses or treatment for the physical and mental traumas they've endured. -Too few investigators coming to the aid of children who are being abused while in foster care. -Too few foster care homes for the kids who are stacking up like cord wood, shuffled here and there, growing up in institutions rather than homes and even sleeping at times in DCS offices. It's a heck of a way to spend those precious few years of childhood. Unlike most of the country and despite last year's reforms that were supposed to start fixing the mess that was Child Protective Services, Arizona continues to yank kids out of their homes in unprecedented numbers. Despite a goal of reducing the number of kids in foster care, it actually went up another 7 percent during the six-month period that ended in September: from 15,751 children in foster care to 16,990. And rising every day, based on the crush of calls I've been getting lately, from parents and grandparents who have lost their children to DCS. The kids are theoretically being taken to protect them. The lawsuit, however, paints a picture not of protection but of state-sanctioned abuse and neglect. Like the 8-year-old girl who entered foster care in 2012 for the third time. She showed signs of PTSD and abuse yet was separated from her siblings and dumped into a group home as an "emergency shelter" — an emergency that lasted two years. The lawsuit alleges the state ignored the little girl's need for glasses, along with her limp and a nagging toothache and failed to get her proper help even though she began hearing voices and threatened to hurt herself or others. Like the 7-year-old boy who has been in foster care since he

was four and already has attended eight different schools and lived in 11 different places – including one place where he was physically abused and another a Spanish speaking home even though he doesn't speak Spanish. After his fifth placement, he became suicidal and diagnosed with PTSD. This, at the ripe old age of 6. He never sees his sisters anymore – the only people who mean something to him -- because they've been adopted. And he's not getting much therapy these days, the lawsuit says, because his current placement is considered "temporary". Like the four siblings, ages 3 to 7, who didn't see their mother for the first four months they were in foster care, despite a plan to reunify the family. Like a 14-year-old boy named Bryce who has been in foster care since he was 5, shuttled from one group home to the next, cut off from his brothers, denied psychiatric care he desperately needs. "I feel like I get tossed around like a bag of chips," he said in October 2012. In December 2014, Bryce threatened suicide and in January, he was put into juvenile detention after an incident at a group home. This boy has spent most of his life in foster care and says he doesn't expect to ever find a permanent family. I could go on. Instead, I'll talk about shortages. A shortage of preventive services that could allow children to stay in their own homes. A shortage of foster homes where kids can be nurtured and cared for – or at least treated better than a bag of chips. Or a lost cause. A shortage of mental-health treatment to help them through experiences that no child should ever have to endure. Certainly, not when they are in our care, on our watch. The one thing we aren't short on in this state? An army of children being yanked out of their homes – the vast majority due to neglect, not abuse. "A lot of it is poverty and substance abuse," Ronan told me. "It's lack of child care. It's lack of jobs. If we decided we don't want to help those families then the state becomes their family and they better do a better job of being their family and they just don't." They don't. Or put another way, we don't. In addition to the Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest, the lawsuit is being brought by Coppersmith Brockelman and Children's Rights, a national advocacy group that focuses on child welfare. Ronan says they're hoping to get the lawsuit certified as a class-action suit, in order to force, finally, the state to do its job. It's frustrating that it has come to this. Maddening that the new and supposedly improved DCS has apparently been unable to make a dent in fixing the problems plaguing woeful old CPS. But mostly it's just incredibly tragic for 16,990 Arizona kids ... and counting. Source: <http://www.azcentral.com/story/laurieroberts/2015/02/03/foster-children-lawsuit-arizona/22804043/>

Oregon Foster Youth Impacting Legislation FosterClub All-Stars talking about improving the foster care system downtown Portland. (Pictured from left to right: Royce Markley, Mellisa Gutierrez, Lora Murphy, Regina Austin, David English, and Patricia Dorr) In 2014, the Oregon Foster Children's Bill of Rights became law. The youth voice is guiding the implementation of the law and ensures foster youth are provided with support, resources, and protection. FosterClub All-Star, Royce Markley, and other Oregon foster youth are calling on Oregon lawmakers to support youth in the foster care system. The 2015 Oregon Legislature has two bills centering on foster youth: The first bill would enable youth to have a savings account beginning at age 12. Recent research indicates that when youth are empowered to have savings accounts and financial literacy training their success as adults increases substantially. Currently, barriers exist in many states to allow youth to have any type of bank account prior to leaving foster care. This strips youth of their independence and doesn't allow for youth to understand proper financial management. You can read more about the [bill in its summary](#). The second bill would allow youth to participate in normalcy activities. These activities would range from extracurricular to community activities. Foster youth are often excluded from activities with their peers and it has long lasting effects. While much progress has been made across the country and in Oregon in recognizing the importance of normalcy, child welfare systems often leave this up to the choice of foster parents or private facilities. In doing so, youth are still often unable to have any sense of normalcy. This new bill would require participation in at least one activity as directed by the youth. This bill would be one of the first in the country to require participation. You can read more about the [bill in its summary](#). Youth voice is difficult for lawmakers to ignore. Foster youth are the experts! Royce and other youth working to improve Oregon's foster care are highlighted in an article by the Oregonian's Amy Wang. Read the entire article here: http://www.oregonlive.com/kiddo/index.ssf/2015/02/foster_youth_are_subject_of_se.html (link is external) File attachments: [Foster youth seek legislative support for extracurriculars, savings accounts.pdf](#) [Savings Bill.pdf](#) [Normalcy Bill.pdf](#) Source: <https://www.fosterclub.com/groups/oregon-foster-youth-impacting-legislation>

Lawsuit: Arizona's neglect of foster kids shocking Mary Jo Pitzi, The Arizona Republic 2:59 p.m. EST February 4, 2015 The suit, filed on behalf of 10 children, says Arizona does not have enough foster homes. (Photo: Nick Oza/The Republic) 54 CONNECT [35 TWEET 5 LINKEDIN 1](#)

COMMENTEMAILMORE PHOENIX -- Arizona's neglect of children in foster care "shocks the conscience" and amounts to official apathy toward the plight of nearly 17,000 children, [a class-action lawsuit filed Tuesday in U.S. District Court alleges](#). "It is time that someone gives voice to the thousands of children in foster care who have no say about where they live, where their siblings go, or what happens in their future," Kris Jacober, president of the Arizona Association for Foster and Adoptive Parents, said in a statement accompanying the suit. "Children are still sleeping in (state agency) offices because there is nowhere else for them," she said. "They're not receiving timely or needed mental health services. The children in this lawsuit represent thousands with similar stories. The state can't simply bring them into custody and provide for them on the fly." The suit, filed on behalf of 10 children currently in the Arizona foster-care system, names the directors of the state departments of Health Services and Child Safety and alleges the state: --Neglects its duty to provide adequate health care for children in state custody. --Has a severe shortage of foster homes. --Fails to promptly investigate reports of neglect and abuse involving children in foster care. --Hampers efforts to maintain family relationships by separating siblings in foster care and not providing required parental visits. Although the state is aware of these conditions, many of which the suit documents using the state's own data, it has not corrected them, the lawsuit says. Because of that, the lawsuit says, Arizona's actions show "a policy, pattern, custom and/or practice that shocks the conscience, is outside the exercise of any professional judgment, and amounts to deliberate indifference to the constitutionally-protected rights and liberty and privacy interests" of the children named in the suit, as well as all children under state care. [USA TODAY Life after foster care: Mentors help teens prepare](#) Gov. Doug Ducey is reviewing the case and offered little comment. "Governor Ducey takes the safety and well-being of foster care children extremely seriously," his office said in a statement. "They are among the most vulnerable in our state and the governor believes it is imperative that the government protect them." The suit seeks a series of remedies, ranging from an increase in foster homes to timely medical care. The suit uses pseudonyms for the 10 child plaintiffs, who range in age from 3 to 14. It seeks class action by the court on behalf of all children in state foster care. As of September, there were 16,990 children in state custody, according to the latest data from the Department of Child Safety. The Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest, the local law firm of Coppersmith, Brockelman LPC and the New York-based Children's Rights organization are handling the case. Children's Rights filed a similar complaint last month in South Carolina and a nearly 4-year-old suit alleging neglect of Texas children in foster care is proceeding. The filing comes seven months after the state created a stand-alone child-welfare agency in the wake of the discovery of nearly 6,600 reports of child abuse and neglect that went without investigations over nearly four years. But that highly publicized effort, which resulted in the creation of the Department of Child Safety, didn't address the issues that plague foster care, said William Kapell, lead attorney with Children's Rights, an advocacy organization. In fact, despite all of the attention on child welfare over the last year, not much has changed, said Anne Ronan, an attorney with the Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest. "It created a more expensive investigative unit," she said. Arizona foster care rates The number of children in Arizona's foster care system has steadily risen since 2002. Sponsored by March 2011 Sept 2011 March 2012 Sept 2012 March 2013 Sept 2013 March 2014 Sept 2014 0 5,000 10,000 15,000 Department of Child Safety Ginger Rough/The Republic March 2011: 10,707 September 2011: 11,535 March 2012: 12,453 September 2012: 14,111 March 2013: 14,314 September 2013: 15,037 March 2014: 15,751 September 2014: 16,990 And if that investigative effort results in more children being removed from their homes, she said, the state needs to be prepared to cover the cost of each child's education, health care and mental-health treatment. Those responsibilities have been sorely neglected, the lawsuit points out, as it documents travails that the 10 children have endured. For example, one of the children, identified only as Charles P., had been in eight schools over a year-and-a-half. Beth K., the lead plaintiff in the case, had complained of a toothache for months while living in a group home, but got no dental care during the nearly two-year period. During that time frame, the state also failed to get her eyeglasses and did not notice that she walked with a limp, so she didn't get orthopedic shoes that would correct her walk. The lawsuit also says the state has hindered efforts to keep families together, and refers to the case of four siblings, two girls and two boys, ages 3 to 7, who were placed in state custody a year ago. They were initially placed with a relative 2 1/2 hours away from the family's home, a distance that apparently hampered the ability of state caseworkers to do "urgent responses" on their cases. Over the last year, the four, identified only as the "C-B siblings," were split into two separate foster homes, reunited for two weeks with their father before he returned them to state custody, sent to three different foster homes, and were denied the therapy the state Department of Child Safety determined they needed. In July, a Juvenile Court found the agency's action, or lack thereof, "appalling," noting DCS failed to follow through on therapy sessions, and didn't back up its promise to the father that it would help him with transportation to get the children to therapy. The case illustrates the lapses by the state in meeting its goal of maintaining family bonds, the suit says. The suit also says DCS has not coordinated visits between children in foster care and

their parents, nor has it always done monthly visits with biological parents to gauge whether family reunification is possible. And while the state was trying to fix the former Child Protective Services, it did not keep up with similar complaints on foster care: Nearly three-quarters of foster care-related reports had not been looked at and resolved in the 60-day time frame required by law, the suit says. Source: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2015/02/04/arizona-foster-care-lawsuit/22868815/>

Lawmakers Want To Stop The 'Foster Care To Prostitution' Pipeline February 3, 2015 8:54 PM [Share on email](#) [28 View Comments](#) Related Tags: [Becky Zal-Sanchez](#), [Beth McCann](#), [Child Welfare](#), [Child Welfare System](#), [Dan Nordberg](#), [FBI](#), [Foster Care To Prostitution](#), [Foster Children](#), [Missing Children](#), [National Association of Social Workers](#), [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children](#), [National Western Stock Show](#), [Sex Trafficking](#) You've Earned Points for Reading! Claim points in our Reward Center, and earn more tomorrow. [Claim Points](#) DENVER (CBS4) – State lawmakers say too many children in the child welfare system are disappearing for weeks at a time without anyone looking for them. They also say most of the children rescued from sex trafficking are in the foster system. Right now lawmakers say there are 57 children missing from Colorado's child welfare system. Nobody knows where they are and too often there is little effort to find them, according to lawmakers. They say Colorado's most vulnerable children deserve better. A child sex trafficking sting during the National Western Stock Show last week was just the latest example of what state lawmakers call a disturbing trend — a foster care to prostitution pipeline. Sixty percent of children rescued from sex trafficking have at one time have been in the custody of a welfare agency or foster home, according to lawmakers. "Just having that lack of steady parenting and being exposed to abuse, neglect (and) domestic violence; they already have, usually, very low social boundaries. They can be more trusting to strangers because they've had to be able to survive and go to different foster homes," Becky Zal-Sanchez with the National Association of Social Workers said. Zal-Sanchez says many of the children have run away so often case workers write them off. They can go missing for weeks without anyone looking. Reps. Dan Nordberg and Beth McCann want that to end. They're carrying a bill that would require welfare agencies and foster parents to notify police, the FBI and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children within 24 hours of a child disappearing. CBS4's Shaun Boyd talks with Reps. Dan Nordberg and Beth McCann (credit: CBS) "What this bill says is, 'Look, these lives matter.' And when you go missing the state of Colorado is going to do everything in its power to enable local, state and federal law enforcement to find you," said Nordberg, R-Colorado Springs. "Often these kids are already emotionally traumatized," said McCann, D-Denver. "So when they leave that environment they find support in this underworld — this dark underworld. It's a very complicated and sad situation." Last year the FBI and local police in Colorado rescued nearly 100 children from sex trafficking — a 54 percent increase over the previous year. With bipartisan support the bill easily passed the House on Tuesday. Source: <http://denver.cbslocal.com/2015/02/03/bill-concerning-missing-foster-kids-easily-passes-in-the-colorado-house/>

Attorney: Former 'foster parent of the year' molested girl Eric Wilkinson reports Eric Wilkinson, KING 5 News 5:16 p.m. PST February 4, 2015 Lester Drapeaux had already served prison time for molesting a child when he was granted a license to become a foster parent in 1974. (Photo: KING) 228 CONNECT [30 TWEET](#) [6 LINKEDIN](#) 4 COMMENTEMAILMORE Lester Drapeaux had already served prison time for molesting a child when he was granted a license to become a foster parent in 1974. Among those he took in was a 5-year-old girl known now only by her initials, M.M. The abuse began almost immediately. "He started by doing things to her in the bath when she was little, and as she grew older the abuse escalated and got worse and worse," said Jason Amala, partner with the Seattle law firm Pfau Cochran Vertetis Amala. It all happened inside Drapeaux's Lake Stevens home where hundreds of children were cycled through by DSHS over the course of nearly two decades. Documents obtained by KING 5 show that Drapeaux had actually been under the supervision of DSHS for his sex conviction before becoming a foster parent. At the time there was no Department of Corrections and DSHS was in charge of the oversight of parolees. DSHS staff either knew or should have known that Drapeaux was a "habitual criminal, alcoholic and child molester," according to the law suit filed on behalf of M.M. But no one said a thing. "They supervised his probation. If there was any question all they had to do was walk a few blocks to the courthouse, pull his file and it was there for anyone to see, including DSHS," said Amala. DSHS's own records may indicate why this happened. The agency was trying to adhere to federal guidelines that paired minority children with minority foster parents. The victim in this case is Native American. There were apparently so few Native American foster families that DSHS even granted an exception to Drapeaux, allowing him to take in more than the standard number of vulnerable children. "It looks like DSHS was so concerned about placing a Native American child in a Native American home that they had blinders on and didn't do their normal background checks," said Amala. Amala also says the agency did not adequately investigate allegations by Drapeaux's step-daughter that her molested her. Meantime, in 1995 DSHS awarded Drapeaux with the "Foster Parent of The Year" award, according to Amala. The victim in the case has now been awarded a 2-and-a-half million dollar settlement from DSHS. Her attorneys say three more victims have come forward, and they believe many more may be out there. DSHS released a statement saying, in part that "although background check processes appropriate for the time were done when the foster home was licensed in 1978, they did not pick up that the foster father had a conviction for indecent liberties with a 17-year-old minor in 1972. The foster father consistently lied in his licensing documents about prior convictions involving minors. When statewide background checks became available in the 1980s, that conviction was not reported on those statewide background check reports. It is unknown why. Both our practices and background check procedures have been strengthened since." Lester Drapeaux died several years ago. Source: <http://www.king5.com/story/news/local/2015/02/03/dshs-foster-parents-native-americans-molestation-settlement/22825971/>

Maui mother can't hold back anguish as she testifies against 'Potty Boot Camp' owner Posted: Feb 04, 2015 10:56 PM PST Updated: Feb 05, 2015 2:42 AM PST By Jade Storms Email Connect jstorms@hawaii.newsnow.com By Chelsea Davis Email Connect chelseadavis@hawaii.newsnow.com Follow @ChelseadavisHNN Tiffany Penyy Rettich Karin Engert Rebecca Stapp WAILUKU, MAUI (HawaiiNewsNow) - It was a full day of testimony on Wednesday for the mother of the boy allegedly abused by the owner of "Potty Boot Camp" on Maui. Tiffany Penyy Rettich took the stand first thing this morning. She says her son went to Rebecca Stapp's "Potty Boot Camp" back on May 1, 2013. She said Stapp told her there were three methods to her magic: positive reinforcement, praise, and rewards. Penyy Rettich said Stapp told her most her kids were potty trained by the end of the first day and no physical force was ever used. However, after Penyy Rettich picked her son up that day, she said she noticed there were bruises all along his thighs, back, buttocks, and groin area. Penyy Rettich says she confronted Stapp about it, but she says Stapp denied ever using physical abuse. Penyy Rettich says after she left Stapp's home, she went to the Maui Police Department to file a police report and took her son to the emergency room. Penyy Rettich says she already saw signs of her son not acting like himself. "After consuming the beverage that he drank at the hospital, he ended up having an accident and he started crying uncontrollably," said Penyy Rettich as tears rolled down her face. She said her son wasn't just abused physically, but psychological as well. "There were a couple times...as I tried to give him confidence and let him know he was in a safe environment...there were a few times he would run around naked and he would have potty accidents and he would go hide and cry," Penyy Rettich said through tears. Although Penyy Rettich was the only one to take the stand on Wednesday, others came out in support of Stapp. "What she does, she does with love, with kindness, with lot of expertise and care for each individual child, and I can say that because she trained my daughter three years and three months ago," said Karin Engert. Engert says Stapp potty trained her special needs child after everyone said she couldn't be potty trained. She said the injuries on the 17-month-old boy look like diaper rash. "All we have is pictures of, to me, looked like having a diaper on a baby, the rubber band cuts into the thigh, that's exactly what that mark is," Engert said. Stapp is accused of third degree assault. If she is found guilty, she could face up to a \$2,000 fine and/or one year in jail. Prosecutors will be calling more witnesses to the stand, including Stapp's daughter. It is unclear if Stapp will testify. Trial will continue on March 18, 2015. Source: <http://www.hawaii.newsnow.com/story/28029925/owner-of-potty-boot-camp-on-trial-for-allegedly-abusing-child>

BCSO: Detention center employee sexually assaulted teen inmate Juan De La Rosa, 39, accused of kissing teen inmate in elevator Posted February 04, 2015, 10:25 PM Updated February 05, 2015, 9:33 AM 104 9 By [Tim Gerber](#) Reporter SAN ANTONIO - He's paid by the county to watch over juvenile offenders, but investigators are accusing a juvenile detention employee of taking advantage of one of the inmates. RELATED CONTENT [SAPD: Man charged with sexually abusing minor blames victim DPS seeking help in hunt for most-wanted sex offender](#) [Man receives 40 years for sexual assault of child](#) [La Vernia teacher arrested in sexual assault of student](#) Juan De La Rosa, 39, was an MOD leader at the Bexar County Juvenile Detention Center. According to an arrest warrant, he was on duty and in uniform when he allegedly took advantage of the 16-year-old female inmate inside an elevator last month. De La Rosa was arrested Wednesday evening at his home located in the 7200 block of Albany Ridge and was charged with official oppression. He was arrested without incident by members of the Bexar County Sheriff's Office Fugitive Apprehension Unit. According to the warrant, the victim made an outcry to a rape crisis therapist on Jan. 21, stating she had been sexually assaulted by De La Rosa on Jan. 16. The teen told a forensic interviewer that De La Rosa kissed her on the

mouth while they were in an elevator together. The incident was captured on video by surveillance cameras installed in the elevator. The video allegedly shows De La Rosa kissing the victim on the mouth, while he was in his uniform and she was wearing her juvenile detention uniform. The teen victim said aside from the unwanted kiss, De La Rosa did not have any other contact with her. Official oppression is a Class A misdemeanor in Texas. If convicted, De La Rosa faces the possibility of a year in jail. [Click here to see a copy of the arrest affidavit.](#) Source: <http://www.ksat.com/content/pns/ksat/news/2015/02/04/juvenile-detention-employee-charged-with-official-oppression.html>

Girls removed from Leesburg group home after sexual battery allegations By [Elyssa Cherney](#) Staff Writer [contact the reporter](#) [Crime Sexual Assault Sexual Misconduct](#) No more girls at group home where 3 residents reported that neighborhood boys may have sexually assaulted them All four residents at a Leesburg group home where reports of sexual battery emerged last week have been moved, according to state Department of Children and Families spokeswoman Kristin Gray. [Related Lake County News Leesburg police investigate reported sexual assaults of young group-home residents See all related 8](#) After reports that three underage girls living in the for-profit group home may have been sexually assaulted by neighborhood boys, DCF began investigating "allegations of inadequate supervision" in the home. [eComments](#) Boys will be boys , they certainly won't be held accountable . 1chickenman at 6:14 PM February 05, 2015 [Add a comment](#) [See all comments 1](#) "When we were in the home conducting the assessment ... and gathering information, concerns regarding the level of supervision came up," Gray wrote in an email. "The details about what information led us to those concerns aren't releasable." The group home, W.I.N. for Kids, is licensed by DCF and has served girls between ages 6 and 17 since 2007, according to its website. It receives between \$92 and \$184 for each bed it occupies with a child in state care, according to a rate agreement between the group home and its community-based care agency. Children in state custody have been abused, neglected or abandoned. On Jan. 20, a 17-year-old resident at W.I.N. for Kids told police she was gang-raped by a group of three to seven men. Two other residents at W.I.N. for Kids home, ages 12 and 15, told police that same week that they had participated in sex acts with boys in vacant houses. Gray said that children are relocated from their current living situation during an active investigation when a request is made by an involved party. The request can come from the group home provider, DCF or a case manager, but she said she cannot disclose who asked for the change. "If its kids are unsafe then we would move them, but in this particular situation that wasn't necessarily the case," Gray said. Kids Central, the local agency that arranges placements for children in state custody, said last week that the group home was in good standing and that it did not have a history of founded abuse or neglect allegations, according to spokeswoman Nicole Pulcini Mason. "Because of the nature of group homes, just in general, people tend to make abuse allegations and it's kind of like the nature of the beast at some point," she said. "It seems to be a little bit unusual they haven't really gone through that." Police have not made any arrests but have identified a person of interest in the gang rape, according to Lt. Joe Iozzi. The girls received forensic interviews with children's advocates and the 17-year-old and 12-year old received medical examinations. [Echerney@tribune.com](#) or 352-742-5930 Source: <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/breaking-news/os--group-home-assaulted-girls-moved-20150205-story.html>

Counselor who sexually abused teen in group home looks out of chances to avoid prison [This is crazy' Markeem Chaplin says after sentencing on sex conviction](#) Markeem Chaplin spoke briefly after his sentencing today in County Court. [Print](#) By [Douglass Dowty | ddowty@syracuse.com](#) The Post-Standard Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#) on February 05, 2015 at 1:22 PM Reddit Email Syracuse, NY -- A Syracuse man who had oral sex with a Camillus group home resident can't seem to stay out of trouble. Former counselor [Markeem Chaplin](#), 23, of Syracuse, avoided prison for sex abuse after admitting he had a sexual encounter with a special needs resident under his care. Instead, he was sentenced in February 2014 to 10 years' probation and became a Level 2 sex offender. But Chaplin [violated his probation right away](#), failing to cooperate with probation officers. He was given a second chance in March 2014 after agreeing to talk about his crime and future plans. County Court Judge Thomas J. Miller promised him state prison if he strayed again. And it looks like he intends to keep his word. Chaplin was [charged with violating his probation again](#) in January, this time accused of failing to report to probation, as well as being discharged from sex offender treatment due to poor attitude and poor attendance, prosecutor Anthony Germano has said. Today, Miller said he'd send Chaplin to prison for 1 1/2 years if he pleaded guilty to the probation violation. Otherwise, Chaplin will be able to challenge the charges at a hearing. But if he loses the hearing, he could face up to 4 years in prison. Germano reiterated today that he's looking for the full sentence. The prosecutor noted that he wanted Chaplin to spend time in state prison all along. Defense lawyer Jessica Senn described Chaplin to the judge as being a hard worker with a difficult childhood. Chaplin is due back to court Feb. 13. He remains in jail with no bail. Source: http://www.syracuse.com/crime/index.ssf/2015/02/counselor_who_sexually_abused_teen_in_group_home_may_be_out_of_chances_to_avoid.html

DCF's Katz and Sen. Fasano Square Off Over Agency Oversight, Accountability Sen. Leonard Fasano, Joette Katz Courant File Photos (Courant File Photos) By [Josh Kovner](#) [contact the reporter](#) [Juvenile Delinquency Martin M Looney U.S. Department of Justice Leonard A. Fasano Beth Bye](#) Increased oversight of CT DCF being considered The Republican leader of the state Senate and child-protection Commissioner Joette Katz squared off Thursday at a public hearing over three GOP proposals to increase public oversight of the Department of Children and Families and create an independent ombudsman's office. Sen. Leonard Fasano's bills were among a dozen aired before the legislature's Committee on Children. Included was a separate bill to improve treatment of children who witness domestic violence. Sen. Martin Looney, D-New Haven, the president pro tempore of the Senate, and state child Advocate Sarah Eagan testified in support of that bill. Sen. Beth Bye, D-West Hartford, spoke in favor of a proposal to strengthen protection of infants, in light of an increase in the number of children under 3 in Connecticut who have died from maltreatment and unsafe sleeping conditions. The DCF has begun a public-awareness campaign about unsafe sleep and is working with a national foundation to better protect infants in high-risk households. Eagan testified that an overreliance on seclusion and restraints persists at the DCF's juvenile-justice facilities, including the Connecticut Juvenile Training School for boys and the Pueblo unit for girls, both in Middletown. She said the DCF's system of collecting data on its own performance and improving its response "remains incoherent, unreliable and opaque." Fasano, of North Haven, proposed that DCF adopt stronger quality-assurance measures at the training school, and that the Office of the Child Advocate become the primary agency reviewing child fatalities. [eComments](#) DCF should register itself into a mental health clinic. cbeachcomber at 8:22 AM February 06, 2015 [Add a comment](#) [See all comments 2](#) The child advocate's office and its fatality review board already investigate child deaths and recommends reform, while DCF internally examines the death cases for personnel issues and flaws in any of its protocols. The theme of Fasano's remarks was that he distrusts DCF to do internal reviews. Katz, seated in the gallery waiting for her turn to speak, slowly shook her head as Fasano reported that he'd heard from parents, group-home providers and others that DCF had closed a group home with as little as three days' notice, and without an adequate plan for the displaced children. He said the youth could "find themselves out on the street." Fasano, who has been a vocal critic of the DCF, said he was relating anecdotes to the children's committee based on conversations with teenagers, DCF staff members, parents, and providers, but wasn't vouching for the truth of what he was told. Katz, joined at the hearing by an entourage of top DCF officials, said: "I have never closed a group home in three days." She said homes aren't closed until every child has an alternative placement, a process that can take weeks or months. Sen. Dante Bartolomeo, D-Cheshire, co-chair of the children's committee, asked that Fasano's allegation be addressed and that the response be made part of the hearing record. DCF's marked shift away from group care in favor of foster homes and community treatment has resulted in the closing of some group homes. There are now 829 fewer DCF children in group homes than there were in January 2011, a 56 percent drop. In turn, more relatives and mentors of children are stepping up as foster parents. But advocates have questioned whether DCF is adequately funding the community and foster-care programs, and spending enough time and money recruiting, training, retaining, and overseeing foster parents. Katz testified that DCF has saved \$70 million from reducing group-home placements and has invested \$49 million of the savings in community and foster-care programs, and supporting foster parents. Katz, who reviews all requests for group care, said there are more than enough residential facilities in Connecticut to handle the children who need a higher level of treatment and therapy than is available in foster homes. Fasano said he supports an independent ombudsman, as opposed to DCF's own five-person ombudsman's office, which answers, ultimately, to Katz. He said questions, grievances, and complaints would receive a more objective review by an independent office. Eagan, the child advocate, also testified in favor of an independent ombudsman, though she would preserve DCF's internal office. "An ombudsman can be a voice for children and youth confined in juvenile justice facilities (and) investigate complaints, report findings and make recommendations for change," Eagan said. She said DCF's internal office "responds to many calls and concerns from family members and child welfare stakeholders. Concurrent use of an independent ombudsman who can address the needs of youth in care, particularly those in facilities, should also be considered," Eagan said. Kenneth Mysogland, who directs DCF's ombudsman program, testified that his office handled just shy of 3,000 inquiries last year and is committed to treating each concern in a comprehensive and fair manner. Mysogland said he visits DCF's large facilities and interacts with the youth, staff members, public defenders, Eagan, and others. Sen. Henri Martin, R-Bristol, the ranking Republican on the children's committee, asked Katz if she agreed

with any of Fasano's proposals. She said she didn't. "I have a hard time embracing recommendations if I feel they are built on faulty foundations," said Katz, adding that she found Fasano's proposals to be unnecessary. For example, she said, that the training school in Middletown is nationally accredited and doesn't need additional, or different, quality assessments, as Fasano suggested. But advocates have in recent months pressed DCF to adopt performance standards that better measure the conditions at the training school. Eagan testified that her office strongly supports the proposal to "strengthen quality assurance and transparency for state-run and state contracted juvenile justice facilities—thereby enabling a greater opportunity to address urgent and significant concerns about conditions of confinement for some juveniles and facilitating well-informed, collaborative juvenile justice response." Eagan noted that the Judicial Branch's juvenile services division uses a performance assessment developed by the U.S. Department of Justice to improve conditions in juvenile detention centers. Katz said she welcomes all manner of input and believes the department operates under "the public microscope." But she said the agency should monitor itself. The children's committee took no action on the bills Thursday. The panel at a later date will vote on which measures to send on to the full House or Senate, Copyright © 2015, [Hartford Courant](http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-dcf-bills-20150205-story.html) Source: <http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-dcf-bills-20150205-story.html>

<http://onforb.es/1Ch8e71> Nick Morrison Contributor [Contact Nick Morrison](http://onforb.es/1Ch8e71) The author is a Forbes contributor. The opinions expressed are those of the writer. **Education** 2/11/2015 @ 10:14AM **Gaming Can Give Troubled Teens Another Shot At Learning** Students who get turned off by education can struggle to see the point of schools, but one project is showing how gaming can give troubled teens another shot at learning. Games developer Kuato has already won plaudits for its work in schools, where students have to learn basic code to take a robot through an adventure/shoot-em-up game. To date, the game has proved a hit in schools from Eton to the East End of London, and has been used in more than one million coding sessions in schools across the world, the equivalent of 60,000 hours of teaching code. But in a new departure, Kuato has gone into a school for students who struggle to engage with mainstream education, to see if coding can give them a reason to learn. The Pavilion Study Centre in north London caters for teenagers who have been unable to settle in regular schools. Most have poor attendance records, and many have either already been excluded from school or were at serious risk of exclusion. So it would seem an ideal test-bed to see if coding can succeed where alternative approaches have failed. And the results suggest that creating games does have the power to switch students back on to education. The approach is simple, says David Miller, Kuato's director of learning and a former U.K. teacher of the year. Students can only play the game once they have learned to write a few lines of Javascript. The lesson taps into a fascination with gaming, while showing they can be creators as well as players. At the same time, it presents an alternative vision of the point of education. "They have a natural interest in computer games – they are the millennium generation who have grown up with games – but they're also interested to know there is a way of being creative," says Miller. "So much of mainstream school is about passing exams to go into medicine or law or engineering, and so many kids are turned off by that particular path." As the lesson progressed, Miller says the students went from suspicion at another group of 'experts' coming in telling them what to do, to an enthusiastic engagement with the project. Kevin Matthews, assistant head at the Pavilion, said learning to code – and being able to play with the results – had a dramatic effect on the students. "Most of our students are lacking in confidence and self-esteem and they often have issue with trust, and we have some who find it difficult to focus on an activity," he says. "But they really did love it. It was similar to a game they could buy in the shops so they didn't feel they were being fobbed off, and they could see immediate results. They could see the effect of what they put in." Such instant feedback is not always apparent in education, and it was also notable that some of those who picked it up quickly were eager to help the less able students, Matthews adds. Exercises such as this help students to realise they do not have to be just consumers of technology, says Richard Crick, the centre's IT co-ordinator. It's not just the Kuato project. The centre also teaches students to create their own apps, for example. This in turn helps the students believe that a worthwhile career may not be closed to them after all, despite the fact they are unlikely to leave education with a string of qualifications. "We're empowering them to control the technology they're using," says Crick. A particularly interesting element of the project is that the students were encouraged to become self-directed learners, in a way that mimics game-playing itself. "They teach themselves to play the game as well as learning from the game," says Miller. He believes projects such as this can have a domino effect, translating a new-found interest in learning into other areas. "It is a way of accessing the learning instinct," he says. Of course this project does not mean that computer games are the way to get every disaffected student interested in learning. But it underlines that where teenagers are switched off from education, then looking at alternatives to traditional teaching may not be a bad place to start. Follow me on twitter @nsdmorrison This article is available online at/Source: <http://onforb.es/1Ch8e71>

Death raises questions about Elk Grove foster home By Brad Branan bbranan@sacbee.com 02/07/2015 4:43 PM 02/07/2015 10:30 PM **Allenia Bledsoe Story Comments** A 2-year-old girl placed in an Elk Grove foster home died of acute pneumonia, the Sacramento County Coroner's Office concluded in a report that has done little to quell the concerns of the girl's birth family. The coroner's 10-page report details the examination of Allenia Bledsoe, including the finding of bacteria in her lungs leading to pneumonia, but does not address the circumstances of her illness or the response by her foster mother. The report about the Nov. 7 death was completed late last month. In response to questions from The Sacramento Bee, Coroner Kimberly Gin said her office interviewed the foster mother and learned she did not take Allenia to a doctor. "The child was sick with some type of cold or virus that all the kids in the house had," Gin said. "She seemed to get better, as did everyone else. The day she died she wasn't exhibiting any symptoms at all." Related [Sacramento parents seek answers in foster care death of their 2-year-old](#) Allenia's bacterial infection was likely the result of the virus that was going around the house, she said. For Allenia's birth parents, the report only adds to the questions they've had since the toddler's death, when they were told Allenia woke up upset early in the morning and was found unresponsive a few hours later. "She didn't have a fighting chance," said her mother, Jayme Wimberly. "I want to know why they didn't bring her to the hospital." Allenia's grandmother, Alicia Bledsoe, said the family is upset because neither the county nor the foster-care agency responsible for Allenia will discuss the circumstances of her death in any detail. "They should have brought her to the hospital," she said. At her home, foster mother Latasha Norman was reluctant to discuss Allenia's death last week. Asked why she didn't take Allenia to a doctor, she said, "Because I didn't know she was sick. I didn't know she had pneumonia." She then shut her front door, refusing to answer any more questions. Several children could be seen in her home. Denise Lowery, administrator of New Horizons Foster Care Agency in West Sacramento, confirmed that Norman continues to work for the agency. She said investigations by the state Department of Social Services and county Child Protective Services found that Norman had done nothing wrong. She said foster children often get sick without going to a doctor, unless the illness continues, and then the agency recommends that foster parents take them to a physician. "I feel awful for them," Lowery said of Allenia's family. Two pediatricians contacted by The Bee for their professional opinions said they did not want to get involved in a potential legal matter. Coughing, fever, chills and shortness of breath are the most common symptoms of pneumonia, according to the American Lung Association. While not common, young children can die from pneumonia, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Gin said it is not unusual for parents who have lost children to say they exhibited no symptoms of the illness that killed them. "I can't say the child did not have symptoms," she said of Allenia. "I can only say that we are often told this story of no symptoms." Laura McCasland, a CPS spokeswoman, said she could not comment about the agency's investigation because it found no evidence of neglect or abuse by the foster mother. Michael Weston, a Department of Social Services spokesman, said he could not discuss anything about Norman's record as a foster mother because of confidentiality laws. But Weston was able to discuss her record as a provider of other child care services. Norman has been licensed to provide child care since 2002 in Sacramento and Solano counties and had licensing problems with her Playful Scholars business around the time of Allenia's death, Weston said. On Nov. 10, three days after Allenia's death, the department responded to a complaint that she was providing child care without a license, records show. Sacramento County, which then licensed day care facilities, had revoked her license because she had failed to pay a license fee, Weston said. The state, which recently took over licensing duties from the county, upheld the complaint and told her to reapply, Weston said. She was given a child care license from the state last month. Norman has a history of financial problems associated with her child care business, bankruptcy records show. She filed for bankruptcy protection twice in 2013. Her income barely covered expenses and she had more than \$100,000 in debt, most of it owed to the Internal Revenue Service for failing to pay income taxes five years in a row, according to records she filed with the court. She also listed a \$12,000 debt to Dana Hurkens of Rancho Cordova from the settlement of a 2007 civil case in Sacramento Superior Court. Hurkens said Norman was renting her building for her child care business and moved out without telling her or turning off the water. "She said, 'I can't operate. I'm going under,'" Hurkens said. "The pipes froze and burst and caused \$200,000 in damage. We couldn't use the building for three years." Call The Bee's Brad Branan, (916) 321-1065. Follow him on Twitter @BradB at SacBee. Source: <http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article9529571.html#storylink=cpy>

Group-home supervision questioned after three girls reported sexual assaults By [Elyssa Cherney](#) Orlando Sentinel [contact the reporter](#) **Crime Sexual Assault** DCF is probing the quality of care at a Leesburg group home where residents reported sex offenses Teenage girls are the most difficult DCF population

to manage, leading child advocate says. 3 girls who said they were sexually assaulted have been removed from the Leesburg group home where they lived

LEESBURG — Twyne Littlejohn misses the bubbly girls who lived in the modest home on her street. The teenagers, sitting outside in the high-crime community, would wave hello and ask for candy or for her homemade frozen juice cups, said Littlejohn, 63. "I talked to them, they were nice girls," she said. "They acted like regular teenagers, but they had underlying stuff... These are kids that probably have a lot of mental-health issues and self-esteem issues that started from their families." Now the girls, wards of the state, are gone. The state Department of Children and Families removed them — ages 12, 15 and 17 — from the for-profit group home in Leesburg's Carver Heights neighborhood while authorities investigate allegations that they were sexually assaulted. The accusations have raised questions about the quality of care provided by W.I.N. for Kids, which is licensed by DCF. In a one-week span, a sobbing teenager reported to Leesburg police that she was gang-raped by a group of four to seven neighborhood men, and two other residents told police they participated in sex acts with boys in abandoned homes nearby. No arrests had been made in the cases but police are following a person of interest, Lt. Joe Iozzi said. Now, DCF is investigating "allegations of inadequate supervision" at the group home, spokeswoman Kristin Gray said. Gray said the agency is considering several key questions about W.I.N. for Kids: "Were the children receiving proper supervision in this group home? Was the house parent providing the proper structure? Did she have control over this population?" [cComments](#) @SayAgain Turnover is high. It's because the agency's focus is it's budget and the advancement of career bureaucrats, not the care and safety of children. FormerHater at 3:12 PM February 09, 2015 [Add a comment](#) [See all comments](#) 4 It is unclear how many adults lived in the 1,800-square-foot home in the city of 21,000. The ranch house, which boasts a neatly-trimmed lawn with flowers and a minivan in the driveway, is licensed to take six girls. Just four had lived there recently but all have been relocated, Gray said. The girls' living arrangement wasn't unusual. Statewide, 2,125 children are placed in group homes, 386 of them in Central Florida, according to the child-welfare agency. Fewer children end up in group homes than in other placements, such as with a foster family or a relative, due in part to the fact that there aren't enough people willing to house older wards of the state, Gray said. Plus, teenage girls are challenging. Jack Levine, Florida's leading child and family policy advocate, said it's because many have been sexually or physically victimized. Even with good supervision girls can stray toward risky behavior, he said. "The mental processes that many girls go through is a very odd combination of trust and fear," said Levine, who served as president of the nonprofit Voices for Florida's Children for 25 years and now works in Tallahassee. As a result, he said, these girls may be "seeking a male model that they may not have in their own family, usually utilizing their sexuality as basically pay for emotional stability. The irony is that in the giving of herself, she is not getting stability — she is getting a new level of victimization." As the 17-year-old from W.I.N. For Kids relayed her story to police, her "arms clenched around her torso, and [an] occasional knee pulled to her chest appeared genuine," a report states. In the second case, one child told police she had never had sex before while the other said she frequently engages in group sex and that "she does this for attention," according to the report. All the girls received forensic interviews with child advocates and medical exams were done on the 12- and 17-year-olds, according to Leesburg Police Maj. Steve Rockefeller. South Carolina native Tamiko Aikens, who is listed on the group home's website as the executive director, declined to comment on the ongoing investigation. The group home appears to cater to girls who may have been victimized or who have discipline problems, according to the website. "We have a vision to guide our children into a state of realization in order that they may have the ability to talk through and manage tough situations rather than act them out," the website states. The website also notes that Aikens opened the group home, which takes girls between 6 and 17, in 2007 after "a series of life events lead Ms. Aikens to her true purpose in life, to help children." The group home was in good standing before the sexual-battery reports, according to Kids Central Inc., a community-based care agency that arranges placements for children in state custody. The group home receives \$92 to \$184 for each bed occupied overnight, according to a rate agreement with Kids Central and DCF. Littlejohn, who runs a male youth group for area kids called The Great Plan, said the house mother was strict with the girls but that she also gave them the freedom to make their own choices. "They weren't in jail in a locked facility," she said. "They can move around and do what they want to do." Other neighbors agreed, adding that the girls could be seen sitting on an electrical box near the house and were instructed by the house mom not to move from there, apparently as a way to keep tabs on their whereabouts. In the past two years, Leesburg police responded to the group home 35 times, most often due to a juvenile complaint or a missing person. The incident reports detail a living situation in which the house mother couldn't always manage the girls without help from law enforcement. On one occasion in June, police were called to settle a dispute between two girls after one said she accidentally broke someone else's shoe and a shouting match broke out, according to the report. Earlier that year, police arrested one of the residents for having marijuana. Levine said it's normal for any child to resist authority and that it's impossible to predict adolescent behavior. But there are still certain expectations of a house parent in a group home, he said. "You've got to set the stage for success by actually having the children understand the consequences of certain behaviors, but also to help them set their own rules," he said. "As hard as it is, there are some people who do it and do it really well." W.I.N. for Kids is classified as a "parent model," which means it's a hybrid between a foster home, in which kids are placed with families, and a more traditional group home where staff monitors the kids in shifts, according to DCF. Gray said that the W.I.N. for Kids environment is more preferable because it offers a "smaller, more intimate type of setting with less children and the same caregiver instead of people shifting in and out." Neighbor Littlejohn said she was shocked to hear about the review of the group home. "I think she [the house mother] tried to treat them like regular kids," Littlejohn said. "Every child wants to be treated like normal without distinctions... I saw her doing her job and whatever it took to make it work."

echerney@tribune.com or 352-742-5930 Source: <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/lake/os-group-home-sexual-assault-girls-20150209-story.html#page=1>

Memo To Civil Rights Activists: Testing Isn't Helping Is forcing every child to take annual standardized tests in reading and math a civil rights issue? That certainly seems to be one of the questions most in consideration in Washington, DC, since deliberations began on how to rewrite the federal government's most significant education policy No Child Left Behind. Back in January, when Congressional committees in both houses began their conversations, [The Washington Post](#) reported, "a coalition of civil rights groups" had released a [statement](#) urging Congress to maintain the annual standardized tests in math and reading. "The testing requirement has come under fire from a strange-bedfellows movement of teachers unions, parents, and conservative lawmakers," notes [The Post's](#) Emma Brown, "who argue that the exams represent an overreach by the federal government that has turned schools into one-dimensional test-prep institutions." Indeed, parents and teachers across the country are up in arms about their schools' overreliance on standardized tests. The blogsite Fairtest, by The National Center for Fair and Open Testing, keeps a [running tally](#) of news stories across the country reporting on resistance to the tests including boisterous street protests, demonstrations at school board meetings and state capitals, and efforts to boycott the tests. You'd be hard pressed to find a state where there isn't open and prominent rebellion against the tests. A lot of the controversy addresses not only the existence of the tests but also how the scores are used for high-stakes decisions on how schools and teachers are performing and whether to pass students onto the next grade or to graduation. The nation's largest teachers' union, the National Education Association, has come out [firmly against the annual testing](#). So has the other national teachers' union, [the American Federation of Teachers](#) at least in terms of how they are being used in the high-stakes decision making. But the civil rights groups argue that annual testing is necessary, Brown reported. "No Child Left Behind's testing requirement has unmasked yawning achievement gaps and forced all states and school districts to focus on serving poor and minority students, including those with disabilities." "Any rewrite of No Child Left Behind should keep annual testing provisions" writes [the editorial board](#) of [The Washington Post](#). Their editorial accused teachers unions of giving "lip service to accountability as long as their members aren't the ones held to account." "The tests were intended as a way for schools to see whether all student groups, but particularly minorities and poor students, were being taught adequately" an article in [The New York Times](#) states, noting that the Obama administration is steadfast in insisting annual tests stay in the legislation. A particularly vehement defense of annual testing appearing at the blogsite [Education Post](#), operated by a former communications director in the Obama administration's Education Department, compares proposals to curb annual testing to efforts by the National Rifle Association to block most federal research into gun violence and deaths. The writer calls it a "blatant attempt to dump the evidence." So how bout that evidence? Are Black Males Better Off? After 12 years of test-driven education accountability aligned with a "civil rights" cause, you would expect to see substantial improvements among student populations most in need of being better served by the system. That's not the conclusion of [a new report](#) released by The Schott Foundation for Public Education. [Full disclosure, Schott is a partner of the Education Opportunity Network.] The report, the most recent edition of "The Schott 50 State Report on Public Education and Black Males," analyzed over a decade of data on the chronically troubled population of young Black males in the country and found too little progress and evidence of recent deterioration. Despite stated intentions of federal education policies, gaps in scores in reading and math tests on the National Assessment of Education Progress between black males and their white peers continue to be wide. Nationally, 38 percent of white males scored at or above proficient on the 2013 NAEP assessment in reading, but only 17 percent of Latino males and 12 percent of Black males did. In math, 13 percent of Black males scored at or above proficient on the 2013 NAEP Grade 8 math assessment, while scores were 21 percent of Latino males and 45 percent of White males. These gaps in achievement get reflected in graduation rates. Of the 48 states where data were collected, "in 35 states and the District of Columbia, black males

remain at the bottom of four-year high school graduation rates. (Latino males were at the bottom in 13 states.)” Nine states and the District of Columbia still have alarmingly bad track records for graduating black males of 55 percent or less. While there has been some progress in high school graduation rates for black males over the past decade, the report’s estimate of 59 percent for the 2012-2013 school year are actually lower than the 61 percent mark the US Department of Education forecasted in 2011, which means the direction for these students may be going backward. Nationally, the graduation gap between black and white males has not only persisted, but widened from 19 percentage points in school year 2009-10 to 21 percentage points in 2012-13. Eleven states have over a 25-percentage point gap between black and white student graduation rates. In higher education, these attainment gaps are reflected in data as well, showing only 16 percent of black males eventually holding a Bachelor’s Degree or higher – half of what white males achieve and only somewhat better than the 12 percent rate among Latino males. “Black males continue to be both pushed out and locked out of opportunities for academic achievement,” the report states, “including notable disparities in their enrollment in Advanced Placement courses and participation in Gifted and Talented programming. Furthermore, Black students were more likely to be classified as students with disabilities.” These findings continue to make clear there is “a systemic problem impacting black males,” as Schott’s executive director John Jackson writes in remarks. The report calls for “tailored approaches adapted to personal educational needs, social contexts, and students’ learning styles. The current standard approach does not serve high or low achievers well.” You could argue these findings are irrelevant to issues of standardized testing – that the tests are meant to chart the academic progress of each student year to year, and eventual trajectories such as high school graduation and college degrees are affected by other factors not discernable through annual testing. But that’s the point. While so much emphasis has been focused on standardized testing, much bigger, more important issues impacting young students of color have been sorely neglected. The demands of testing have simply crowded out those issues. The Bigger Picture On Test-Driven Education “For very good reasons, many civil rights groups lined up behind NCLB (just as some now continue to support test-based reforms),” a [recent brief](#) from the National Education Policy Center states. But “it is important to note that achievement gaps were well known prior to NCLB,” the brief notes. So what have we accomplished, in terms of civil rights advancement, with 12 years of test-driven reform? “Since NCLB became law in 2002,” the researchers write, “students may have shown slight increases in test scores, relative to pre-NCLB students. Looking at the results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), however, any test score increases over the pre-NCLB trend are very small, and they are miniscule compared to what early advocates of NCLB promised. We as a nation have devoted enormous amounts of time and money to the focused goal of increasing test scores, and we have almost nothing to show for it.” A recent broadcast of the [Diane Rehm show](#) had a noteworthy point counter-point on the issue of testing between pro-test advocate Matthew Chingos of the Brookings Institution and Elaine Weiss of the Broader Bolder Approach to Education who advocates for a [very different direction in education policy](#). In the discussion, Chingos claims there was “pretty good research evidence” that the goals of NCLB have been accomplished in part, but Weiss points to a [study](#) by the National Academy of Sciences that found an over reliance on test data had produced no substantial gains in student achievement and had led to narrowing of the curriculum, particularly in schools serving low-income students. The study, reported on by [Valerie Strauss](#) of The Washington Post, found, “Standardized tests commonly used in schools to measure student performance – including high school exit exams and tests in various grades mandated by former president Bush’s No Child Left Behind law – ‘fall short of providing a complete measure of desired educational outcomes in many ways.’” While Chingos argues to the radio audience that annual tests can tell us what effect a school has had on the year-to-year progress of a student, Weiss counters these tests “do a horrible job of telling us how schools are doing.” In fact, because of the strong correlation of test scores to the household income level of the student being tested – [a correlation that is undeniably true all over the world](#) – tests mostly “tell us how many poor kids are in the school,” Weiss explains. What should we be doing instead? How Bout This Instead? To begin with, “Testing should not be driving reform,” the folks at NEPC assert. The disparities among subgroups of students will not close by perfecting our testing strategies but only when we commit to “sustained investment and improvement based on proven strategies that directly increase children’s opportunities to learn.” Their conclusion is, “An incremental increase in reading or math scores means almost nothing, particularly if children’s engagement is decreased; if test-prep comes at a substantial cost to science, civics, and the arts, and schooling as a whole shifts from learning to testing.” Instead they call for “a sustained, fair, adequate and equitable investment in all our children sufficient to provide them their educational birthright.” Echoing these recommendations, the policy document from Broader, Bolder Approach linked above calls for “comprehensive supports for the disadvantaged students.” Specifically, the document advocates universal access to high-quality early childhood education and family supports, more “quality time” for enriching instruction, and a “supports-based approach” that includes attention to these students’ nutrition, health, wellness, counseling/guidance, and mental and emotional health. Another [intriguing idea](#) is to change annual testing from high-stakes assessments of every student to a sampling of students – disaggregated by race, income and other factors – for the purpose of diagnosing learning problems – a sort of schools-based NAEP. However, the civil rights argument for The Big Annual Test continues to devolve into circular reasoning: Justifications for the tests are based exclusively on what the tests produce – that we need to test every poor black and brown child every year to see what their test scores are. We know what to do when we’re going in circles. Change directions. Source: <http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/memo-to-civil-rights-activists-testing-isnt-helping/>

The price of mental health: 'I'd rather be sad' After a childhood filled with periods of intense therapy, Alex, a 27-year-old New Yorker with a career in theatre, doesn't expect to go back [Is therapy worth it? Seven personal tales about the price of mental health](#) “Maybe just because I am cheap, I’d rather be sad and keep the money than engage in [therapy].” Illustration: Illustration by Chloe Cushman for the Guardian [Jana Kasperkevic @kasperka](#) Tuesday 17 February 2015 08.30 EST Last modified on Tuesday 17 February 2015 10.01 EST [Share on Facebook](#) [Share on Twitter](#) [Share via Email](#) [Share on LinkedIn](#) [Share on Google+](#) [Share on WhatsApp](#) Shares 88 88 [Comments 6](#) This is one of seven interviews with young professionals about their experiences with therapy and its costs. [Read the rest here](#). By the time Alex turned 18, he couldn’t remember a time when he hadn’t been on medication or in therapy. As a depressed and anxious child, Alex worried his parents, who he says “like to throw money at problems”. When he was a teenager - based on the recommendation of an educational consultant - they sent him to a residential treatment center in Utah. Alex describes the 22 months that he spent at the center as a period of intense therapy. At \$6,000 a month, Alex’s stay at the center included room and board, “very bad meals”, schooling and therapy. “It was more expensive than a college education,” he says. The fundamental nature of the economic transaction bothers Alex. “For parents, it’s a strange thing because they want their kid fixed and shielded from evil, but presumably because it’s a thing you are buying, you want it done fast,” he says. “That’s the transaction: fix our kid and do it better and faster than the program down the street.” The summer before he started college, Alex decided to find out what would happen if he stopped taking his medication and stopped going to his weekly sessions. “I was curious,” he says. “Would it all fall apart?” It didn’t. “Everything was sort of the same,” he says. “It ended up being fairly OK, save for the occasional depressive episode.” He decided he’d rather get through these episodes himself than engage in more therapy. Currently, Alex has been out of therapy for about 10 years. “Maybe just because I am cheap, I’d rather be sad and keep the money than engage in [therapy],” he says. “For me, it means more to have a therapeutic conversation with a friend, who I know isn’t being paid to listen.” He says he is probably never going back to therapy. Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/money/2015/feb/17/mental-health-treatment-costs-children-medication-therapy>

Workers at Rockford girls center: Therapy included cartoons, faked records Ex-worker Rock River Anthony Souffle, Chicago Tribune Former Rock River Academy worker Angelia Babcock: “A lot of staff made stuff up. If you would pull some of the notes, you could look up one kid, and it would be the same intervention day after day for that kid.” Former Rock River Academy worker Angelia Babcock: “A lot of staff made stuff up. If you would pull some of the notes, you could look up one kid, and it would be the same intervention day after day for that kid.” (Anthony Souffle, Chicago Tribune) By [David Jackson](#), [Duaa Eldeib](#) and [Gary Marx](#) Chicago Tribune [contact the reporters](#) Girls with troubled lives pleaded in vain for therapy at Rock River residential center, ex-workers say. At Rock River Academy, records show ‘group therapy’ might mean watching ‘Lilo & Stitch.’ Ex-worker at Rockford girls center: ‘You would feel sorry for the girls who really wanted some help.’ At Rock River Academy, hours that were billed as “group therapy” for girls with troubled histories instead were spent watching movies in a common area, with no discussion afterward, according to a state monitoring report and interviews with former workers. Direct-care workers at the Rockford facility were expected to produce daily reports stating they had engaged residents in therapy sessions for a certain number of minutes each shift, according to training materials that spelled out “The Rules.” But employees said they often were too preoccupied with breaking up brawls and defusing crises to provide any meaningful therapy. Some workers told the Tribune that their colleagues started their shifts by typing out accounts of therapy sessions they had yet to provide. Sometimes, they said, they copied and pasted clinical notes from one resident’s file to another. [DCFS monitoring fails to fix problems at Rock River \(timeline\)](#) [Chicago Tribune Graphics](#) [Chicago Tribune Graphics](#) Meanwhile, girls who had suffered traumatic abuse pleaded in vain to see a counselor, they said. “There are a lot of false reports about seeing counselors. We used to read through those reports and laugh,” said Maxine Leavy, an

employee at Rock River until 2012 who now works with juveniles in a local detention center. "Kids wasn't getting any therapy or counseling. It was just like a kennel — someplace to put your animal. You would feel sorry for the girls who really wanted some help." The 59-bed, all-female facility announced last month that it would close after the Tribune's "Harsh Treatment" investigation revealed that young residents were assaulted by peers and lured into prostitution. State officials have been transferring youths to other placements, and the facility will operate at diminished capacity until its scheduled closure in April. [\[Related Harsh Treatment Graphic essays: Stories of youth without homes See all related 8\]](#) Rock River remains part of a widening U.S. Justice Department investigation into billing practices and conditions of care at 18 of the 190 behavioral health facilities run by Universal Health Services Inc., a \$7 billion-per-year for-profit company. Universal has not been accused of wrongdoing in that federal probe and has said it provides compassionate, high-quality care that lifts the lives of troubled youths. For this story, the Tribune interviewed more than two dozen former Rock River workers, although many of them spoke on condition that they not be named because they feared professional and legal retribution from Universal. The Tribune also examined thousands of pages of confidential juvenile case files and other records and interviewed former residents who said there was little engaging programming or therapy at Rock River. [\[Harsh Treatment series, reactionOpen link\]](#) Universal said in a statement that it disputed the accounts of pressure to file misleading reports at Rock River. Staff were trained on how to submit proper records, and state officials audited those records, the statement said. "If employees had been found to have intentionally falsified records, such employees would have been subject to disciplinary action, including immediate termination if warranted," it said. Allegations of misleading records and lack of treatment also appear in government monitoring reports and civil lawsuits at other Universal youth treatment facilities. In one example, Universal in 2012 agreed to pay \$6.85 million to settle federal and state allegations under the False Claims Act that one of its Virginia youth facilities had inflated bills to Medicaid while providing substandard psychiatric treatment to adolescents. [cComments CUT THE FUNDING, GOV RAUNER!](#) rubiconxj1998 at 7:01 PM February 21, 2015 [Add a comment See all comments 11](#) In a separate example, in 2013, state officials in Illinois commissioned the University of Illinois at Chicago's psychiatry department to examine the treatment and safety of juvenile wards at Universal's Garfield Park Hospital in Chicago. The UIC team reported "alteration or falsification of medical records," saying a top hospital official reportedly pulled notes from one ward's chart "and had the medical director and nurse rewrite their notes to exclude any mention of the unit being volatile or unsafe." Universal said in a statement that it disputes the allegations that medical records were falsified and added that there was no finding of wrongdoing in either case. Well over half of Universal's income from its youth residential treatment facilities comes from Medicaid, the federal health care program, and Universal reports a roughly 20 percent profit margin from the centers, according to the company's Securities & Exchange Commission reports and public statements. Rock River Academy Anthony Souffle, Chicago Tribune Rock River Academy announced it would close after a Tribune series revealed residents were assaulted by peers and lured into prostitution. Rock River Academy announced it would close after a Tribune series revealed residents were assaulted by peers and lured into prostitution. (Anthony Souffle, Chicago Tribune) Because of Universal's intricate billing procedures, the Illinois comptroller could not determine the dollar amount state agencies paid for housing and treatment of youths at Rock River. Universal does not disclose its revenues or profits from specific residential centers, saying it focuses on high quality treatment. "A typical day in treatment includes 3-5 hours of therapeutic activity — group therapy, psychoeducational or didactic groups, activities and 5 hours of school," Universal said. But Ashley Doan, who worked at the facility for a few months last year, said "the girls have to beg to talk to therapists." Former resident Tesla Ann Wroblewski, 16, who spent more than a year at Rock River starting when she was 13, said the violent atmosphere undermined therapy. "I am glad they're closing — it's a relief to me, because at least now the girls will find actual help," she said. As a newly hired frontline worker with no counseling experience, Stephanie Burdick said Rock River didn't properly train her or other staff to lead therapy sessions or address the wards' intense needs. "They should have special therapists do groups with them surrounding their impulse control, eating disorders, suicide attempts. They should be having better therapy," Burdick said. Teresa Jones said she walked off the job after only a few days on Rock River's residential unit in July because she felt unprepared for the mayhem she encountered: "I felt like my supervisors just threw me in there. ... I felt like I had to fend for myself," Jones said. "I was a baby sitter. You watch some kids and make sure they just don't tear up the house." In at least one instance, monitors from the state Department of Children and Family Services filed internal reports on the lack of therapy at Rock River as well as misleading facility claims that treatment was provided. In 2012, DCFS monitors were called into the facility after other government agencies raised alarms about a series of violent brawls and group runaways. Reviewing 10 Rock River youth case files, the team found one mental health assessment was "obviously a cut and paste composition with repetitive errors." They also observed a facility group therapy session in which girls watched the cartoon movie "Lilo & Stitch," "which had (no) therapeutic value and was not processed with youth afterward. Monitor described group work as 'busy work' for the most part." In response to the monitors, Rock River promised "corrective action plans" and designated existing staff to "performance improvement teams," internal agency memos obtained by the Tribune show. [18 mental health facilities part of federal probe Chicago Tribune Graphics Chicago Tribune Graphics](#) But former staff members told the Tribune that colleagues continued the practice of showing movies and calling it group therapy, even when there was no effort to pick a relevant film or have the girls discuss it in a therapeutic way. Universal's statement said that appropriate movies and TV shows are shown for recreational purposes and that Rock River does not seek payment from Medicaid without a therapeutic component. Workers also said they saw their colleagues copy excerpts from one girl's file into another girl's records to create documents used to bill the government. "It was cut and paste clinical notes," said former mental health counselor Jean Bush, who left Rock River three years ago and now works at another residential facility. Former workers said that while administrators did not order them to falsify reports, they felt relentless pressure to generate the paperwork used for reimbursement from government agencies. Cutting corners became an accepted practice among the beleaguered staff, workers said. [\[Related Harsh Treatment Graphic essays: Stories of youth without homes See all related 8\]](#) "When you're spending the night in crisis and you're trying to keep the girls safe, you don't have the time to talk to the girls, but ... if you didn't write your notes, you'd get pulled into meetings and get wrote up," said Angelia Babcock, who said she worked for Rock River for more than a year until last year. "A lot of staff made stuff up. If you would pull some of the notes, you could look up one kid, and it would be the same intervention day after day for that kid." On non-school days, workers were expected to produce reports saying they gave each child in their care 23 to 37 minutes of therapy, according to Rock River training records and interviews. Those reports were used in billing government agencies, the facility records show. Expectations about how many minutes were to be reported varied depending on the shift and whether youth were attending school. To meet those expectations, some workers would report that they held sustained therapy sessions when they had interacted with a girl only sporadically, according to Tribune interviews with former staff. [Graphic essay: A beating by peers, chaos during class and a bold bid for freedom Chicago Tribune Graphics Chicago Tribune Graphics](#) "There was a day I was told I had to do notes on girls and I didn't have any interactions with them," said one former worker who spoke on condition that she not be named. That worker said she witnessed others do just that. Employees said administrators provided examples of precise phrases and language to be inserted into notes on therapy sessions. Some said they watched colleagues start their shifts by writing up reports on interactions with residents, when they hadn't actually seen the girls yet. "How can a person type notes at 7 in the morning for an intervention that supposedly occurred at 2 in the afternoon?" one former worker asked. [cComments CUT THE FUNDING, GOV RAUNER!](#) rubiconxj1998 at 7:01 PM February 21, 2015 [Add a comment See all comments 11](#) Burdick recalled one short-staffed weekend shift when she and a fellow worker had to handle 12 girls, including one who needed one-on-one supervision with an employee always at her side. "There were two suicide attempts. It was complete chaos," Burdick said. "And after the weekend, my supervisor asked me, 'How did the weekend go?' I told him everything, and the first question out of his mouth was, 'Did you get any notes done?' I just looked at him like, really?" [dylackson@tribpub.com deldeib@tribpub.com gmarx@tribpub.com](#) Copyright © 2015, [Chicago Tribune](#) Source: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/watchdog/rctc-rock-river-records-met-20150220-story.html#page=1>

New Seattle Test Boycott Erupts: Nathan Hale High School votes to refuse to administer a Common Core test By [I AM AN EDUCATOR](#) on February 24, 2015 Today, I found out from my good friend Doug Edelstein that his school community decided to collectively refuse to administer the new Common Core test, the SBAC, to 11th graders. Doug teaches at, and graduated from, Nathan Hale (in fact, my step-dad was a classmate of his). The Nathan Hale Senate—a body made up of the teachers, administrators, parents and students—voted nearly unanimously that this test was inappropriate. The vote was taken after careful consideration and much discussion and inquiry, including two school community forums — one of which included University of Washington professor of education and [renowned scholar](#) on high-stakes testing, Wayne Au. This is the first year that the SBAC is required in the Seattle Public Schools, and this action represents an escalation of the high-stakes testing resistance that erupted against the MAP test in 2013. In taking this action, Nathan Hale has become the latest focal point of what has now become the [largest ongoing revolt](#) against high-stakes testing in U.S. history and an important new escalation in the national resistance to common core testing. Doug wrote the following announcement of Nathan Hale's courageous decision to take a stand against the testocracy: This afternoon the Nathan Hale Senate (functions as Building Leadership Team) voted nearly unanimously not to administer the SBAC tests to 11th

graders this year. The Senate also recently voted not to administer the PSAT test to 10th graders at all in the future. Reasons for refusing the SBAC for 11th graders included (summary): 1. Not required for graduation 2. Colleges will not use them this year 3. Since NCLB requires all students pass the tests by 2014, and since few if any schools will be able to do that, all schools will therefore be considered failing by that standard. There is thus no reason to participate in erroneous and misapplied self-labeling. 4. It is neither valid nor reliable nor equitable assessment. We will use classroom based assessments to guide next instructional steps. 5. Cut scores of the SBAC reflect poor assessment strategy and will produce invalid and unreliable outcomes. 6. Student made this point: "Why waste time taking a test that is meaningless and that most of us will fail?" 7. The SBAC will tie up computer lab time for weeks. 8. The SBAC will take up time students need to work on classroom curriculum. This is an important step. Nathan Hale is asserting its commitment to valid, reliable, equitable assessment. This decision is the result of community and parent meetings, careful study of research literature, knowledge of our students' needs, commitment to excellence in their education, and adherence to the values and ideas of best-practice instruction. This resolution does not mean NHHS will refuse the 10th grade SBAC assessments, sorry to say. But the way the school went about the decision is a powerful model for other schools, and means that anything is still possible in that regard. Yay. Doug Edelstein Source: <http://iamaneducator.com/2015/02/24/new-seattle-test-boycott-erupts-nathan-hale-high-school-votes-to-refuse-to-administer-a-common-core-test/>

Dumb And Dumber In The Republican House Education Bill For sure, there is a lot for Democrats to dislike about the current version of No Child Left Behind federal education legislation steaming toward approval in the US House of Representatives. The bill, [HR5 the Student Success Act](#), was written completely by Republicans, passed through committee without any Democratic support, and has already drawn strong opposition from the Obama administration and others. But [with Republicans firmly in charge of efforts to rewrite NCLB](#), it's important to identify specifics in the bill that should become bright lines Democrats can't cross and points for inclusion to fight for in Senate negotiations and joint deliberations. What's Dumb At the top of the list of what Democrats oppose in the Student Success Act is the insistence among Republicans that federal money for public schools be further constricted. While a number of state governors and prominent voices on Capitol Hill have come to the realization that [levels of spending on education need to increase substantially](#), the bill from the Republican controlled House would ensure long terms cuts. Quick to criticize this, President Obama was quoted in Beltway news outlet [The Hill](#) saying the Republican bill would "lock in cuts to schools for the rest of this decade." A [White House report](#) elaborated, explaining how the bill would cement [education cuts demanded by the 2013 sequester](#) and ensure federal education funding will be lower in 2021 than it was in 2012. At [The Huffington Post](#), president of the American Federation of Teachers Randi Weingarten voiced similar criticism that the Republican bill would "lock in recession-driven cuts to education. It would allow state and local governments to walk away from their responsibility to maintain funding from year to year." And as [Valerie Strauss](#) reported on her blog at The Washington Post, 115 education groups contend the funding levels proposed in the House bill "are inadequate to properly support K-12 public education." In a letter to Congressional leaders, these organizations argue, "HR5 locks in over \$1.7 billion in education cuts" at a time when "public school enrollment will increase by more than 2.2 million students." There is definitive research that [spending at sufficient levels is really important](#) if we want "student success," as the Republican bill purports to legislate. And the federal government has a very important role to play in providing this funding, especially because [most states are currently reliant on federal money](#) to help them maintain education funding from year to year. What's also galvanizing Democratic Party opposition to HR5 is the bill's complete neglect of funding for preschool education. [Education Week reporter Alyson Klein](#) reported US Secretary Arne Duncan opposes the legislation, in part, because it "doesn't create any sort of new investment in early childhood education," an area that Duncan and [House Democrats](#) have been saying they'd like to see significant new investments. Democrats mostly agree with a coalition of education professionals and advocacy groups that has "urged lawmakers to consider adding dedicated funding for preschool in the bill" according to [Allie Bidwell at U.S. News & World Report](#). These advocates argue, "Any legislation should create a dedicated funding stream for states to receive targeted federal dollars to expand early learning and child care programs in schools with high concentrations of low-income students." Federal support for preschool education would come at a time when more states are also seeing the need to increase funding for these programs. As [District Administration](#) magazine reports, "For the third year in a row, both Republican and Democratic policymakers are making significant investments in state-funded preschool programs." The article found a 12 percent increase in state investment over fiscal year 2013-14. Yet, increased spending levels for pre-k are not universal, as many states still struggle to afford these initiatives. [Research continues to show](#) that spending more money on education programs for three and four year olds [produces strong gains](#) in education achievement and other measurements later in life. So any legislation coming out of DC that would blunt the upward momentum in pre-k funding would be a step back. What's Dumber What's worse, HR5 would also eliminate progressive elements in the original Elementary and Secondary Education Act dating back to the presidential administration of Lyndon B. Johnson. Specifically, HR5 would discontinue federal enforcement of states' "maintenance of effort" in public education funding. The term [maintenance of effort](#) refers to the requirement that state and local funding levels remain relatively constant from year to year; otherwise they lose eligibility to receive federal grant support. An analysis from the [National Education Association](#) explains, eliminating maintenance of effort "will trigger a race to the bottom in state and local support for education as federal dollars would be reduced to backfilling holes in state and local support ... Removing MOE requirements also undercuts the effectiveness of the 'supplement, not supplant requirements'" that ensure states don't substitute federal money for their own responsibility to educate children. "Currently, the MOE requires districts to spend at least 90 percent of the state and local money they spent in the prior year, yet districts may reduce their spending by up to 10 percent without penalty, which provides sufficient flexibility already." The other terrible idea in the House bill is to enact Title I Portability. Title I of the original ESEA ensures federal dollars create more funding equity in education by targeting money to schools and districts with the highest concentrations of low-income students. What the Republicans are now proposing is that Title I money would "follow the child" when parents opt out of a Title I designated public school to attend a wealthier school or a [charter school](#). As [Politico](#) reports, Secretary Duncan maintains allowing Title I dollars to follow the child would cause the money to flow out of high-need districts. A report from his department contends, "The 100 largest school districts in the country serving high concentrations of black students could lose \$1.3 billion. For districts serving many Hispanic students, the loss could total \$1.8 billion. Detroit City Schools stands to lose \$265 million and Los Angeles Unified School District could lose \$782 million." Rural schools will be harmed as well, as Jackie Mader explains at [The Hechinger Report](#). "In Mississippi, where more than 56 percent of students attend rural schools, Title I funding could be cut by \$7 million, with the largest cuts taking place in five high-poverty Mississippi Delta districts." A report from the [Center for American Progress](#) called Title I Portability "Robin Hood in reverse," stating, "school districts with a poverty rate of more than 30 percent would lose money, while districts with a poverty rate of under 15 percent would see dramatic increases in funding." Title I Portability is also flat out unworkable. States opting into it would turn the budgeting process in the most struggling schools into a guessing game. It would also rob these schools of their economies of scale. When a school would lose a percentage of students in a particular grade level or across grade levels, the school would not be able to cut its teaching staff proportionally, as that would leave the remaining students underserved. So what would have to happen instead would be to cut a support service – such as a reading specialists or a special education teacher – to offset the loss of funding. This would damage the effectiveness of the school long term and cause it to slide further into the ranks of "low performing." Title I Portability is also an especially important point of opposition because some Democrats have adopted conservative talking points that "letting the money follow the child" and allowing "parents to vote with their feet" are stands-ins for sound fiscal policy and regulation that would enforce equity and quality. Proposals like Title I Portability are the logical outcome of any argument that would base education policy on a market-based ethic rather than basic guarantees of quality and equity. That position is a slippery slope to privatization. As The Washington Post's [Emma Brown](#) explains, "Many Democrats see it as a first step toward federal vouchers that would allow students to use federal funding for private school enrollment." There's More There are certainly other things to dislike about HR5. Promoters of the bill contend it provides states with more flexibility, but then it includes the absurd condition that use of federal funding for reduced class sizes (Title II) be limited to 10 percent. The bill lifts the outmoded and damaging federal enforcement of Adequate Yearly Progress that has unfairly labeled struggling schools as "failures," yet it leaves in place much of the strict testing requirements that are broadly opposed by parents and teachers. And the bill allocates more money for charter schools but provides no new conditions or requirements for what has now become a [wildly unregulated and corrupt sector](#). The [Network for Public Education](#), a public education advocacy founded by parents, teachers, and education scholars, has provided an online tool to support people wanting to write their congressional representatives and tell them to vote no on the bill. Should the bill pass, as is predicted, Democrats then must continue to insist that any revision of NCLB must ensure equity and quality rather than austerity and further privatization. Source: <http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/dumb-and-dumber-in-the-republican-house-education-bill/>

California foster care: Push to curb medication has failed in past By Karen de Sá kdesa@mercurynews.com Posted: 02/21/2015 12:49:18 PM PST [2 Comments](#) Updated: 02/21/2015 07:04:13 PM PST Drugging Our Kids [The full Bay Area News Group investigation, including a documentary video.](#) Over the course of a decade, California lawmakers have considered a dozen bills to regulate the use of psychiatric drugs in the nation's largest foster care system. Yet, despite the alarm over children medicated as young as 4 and teens so doped they drooled and became obese, just one became law: a bill to speed up court approval so foster children could get drugs more quickly. Pushed in 2004 by residential group home directors and psychiatrists, Assembly Bill 2502 sailed to the governor's desk with no opposition even as a succession of bills that would have scaled back prescribing died in committees. Now, with youth advocates cheering a major new legislative push to curb overprescribing in foster care, the years of setbacks are forcing an uneasy question: This time, will things finally change? Joymara Coleman, a 24-year-old Cal State East Bay student, displays two of the psychotropic medications she was prescribed while in foster care. She no longer takes Abilify or Trazodone, but keeps them in her apartment as a reminder of what she has overcome. (Dai Sugano/Bay Area News Group) (Dai Sugano) Beginning Tuesday with a Senate Human Services Committee hearing, lawmakers will consider four new bills in the wake of this newspaper's yearlong investigation "Drugging Our Kids." The newspaper found that although California tasked the juvenile court with reining in reckless prescribing as early as 1999 -- making it unique in the nation -- the number of foster children receiving psychiatric drugs over the last decade remains at almost 1 in 4 teens. Well over half of those children were prescribed antipsychotics, drugs that are poorly studied in children and can cause debilitating side effects -- but blockbuster moneymakers for pharmaceutical companies. Advertisement Those numbers indicate the state has urgent work to do, said retired Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Terry Friedman, who sponsored the bill that requires California's juvenile courts to approve all psychotropic prescriptions in foster care. Friedman said while some children need medications to manage their emotional health, the current rates are "alarming and disappointing" -- given that the "clear goal" of the bill he pushed 16 years ago "was to stop overmedication." "It seemed painfully evident that kids were being medicated for behavioral-control purposes and that just seemed inappropriate, excessive and dangerous," he said. However, history shows the new controls may have difficulty passing if they increase workloads, raise costs or run into opposition from groups concerned that easy access to medications could be hampered. Lobbyists representing doctors and group homes have long had powerful voices in the state Capitol. "Care delayed is care denied," said Randall Hagar, a lobbyist for the California Psychiatric Association, "so we would look at the time elapsed between the time a doctor said, 'I think this kid needs a med,' and when they get the med. And if that's too long, then bad things happen." Carroll Schroeder, executive director of the California Alliance of Child and Family Services, said the residential group homes he represents have similar concerns. Any new controls, he said, should not prevent a child from getting "the right treatment or therapies at the right time in the right dosage." The 2004 bill his alliance sponsored required the courts to rule on med requests within seven days, addressing what his members described as harmful delays in prescription authorizations. But Senate Majority Leader Bill Monning, D-Carmel, said new legislation is needed -- and he is confident it will pass because of a heightened public awareness, a coordinated group of senators and a problem too big to ignore. Monning's bill would provide courts with second medical opinions and require health exams before a child is prescribed an antipsychotic. "I clearly see these as health care issues and fundamental human rights issues," Monning said. State Sens. Jim Beall, D-San Jose, and Holly Mitchell, D-Los Angeles, and Assemblyman David Chiu, D-San Francisco, are also crafting bills with guidance from the National Center for Youth Law that would ensure better monitoring of medicated foster children; require regular reports on prescribing; train caregivers and social workers; and drive down prescribing in group homes where medications are most heavily used. From 2001 to 2011, similar legislation that would have ensured patient rights as basic as having doctors review medical records before prescribing repeatedly failed. Legislative efforts to require reporting on the number of foster children prescribed drugs also failed repeatedly, even when amended versions shrank them to pilot projects in just a few of the state's 58 counties. One such bill in 2004 aimed to "reveal gaps in the state's ability to adequately regulate the use of psychotropic medications." Former foster youth Jennifer Rodriguez, now executive director of the San Francisco-based Youth Law Center, testified before the Assembly in 2006 about the need for tighter controls. She implored the state to fund "nontraditional mental health stress relief like dance lessons, gym memberships and recreational activities," as well as services to connect kids with relatives and caring, committed adults. Rodriguez spoke from experience, telling lawmakers in a videotaped hearing that at age 12 she was given sedatives in her first group home, where she had trouble sleeping. That progressed to antidepressants "and before long, I was on four different prescriptions," she testified. "I was alternately sleeping in class and then bouncing off the walls. My hands were shaking so bad I couldn't even hold a pencil." Five years later, the advocacy group Rodriguez once led, the California Youth Connection, tried again to obtain health care protections for foster youth that most kids growing up in families would receive. The Foster Care Mental Health Bill of Rights would have strengthened youths' right to refuse medications, granted them age-appropriate information on potential side effects, and required that they be informed if prescribed medication had not been tested on children. But county mental health directors expressed concerns, saying the bill could "create complicated clinical consequences." Friedman hopes California leaders will pay attention to the children's voices this time around. "What's important really should be set by the kids rather than by the professionals," Friedman said. "I'm not suggesting anarchy, but the system exists for them and we need to listen to them." Contact Karen de Sá at 408-920-5781. Source: http://www.mercurynews.com/health/ci_27573948/california-foster-care-push-curb-medication-has-failed

Senate panel examines why California foster care system "addicted to psychiatric drugs" Iris Hoffman, 18, a member of the California Youth Connection, testifies on Feb. 24, 2015 in a hearing in the state Capitol to address the misuse of psychotropic medication in the child welfare system. (Dai Sugano/Bay Area News Group) By Karen de Sá, Bay Area News Group Posted: 02/24/15, 7:08 PM PST | [# Comments](#) Iris Hoffman, 18, center, a member of the California Youth Connection, testifies on Feb. 24, 2015 in a hearing in the state Capitol to address the misuse of psychotropic medication in the child welfare system. (Dai Sugano/Bay Area News Group) SACRAMENTO >> California's foster care system "has grown more addicted to mind-altering medication," the chair of a powerful Senate committee told a packed public hearing in the state Capitol Tuesday, adding that "here in California, we've done little to act on this alarming issue." Vowing change on the eve of a new legislative season, state Sen. Mike McGuire said past failures to act are now "simply unacceptable," resulting in thousands of California foster youth who "have fallen victim to inaction, and at times politics." Tuesday's four-hour hearing before the Human Services Committee highlighted a package of bills he introduced this month, following Bay Area News Group's investigation "Drugging Our Kids," which revealed nearly one in four teens receive psychiatric drugs in foster care -- often to control their behavior, not to treat mental illnesses. Most are prescribed antipsychotics, a powerful class of the drugs with the most harmful side effects. Will Lightbourne, director of the state's Department of Social Services, acknowledged "there's a very deep concern about the volume" of psychotropic drugs prescribed to foster youth and vowed, "Yes, we do want to bring that number down." Lightbourne said two state-sponsored panels have spent years working to develop guidelines that would protect foster children from the excessive use of psych medications and to decrease the reliance on the drugs at residential group homes, which house some of the toughest to place foster kids. Foster children deserve "non-medical treatments whenever possible," Lightbourne said. But McGuire, D-Healdsburg, pressed state officials to explain why so little has changed since state lawmakers held a hearing nearly a decade ago on the very same issue. On Tuesday, former foster youth, child psychiatrists, a leading juvenile court judge and the director of a powerful lobby of child welfare directors said solutions are long overdue. They are urging state lawmakers to pass a series of bills that -- among other issues -- would step up court oversight of prescribing, expand the role of public health nurses to better monitor medicated children, and train caregivers to defuse disruptive or self-destructive behaviors without the use of sedating drugs. Advertisement "We need to shift our thinking away from the primacy of psychiatric medications toward relationships," testified George Stewart, a Berkeley child psychiatrist who has spent much of his career tapering severely traumatized children safely off high-risk drug cocktails. "We are going to look back on this era of great enthusiasm for psychiatric medications and either scratch our heads or beat our heads. We will look back in 20 years and say: 'What were we doing?'" Former foster youth Iris Hoffman, 18, of Sonoma County spoke to senators on behalf of youth in the child welfare system who are scared to refuse medications because they will be punished in residential group homes. "It's really hard to trust someone who's forcing you to take pills that you don't feel is right for you to be taking," said Hoffman, a member of the advocacy group California Youth Connection. "Seroquel, Abilify, Ativan -- all of the things I was prescribed before I was 16 -- they never helped me heal from the trauma I suffered." On the local level, some counties are already looking at alternatives. Toni DeMarco oversees a program for San Mateo County foster youth that includes drumming, yoga, and swimming -- "the kinds of interventions," she said, "that make the need for psychotropic medications go away." Lori Medina, director of Santa Clara County's Department of Family and Children's Services agreed. "The symptoms around these children's trauma cannot just be remediated with medication -- there has to be other approaches," Medina said. "Social workers are trained to ask questions, but there has to be more of that." Senators also said they were alarmed by the newspaper's analysis that showed how pharmaceutical companies lavish the state's foster care prescribers with millions of dollars for meals, gifts, travel, speaking engagements and research grants -- a practice Lightbourne

called “deeply troubling.” The newspaper found the doctors who prescribed the most, typically were rewarded the most. State Sen. Bill Monning, D-Carmel, expressed outrage that drug companies promote prescribing of powerful psychiatric drugs that have not been approved for use on children. “How do we avoid there being a monetary incentive for prescribing these drugs?” he asked. At Tuesday’s hearing, senators McGuire and Monning discussed whether new regulations to outlaw conflicts of interest that could be harming foster youth are now needed. The head of social services responsible for California’s roughly 63,000 foster youth agreed. “To the extent that we can as a state restrict that,” Lightbourne said, “I think that’s ultimately very good.” Source:

<http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/health/20150224/senate-panel-examines-why-california-foster-care-system-addicted-to-psychiatric-drugs>

A For-Profit Foster Care Agency, Traded on the Stock Exchange, Deadly to Children Details Written by [Michele Bittner](#) Created on Wednesday, 25 February 2015 15:14 [Share on email](#) [Share on print](#) [Share on facebook](#) [Share on twitter](#) [Share on linkedin](#) [Share on pinterest](#) [share](#) [Share on google plusone](#) [share](#) [More Sharing Services](#) February 20, 2015; [BuzzFeed News](#) One of the nation’s largest for-profit foster care agencies, Mentor, has recently come under scrutiny after investigation has revealed a string of missteps leading to abuse, mistreatment, and several deaths. While organization executives have dismissed claims that National Mentor Holdings’ negligence has resulted in substandard services, the company has received some of the highest numbers of serious violations in several states, including Massachusetts, Georgia, and Texas. In some of its most severe instances of abuse, failed background checks on foster parents had detrimental results to the children in Mentor’s care. At Last Chance Farm in Maryland, boy after boy was sexually abused at the hands of foster parent Stephen Merritt. Even after reports by foster children, a letter from a former victim’s psychologist, and several police investigations, Mentor continued to place young boys in Merritt’s care for at least seven years. In Texas, failed screenings of potential parents allowed for several failed placements with Sherill Small. Mentor failed to interview adequate numbers of relatives, relying instead on the reference of Small’s daughter, who was herself convicted of aggravated kidnapping and robbery. Meanwhile, Small’s husband was also approved as a foster parent despite his admission to a long-time cocaine addiction. After several failed placements, two-year-old Alexandria Hill was placed in Small’s care, and then murdered at Small’s hand in a fit of frustration. And while both foster parents would never have been approved had adequate screening and background check policies been in place, poor decision-making by Mentor staff enabled the abuse to occur. Such cases have lead to investigations into the company as a whole, and as a result, Mentor’s organizational goals have been questioned. Instead of a strong focus on quality services to children, former staff members of Mentor claim that the central focus of operation is increased profit margins. According a former employee, “You feel the pressure. You have to make those targets. I went there because I care about services for kids. I eventually became a machine that cared about profits. I didn’t care about kids.” As a company traded publicly on the New York Stock Exchange, there were undoubtedly times when the costs of quality services at Mentor have come into conflict with the demand for higher shareholder profits. Foster care agencies are intended to serve as a safety net for vulnerable children, and the rapid expansion of corporate entities for increased market share in such human service industries capitalizes on resources that should be passed on in services to those in need. With this in mind, many foster care agencies contracted by state and local governments are nonprofit agencies focused on quality service over profits. Yet the past thirty years have seen increases in for-profit companies entering the field. While some local and state governments have restricted contracts with for-profit agencies, strong partnerships between entities such as Mentor and nonprofit sister organizations have allowed their position in foster care to continue. Similar to [the relationship between charter schools and related for-profit entities](#), such intertwined relationships between nonprofits and for-profit entities bring questions of accountability and motive in a variety of industries.—Michele Bittner Source: <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/policy/social-context/25679-a-for-profit-foster-care-agency-traded-on-the-stock-exchange-deadly-to-children.html>

Father speaks out about foster parent allegedly abusing daughter • Wednesday, February 25, 2015 [Print](#) [E-mail](#) [Share](#) Editor’s note: It is the Boomerang’s policy not to run names of defendants in sex crime cases until a conviction, or guilty or no contest pleas, unless the accused is a person of public interest, such as an elected official, or a person of public trust, such as a teacher or counselor. By CHILTON TIPPIN chiltont@laramieboomerang.com A former Laramie foster parent faces 11 charges of sexual abuse of a minor in Converse County stemming from allegations he sexually assaulted an 8-year-old girl in Douglas. Stephen Calderon, 30, arrested in August in Converse County, is also under investigation in Albany County, the Laramie Police Department confirmed. Calderon is charged with 11 counts of first-degree sexual assault in Converse County. Each charge carries a penalty of up to 25 years imprisonment and/or a \$10,000 fine, according to court documents. While the Laramie Police wouldn’t release details about the ongoing investigation or charges, a former resident whose children were under Calderon’s care in Laramie said his daughter was raped several times by Calderon. Chris Kruse, the girl’s father, said he wants to make the incident public because what happened to his family “is wrong and needs to be exposed.” Kruse said his daughters were 3, 6 and 9 when the Wyoming Department of Family Services placed them under the care of Calderon and his wife in January 2013 in Laramie. Kruse, who originally lost custody of his children following a divorce, fought to get his daughters back for more than a year. DFS returned them to his custody in November 2013. The following November, Kruse’s oldest daughter — who turned 10 under Calderon’s care — told Kruse, his partner and a trusted friend that Calderon came into her bedroom and performed sexual acts on her, Kruse said. When Kruse found out, he said, “it killed me inside.” “We believe in this system that’s supposed to take care of us, and when things aren’t right, they’re supposed to be there for our families, specifically DFS,” he said. “When they step in and take children away, they don’t do any better when they put them in this kind of care, you know, put them in a situation like that — that scars them for life. There’s nothing you can do to take something like that away. It’s going to be there forever.” The Wyoming DFS declined to discuss Calderon’s employment, such as where or for how long he was a foster parent. Nor would the agency say how many children were placed under Calderon’s care. DFS also declined to speak about the details of Kruse’s case. A report on payments made to Calderon provided by DFS following a public records request shows the first payment made to Calderon was in July 2007. The final payment made to Calderon was in August. During this time period, DFS paid Calderon about \$93,000. During the time period Calderon had Kruse’s children — roughly January 2013–November 2013 — DFS paid Calderon about \$26,430, records state. Tony Lewis, the agency’s spokesman, wrote in an email “Wyoming has an excellent safety record when it comes to protecting children in foster care.” “We realize, however, that it’s unacceptable for even one child to be harmed in foster care,” he wrote. “Because this case is now in the courts, DFS can’t comment on the information provided to the Laramie Boomerang without violating state statutes on confidentiality in child cases.” Divorce and protection orders Kruse provided the Boomerang with hundreds of files documenting the agency’s custody of his children and his struggle to get them back. Kruse and his ex-wife divorced in 2010, and she was granted custody of the children. Court records provided by Kruse show his ex-wife took out four protection orders against him, dating back to 2002. In the 2002 protection order, filed in Angola, Indiana, Kruse’s ex-wife alleged he “shut my hand in the door” and “verbally abuses and threatens me.” Kruse said that charge was later dismissed. In a 2005 protection order, filed in Fort Collins, Colorado, Kruse’s ex-wife alleged “he was choking me until I blacked out.” Kruse said he took a misdemeanor criminal mischief charge in a plea agreement in this matter. His ex-wife filed one family violence protection order in 2008 in Albany County. Kruse counter-sued and won the case, according to Albany County court records. Kruse’s ex-wife also filed one stalking protection order in Albany County. The case was closed without a prevailing party named. For his part, Kruse maintains he and his ex-wife argued, but he was not violent. Rather, she made the allegations because she “learned how to work the system.” “There was never any reason for (the protection orders),” he said. “She continually used the exact same reason, almost word for word.” Kruse also said he has never been convicted of a felony. A review of Albany County court records shows he has no felonies in Wyoming. Kruse said his ex-wife moved to Indiana. Attempts to contact her for this story were unsuccessful. In summer 2012, Kruse’s ex-wife dropped his three daughters off at his house for a summer visitation, he said. During the visit, which lasted several weeks, Kruse and Alisha Hood, his partner, would spank the girls if they misbehaved, he said. Before the children returned to Kruse’s ex-wife, Hood said she spanked the middle child with a spoon. Kruse’s ex-wife later saw bruises on the child’s behind and called police. According to court documents, Kruse’s ex-wife told police the bruises were from the spanking. In an interview with the Boomerang, Hood said she didn’t spank the child hard enough to leave bruises. According to court documents, Hood told police on July 27 “it was possible she had bruised (the child) while spanking, but if she had it was unintentional.” Kruse told the Boomerang the bruises came from the child falling off her scooter. He told police “if Alisha left the bruises, they were unintentional,” according to court documents. Neglect/abuse petitions were filed against Kruse and Hood in Albany County District Court. In a fall 2012 plea agreement, Hood pleaded no contest to the charge. In return, the state agreed to drop the charge against Kruse, according to court documents. Kruse’s ex-wife, however, kept custody of the children — until January 2013. DFS takes custody Following the neglect/abuse incidents, the court ordered Hood, Kruse and Kruse’s ex-wife to take parenting classes, along with several other obligations. Kruse and Hood said they hoped to begin the process of getting the children back, so they began “jumping through the hoops.” However, Hood said the court insisted the parenting classes be taken by all three adults. When Kruse’s ex-wife failed to show up for classes, thereby

delaying the eventual return of Kruse's children, he sued her for contempt of court, Kruse said. During the Jan. 7 contempt of court hearing, the judge found out Kruse's ex-wife was keeping the children in the same home as a convicted felon and registered sex offender, according to court documents. DFS took the children into custody the next day, placing them with Calderon and his wife. "When they were first taken, I went to (our DFS caseworker) and said, 'Why are they going to foster care?'" Kruse said. "You have no issues with us. I've been cleared." Kruse contended the children were taken from him in the first place because of something Hood allegedly did. Moreover, the charges against him were dismissed in the plea agreement. But the caseworker told him there was a protocol for getting his children back, Kruse said. "He said, 'Give it a couple of weeks,'" Kruse said. "He told me that for months." Meanwhile, Kruse and Hood went to multidisciplinary team meetings, where case and custody matters were discussed among attorneys, counselors, DFS caseworkers, school principals and others. The multidisciplinary team was originally opposed to granting Kruse custody. But as Kruse and Hood worked through parenting classes, attended meetings, spoke with team members and complied with other wishes, the team eventually recommended transitioning custody to Kruse. For example, in a July 2013 multidisciplinary team meeting document, the entire team recommended keeping Kruse's children in DFS custody. By October 2013, however, every team member except the ex-wife's lawyer recommended transitioning the children to Kruse's care, according to the team document. Conversely, the entire team except the ex-wife's lawyer disagreed with a recommendation to transition the children to Kruse's ex-wife's care, according to the team document. Kruse got his girls back shortly before Thanksgiving 2013. Transition and Calderon Bringing the girls back into the household was difficult, Kruse said, and none of his children mentioned anything about the abuse. In time, however, Kruse said he had a feeling his oldest daughter wanted to tell him something. "I think she wanted to talk to us, but she didn't know, she was scared, she thought she would get in trouble for what had happened," he said. She first told a trusted friend of the family, Kruse said. Then she opened up about the abuse to Kruse and Hood in November 2014, a year after returning home, Kruse said. Hood and Kruse said they don't know whether the younger daughters were abused. The oldest, Hood said, has done her best to cope with the trauma. For months, she had nightmares and couldn't sleep without her dog. "She's afraid that somebody is going to come wake her up in the middle of the night," Hood said. Laramie police approached the oldest daughter to report the crime, Kruse and Hood said, but their daughter declined to comment. "She's very embarrassed," Hood said. "She's scared to talk about it." But Kruse said the family has since moved out of the state, and all three children have slowly improved since coming home. A March multidisciplinary team report stated "all three girls have expressed excitement about living with their father." As for Calderon, he remains in custody in the Converse County Detention Center. Calderon allegedly told authorities in August he performed multiple sexual acts with the 8-year-old girl during the time period of April 1-Aug. 28 in Douglas, according to court documents. Speaking with Converse County Sheriff's Office deputies, the minor child allegedly confirmed the allegations, according to the documents. Any case brought against him in Albany County is pending the Converse County proceedings, Laramie Police Lt. Gwen Smith wrote in an email. Calderon was arraigned in October in Converse County District Court. A pretrial hearing is set for March 24. He remains incarcerated in the Converse County Detention Center, where he awaits an April 6 trial. DFS official explains foster parent vetting process, Wyoming safety record Tony Lewis, Wyoming Department of Family Services spokesman, said the agency vets potential foster parents through a series of background checks, including running their fingerprints through an FBI database and checking state child abuse and neglect records. Caseworkers examine potential foster parents' residences. DFS trains foster parents on "the nature of the responsibilities that go along with having a foster kid," Lewis said. The agency also provides special services, counseling and additional resources for foster parents watching children with special needs, he said. Lewis said a state's overall performance and safety are typically measured with three indicators: the percentage of children who receive monthly visits from caseworkers; the state's average time for investigating reported cases of maltreatment; and the number of children maltreated in foster care. "On those three measures, Wyoming has good performance," Lewis said. According to the United States Children's Bureau: — In 2012, the most recent year for which data is available, 98 percent of Wyoming's foster children in the state received monthly visits from caseworkers. — In 2012, no foster children were maltreated while in foster care. — In 2012, Wyoming's average time for investigating cases involving children was 14.9 hours. "The national standard is supposed to be around 24 hours," Lewis said. "About one-third of the states can't meet that, and there are very few states that have as quick a response time as Wyoming." Source: <http://www.laramieboomerang.com/articles/2015/02/25/news/doc54ed50660b583778676995.txt>

Mom happy with boot camp murder verdict - Crime & Courts | IOL News Mom happy with boot camp murder verdict SuppliedRaymond Buys, a 15-year-old boy, died after he was kept chained to his bed, beaten with planks and hoses at a training camp in Vereeniging, that boasted of "making men" out of its young recruits. Picture: Supplied Johannesburg - The mother of a 15-year-old boy who died after being abused at a camp said she was happy that both accused were found guilty of murder by the Vereeniging Regional Court on Friday. "I have mixed emotions, but I'm happy that they were both found guilty and that it's come to an end," said Wilna Buys. Magistrate Retha Willemsse found Alex de Koker and Michael Erasmus guilty of murder, child abuse and assault. Their charges related to the death of 15-year-old Raymond Buys at the Echo Wild Rangers Camp in 2011. Wilna said the four years since Raymond's death had had a huge impact on their family and that they were only now starting to pick up the pieces. "I think he's sitting and smiling down on us and is proud of everything we've done," she said, bursting into tears. "It wasn't easy to be here all the time, but we made a promise to Raymond." Erasmus's father, Casper, said he felt guilty for sending his son to the camp. "Alex (de Koker) pulled the wool over my eyes. I feel guilty because I forced Michael to go. "But thankfully I still have my child. The Buys family is sitting without their child. It's a nightmare." Michael Erasmus's stepmother Betsie Erasmus said they were glad the trial was drawing to an end. "Michael was also just a child when he went to the camp. He was easily influenced." Operations manager of Women and Men Against Child Abuse, Tania Otto, said the judgment was excellent. "We're very surprised that the magistrate found them guilty of murder because judges seems hesitant of that." After the judgment, De Koker, wearing a bright pink shirt with his feet cuffed together, gave his wife a long hug over the dock before a number of police officers led him back to the holding cells. Michael Erasmus sat with his father, stepmother, girlfriend Sindy Nel and their five-day-old daughter outside the court room. Source: <http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/mom-happy-with-boot-camp-murder-verdict-1.1824784#VPPdWOKtGIs>

California foster dad gets 19 years to life for sex abuse of six girls LOS ANGELES Fri Feb 27, 2015 9:02pm EST [inShare](#)0 Share this Email Print LOS ANGELES (Reuters) - A former Southern California foster parent was sentenced on Friday to serve nearly 19 years to life in prison for raping and sexually abusing a half dozen girls who were 9 to 15 years old while in his care, prosecutors said. Felipe Hernandez, 68, pleaded guilty earlier this month to multiple felony counts of aggravated sexual assault on a child, lewd acts on a minor, child pornography and other sex offenses stemming from crimes committed over the course of six years, according to the Orange County District Attorney's Office. The abuse, which ranged from groping to rape, came to light in the summer of 2012 when a relative of Hernandez discovered a digital memory card containing video of him molesting one of the girls and reported it to the Santa Ana Police Department, the prosecutor's office said. A spokeswoman for district attorney's office, Roxi Fyad, said the Hernandez case marked one of the more egregious instances of serial sexual abuse in the county's foster care system. "He violated his position of trust," Fyad said. Two of his victims confronted Hernandez at his sentencing in court, saying the trauma they suffered had led them both to attempt suicide but that they had since moved on to "a better place in their lives," the prosecutor's office said. Hernandez was sentenced to a term of 18 years and eight months to life in prison. His wife, Maria Esther Hernandez, 61, was sentenced separately in 2013 to three months in jail and three years of probation for her role as an accessory after the fact in trying to cover up the abuse, prosecutors said. (Reporting by [Steve Gorman](#)) Source: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/02/28/us-usa-foster-rape-idUSKBN0LW02Q20150228>

Legislation needed to protect foster kids' personal funds By Daniel L. Hatcher [University of Baltimore](#) Maryland needs legislation to stop its foster care agencies from taking child resources. Our state foster care agencies are apparently so underfunded that they are taking resources from abused and neglected children. The agencies are taking control over foster children's Social Security benefits (when the children are disabled or have deceased parents) and using the children's funds to repay foster care costs. In other words, Maryland is requiring the children to pay for their own care. Maryland will even take Veteran's Assistance benefits from children with a parent who died in the military. And a state regulation was written to take "all of the child's resources" to repay foster care costs, including "the child's own benefits, insurance, cash assets, trust accounts" and even the child's own earnings — everything. This even though Maryland is rightly already legally obligated under state and federal law to provide and pay for foster care services. This isn't only in Maryland. I know of one case in Illinois where the children's SS was taken, then DCFS took the parent to court for child support. When calculating the amount of child support to be paid, they included the children's SS as part of the mother's income. It's almost out of a Charles Dickens novel — forcing orphaned and disabled foster children to pay for their own care. Other states have engaged in this practice regarding Social Security benefits, but the fact that other states may be engaged in bad policies does not make it OK for Maryland. There's more: Maryland hired a private company last year — Maximus, Inc. — to provide an assessment for how the state can obtain more resources from foster children and, according to Maximus' report, "maximize revenue gain"; the report describes foster children as a

"revenue generating mechanism." The Maryland Department of Human Resources contracted with Maximums despite litigation regarding the practice and a finding by the Maryland Court of Appeals that the agency violated foster children's due process rights by providing no notice to the children or their lawyers. Maryland foster care agencies are significantly underfunded. But taking resources from the very children the agencies exist to serve is not the answer. Luckily for our state's foster children, Sen. Jamie Raskin and Del. Geraldine Valentino-Smith sponsored legislation this year that takes an important step toward improving protection of foster children's own resources. Senate Bill 524 and companion House Bill 575 mandate that: •The foster care agency serve in a fiduciary capacity for children in its care, only serving their best interests; •In addition to deciding how to best use the children's resources for current unmet needs, the foster care agency begin conserving at least a percentage of the funds to help those children who will soon be aging out of care; •The foster care agency help children begin to understand finances and start planning for their futures. SB 524 and HB 575 help ensure that foster children's own resources are used to truly help the children, including aiding the children's struggle for future self sufficiency. Using the children's resources, a planning process is encouraged to promote saving for the children's future educational and employment goals, including already available specialized savings accounts — such as the Program for Achieving Self Support (PASS) and individual development accounts. This legislation will help our most vulnerable children to help themselves by using their available resources in ways that serve their current unmet specialized needs and assist in their difficult future struggle for independence as they leave foster care. The Senate bill, with amendments, received a unanimous favorable vote from the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. A hearing will soon be held before the House Judiciary Committee. Members of that committee should follow the lead of their counterparts in the Senate. Daniel L. Hatcher is a professor of law in the [University of Baltimore](http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/oped/bs-ed-foster-funds-20150303-story.html); his email is dhatcher@ubalt.edu. Source: <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/oped/bs-ed-foster-funds-20150303-story.html>

Board Members Of Troubled Foster-Care Company Have Little To Say About Abuses [Talat Ansari](#) BuzzFeed News Reporter [Aram Roston](#) BuzzFeed News Reporter posted on March 4, 2015, at 8:57 a.m. [Tweet](#) [Bookmark it](#) [Tweet](#) [Tweet](#) A recent [BuzzFeed News investigation](#) into the nation's largest for-profit foster care company revealed deaths, sex abuse, and serious lapses in the training and oversight of foster parents. The investigation into National Mentor Holdings found instances of long-term sex abuse in Maryland by Mentor foster fathers, widespread problems with Mentor documented by the state of Texas, and at least six deaths of children in the custody of Mentor since 2005. Mentor trades on the [New York Stock Exchange](#) as [Civitas Solutions Inc.](#), which reported \$1.2 billion in revenue last year. Companies can often seem faceless, but like all public companies, Civitas is governed by a board of directors. BuzzFeed News decided to find out whether members of the board knew about the problems exposed by the recent investigation, and if so, ask what they planned to do about it. For some children, it's a question of life and death. [View this image](#) Alexandria Hill Sherill Small, a Mentor foster parent in Texas, murdered 2-year-old Alexandria Hill in 2013, smashing in her skull. Mentor had placed the little girl with Small despite warning signs that she wasn't fit to be a foster parent. From September through December 2012, Small had taken in five foster children, but every one of them had been removed as "[failed placements](#)," Small, according to an internal Mentor document obtained by BuzzFeed News, "reported feeling [stressed out](#), and will express that she is unable to care for the children in the home." The Mentor document also warns that personnel from the Texas state Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) program "felt the children should not be in the home at that time." Less than a month after that report, Mentor placed little Alexandria with Small, the foster mother who would become her murderer. [View this image](#) Aram Roston / BuzzFeed News In Maryland, Stephen Merritt, one of several Mentor foster parents at a compound called Last Chance Farm, [pleaded guilty](#) in 2011 to sexually abusing multiple boys in his care. Another foster father on same compound, Tracy Grant Bayne, also admitted to abusing a boy. Again, warning signs weren't heeded. As far back as 2004, a boy had complained to his Mentor caseworker that he was being abused. The caseworker sent him back to Merritt. Police investigated allegations of abuse twice, but didn't find enough to press charges. A [psychotherapist wrote Mentor](#) in 2010, warning of "[huge red flags](#)" in Merritt's interaction with a child. But it would be another year before police finally arrested Merritt and stopped the abuse. An analysis of Texas data by BuzzFeed News found that Mentor ranked last among large foster placement providers in the state, [based on the number of severe violations per home](#). Texas regulators found more than 100 serious problems in Mentor foster homes in the last two years, including, but not limited to, instances of children being slapped, hit with belts, and struck. In Georgia, where the state grades child-placing agencies, Mentor's fared poorly as well. Of the six branches Mentor runs in Georgia, [not one scored an average grade above the median](#) in the 10 most recent quarters. State and local governments have long worked with nonprofits and religious groups to help find good homes for children whose parents can't care for them. But over the past several decades, for-profit companies have started winning contracts to manage foster care placements. Former Mentor employees said that the pressure to make profits sometimes led to Mentor cutting corners on protecting the children — a charge Mentor strongly disputed in BuzzFeed News' original story. Mentor also said it has helped thousands of children, and pointed to Maryland, where state regulators recently gave the company high marks. In 2006, National Mentor Holdings [was bought](#) for \$242 million in cash by Vestar Capital Partners, a giant hedge fund based in New York City. The company went public last year under the name Civitas, but [Vestar still owns about two-thirds of the stock](#). Three Vestar employees sit on Civitas' board: Chris Durbin, James Elrod Jr., and Kevin Mundt. [View this image](#) Civitas Solutions / Via civitas-solutions.com When BuzzFeed News called Vestar to ask to interview its employees after the investigation was published, a spokesperson said, "Vestar declined to comment." Before the story ran, the spokesperson had provided this statement: "Vestar shares MENTOR Network's belief that one tragedy within any foster care program is one too many. Mentor's investments over the past decade to strengthen service quality while expanding programming have been fully supported by Vestar. We are proud to be associated with an organization that has enhanced the lives of tens of thousands of children and adolescents and adults with disabilities." [View this image](#) Federico Peña, Pamela Lenehan, Guy Sansone, and Greg Torres US Department of Energy, Civitas Solutions / Via civitas-solutions.com Federico Peña isn't a Civitas board member but he's a "senior advisor" to Vestar. He's also a powerful political figure, a former national co-chair of the Obama presidential campaign and a secretary of transportation and a secretary of energy under President Bill Clinton. Reached after the story ran, and told about the problems at Mentor, he said he had not read the BuzzFeed News story. "'I'm not involved in that matter but thank you for the call and I have to go.'" Pamela Lenehan, who was elected to the Civitas board in 2008, did not answer numerous phone calls from BuzzFeed News. Guy Sansone, a healthcare consultant, did not respond to a phone call and email placed by BuzzFeed News. Greg Torres — former president and CEO of Mentor from 1996-2004 — did not respond to a phone call and email placed by BuzzFeed News. BuzzFeed News did not reach Patrick M. Gray, an accountant and former audit partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers. [View this image](#) Patrick M. Gray, Edward Murphy and Bruce Nardella. Civitas Solutions / Via civitas-solutions.com Edward Murphy and Bruce Nardella currently work at Mentor. After BuzzFeed News had started contacting the other board members and before calling Murphy and Nardella, a Mentor spokesperson sent a statement on behalf of the entire board: "Service quality and outcomes across The MENTOR Network are of paramount importance to the entire Board. We were aware of matters raised in your story, and especially the tragedies in Maryland and Texas. We are also aware of how profoundly the organization has been impacted by these tragedies, as well as the comprehensive actions management has taken in an effort to ensure the safety and well-being of the children and adolescents served in MENTOR's programs. "As a Board, we appreciate the challenges associated with foster care, and understand that while no provider will ever achieve perfection, each, including MENTOR, has a responsibility to strive for it in partnership with public agencies. We recognize that the good work of the MENTOR team has enhanced the lives of tens of thousands of children at-risk and adults with disabilities. However, we have also insisted that the organization learn from each mistake in order to enhance its programs and protect those it is privileged to support." correction An earlier version of this story contained remarks attributed to Civitas Solutions board member Patrick M. Gray. In fact, BuzzFeed News did not speak to that Patrick M. Gray but to a different person with the same name who claimed to be a Civitas board member. March 4, 2015, at 4:12 p.m. Source: <http://www.buzzfeed.com/talalansari/board-members-of-troubled-foster-care-company-have-little-to-say-about-abuses>

Epworth Village closes G.I. group home [Story](#) [Comments](#) [Print](#) [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) Posted: Wednesday, March 4, 2015 11:00 pm | Updated: 11:46 pm, Fri Mar 6, 2015. [Epworth Village closes G.I. group home](#) By Tracy Overstreet tracy.overstreet@theindependent.com theindependent.com Posted on Mar 4, 2015 by [Tracy Overstreet](#) Epworth Village has closed its Grand Island group home. Harrietta Reynolds, chief executive officer of Epworth Village in York, said the home at 2317 N. Kruse Ave. in Grand Island was too expensive to run. "The boys would attend our school, so we had to be transporting them a lot," she said. "It wasn't really a practical thing after a while." Epworth Village was founded in York in 1889 as Mother's Jewels Home to care for orphaned and abandoned children. It was renamed Epworth Village in 1959 and took on the mission of providing services for children and families with severe emotional and/or behavioral disorders. The group home in Grand Island opened in 1999. Despite being located directly across the street from Grand Island Senior High, the group home boys were taken to York weekdays for enrollment in Epworth

Village's accredited school there. "It was so expensive to travel to bring them over to school in York," she said. "That's what had to happen because we have our own school ... accredited by the state." Reynolds said attending public schools often wasn't an option for the Epworth Village boys. "Because of behavioral issues, it was not an option in most cases," she said. "There were some times where they could be mainstreamed into certain classes in a public school, and that happened on occasion but not to a great extent." The Grand Island group home, which was licensed to hold 10 boys between the ages of 12 and 18, closed on Dec. 3, 2014, Reynolds said. It had six boys at that time. They were all taken to the Epworth Village campus in York. Reynolds said Epworth Village is in a rebuilding phase. It just announced this week the opening of a girls' group home in York. A different use of the home in Grand Island will likely begin in about two to three months, Reynolds said. It should not result in any noticeable change in the neighborhood. "We have another use in mind that would serve children and families," she said. "We want to use it as a ministry — part of our ministry to children, family and youth." Residents in the neighborhood initially objected to the group home and spoke out against a conditional use permit issued by the city in March 1999. The home had served boys who were wards of the state who had contact with the court system, had run away from home, had come from abusive homes or were preparing to return home after receiving mental health treatment. In January 2003, three boys, ages 14 and 15, at the group home reported being sexually assaulted by a female staff member there. The Grand Island Police Department responded to the incident and found older boys at the home who also reported having sexual contact with the female staff member, but they were over the age of 16 and by law were old enough to give consent, the police stated. The female staff member was dismissed. Even though the group home in Grand Island has closed, the conditional use permit allowing its continuation will remain valid for one year following its the continuous operation, Regional Planning Director Chad Nabity said. However, it's not yet known if a conditional permit may be needed in the future. Grand Island is updating its group home definitions and regulations, which may remove the need for a conditional use permit depending on the home's future use, Nabity said. Reynolds said Epworth Village is looking at several possibilities for the home, which Epworth will continue to own. "One option would be for a professional foster family. It would be a family living there that would have foster children placed by the state ... but they can only take a few," Reynolds said. "We're looking at our options," she said. Source: http://www.theindependent.com/news/local/epworth-village-closes-g-i-group-home/article_6af6ce88-c2cb-11e4-9117-832fa96a91a2.html

Lawsuit alleges assault by Carrick group home employee Circle C home is same one where teenager was fatally beaten — A group home in Carrick is being sued over an alleged assault by a staff member that happened last year. [Lawyers cast doubt on police account of Carrick group...](#) Pittsburgh police say two teens are responsible for killing a third at a home for troubled boys. A judge must decide if there's enough evidence to send both to adult court for trial. [More Teens charged with homicide after alleged attack at group...](#) Two teenage boys were charged with homicide Thursday night, accused of beating a 16-year-old boy at the Pittsburgh group home where they all lived. The case has prompted investigations by the state and Allegheny County. [More](#) It's the same home where a teenage boy was beaten to death earlier this year. [VIDEO: Watch Paul Van Osdol's report](#) In last year's incident, the lawsuit says, employee Jaymar Gilbert grabbed 16-year-old resident around the neck and threw him down the steps at the home on Carrick Avenue. Gilbert later resigned and is currently facing a charge of simple assault in connection with the incident. The lawsuit says the group home owner, Circle C Youth and Family Services, hired him despite the fact that he had an extensive criminal history. Court records show Gilbert had been convicted of illegal possession of a firearm, burglary, theft, receiving stolen property and drug charges. "When you're bringing people in to care for at-risk youth you have an obligation to provide those children with the best care you can possibly provide. Mr. Gilbert's background clearly denotes otherwise," said Todd Hollis, the attorney for the teen victim. In a prepared statement, Circle C director Richard Knouff said, "We are careful and diligent in our hiring process. All employees of Circle C, and anyone who works in this field, are required to pass three background checks: child abuse, FBI and Pennsylvania State Police. This incident was thoroughly investigated by the relevant authorities and concluded to their satisfaction." He also said employees with criminal histories can be effective at working with at-risk youths. The state cited Circle C in connection with last year's incident. The state is still investigating the January beating death of 16-year-old Nicholas Grant at the group home. Two other boys who lived at the home are awaiting trial on homicide charges in that case. Source: <http://www.wtae.com/news/youth-group-home-sued-over-alleged-assault-by-employee/31614390>

Former foster mother charged with sexual relationship with foster son Police say Dana Fouse, 38, had sex with teen in her Hyde Park home A Westmoreland County woman is charged with having an ongoing sexual relationship with her former foster son. Related [View Large Photos Westmoreland County's 20 most wanted fugitives](#) The following people have been deemed "Most Wanted Fugitives" by the sheriff's department. The sheriff says all wanted subjects have active warrants at the time of posting the information. Do not act or try to apprehend any recognized subject. [More](#) [VIDEO: Watch the report by Ashlie Hardway](#) Dana Fouse, 38, of Hyde Park, is charged by state police with statutory sexual assault, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse and other charges related to the alleged crimes. Investigators said they interviewed the teenage boy, who claimed the two had sex almost every day for nearly 11 months. "The defendant told the victim that she was unable to become pregnant," state police wrote in an affidavit of probable cause. "She would also periodically tell the victim not to tell anyone of their sexual relationship and also told him not to drink alcohol so he wouldn't accidentally tell anyone of their relationship." Police said Fouse's own children were sometimes present in the home, though in different parts of the home, when the sexual acts would occur. Investigators said the relationship ended after the boy was moved into a new foster home, but that Fouse bought him a cellphone and mailed it to him so he could still communicate with her. It was after the new foster family found the phone that the boy confessed to the relationship, investigators wrote in the affidavit. [PHOTOS: Westmoreland County's 20 most wanted fugitives](#) The Westmoreland County Children's Bureau is listed as the contact on the state website for those inquiring about foster parenting, but bureau director Shara Saveikis said the bureau only oversees children from Westmoreland County who are placed in the foster system. Because of privacy rules involving foster children, Saveikis said she could not confirm or deny if the victim in this case was a foster child from Westmoreland County or another county. Saveikis did confirm Fouse was not licensed by the bureau, so she would not have been managed by the bureau, rather by the agency from where she was licensed. The state-run website on the foster program states all potential foster parents must pass extensive background checks. "To ensure the child's safety, the agency will conduct a criminal background check and child abuse clearance on everyone in your home, age 14 and over," according to the site, adoptpakids.org. Fouse remains free on bond while she awaits a preliminary hearing in April. Source: <http://www.wtae.com/news/former-foster-mother-charged-with-sexual-relationship-with-foster-son/31655748>

Texas foster care deaths addressed in house committee By Phil Prazan Published: March 9, 2015, 2:14 pm Updated: March 9, 2015, 7:14 pm [26Click to share on Twitter Click to share on Google+ 329Share on Facebook Click to share on Pinterest](#) Related Coverage [Tales of foster care abuse in Texas sound 'like prison'](#) [Children dying in foster care spurs new set of rules](#) [CPS: Infants in foster care had bruises, broken bones](#) AUSTIN (KXAN) — More than a dozen Texas children have died in foster care in the past two years. A string of deaths in Central Texas helped highlight the lack of oversight and accountability the state has in protecting children. A bill by Representative Cindy Burkett, R-Sunnyvale, hopes to raise the standards of care. The House Committee on Human Services will hear HB 781 Monday. Ashley Harris from Texans Care for Children says Texas has some of the lowest standards for foster parents. Around 90 percent of foster kids are in privately run foster homes. The state currently requires eight hours of training for guarding over basic (non-disabled, non-special needs children) children. The requirement goes up to 16 hours for children with special needs. "We do know going into the future, more training and better screening will lead to improved safety and placement stability for kids in foster care," said Harris. Currently on the Child Protective Services website, there's a statement saying over 16 hours is recommended for foster parents. However, CPS does not require over 16 hours. HB 781 would require 35 hours of foster parent training. That instruction would include First-Aid, CPR, behavior intervention, trauma-care, and how to give psycho-tropic drugs to children. The bill would also require private foster homes to make public their requirements and training routines. The Department of Family and Protective Services would check in and keep track of those standards. There are close to 17,000 Texas children in foster care. Ten died in 2013. Three died in 2014, including a pair (4 and 6 years old) who drowned in a Georgetown lake. No one registered to oppose the bill at the hearing on Monday. Source: <http://kxan.com/2015/03/09/texas-foster-care-deaths-addressed-in-house-committee/>

Group wants Miss. held in contempt in foster care case Jimmie E. Gates, The Clarion-Ledger 2:02 p.m. CDT March 9, 2015 A child advocacy group is once again asking that the state be held in contempt for failure to carry out mandated reforms in the state's foster care system in the long-running federal lawsuit. Kyeuna would be dead and Shyeuna would be serious injured when a vehicle plied into the women.(Photo: File photo) 84 CONNECT [10 TWEETLINKEDIN](#) 1 COMMENTEMAILMORE A child advocacy group is once again asking that the state of Mississippi be held in contempt for failure to carry out mandated reforms in the state's foster care system in the long-running federal lawsuit. According to the most recent Monitor's Report, the state is failing to produce reliable data on many of the key elements of the settlement agreement, and of those elements on which data is available it is not meeting the required standards,

said lead attorney Marcia Robinson Lowry, executive director of New York-based A Better Childhood. Lowry was originally with another New York-based organization, Children's Rights, when the lawsuit was filed in 2004 on behalf of children in state custody asserting widespread violations of the constitutional rights of children in the Mississippi foster care system. The class action, originally known as *Olivia Y. v. Barbour*, cited dangerously high caseloads, untrained caseworkers, a shortage of foster homes, and a widespread failure to provide basic health care services. In 2008, a settlement agreement was reached and approved by the federal court in 2008. But in 2010, the plaintiffs asked the state to be found in contempt for noncompliance. The court found that the state was in noncompliance with "virtually all areas covered by the agreements" but declined to hold the state in contempt at that time. Instead, the court directed the parties to renegotiate the agreement and to "establish realistic timelines." A Modified Settlement Agreement was approved by the court in July 2012, according to Lowry. A modified settlement agreement, approved in 2012, contained an action plan to address the state's consistent failure to meet court-ordered performance standards. But Lowry said Monday that the latest report of independent monitor assigned to the case, shows the state is still in noncompliance. "For example, there is virtually no reliable information on hiring and worker attrition and thus no reliable information on which to determine worker caseloads, no reliable information about maltreatment in care, and virtually no information about how the state addresses problems in the treatment of children," Lowry said. Even in the regions of the state in which a new "Case Practice Model" has been implemented, performance is well below the standards set in the Modified Settlement Agreement. "Lowry said she was surprised and disappointed with the state's lack of progress. "What the state agreed to do isn't that significant; it's either a lack of capacity or a lack of will to do it," Lowry said. "We felt we had no alternative but to file this action." During state budget hearings, Mississippi Department of Human Services Executive Director Rickey Berry said the state needs to spend an additional \$12 million to meet requirements of the lawsuit. He also said at that time the state has seen an increase of 450 children in foster care in the past year, with many of the children entering foster care because of drug use by their biological parents. Also, he said the state had a vacancy of about 150 social workers. Contact Jimmie E. Gates at (601) 961-7212 or jgates@jackson.gannett.com. Follow @jgatesnews on Twitter Source: <http://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/2015/03/09/group-wants-state-help-contempt-foster-care-case/24656929/>

Boy, 12, in foster care accidentally hangs himself from tree, police say Child was playing alone for about 20 minutes, officials say [NEXT STORY Disney's Hollywood Studios to undergo name change](#) Text Size: [ASmall Text](#) [AMedium Text](#) [ALarge Text](#) A 12-year-old boy, who was in foster care, accidentally hangs himself, police say. Photos A 12-year-old boy, who was in foster care, accidentally hangs himself, police say. PALM BAY, Fla. —A 12-year-old boy, who was in foster care, accidentally hanged himself on Sunday night, according to the Palm Bay Police Department. Related Investigators said Palm Bay Fire Rescue responded to a call about a child not breathing in the 1300 block of Meadowbrook Road around 6 p.m. "The child was airlifted to the trauma hospital where doctors pronounced him deceased," Palm Bay police spokeswoman Yvonne Martinez said. Martinez said the child was playing in the backyard alone for about 20 minutes on a "Tarzan" style rope swing, with an open loop at the bottom, when he allegedly got wrapped in the loop and asphyxiated. [Most watched: Running of the reindeer](#) "It's a tragic, freak accident," SVU Detective Jasmine Smith said. "We are still investigating all the circumstances and are still trying to notify the boy's next of kin." The Department of Children and Families is investigating the circumstances in the home, and have relocated three other children who were also living at the home. The investigation is ongoing. DCF launched a separate neglect investigation into the foster parents, officials said. Source: <http://www.wesh.com/news/boy-12-in-foster-care-accidentally-hangs-himself-from-tree-police-say/31697856>

Woman says group home worker beat her autistic son during... | www.wftv.com Woman says group home worker beat her autistic son during argument over cornflakes 7 8 8 47 Related [Photos: Special needs man's injuries View Larger](#) A central Florida mother said this is what happened to her special needs son when she left him in the care of a Lake County group home. CLERMONT, Fla. — A central Florida mother is planning to sue after she said her special needs son, Kelvin Rosa, was beaten with a three hole punch while in the care of a group home in Clermont. It's the latest abuse allegation Channel 9's Kenneth Craig has uncovered against Central Florida Group Homes since the state filed a complaint against them last year. The victim's mother said she's taking action to prevent abuse from happening to another family. Photos: [Special needs man's injuries](#) She said the dispute between her 24-year-old autistic son and a care worker was over food, and both she and her attorney said there is no reasonable explanation for Rosa's injuries. Rosa, who is diagnosed with Asperger's, was beaten with the object when he tried to get cornflakes around bedtime, his mother told police. The female worker told investigators a different story, saying she was attacked and that Rosa fell while she was defending herself. "Nobody has the right to touch a young person," said Rosa's mother, Maria Santiago. "All the stories she told were lies." Santiago spoke with WFTV through a translator and said she and her attorney are planning to sue Central Florida Group Homes. Last year, Channel 9 exposed similar complaints against the organization, which operates more than a dozen homes. Craig also found other lawsuits involving sexual abuse and even a death at one of their homes. "That tells me that their conduct hasn't changed," said attorney Bryan Crews. "It's a sick that a company with 17 homes can allow this type of activity to occur." According to police documents, the worker accused by Santiago is no longer employed, and the organization said it stands by the fact that the case was closed, and no one was charged. Source: <http://www.wftv.com/news/news/local/woman-says-group-home-worker-beat-her-autistic-son/nkTBT/>

Former Fremont County foster parent faces sexual assault charges involving kids in his care Former Fremont County foster parent faces sexual assault charges involving kids in his care Saved Save Article [My Saved Items](#) [Print](#) [Email](#) 2015-03-11T17:30:00Z 2015-03-12T17:47:04Z Former Fremont County foster parent faces sexual assault charges involving kids in his careThe Associated Press The Associated Press March 11, 2015 5:30 pm • The Associated Press [\(0\) Comments](#) × Related Photos [<>](#) Lander Police Department Enlarge Photo RIVERTON — A 66-year-old Lander man has been accused of sexually assaulting two children about seven years ago while he was their foster father. Court papers say one child was 9 or 10 years old and the other 8 years old when they lived with the man from August 2007 to July 2008. Identifying information about the children has been redacted from court documents, and identifying the man could identify the victims. The Fremont County Attorney's Office has charged him with two counts of first-degree sexual abuse of a minor. The maximum penalty for each is 50 years in prison. Circuit Court Judge Robert Denhardt has decided there is enough information to send the case to District Court for trial. Source: http://trib.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/former-fremont-county-foster-parent-faces-sexual-assault-charges-involving/article_719360d0-50ee-55e7-8cd3-4bad5403d7d7.html

www.palmbeachpost.com **Senate bill aims to shift more Florida foster kids out of group homes** 4:55 p.m. Friday, March 13, 2015 | Filed in: [News](#) [Comments 0](#) [Jupiter autistic teen's parents furious with Petco after coupon arrest](#) Access to MyPalmBeachPost.com included for Post subscribers [Explore](#) TALLAHASSEE — As lawmakers continue efforts to shore up the front lines of Florida's child-protection system, they are also eyeing the back end — that is, what happens to children who have been removed from family homes due to abuse and neglect. House and Senate committees this week examined the options for those children, with the Senate Children, Families and Elder Affairs Committee on Thursday passing a bill (SB 940) aimed at helping foster children who live in group homes. The measure by Sen. Nancy Detert, R-Venice, would push the foster-care system to rely less on group care and do more to find permanent families for children. She said it was a response to a recent study that showed that placing children in group homes instead of with foster families is much more expensive and possibly worse for kids. The study, released last month by the Legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, found that group homes cost the state nearly \$81.7 million for about 2,200 children in 2013-2014, more than \$37,000 per child. In comparison, the state rate when a foster family cared for a child age 13 to 17 is \$527 per month, or \$6,324 per year. The study also found that group homes primarily serve older children — and more males and minority children — with behavioral health issues. Physical aggression, running away, truancy and drug use were all higher among children in group homes as opposed to foster families. "The kids in our group homes have a higher level of aggression. That's what got them here," Kenneth Bender, executive director of Boys Town North Florida, told the House Children, Families and Seniors Subcommittee on Wednesday. Bender said the youths also have a higher level of depression, which can spark aggressive behavior as well. Others, however, contend that children who have been so mistreated in their homes that they must be removed for their own safety would benefit most from loving families. "Group care is an intervention; it's not a place to live," Carole Shaffer of the San Francisco-based Youth Law Center told the Senate panel on Thursday. "Group care is designed to get kids back into the place where they can live with a family." "They need normalcy in their lives," Janice Thomas, assistant secretary for child welfare at the Department of Children and Families, told the House panel on Wednesday. "They also need adult advocates who are looking out for the best interests of the children." As of January, 8,827 children in out-of-home care had been placed with relatives; 2,034 had been placed with non-relatives such as a teacher, coach or family friend; 6,734 were in licensed family foster homes; and 2,177 were in licensed group care facilities, according to information presented by the Department of Children and Families to lawmakers. Slightly more than 11 percent of children who are removed from their families are placed in group homes rather than with relatives, friends or

foster families. National surveys suggest that long-term outcomes were slightly worse for Florida children in group care. "The OPPAGA report indicates that there seems to be no effective, consistent system in Florida for determining which children are placed in which group home and assessing whether group care is appropriate or whether the child is benefiting from the placement," Detert said. "A placement for a child should not be a placement of last resort." But for some children it is. "It depends on the area and the system of care," Thomas said. "Sometimes, unfortunately, it is because we don't have enough foster homes." Detert's bill would address that by requiring the Department of Children and Families to develop a proposal for a continuum of care for foster children. It would include a method of assessing children to decide on their initial placements. Just under half of the children in group care have fewer than two placements before being placed in a group home, according to the OPPAGA report. "We hear group-home providers say that a particular child in their care was in multiple placements before coming to them," Detert said. "The need for better assessment before an initial placement is made is obvious. A child shouldn't be set up to fail a placement because of a bad initial assessment." The first version of Detert's bill would have gone further to reduce group care and would have restricted the circumstances and lengths of time that children could stay in group homes employing shift workers. But the Florida Coalition for Children, which represents group homes and community-based care agencies that subcontract with them, objected in part on the grounds that some children need more intensive therapies. "I really don't like the term 'shift care,'" Shelley Katz, chief operating officer of Children's Home Society of Florida, told the House panel. "I think it is a little bit offensive to some of our staff who have invested 25 years in the care of children." Source: <http://www.palmbeachpost.com/news/news/state-regional-govt-politics/senate-bill-aims-to-shift-more-florida-foster-kids/nkWZG/>

Arkansas Republican who gave girls to rapist used foster daughter illegally in campaign ad [David Ferguson 14 Mar 2015 at 14:04 ET](#) Harris family, their three sons and 'Jeannette' (Harris 2014 campaign) Don't miss stories. Follow Raw Story! Allegations of wrongdoing continue to pile up against Arkansas Republican state Rep. Justin Harris, who adopted two girls out of the foster system, then "re-homed" them with a man who raped one of them when the girls became too difficult to care for. [According to the Arkansas Times blog](#), Harris violated state Department of Human Services (DHS) regulations by featuring one of the girls in a campaign ad when he ran for his state house seat. Arkansas DHS policy strictly prohibits any activity that would compromise a foster child's anonymity. Harris used the photograph of the girl when she was still a ward of the foster system. The Times [reported](#) that the girl in the ad was the eldest of the three deeply troubled sisters who the Harrises took into their home in the fall of 2012. In order to clearly tell the girls' story, the newspaper re-named the eldest girl Jeannette, the middle girl Mary and youngest Annie. The Times identified the girl in the photo as Jeannette, whom the Harrises never adopted, but sent on to another foster home. DHS spokeswoman Amy Webb [told the Times](#) that she could not comment on the Harris campaign ad directly. "If we were made aware of a situation like you described, we would immediately call the foster or pre-adoptive parent and tell him to discontinue using the picture on any campaign material. We would not be comfortable with a foster child's picture being used during a campaign. [DHS's Office of Policy and Legal Services, which according to department rules, has to approve public use of any media featuring a foster child] would not agree to that either." Numerous sources have come forward and [decided](#) the appallingly botched adoption, which Harris and his wife Marsha reportedly pushed for over the objections of the girls' previous foster parents, child care professionals and DHS officials. Harris reportedly threatened to cut the DHS budget if his family didn't get to adopt the girls in spite of the fact that he and his wife were [repeatedly warned](#) that the sisters were special needs children who would require intense counseling and other forms of therapy in order to adapt to a new home. "The problem was simple hubris," [said](#) a foster mother who worked with the girls. "He saw it as, 'I'm with God. God's going to solve this.'" The Harrises have stringently denied any wrongdoing in the case. In an [emotional press conference with their attorney](#) last week, they blasted the DHS and the media and insisted that they are being unfairly blamed for the rape of the middle sister by Eric Francis after the Harrises handed the girls over to Francis and his wife Stacey. They issued a public statement in which they insisted "Rep. and Mrs. Harris have suffered a severe injustice. Due to threats of possible abandonment charges, they were unable to reach out to DHS for help with children who presented a serious risk of harm to other children in their home." The DHS vehemently disputes the Harrises' claims, as do [multiple witnesses](#) who said that Marsha Harris was convinced that the girls were possessed by demons and could communicate telepathically. The family kept Mary, the middle girl, locked in a room for the bulk of her day with no toys or books, and monitored her with a video camera. "The first night I was over there, I just broke down and cried with this little girl because I just felt so bad for her," said babysitter Chelsey Goldsborough. Marsha Harris had stripped the girl's holding room of book, toys and colorful clothes "because a demon told [Mary] not to share," Goldsborough said. "Demons told her to not appreciate [her toys] and all that, so they took away all the toys and her colored clothes." [Report typos and corrections to corrections@rawstory.com](#) About the Author David Ferguson is an editor at Raw Story. He was previously writer and radio producer in Athens, Georgia, hosting two shows for Georgia Public Broadcasting and blogging at Firedoglake.com and elsewhere. He is currently working on a book. Source: <http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2015/03/arkansas-republican-who-gave-girls-to-rapist-used-foster-daughter-illegally-in-campaign-ad/>

Private Christian boot camp shut down, owners arrested South Floridian who alleged abuse at Alabama facility reacts [Small Text Medium Text Large Text Print](#) South Floridian who alleged abuse at shut down boot camp reacts MOBILE, Ala. - The owners of a private Christian boot camp where parents paid to send their troubled teens have been arrested and the facility is also shut down. Madison Litsky said the emotion flooded in when she heard that a so-called boot camp for troubled kids had been shut down and the two men running the place were arrested. "Yes, I did cry," Litsky said. "I was overwhelmed by what happened ... while I was there, and how it affected my life and it still affects my life today." Quick Clicks [Teen: Camp pastor punched me Teenagers allege abuse at camp](#) Litsky, who lives in Plantation, was one of numerous [teens who alleged abuse at the private facility in Alabama](#) called **Restoration Youth Academy**. She and another South Florida teen, William Vargas, [told their stories to Local 10 in 2013](#). "He hit me and hit me again," Litsky recalled. "I was choked," Vargas said. William Knott and Pastor John Young, who ran the camps, denied the claims, but the Mobile Police Department shut down their current camp, now called the Saving Youth Foundation, for sanitary violations March 5 after serving a search warrant there during an ongoing criminal abuse investigation, removing all 36 teens there. Knott was arrested on an unrelated domestic violence warrant, and Young was arrested on a traffic warrant. "They didn't deserve to be in an environment like that," Litsky said. Litsky, who is now 20, is now a lifeguard on Fort Lauderdale Beach and is getting training to become an EMT. She said she's relieved the 36 teens have been rescued from the camp. "None of the kids there -- bad or not -- deserve any of that," said Litsky. "Yeah, those kids needed help, but they weren't getting the help they needed." Litsky is expected to complete her EMT training in May as the criminal investigation in Alabama continues. A Mobile, Alabama, police spokeswoman told Local 10's [Bob Norman](#) the 36 teens removed from the boot camp were turned over to the state and are being returned to their parents. Source: <http://www.local10.com/news/private-christian-boot-camp-shut-down-owners-arrested/31787210>

OUR GOOD DEEDS: High school students help homeless youth OUR GOOD DEEDS: High school students help homeless youth [2 Saved Save Article My Saved Items Print Email <>](#) 031515-nws-good1 Courtesy photo Central High School students in Heather Hoeye's special education English class are gathering donations to create survival bags for homeless youth. 2015-03-15T08:00:00Z OUR GOOD DEEDS: High school students help homeless youth Claudia Laws Journal staff Rapid City Journal March 15, 2015 8:00 am • [Claudia Laws Journal staff \(0\) Comments](#) Local acts of kindness To submit an item for consideration, visit rapidcityjournal.com/gooddeeds or email claudia.laws@rapidcityjournal.com Rapid City Central High School students are creating survival bags to help homeless youth. Teens in Heather Hoeye's special education English class are building 50 bags which will each contain a blanket, toiletry items, laundry soap, socks and beef jerky, as well as any other items the class can gather. "We chose this project because we've all been through hard times and we know how it feels to suffer through some of them," said junior Cody Brede, 18. "We thought it would be a great thing to bring hope to people who don't have anything." The students are partnering with Arise Lutheran Social Services, a grant-based program that provides emergency shelter for runaway and homeless youth ages 10 to 17, according to Staci Jonson, program director for the Arise Youth Center. Having something tangible to give these kids can make a huge difference, Jonson said. "At that juncture, it could be the hope that they need to go one more day," she said. "A fresh pair of socks can mean the world if you haven't had one in a long time. Your feet get wet and get cold and it can just really give that hope of, 'I can get through today and tomorrow is still there.'" Desirae Hanson, 17, knows how much a sliver of hope can help. The junior is going through a rough time herself as her father recently passed away and her home has been foreclosed. "I feel good about helping the students because I know what they go through because I've been homeless a couple times, too," she said. "I just want to help them and give them everything they need." Each student in the class has a different role: creating a project logo, reaching out to potential donors or marketing the project. The students are thrilled to be able to help others. "We're helping troubled teens who don't have anything have a little more hope in life," said senior Devyne Aufdengarten, 19. While more donations are needed, the project is gaining momentum and Hoeye is thrilled with the work her class is doing. "They're creating their own community," Hoeye said. "They're phenomenal and amazing and I'm so proud of them." To donate, email

CentralSurvivalCorps@gmail.com or call Hoeye at 605-430-3263. Of note from readers Nine members of Southwest Middle School's student council donated \$80 worth of books, puzzles, snacks and also volunteered two hours of time to Youth & Family Services' Rapid City Head Start program. — Brianna Reiner / Youth & Family Services Two foster grandparents are working to teach the Lakota language to local children. Kay Allison and Barbara Basketfield volunteer at Rural Initiative Head Start in Lakota Homes. Allison is certified to teach Lakota and Basketfield has taken classes at Oglala Lakota College for two years and is close to earning her certification as well. "I love the kids because they are just sponges," Basketfield said in a news release. "They're just so ready to experience life." — Marianne Fridell, Foster Grandparent Program coordinator Source: http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/our-good-deeds-high-school-students-help-homeless-youth/article_a95d4cb9-44b4-5e96-94b3-08b29fbab7d4.html

How Prison Stints Replaced Study Hall America's problem with criminalizing kids. By JODY OWENS March 15, 2015 Lead image by Sharon Steinmann. Police officers in Meridian, Mississippi, were spending so much time hauling handcuffed students from school to the local juvenile jail that they began describing themselves as "just a taxi service." It wasn't because schools in this east Mississippi town were overrun by budding criminals or juvenile superpredators—not by a long shot. Most of the children were arrested and jailed simply for violating school rules, often for trivial offenses. One 15-year-old girl, for example, was suspended and sent to the Lauderdale County Juvenile Detention Center for a dress code violation. Her jacket was the wrong shade of blue. A boy served a suspension in the juvenile lock-up for passing gas in the classroom. Another landed behind bars because he walked to the alternative school instead of taking the bus. For many kids, a stint in "juvie" was just the beginning of a never-ending nightmare. Arrests could lead to probation. Subsequent suspensions were then considered probation violations, leading back to jail. And suspensions were a distinct possibility in a district where the NAACP found a suspension rate that was more than 10 times the national average. In 2012, the U.S. Department of Justice filed suit to stop the "taxi service" in Meridian's public schools, where 86 percent of the students are black. The DOJ suit, still unresolved, said children were being incarcerated so "arbitrarily and severely as to shock the conscience." We should all be shocked. The reality, though, is that Meridian's taxi service is just one example of what amounts to a civil rights crisis in America: a "school-to-prison pipeline" that sucks vulnerable children out of the classroom at an alarming rate and funnels them into the harsh world of police, courts and prison cells. For many children, adolescent misbehavior that once warranted a trip to the principal's office—and perhaps a stint in study hall—now results in jail time and a greater possibility of lifelong involvement with the criminal justice system. It should surprise no one that the students pushed into this pipeline are disproportionately children of color, mostly impoverished, and those with learning disabilities. The story of Meridian is more than an example of school discipline run amok. It's a key to understanding how the United States has attained the dubious distinction of imprisoning more people—and a larger share of its population—than any other country. It's one reason why the United States today has a quarter of the world's prisoners—roughly 2.2 million people—while representing just 5 percent of its total population. And it helps explain an unprecedented incarceration rate that is far and away the highest on the planet, some five to 10 times higher than other Western democracies. As the managing attorney for the Southern Poverty Law Center's Mississippi office, I've seen firsthand the devastation wrought by the school-to-prison pipeline, and the senselessness of it all. When SPLC advocates began interviewing children at the juvenile detention center in Meridian in 2009 we were investigating children being pepper-sprayed by guards when they were in their cells and posing no threat. But we kept hearing stories from students who were pushed out of school and into cells for noncriminal, minor school infractions. These stories would eventually spark the DOJ lawsuit and a thorough examination of how the "pipeline" operated in this town. *** The origins of the school-to-prison pipeline can be traced to the 1990s when reports of juvenile crime began to stoke fears of "superpredators"—described in the 1996 book *Body Count* as "radically impulsive, brutally remorseless youngsters" with little regard for human life. The superpredator concept, based on what some critics have derided as junk science, is now known to be a complete myth. Former Princeton professor and Bush administration official John DiIulio, the *Body Count* co-author who coined the term, admitted to *The New York Times* in 2001 that his theory of sharply rising juvenile violence had been wrong. But the damage had been done. As these fears took root and mass school shootings like the one at Columbine made headlines, not only did states enact law laws to increase punishment for juvenile offenders, schools began to adopt "zero-tolerance" discipline policies that imposed automatic, pre-determined punishments for rule breakers. At the same time, states across America were adopting harsh criminal laws, including long mandatory prison sentences for certain crimes and "three strikes" laws that led to life sentences for repeat offenders. The term "zero tolerance" was, in fact, adopted from policing practices and criminal laws that focused on locking up minor offenders as a way to stem more serious crime. Somewhere along the way, as local police departments began supplying on-duty "school resource officers" to patrol hallways, educators began to confuse typical adolescent misbehavior with criminality. Schools became, more or less, a part of the criminal justice system. With police officers stalking the halls and playgrounds, teachers and principals found it easy to outsource discipline. Almost overnight, a schoolyard scuffle could now land a kid in a jail cell. The results have been disastrous. In some school districts, as in many African-American communities, police seem to view students as the enemy, or at least as potential criminals. In places like Birmingham, Alabama, their tactics grew ever more extreme. Officers in this former steel city—where black schoolchildren braved police dogs and fire hoses during the civil rights movement—routinely doused students in predominantly African-American schools with Freeze + P, an aerosol weapon that combines pepper spray and tear gas. A cell block in Lauderdale County Juvenile Detention Center in Meridian, Mississippi. | Photo by Marianne Todd LaTonya Stearnes vividly remembers when the chemical weapon was used on two of her daughters, one of whom is named as a plaintiff in an ongoing class action suit filed by the SPLC. The incident began after a boy pushed one of her daughters. When the girl defended herself, a police officer grabbed her from behind and sprayed her in the face. Her sister also was caught in the stinging mist. "I will never forget my daughter's red and swollen face," Stearnes said. "I sent my girls to school thinking they would be safe and protected. I never thought they would be pepper-sprayed. These are teenage girls, not criminals." But they were treated like criminals, as were many others. The SPLC found that from 2006 to 2011, chemical weapons were used on about 300 students in the Birmingham Public Schools district, which is 95 percent African American. When you take into account the bystanders inadvertently caught in a cloud of pepper spray, the number swelled to more than 1,000. *** In Lauderdale County, Mississippi, children caught in the pipeline faced long odds in court. They had little time to spend with their public defender before appearing for a detention hearing—just minutes, according to the DOJ lawsuit. The public defender did not even provide a way for a child or parent to contact him or her. Instead, meetings regularly took place in the courthouse hallway before a hearing. It's little wonder that the DOJ's lawsuit charges that the public defender did not "meaningfully advise children of the possible consequences of admitting to charges or of proceeding to trial." But Lauderdale County is just one example of the confusing legal maze children and their families are sometimes forced to navigate with little help. The stakes are especially high when a state such as Florida puts the decision of trying a child as an adult largely in the hands of a prosecutor rather than a judge. This prosecutorial discretion may explain why Florida sends more children to adult court than any other state in the nation—more than 10,000 in the last five years alone. A staggering 98 percent of those children were transferred to adult court without a hearing before a judge. For these children, just the threat of adult prosecution—and prison—can often elicit a guilty plea. Florida even allows counties to incarcerate children charged as juveniles in adult jails, such as the Polk County Jail, which includes dorms designated for children. The vast majority of the children at the jail in this largely rural, central Florida county are there for nonviolent offenses. Most are simply awaiting court dates, because children charged in the juvenile system are not eligible for bail. Jail guards lacked the basic training needed to supervise children. There was little in the way of education and rehabilitative services. Children who acted up were sometimes placed in kennel-like cages and taunted by guards. They were pepper-sprayed and held in prolonged isolation. An SPLC lawsuit over these conditions was tried in federal court in late 2013 and is awaiting the judge's decision. It seems obvious that such cruel conditions do little or nothing to help troubled children become better citizens. When Lisa Jobe's son, K.J., ended up at the Polk County Jail, she could see that the 15-year-old had changed. "He was always looking over his shoulder," she said. "You never know when you're going to be the person that's going to be jumped next." When K.J. was assaulted in jail, no one bothered to call his parents. His mother learned about it when she saw his black eye. "It broke his spirit," Jobe said. "He was just a different child. He felt there was no hope." She wonders about the other children at the jail. "These are children who've made mistakes, but we shouldn't give up on them," she said. "And, that's what it seems like has happened at the Polk County Jail. They've given up on the children and they're just locking them up." In neighboring Alabama, the state allows children as young as 16 to automatically be charged as an adult for certain offenses. But juvenile court judges can transfer a child as young as 14 to adult court for any offense. When Patrick (not his real name) found himself in an Alabama prison at age 16, he quickly realized that he had better be ready to fight at any moment. He witnessed more than 30 stabbings in a little more than a year. He learned that if he didn't want to be stabbed, it was best to simply hand over his property if another prisoner demanded it. Refusing a sexual overture could also result in violence. They were tough lessons for someone barely old enough to drive. These stories may explain why the practice of housing young people in adult lock-ups is opposed or condemned by a long list of professional organizations, including the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators, the American Correctional Association, the American Jail Association, the Association of State Correctional Administrators and

the National Association of Counties. Jailing children has also been profitable for some in the age of prison privatization. That was the case in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, where two judges were sentenced to prison in 2011 for their roles in a \$2.6 million bribery scheme that sent juveniles into private, for-profit juvenile detention centers. It's believed that more than 2,500 children were affected by the scandal. One teenage girl was sent to a youth camp for delinquent girls in 2007—a stiff punishment for creating a MySpace page that poked fun at her vice principal. “Everything in my adult life blooms from the moment he boomed, ‘Adjudicated delinquent!’ and had me ushered out of the courtroom so that I could be cuffed to the sound of my mother’s desperate wailing,” Hillary Transue wrote seven years later on Vitamin W, a women’s website. “No child should have to hear her parent, her hero, the center of her universe, crumble to pieces—or the bailiff validating her guilt and shame as the cuffs are locked into place.” *** Thousands of juvenile convictions have since been overturned in the wake of the Pennsylvania scandal. But many youth across the country remain needlessly entangled in the justice system. One young man in Mississippi actually became lost within the system after being sentenced to a private, for-profit prison. When Michael McIntosh attempted to visit his son, Mike, at the Walnut Grove Youth Correctional Facility, which housed youths convicted as adults, he was turned away by guards. They told him his son was no longer at the prison. But no one knew where Mike could be found. McIntosh launched a desperate search that, weeks later, led him to a hospital in Greenwood, hours away from Walnut Grove. That’s where he found Mike. He couldn’t speak, see or even sit up. “He’s got this baseball-size knot on the back of his head,” McIntosh recounted to the SPLC. “He’s got cuts all over him, bruises. He has stab wounds. The teeth in the front are broken. He’s scared out of his mind. He doesn’t have a clue where he’s at—or why.” McIntosh still could get no answers from the prison system about what happened to his son. Finally, he received a call from an SPLC advocate investigating the facility. “She said, ‘Your son was in a riot,’” McIntosh said. “They [the SPLC] just took bits [of information] and started putting this puzzle together.” The picture that came together was highly disturbing. Mike had suffered brain damage when the violence erupted in February 2010, only about four months after he entered Walnut Grove at age 19. His injuries left him with the cognitive abilities of a 2-year-old. Several other youths were stabbed during the incident. Mike’s cellmate was stabbed in the head. A dozen other people were hospitalized. Perhaps the most galling detail was that a guard had allowed prisoners into a cell to fight, according to a DOJ investigation. The guard was fired, but her actions were not unusual at this facility operated by a for-profit company. Guards frequently incited violence between the young charges in their care. Violence was a way of life. Drugs and weapons could be obtained throughout the prison. Sometimes guards committed the violence themselves. Some even had gang affiliations. Sexual abuse of prisoners—including brutal youth-on-youth rapes and “brazen” sexual misconduct by prison staffers who coerced youths—was “among the worst that we have seen in any facility anywhere in the nation,” DOJ investigators wrote. A federal judge later wrote that the company operating the prison “has allowed a cesspool of unconstitutional and inhuman acts and conditions to germinate.” It was no place for a young person—much less a place to rehabilitate someone. An SPLC lawsuit over these conditions led to an agreement that ended the housing of children and teens at Walnut Grove. And yet the conditions at Walnut Grove, while extreme, are fairly common. We see similar conditions in many lock-ups where children are incarcerated. *** The Lauderdale County Juvenile Detention Center—a destination for far too many Meridian students between about 2006 and 2012—also wasn’t immune to abusive conditions. Staffers frequently tormented children by shooting pepper spray into their faces. A child needed only to talk too much or not sit in the back of his cell to find his or her skin and eyes suddenly burning from the chemical. But even the best behavior could not guarantee a child would be spared. When a boy threw a tissue out of his cell in November 2009, a guard couldn’t determine the culprit. An SPLC lawsuit describes how the guard handled the situation: All of the boys at the detention center were sprayed with the chemical. Other abuses were also common. Children were confined to small cells for up to 23 hours a day. They slept on mats that smelled of urine as they tried to stay warm under torn, stained sheets. Meals were frequently eaten in their cells, often near a filthy toilet. The detention center did not even provide these youths with underwear—a decision that meant they had to wear the same underwear throughout their confinement. A settlement agreement was reached in the SPLC lawsuit over these abusive conditions, but the facility was ultimately shuttered because it simply could not comply with the agreement. The “taxi service” to the detention center was put out of business. *** Contrary to tough talk about scaring bad students straight, criminalizing kids does not make our communities safer. A growing body of research suggests, in fact, that the current approach to juvenile justice does exactly the opposite. Studies show that the brain does not fully develop until a person reaches his or her mid-20s. In fact, the part of the brain that governs rational decision-making is the last to develop. This means a child may engage in dangerous behavior without fully realizing the risks and consequences for themselves and others. But that child also has a unique propensity for rehabilitation as well. In other words, we shouldn’t give up on kids who get into trouble. But that’s what we’re doing. The research shows that an arrest doubles the odds that a student will drop out. The odds quadruple with a first-time court appearance, according to Justice Quarterly. And dropping out, in turn, increases the likelihood of prison. In fact, African-American men under 35 who failed to finish high school are now more likely to be incarcerated than working. Criminalizing students comes at a steep cost to taxpayers. Confining a single young person can cost as much as \$148,767 a year, according to a recent survey of 46 states by the Justice Policy Institute. This costly “pipeline” disproportionately harms children of color and causes immeasurable harm to their communities, where many of them live in poverty. Black students are suspended and expelled at three times the rate of white students, according to the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights. Even at the preschool level, there’s a gaping racial disparity: The department found that black preschool students – a group that represents only 18 percent of preschool enrollment – make up 48 percent of preschool children suspended more than once. When there is such a disparity in discipline at 4 and 5 years old, it shouldn’t be a surprise that African Americans are incarcerated at about six times the rate of non-Hispanic whites, according to the National Academy of Sciences. Or that they are three to five times more likely to be arrested for drug offenses than whites, despite using drugs at roughly the same rates. *** The court victories against harsh school discipline and brutal detention conditions are vitally important to reforming this system. But the school-to-prison pipeline has not yet been destroyed. It is still harming young lives; I see it firsthand through my work. I see it operating in school districts across the country, in juvenile courts and detention centers, and in the adult prisons that greet a new generation of young prisoners every year. We need a new way. One that does not treat ordinary children like criminals, that does not equate bad behavior with criminality. One that does not target African-American children for incarceration at an early age. One that does not place children in brutal, filthy jails and prisons where their needs are neglected and they are subjected to pervasive violence, sexual abuse and psychological torture. One that does not erode trust in law enforcement among communities of color. One that believes in the ability of children to change and invests in their futures. One that provides hope, not despair. The simple fact is that most children who act up in school or even commit minor crimes will grow out of their bad behavior—if we let them. This is not to say that children should not be held accountable or punished for committing crimes, particularly violent crimes. But most of the children now being pushed out of school and into detention need a helping hand, not a pair of handcuffs. We must spend less on prisons and more on education, counseling, therapy and other rehabilitative services. Such an investment will save taxpayer money, enhance opportunities for many communities mired in poverty and, importantly, lead to less crime in the future. While it is encouraging that people across this nation are finally asking why we imprison so many people, we will miss the bigger picture by only looking at adult prisons. We must look at the schools and the entire justice system if we hope to truly address the mass incarceration crisis. The path to prison starts at an early age. And as long as we continue to needlessly criminalize children in the name of school discipline, our prisons will only continue to overflow. Jody Owens is the managing attorney for the Southern Poverty Law Center’s Mississippi office. Read more:

<http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/03/criminal-kids-juvenile-justice-sentencing-reform-incarceration-116065.html#ixzz3V3yebDT2> Source: http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/03/criminal-kids-juvenile-justice-sentencing-reform-incarceration-116065_full.html?print=VQ30xukiG1s

Attorney general launches children’s justice unit By [Dana Littlefield](#) 5:24 p.m. March 14, 2015 Saying she wants to “double down” on issues related to children, California Attorney General Kamala Harris has launched a special unit within her office dedicated to protecting the rights of the state’s most vulnerable residents. The Bureau of Children’s Justice, which kicked off last month, will focus the efforts of state prosecutors and civil rights lawyers on a number of issues impacting minors, including juvenile justice, foster care, education, truancy and human trafficking. Among the bureau’s goals, Harris has said, is to work with local, state and national authorities to make sure laws and regulations are enforced consistently, and to identify any policy changes that may be necessary. She said one of the bureau’s first tasks will be to look for enforcement gaps in the foster care system to “ensure that government agencies are held accountable to those entrusted in their care.” And while state officials have not outlined exactly what fixes they’re looking to make or specified any failures on the part of local jurisdictions, they say the available data indicate plenty of room for improvement. For example, they note two studies published in 2013 showing that 42 percent of students in the foster care system do not graduate from high school, compared to 12 percent of all California students, and that half of all children sold into the sex-trafficking trade in the state are foster youth. “(Children) have a lot of rights, a lot of legal protections in California,” said Special Assistant Attorney General Jill Habig, who was involved with creating the new bureau. “And yet we’re seeing the outcomes that we are seeing. “There are probably some gaps that we need to fill.” Habig said the bureau is an extension of a “smart-on-crime” approach Harris advocated during her two terms as

San Francisco's district attorney. The idea is to address problems that put children at greater risk of committing crime or being targeted as victims, such as a lack of educational resources or an unstable home environment. The Attorney General's Office is also partnering with the nonprofit Center for Youth Wellness, to raise awareness about how childhood trauma — such as being exposed to violence in the home, abuse or neglect — can adversely affect a person's health and development. Cecilia Chen, a policy analyst at the San Francisco-based center, said looking at how children are affected by traumatic experiences and what stress does to the brain and body has implications for public health and public safety. "There's so much work (to do) to address the school-to-prison pipeline," Chen said. "(Childhood trauma) has implications across multiple sectors across the state. It's not something that's limited to lower-income communities of color." Last month, the Attorney General's Office sent a letter to officials in all 58 counties, stressing a need for them to meet legal obligations pertaining to foster youth, and urging them to evaluate current practices and policies. "As the bureau begins its work, I welcome your ideas, feedback and suggestions for ways we can work together on this endeavor," Harris wrote in the letter. Leaders of several agencies and organizations in San Diego County said they were pleased to learn that the state was making children's issues a priority, and they noted that local government and nonprofit organizations here have been collaborating on those efforts for years. "I'm going to take that as an offer of support," San Diego County Probation Chief Mack Jenkins said of Harris' letter. His department supervises more than 2,700 juvenile offenders, fewer than 500 of whom are in custody. Jenkins said he looks forward to discussing the county's programs and policies with state authorities. He noted two programs that seek to identify young people in the welfare system who may cross into the justice system, and then match them with counseling and other services. All San Diego County probation officers now receive training on the effects of early exposure to trauma and violence, he said. "My question is how do we take what (Harris) has launched and turn it into some tangible benefits for kids?" Jenkins said. Early this year, authorities in San Diego announced a new task force that will work to identify and rescue victims of human trafficking, as well as prosecute the traffickers. The task force has investigators from 15 local, state and federal agencies, including the county District Attorney's Office and Sheriff's and Probation departments, and city police departments in Coronado, Escondido, La Mesa, Oceanside and San Diego. The Attorney General's Office is also involved. Steven Jella, associate executive director of San Diego Youth Services, called it an "exciting" prospect that the state would be focusing on the needs of foster youth, including those who become homeless or get lured into the sex trade. "Sometimes one youth falls in all three categories," Jella said. "Any one of those focus areas could absolutely benefit from more conversation and more resources." Angela Bartosik, chief deputy alternate public defender, also welcomed the state's perspective on helping victims of human trafficking. She said her office sees many women and girls accused of being prostitutes. And she, too, pointed to the successes of local programs that target vulnerable youth, such as the annual Passport to Life Career and Education Expo, which provides information to probationers about going back to school or getting a job. "I think our county is doing a lot," Bartosik said. "I'm proud of it. But more ideas and more resources are never a bad thing." Harris, a Democrat, announced in January that she would enter the race to replace Barbara Boxer, who is retiring from the U.S. Senate. Source: <http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2015/mar/14/attorney-general-launches-childrens-justice-unit/>

The Drugging of Children in Foster Care By [Philip Hickey, PhD Featured Blogs](#) March 16, 2015 [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Email](#) [Print](#) [33 Comments](#)
6.39k Views It's no secret that here in America, foster children are being prescribed psychiatric drugs, especially neuroleptics, as a means of controlling their behavior. A great deal has been said and written on the matter. Politicians have declared the practice deplorable. Children's advocacy groups have expressed concern, and, of course, those of us in the antipsychiatry movement have screamed till we're hoarse. But the problem persists. For the past six months or so, the San Jose Mercury News, a California newspaper, has been running frequent articles on this topic, calling for oversight and corrective action. On February 24, 2015, Karen de Sá, a reporter with that newspaper, published an article titled [Senate panel examines why California foster care system 'addicted' to psychiatric drugs](#). It's an excellent article, which highlights various aspects of the problem, and provides updated information on this matter. Here are some quotes: "California's foster care system 'has grown more addicted to mind-altering medication,' the chair of a powerful Senate committee told a packed public hearing in the state Capitol on Tuesday, adding that 'here in California, we've done little to act on this alarming issue.'" "Lightbourne said two state-sponsored panels have spent years working to develop guidelines that would protect foster children from the excessive use of psych medications and to house fewer kids at residential group homes, where drugs are most frequently prescribed. Foster children deserve 'nonmedical treatments whenever possible,' Lightbourne said." "'We need to shift our thinking away from the primacy of psychiatric medications toward relationships,' testified George Stewart, a Berkeley child psychiatrist who has spent much of his career tapering severely traumatized children safely off high-risk drug cocktails. 'We are going to look back on this era of great enthusiasm for psychiatric medications and either scratch our heads or beat our heads. We will look back in 20 years and say, 'What were we doing?'" "Senators also said they were alarmed by the newspaper's analysis that showed how pharmaceutical companies lavish the state's foster care prescribers with millions of dollars for meals, gifts, travel, speaking engagements and research grants -- a practice Lightbourne called 'deeply troubling.' The newspaper found the doctors who prescribed the most, typically were rewarded the most." All of which tells a familiar story. Pharma-psychiatry systematically targets foster children as potential customers. They do this because the residents of foster homes, group and individual, are a "captive audience," in the sense that the foster parent or staff member will ensure that the resident takes the pills. In this way, non-compliance -- the great drain on pharma revenue -- becomes a non-issue. Karen de Sá's article is cogent, articulate, and powerful, and undoubtedly she and her colleagues are raising awareness on this matter. But there was one paragraph in her article that I felt warranted some additional discussion. "Tuesday's four-hour hearing before the Human Services Committee highlighted a package of bills being introduced this month, following this newspaper's investigation 'Drugging Our Kids,' which revealed nearly one in four foster care teens take psychiatric drugs -- often to control behavior, not to treat mental illnesses. Most are prescribed antipsychotics, a powerful class of psychiatric drugs with the most harmful side effects." Note the phrase "...often to control behavior, not to treat mental illnesses." What the author is missing here is that, within psychiatry's spurious domain, misbehavior is a mental illness. In fact, it is several mental illnesses. If a child is frequently defiant, he has a mental illness called oppositional defiant disorder. If he is given to outbursts of anger, he has a mental illness called intermittent explosive disorder. If he is given to violating rules or infringing on the rights of others, he has a mental illness called conduct disorder. If he is given to setting fires, he has a mental illness called pyromania. If he is persistently angry and given to very frequent temper tantrums, he has a mental illness called disruptive mood dysregulation disorder. And, of course, if he is disruptive and inattentive in the classroom, he has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. If the child's misbehavior can't be shoe-horned neatly into any of these categories, psychiatry has two residual categories: other specified disruptive, impulse-control, and conduct disorder; and unspecified disruptive impulse-control and conduct disorder. Contrary to popular opinion, no neurological pathology is required to establish these "diagnoses." So, by neatly re-labeling every conceivable kind of misbehavior as a mental illness, psychiatry has established turf in this field, and has legitimized the use of drugs to "treat" this misbehavior. This is the crux of the entire debate. There is literally no significant problem of thinking, feeling, and/or behaving that is not listed, either directly, or by implication, in the DSM. So, Karen de Sá is incorrect. In the looking-glass world of psychiatry, practitioners are not prescribing major tranquilizers to control children's behavior. Rather, they are "treating mental illnesses," with medications that have been proven by highly questionable pharma research to be "effective and safe." We have actually reached the position in our society where a physician who does not follow these practices could be held liable for failure to treat. And this is the problem. Every attempt to eliminate, or even reduce, this widespread and persistent practice, is doomed to failure as long as psychiatry's spurious diagnoses are accepted as bona fide illnesses. Because if childhood misbehavior is an illness, then psychiatrists and other physicians are not using drugs to control behavior, rather they are "treating," compassionately and effectively, these "disabling illnesses." Psychiatry, over the past five decades, has systematically and deceptively pursued a self-serving policy of medicalizing virtually every significant problem of thinking, feeling, and/or behaving. Their pharma allies have provided the money, and psychiatry has provided the credentials, in what is arguably the most widespread and destructive swindle in human history. And they have been enormously successful. Their spurious notions are widely accepted today as reality. No significant progress will be possible in these areas until the swindle is finally and utterly exposed, and sanity is restored to our conceptualizations of human activity. Until then, despite the protests of politicians, advocates, journalists, and others, the pharma-psychiatry maw will remain wide open, and the ranks of "the mentally ill" who need "treatment" will continue to grow. Source: <http://www.madinamerica.com/2015/03/drugging-children-foster-care/>

Former Foster Child Says Abuse Is Pervasive Updated: Thursday, March 19 2015, 08:26 AM CDT Scary words are coming from a former foster child about abuse he says is the norm in group home foster care. Kristopher Sharp he and others are working to change Texas law that would help other foster children get the help he says he was denied. "There's always some type of abuse whether it's physical or sexual it's very pervasive," he asserted. The allegations are strong but Sharp says it was his reality after living much of his youth in group foster care homes where he states abuse is prevalent. "One of my caregivers molested me, repeatedly. He was a predator and he did this with a lot of other young people who were in that home," Sharp said. He and other child

advocates like Dr. Katherine Barillas says there is an office set up for children to report abuse problems but "they don't know about the office or they're afraid to utilize it because it's part of the agency that unknowingly and unwittingly put them in a situation in which they were abused." The proof is in the numbers in the last three years only seven children used that system to report abuse. Barillas compares that to a recent study. She said, "45 youth responded to the survey and said they didn't know who the ombudsmen office was and they were abused in foster care." House bill 1371 in part, will make that ombudsmen independent of DFPS and give the office more power to protect children this former foster asserts are often victimized. "It should be shocking to the public, it should be shocking to lawmakers and it should be shocking to policymakers because we're removing young people from their homes and we're saying we can do a better job than your family, than your family, and oftentimes that's not the case," Sharp says. Dr. Barillas says this proposal is not about any perceived DFPS shortcomings, or the agency's director. She says it's about making a permanent change to this ombudsmen office that will protect children now and in the future. [By Melanie Lofton](#) Follow us on Twitter [@keyvetv](#) and LIKE us on [Facebook](#) for updates! Source: <http://www.keyvetv.com/news/features/top-stories/stories/former-foster-child-says-abuse-pervasive-24813.shtml>

Foster care for vulnerable kids to replace residential care units in \$43 million plan Foster care for vulnerable kids to replace residential care units in \$43 million plan Date March 16, 2015 (29) [Richard Willingham](#) State Political Correspondent for The Age Struggling: Foster carers Keeryn and Stephen Longmuir are delighted at news of a funding injection from the state government. Photo: Jason South Vulnerable children living in residential care units will be moved into foster care under a \$43 million plan from the Andrews government. The sector is struggling with a shortage of foster carers and hopes the new investment will allow existing carers to expand their work as well as encourage others to become involved. There is a major shortage of home-based care in Victoria which has seen hundreds of children placed in residential care units. At June 30 last year, more than 500 children were staying in these units. There have been reports of serious physical and sexual abuse and exploitation in residential care units. The state's commissioner for Children and Young People, Bernie Geary, is investigating sexual exploitation and abuse in residential care units. His report is due in the next few weeks. Advertisement Families Minister Jenny Mikakos on Monday announced the package saying the Napthine government had made a series of announcements for the sector, but had not spent the money. Last year, the Napthine government announced a \$183 million plan to get some children out of residential care as well as boost therapeutic placements within the system. A new electronic reporting system to reduce sexual exploitation in the system was also flagged. Under the Labor government policy, targeted care packages will be available tailored to each child's needs. Features of the fund include giving extra money to carers to lease bigger cars or houses if they are looking after a sibling group who have been placed in residential care. In some cases, it will allow foster carers to get help while they work, or specialist education services if their child needs extra help. Getting children under 12 out of residential care units is the priority and there also will be a focus on the over-representation of aboriginal children in out-of-home care. Ms Mikakos said more than 100 children had already been identified to be moved out. The money will be spent over the next four years, beginning this April. Mr Geary said putting vulnerable children together in residential care units did not work. "This is positive first step, as the actual notion of residential care is a flawed one, the state needs to continue to do better," Mr Geary said. One of the major issues facing the sector is the dwindling numbers of foster carers due, in part, to the inadequate level of subsidy they receive for their work. Victorian foster carers are among the worst financially supported in the country. "We want a lot more people to step up and be foster carers, we have had an exodus of foster carers in recent years," Ms Mikakos said. Kerry Longmuir has been a carer for over 30 years and has looked after over 380 children. She said the new money would help, especially with increasing demand for services. "It's a shame so many carers are leaving," Ms Longmuir said. "There's a lot more kids coming in and lot more damaged kids coming in." The sector has been broadly supportive of the plan. Centre of Excellence in Child and Family Welfare chief executive Deb Tsorbaris said on an average day there were 7700 children unable to live with their parents, because of abuse or neglect, and were living in alternative accommodation. "A shortage of carers, a significant number of carers leaving the system and a limited range of care options has been a major concern for some time," she said. Ms Tsorbaris says the new scheme will provide some flexibility and, hopefully, encourage more people to be carers. Opposition spokeswoman Georgie Crozier said Labor had been caught out taking credit for something it had not funded. Source: <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/foster-care-for-vulnerable-kids-to-replace-residential-care-units-in-43-million-plan-20150316-1m0fhi.html>

Child killed while in foster care Story by Adam Snider, KFOR OKLAHOMA (CNN)-- A two-year-old is dead and his foster mom is being charged with first degree murder. The child's birth mother said she lost her kids in October, but she is convinced if DHS hadn't stepped in her son would still be alive. Bryson and his six-month-old sibling had been in the care of Heather and Tyler Adams. They were moved by DHS because health officials allegedly found evidence of child abuse. According to court records, a non-responsive Bryson was found by Tyler in their home. Heather later told investigators that she hit the child with her fist. Tallgrass Family Services is the group that trained Heather to be a foster mom. Tallgrass sent a statement that said in part: "Everyone is deeply shocked and heartbroken. We are working closely with law enforcement and the Department of Human Services to fully cooperate with the investigation." Bryson's infant sibling was removed from the home and remains in DHS custody. Adam's remains in jail on \$150,000 bond. Source: http://www.cbs12.com/news/top-stories/stories/vid_24440.shtml

Parents of troubled teen who hung himself sue mental-health center By CARLI TEPROFF Miami Herald March 21, 2015 2015-03-21T13:50:59Z By CARLI TEPROFF Facebook Twitter [Follow](#) [Google Plus](#) More [Linkedin](#) [Reddit](#) [YouTube](#) [E-mail](#) [Print](#) [Order a reprint of this story](#) The father of a 15-year-old boy dropped off his son at a Miami-Dade County mental-health facility, thinking he would get the help he needed to deal with his emotional demons. The demons won out. Less than one full day after checking in, the boy was found hanging by a strap from a ceiling pipe. He died the day after that. Wednesday, the teen's parents sued the operator of the center, which had admitted their child under suicide watch, according to the lawsuit. Ira Leesfield, who represents the parents of the Florida Keys teen, identified by his initials L.V., said Wednesday that someone at the facility "dropped the ball" by not keeping track of the boy. "When you entrust someone to take care of your child, you expect that that is going to happen," Leesfield said. "He was there one day." The lawsuit, filed Wednesday in Miami-Dade Circuit Court, seeks damages in excess of \$15,000 against Concept Health Systems, which runs Concept House at 162 NE 49th St. in Miami. The teen was dropped off for a five-month program by his father on Feb. 7 for treatment of substance abuse and mental illness, according to the lawsuit. On Feb. 8, he was found hanging. Several calls to Concept House and to Chief Executive Officer Ed McGowan's cell phone were not returned. Concept House is licensed by the Department of Children and Families and has been operating for more than 30 years in Miami-Dade County, according to the facility's website. It offers substance abuse and mental health services for adults and teens. Leesfield said the teen's parents, identified in the lawsuit as J.G.V. and J.L.V., took the boy to Concept House after a recommendation from DCF. "At 14, [L.V.] hit an emotional wall," said Leesfield, adding the teen was depressed. "He had a lot of problems and just needed help." The boy had tried to kill himself several times before. "They were aware of his history," Leesfield said of the facility. "He should've never been left alone." On DCF's new website that details child deaths, the incident is listed. "15-year-old was pronounced dead two days after he was found hanging in his room at a substance abuse treatment facility. At the time of the incident, there was an open investigation involving the teen, who started a fire when his father refused to allow him to return to the mother's home." A DCF spokeswoman said the department is investigating the death. It was not known Wednesday night whether Concept House had any similar problems before. Leesfield said in the lawsuit that the facility "was negligent and breached its duties of care" by "failing to adequately monitor L.V.," among other concerns. "This was a needless tragedy to our son and an incomprehensible loss to our family," L.V.'s parents said in an e-mail. "A total lack of responsibility leaves us with heavy hearts." Source: http://www.keysnet.com/2015/03/21/501867_parents-of-troubled-teen-who-hung.html?rh=1

Special Report by Medical Whistleblower: [Voiceless Victims: Wards of the Court](#) (March, 2015)

Special Report by Medical Whistleblower: [Accountability and Human Rights Violations Report Card Submitted to United Nations](#) (March, 2015)

Lawmakers Aim To Regulate Abusive Youth Camps [Dominic Holden](#) BuzzFeed News Reporter [Tweet](#) [Bookmark it](#) [Tweet](#) [View this image](#) David Wernsman / BuzzFeed News "I was woken up before dawn by two large men who put a belt around my waist, and they told me this is about trust." That's the first thing David Wernsman remembers from May 30, 2006. "If you try to run, we will handcuff you, and take you where we are going," he recalled the men saying in his Colorado home. "My parents were standing there, crying, telling me, 'We love you, but you have to go with these men.'" "I was 17, and sent away because I was gay," Wernsman told BuzzFeed News. Websites that promote extreme programs for troubled teenagers tend to have common selling points: tough love — amid beautiful, natural settings — with incredible results. In promotional materials, young men and women trek through wilderness, earnest

camp counselors are beaming, and program directors describe how enrollees can undergo a metamorphosis from truculent misfit to affable wunderkind. To be sure, some programs hire qualified staff to deliver professional therapy for genuinely troubled kids with severe addiction or criminal behavior. But for many teens in positions like Wernsman — who described being forced into manual labor and receiving “beatings with a belt” during his seven-month stay with the program — privately run treatment facilities can be bastions for abuse, where there is little government regulation and youth are largely incommunicado from the parents who enrolled them. This is why California lawmakers announced Friday they are introducing bills in the state legislature and United States Congress that would regulate the therapy camps, some of which have spawned documentaries and government reports that excoriate their practices. [View this image](#) > California State Sen. Ricardo Lara introduced a bill Friday to regulate the industry. AP / Reed Saxon In California, State Senator Ricardo Lara on Friday announced he filed SB 524, the Protecting Youth from Institutional Abuse act. The measure calls for teen programs to be subject to the more stringent licensing standards currently applied to group homes “to ensure essential health and safety standards are met for youth living in these institutions.” Currently in California, “residential boarding schools are exempt from state licensing and do not have any oversight beyond filing a one-page affidavit with the Department of Education,” a preliminary legislative fact sheet from Lara’s office says. At these programs in the state, “69 reported cases of abuse were committed by 56 unique perpetrators, 15 cases of physical abuse, 45 cases of neglect or deprivation of necessities, 2 cases of sexual abuse, and 6 cases of psychological and emotional maltreatment.” By mandating more government oversight at the private facilities — which include so-called boot camps and wilderness camps — the law “will protect youth from abuse and neglect in institutions,” the fact sheet said. Sen. Lara told BuzzFeed News he thinks “there is political will this session to pass SB524,” “Over the past few years,” he explained, “we’ve heard from a growing number of survivors about the horrific treatment they’ve received in alternative youth treatment centers. This bill is about standing up against abuse and injustice and standing up for youth who can’t stand up for themselves.” U.S. Rep. Adam Schiff, meanwhile, is planning to introduce a federal bill along similar lines. His bill will be similar to a federal bill that has died in the past that called for establishing standards for the facilities, mandating reviews, and imposing penalties on companies that violate those rules. “I am working with my colleagues to introduce legislation that will hold all residential treatment programs accountable for instances of child abuse,” Schiff said in a statement. “The measure will also increase the transparency of these programs so that parents can make informed and safer choices for their children.” One of the proponents is Rebecca Lopez, 18, who said these sorts of laws could improve facilities like the one she was taken to. “My mom wasn’t okay with me being gay,” Lopez said by phone from Los Angeles. “She will say it’s about me being sent away for school, but she wanted me separated from my girlfriend.” Two men arrived in Lopez’s bedroom posing as police officers during the night when she was 15, she said, and the pair drove her several hours north to a Christian camp for troubled teens where she was kept for six months. “How do I say this without getting choked up?” she said, remembering her worst experience. Another girl had forced herself into Lopez’s bed one night, she said. “She masturbated on my bed. She was trying to touch me. I kicked her so she wouldn’t touch me.” If Lopez had complained, she believes staff would have confined her with her perpetrator as a form of discipline. Punishments also involved requiring kids to remain silent for days and restricted to a diet of only peanut butter and bread. “During 2005 alone, 33 states reported 1,619 staff members involved in incidents of abuse in residential programs,” the Government Accountability Officer reported. Malnourishment and flawed operations are among the conclusions from the most comprehensive examination of certain programs for troubled youth, conducted by the Government Accountability Office. The GAO’s 2007 [report](#) “found thousands of allegations of abuse, some of which involved death, at residential treatment programs across the country and in American-owned and American-operated facilities abroad between the years 1990 and 2007.” Truly comprehensive data simply don’t exist, the government said. But the researchers drilled down on one year in particular: “During 2005 alone, 33 states reported 1,619 staff members involved in incidents of abuse in residential programs.” Three teens died between 1990 and 2002, the report found, adding that some facilities had undertrained staff, under-nourished the kids, and maintained reckless or negligent operating practices. Wernsman, who was taken to a facility in the Dominican Republic that was run by a company in the United States, recalled how kids were treated in his program: As a punishment, “Some kids were put in solitary confinement, in an eight-foot by eight-foot windowless cell, given just toilet paper and a bucket to defecate in. They were put in there for two weeks and fed through a slot at the bottom of the door. During the day, they were forced to be outside and pointlessly dig a hole.” Both Wernsman and Lopez said all their communications to parents — allowed less than once a month — were monitored to make sure they didn’t report wanting to leave or disparaging the conditions. The Los Angeles LGBT Center, which has launched a [Protect Youth from Institutional Abuse campaign](#), is among the nongovernment backers to rein in “programs that claim to help ‘troubled’ kids and to ‘cure’ LGBT youth.” “It definitely didn’t improve my life,” said Wernsman. “Parents get in touch with places like this and they rope you in. They prey on families who are in weak moments, who believe their child has some issue they are no longer able to help. They convince them ... they need to send their kid away. My parents thought what they were doing was right, and from the outside, the school looks like it helps kids, but it is far from that.” Lopez said she was branded at the facility as gay and banned from touching other kids, even casually on the arm. She said, “I still flinch when someone touches with me or when people interact with me.” Several reports say the program Wernsman attended shut down in 2011. The academy Lopez attended did not respond to BuzzFeed News with questions about her criticisms before this article was published. Source: <http://www.buzzfeed.com/dominicholden/lawmakers-aim-to-regulate-abusive-youth-camps#.suwPw5XJe>

Willingboro man charged with sexually assaulting 2 girls at group home Posted: Tuesday, March 24, 2015 9:30 am | Updated: 9:38 am, Wed Mar 25, 2015. [Willingboro man charged with sexually assaulting 2 girls at group home](#) By David Levinsky Staff writer Burlington County Times CAMDEN — A Willingboro man was charged with sex crimes against two teenage girls at a group home in Waterford, Camden County, where he worked, authorities said Tuesday. Larry D. Holliday, 48, was charged March 13 with one count of aggravated sexual assault, four counts of aggravated criminal sexual contact, and two counts of endangering the welfare of a child, the Camden County Prosecutor’s Office said. Source: http://www.burlingtoncountytimes.com/news/local/willingboro-man-charged-with-sexually-assaulting-girls-at-group-home/article_251b5b1c-672a-546c-bf5e-34fad67016d8.html

News Schiff to Introduce Bill to Reform ‘Troubled Teen’ Programs (Breaking) Finally, relief is on the way for teens who’ve been abused and traumatized. Now to get bi-partisan support. April 10, 2015 - by [Karen Ocamb](#) 3 Rep. [Adam Schiff](#) (D-CA) will introduce legislation next month to reform residential treatment programs nationwide, his office announced Friday. Last March, Schiff joined out State Sen. [Ricardo Lara](#), the LA LGBT Center and Survivors of Institutional Abuse in a national campaign to [reform the billion-dollar “troubled teen” industry](#), as the residential treatment programs are known among survivors. “We cannot ignore reports that far too many young people have died and suffered abuse at the hands of those who run and work at residential treatment programs under the guise of providing critical therapy and rehabilitation services,” [Schiff said March 27](#). Schiff promised to introduce legislation to hold all residential treatment programs accountable for instances of child abuse and increase transparency so parents know if the treatment programs are safe. The residential programs are often the “last resort” for parents seeking to help their children with severe behavioral problems or rehabilitation from trauma or alcohol and drug addiction. However, as [Survivors of Institutional Abuse](#) notes, the programs are also used to try to change the sexual orientation or gender identity of youth. The introduction of Schiff’s bill is timely with the [announcement by President Obama](#) that he supports ending programs known as “reparative” therapy. Additionally, Schiff’s California colleague, Rep. [Ted Lieu](#), announced Thursday that he will introduce a bill “soon” to cut federal funding to healthcare professionals that practice what is commonly now considered “junk science.” Schiff notes his legislation, to be introduced in May, is [patterned on legislation introduced in 2007](#) by former Rep. George Miller (D-CA)—the Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act—which passed in the House twice but then hit a dead end. However, a [2008 GAO report](#) Miller ordered while holding Congressional hearings into the “troubled teen” industry documented widespread reports of use of physical restraints, severe methods of intimidation, starvation, neglectful medical practices, physical abuse, and death, with LGBT youth at particular risk of abuse. The GAO found that 34 states had over 1,500 staff members involved in incidents of child abuse in 2005. But, Schiff’s press release noted, “these programs continue to operate with little or no accountability because of a loose patchwork of state licensing and monitoring requirements and little federal oversight, despite the fact that some programs receive federal funding. State regulations that do exist have not done enough to prevent abusive ‘boot camps’ from shutting down in one state and re-opening in another under a different name.” “We cannot ignore reports that young people have died and suffered abuse at the hands of those who run and work at residential treatment programs under the guise of providing critical therapy and rehabilitation services,” Schiff said. “This is why I am working with my colleagues to introduce legislation that will hold all residential treatment programs accountable for instances of child abuse. The measure will also increase the transparency of these programs so that parents can make informed and safer choices for their children. Families that turn to these treatment programs for help, often as a last resort, must know that their children are safe and in the care of

professionals. "Schiff's legislation would: Hold all youth residential treatment programs accountable to a set of minimum federal standards including prohibiting all residential treatment programs that purport to provide youth with mental health and behavioral treatment from any form of child abuse and depriving children of water, food, or medical care; requiring that all children have reasonable access to their families and a hotline to report instances of abuse; and requiring all staff members to be properly trained to identify instances of child abuse. Establish civil penalties for any violation of these standards and ensures private right of action so that victims and their families can seek civil damages as well. Increase transparency of the "troubled teen" industry by establishing a publicly-available database of residential treatment programs and their records of criminal activity, and licensing status. Require states to work with Health and Human Services (HHS) to report and investigate instances of child abuse at residential treatment programs, and further requires them to establish standards that are at least as strict as federal standards. Also requires states to develop policies that ensure every program in their state is properly licensed and in compliance with license requirements. Source: <http://www.frontiersmedia.com/frontiers-blog/2015/04/10/schiff-to-introduce-bill-to-reform-troubled-teen-programs-breaking/>

California creates first guidelines for prescribing psych meds to foster youth By Karen de Sá kdesa@mercurynews.com Posted: 04/11/2015 07:17:28 AM PDT [Comments](#) Updated: 04/11/2015 07:18:04 AM PDT [Drugging Our Kids](#) [The full Bay Area News Group investigation, including a documentary video.](#)

Three years after joining forces to address the alarming use of psychotropic medications in California's foster care system, a high-level group of health care officials, attorneys and public policy leaders on Friday unveiled a sweeping set of guidelines for doctors who prescribe the powerful drugs to some of the state's most traumatized children. The nonbinding directive calls on physicians to offer non-drug therapies; to give preference to medications approved by the Food and Drug Administration for use on children; and to keep dosages to a minimum with a "start low and go slow" approach. It discourages the use of two or more meds, and suggests doctors periodically wean children off the mind-altering drugs altogether. The state's first comprehensive effort to address the issue comes after this newspaper's series "Drugging Our Kids" showed California's foster care system has come to rely on psychiatric drugs to manage behavior -- often prescribing them in heavy doses, for long periods of time, and for conditions other than the serious mental illnesses they were designed to treat. The new guidelines specifically state: "Psychotropic medications should not be used for the purpose of discipline or chemical restraint, except as acutely necessary in true psychiatric emergencies." While many youth advocates applauded the recommendations as long overdue, they say legislation in the works is needed to ensure reforms are put into practice. Advertisement "The guidelines aren't going to solve all the problems," conceded Linette Scott, chief medical information officer for the state's Department of Health Care Services, the agency that oversees the state's public health system. But she said that "they set expectations and create a common language" for offices and clinics treating California's 63,000 foster children. Scott called the 18-page guidelines "a very significant outcome" of the state-sponsored Quality Improvement Project, along with a newly posted Foster Youth Mental Health Bill of Rights, and a question list that kids and caregivers can take to doctor's visits. The recommendations also backed by the Department of Social Services come after an exhaustive effort began in 2012 -- involving more than 100 professionals, foster youth and advocates who have met 13 times in the past four months alone -- but they stop short on measures to hold doctors accountable. Experts have said that the state now needs a method to make sure doctors are following through. The federal government has called on all states to reduce the inappropriate use of psychotropic medications in foster care and to expand more effective treatment; President Barack Obama included money in his proposed budgets for both 2015 and 2016 to assist those efforts. And other states have put far more binding -- and measurable -- policies in place, according to the Center for Health Care Strategies, a New Jersey-based nonprofit monitoring the issue in 14 states. Washington, Wyoming, New Jersey and Illinois ensure that children prescribed psychotropic medications receive second medical opinions. In Texas and Connecticut, child welfare workers, foster parents and residential providers are trained on the impacts of psychotropics, including what questions to ask doctors, what side effects look like, and when to seek non-drug therapies. All experts examining the issue agree on one thing: States must regularly report on medication use in order to ensure foster children are being prescribed safely, and to identify patterns of misuse -- a practice California is only beginning. Oregon, for example, produces quarterly reports on how many children age 5 and younger have been prescribed psych meds, how many children are on antipsychotics -- a powerful class of psychiatric drugs -- as well as those receiving multiple medications at once. Child welfare advocates calling for better protections in California are focusing on the state Legislature, where four bills are being heard Tuesday in the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Amid the flurry of legislation, a growing chorus wants to know who, precisely, is behind dangerous prescribing. In a sharply worded letter sent in March to the Health Care Services Director Jennifer Kent, Senate President pro Tem Kevin de León, and senators Bill Monning, Holly Mitchell, Jim Beall and Mike McGuire stated: "We believe the state could more aggressively police the physicians responsible for prescribing abuses." The California Medical Board, meanwhile, is seeking a list of doctors prescribing three or more psychotropic medications at once for 90 days or more to foster children, a practice considered medically questionable that it intends to investigate. And in May, the senate will hold a hearing on how to rein in foster care prescribers from accepting drug company perks that the newspaper found totaled more than \$14 million between 2010 and 2013. Foster care prescribers, on average, receive more than twice as much from drug companies as the average California doctor, for travel, meals, speaking, consulting, and industry-funded research -- with those who prescribed the most, typically received the most, this newspaper found. In response to those findings, Santa Clara County Supervisor Ken Yeager received unanimous approval in March to pursue a policy banning all county-contracted physicians prescribing to foster youth "from accepting incentives from pharmaceutical companies." A similar ban is already in place for county-employed doctors, but the new policy would extend the restrictions to include the 20 agencies that the county contracts to provide mental health services. "We just have to guarantee that physicians are making decisions that are in the best interest of the foster youth and not in their best interest," Yeager said. In a budget hearing Thursday in the state Capitol, Sen. Monning, D-Carmel, described similar concerns. He questioned state health and foster care officials about whether they had considered barring Medi-Cal prescribers from accepting drug company money, a practice he said "should not be a part of what the state of California is supporting. "If we're in a system where the more prescriptions, the more financial interests for that prescribing physician, that defies any ethics code around," Monning said. "And it should be made illegal." Contact Karen de Sá at 408-920-5781. Source: http://www.contracostatimes.com/breaking-news/ci_27891659/california-creates-first-guidelines-prescribing-psych-meds-foster

Bill on state wards forces lawmakers to question role in Nebraska HHS overhaul Posted: Friday, April 10, 2015 9:00 pm [Bill on state wards forces lawmakers to question role in Nebraska HHS overhaul](#) LINCOLN (AP) — A proposed experiment to pay private agencies to locate relatives of state wards has some Nebraska senators questioning the Legislature's role in overhauling the state's beleaguered Department of Health and Human Services. Senators voted 26-0 Friday to advance a measure that would give \$1.5 million per year to private partners such as nonprofit family service Christian Heritage to find relatives or people with significant emotional connections to the child. Proponents said the four-year pilot program could serve as a "best practices" example for what HHS should do in the future to keep children out of foster care. As of April 6, the state was responsible for 3,219 children in out-of-home placement, costing Nebraska \$38.1 million last year. But some senators said the measure sets the wrong precedent by detailing to HHS exactly how it should fix the state's troubled foster care system. "We are getting more and more in the weeds of how workers do their job," said Sen. Colby Coash of Lincoln. "I want to make that part of the record, because at some point, when things go wrong, we won't be looking to the executive branch or the Department of Health and Human Services as to why they went wrong, we'll be looking right at ourselves." The bill's sponsor, Sen. Kate Bolz of Lincoln, said that HHS notifies extended family about children in the welfare system but currently lacks resources to engage and train for permanent placements. Brad Brown, executive director of Christian Heritage, said HHS does not have the time to invest in building support networks for children in the foster care system. A 2013 project between HHS and Christian Heritage in the southeast service area of the state identified more than 100 children languishing in the system and began searches to identify and educate family members. Brown said in 78 percent of the cases, Christian Heritage found at least one relative willing to offer a permanent home. "The time it takes to tell the story and how they can be involved, and (explain) the opportunity to be a part of that child's lifelong network of unconditional support: That just takes a lot of time," Brown said. Source: http://www.omaha.com/news/legislature/bill-on-state-wards-forces-lawmakers-to-question-role-in/article_472fc54c-beb4-6b06-aa68-2f5cea4194ce.html

Parents, Don't Send Your Teens into 'Hotel Hell' Written by David Heitz | Published on April 18, 2015 Los Angeles LGBT center teams up with lawmakers to demand legislation on juvenile institutions The notion of the "bad kid" has been around as long as parents have threatened to send such children off to reform schools and "scare them straight." But in recent years, it has come to light that some institutions physically and mentally torture children and even prevent them from getting an education. Such places have become a multi-billion-dollar industry, seeing business boom as parents grapple with new issues related to having a "bad kid." Those issues include the opiate epidemic that's sweeping the United States and the country's rising divorce rates. The Los

Angeles LGBT Center has teamed up with Survivors of Institutional Abuse (SIA) as well as with state and federal [lawmakers to bring regulation to the so-called "troubled youth" industry](#). California State Sen. Ricardo Lara has introduced the Protecting Youth from Institutional Abuse Act. It would not exempt religious-based groups that operate such facilities. It's outrageous that neighborhood nail salons are more regulated than the industry of residential schools, camps, and wilderness programs that are entrusted with the lives of kids. David Garcia, Los Angeles LGBT Center On a federal level, the Los Angeles center is working with Rep. Adam Schiff to get legislation introduced in Congress. In some cases, institutions will tell parents they can scare a kid "straight" in more ways than one — even promising to "help" a gay child become heterosexual. So while it was natural for the center to take up the cause, the problem of children being tortured in such facilities goes far beyond those being scared straight in terms of their sexuality. The U.S. Government Accountability Office reported that in just one year, 1,619 employees of these programs — in 33 states — were involved in incidences of abuse. SIA officials report more than 300 young people have died from abuse in these institutions or have killed themselves. "It's outrageous that neighborhood nail salons are more regulated than the industry of residential schools, camps, and wilderness programs that are entrusted with the lives of kids," David Garcia, the center's director of public policy, said in a news release. "We've heard from survivors forced to endure torture techniques that include food and water deprivation, physical abuse, and electric shocks. We've also spoken to devastated parents whose children died in these programs." [Related News: Heroin Becoming an American Epidemic](#) » Twelve Steps Plus Torture, Toxicity [Filmmaker Nick Gaglia](#) made a dramatized narrative of the time he spent in one such facility on the East Coast called KIDS. Actors are used in the film. His parents sent him and his sister to KIDS for treatment of their drug problems. Both later escaped. In the film "Over the GW," viewers see some common practices used in addiction treatment but in a setting managed by abuse and manipulation. If you admit you are powerless over yourself, that can be used against you if swung in the other direction in a toxic way. Nick Gaglia, documentary filmmaker For example, counselors are relentless in getting teens to admit they are powerless over drugs or alcohol. Admitting one is powerless is the first step in Alcoholics Anonymous. But even after a year sober, locked up in the reform facility, residents still would wail in group therapy as counselors would warn them they're doomed to a life on the streets if they ever leave the institution. "If you admit you are powerless over yourself, that can be used against you if swung in the other direction in a toxic way," Gaglia told Healthline. "If you can't trust yourself, you need to trust us," he said was the mantra at the program. "If you don't, you will die." [Image Attribution](#) Image Attribution Author: Courtesy Besides children with substance abuse problems, such institutions also promise to reform children with behavioral problems that may be medical, such as bipolar disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. But often children do not receive proper medical care in such facilities. "I did need therapy, I was drinking and smoking weed, which is something a lot of kids do, especially when born into the trauma of poverty, divorce, alcoholic parents, or whatever it may be," Gaglia told Healthline. "There are going to be behavioral issues. If I had a therapist and meditation that would have been perfect for me." [Related News: Teens Use Marijuana to Manage Negative Moods](#) » No Oversight: Getting High at Rehab The issue of unregulated centers falsely claiming to find success getting people on the right path goes beyond rehabilitation of troubled teens. In Florida, legislation has been introduced to establish state oversight of alcohol and drug treatment facilities. Critics say the primary motivation of many such facilities is money, not getting someone sober. Instead of abuse, some facilities go to the opposite extreme. Patients live in luxury for 30 days in some cases and still get high on the side. In Florida, authorities have raided so-called upstart "sober houses" resulting in allegations of insurance fraud and other unethical business practices. In a news release, Bryn Wesch, chief financial officer of Novus Medical Detox Center, said such places have sprung up out of expanded access to substance abuse treatment. "The recent government raids have demonstrated that a number of those unlicensed providers engage in unethical and criminal activities, suggesting that they're motivated more by profits than the well being of their patients," Wesch said. In healthcare, many treatments not grounded in science and not endorsed by the mainstream medical community boast official sounding accreditations. While these accrediting groups look and sound official, getting their stamp of approval sometimes requires little more than paying a fee. In the case of teen rehabilitation centers, the Federal Trade Commission in its [facts for consumers](#) urges parents to ask about licensing. Legitimate accrediting organizations include Joint Commission on Healthcare (JCHC), the Council on Accreditation (COA), and Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). [Related News: Teens Puffing Away on E-Cigarettes](#) » Parental Peace ... But At What Cost? Gaglia's film depicts a troubled teen coming home from a night out in what appears to be a drunken, drug-induced rage. The boy tears up the family home while fighting with his sister. Soon after, he's going "Over the GW" bridge thinking his mom is taking him on a shopping trip. Instead, she is taking him to KIDS. "If there is chaos in the home, and they put the kid in a residential treatment center, what happens the second the kid isn't there? Peace," Gaglia told Healthline. "In a lot of situations, the parent has their own problems to work through." Often times, recently divorced parents find common ground in sending away troubled children, Gaglia said. Parents should be able to visit and talk with their child in private. They should never be told not to believe their child. Nick Gaglia, documentary filmmaker... "Parents should be able to visit and talk with their child in private," he told Healthline. "They should never be told not to believe their child." And if they repeatedly are unable to see their child, consider that a red flag, too. "Isolation and restraint should never be used in addiction treatment. I was personally restrained over 100 times and never did anything violent to warrant it," said Gaglia. "They used this as a control technique." Source: <http://www.healthline.com/health-news/parents-dont-send-your-teens-into-hotel-hell-041815#6> (Only the poorly informed would recommend parents contact ASTART for help.)

Boot Camp or School? Critics Worry Charters for Minority Kids Are Too Militant April 13, 2015 Yahoo News quotes Pauline Lipman, professor of educational policy studies, on the high rates of suspension, expulsion and teacher turnover in Success Academy, a chain of charter schools known for militaristic discipline. For all its achievement, Success' pressurized environment has led to one of the [higher rates of student suspension and expulsion](#) in New York, along with a [teacher turnover rate](#) that's all but put a revolving door on the faculty lounge. "It's really quite high" compared with traditional public schools, says Pauline Lipman, a University of Illinois–Chicago educational policies professor and an expert on urban education and inequality. The tough standards and hyper-focus on test scores, she says, typically don't leave room for creativity, independent thought, or individualized education—it prepares kids to take tests instead of preparing them for college. "They basically drill kids in a good portion of the year. And when kids don't [achieve], then they are shamed," says Lipman. That approach, she says, teaches kids that "it's their own fault because they aren't putting forth the effort." That's true at Success Academy: Low-scoring students are sent to "effort academies," which [The New York Times](#) recently described as part detention, part study hall. At the same time, Success and other no-excuses charter schools have suspension and expulsion rates [up to six times higher](#) than traditional public schools, and they've been accused of pushing out students with learning or emotional disabilities. There's another problem with the approach: "I think it's grounded in race," Lipman says. "It sees poor [minority] families as pathological" and assumes they're poor because they aren't working hard enough. The student populations at no-excuses charters "are almost entirely black and Latino," says Lipman, and the schools are located in poor communities with failing traditional public schools. Those charters, she adds, convince parents—and school administrators—that tough love is the answer rather than giving chaotic, underachieving, understaffed, and overwhelmed neighborhood schools the resources they need to succeed. Source: <https://greatcities.uic.edu/2015/04/13/boot-camp-or-school-critics-worry-charters-for-minority-kids-are-too-militant/>

Laura Flanders Show Video: The privatization of public schools & the biggest uprising against high-stakes testing in U.S. history By [IAM AN EDUCATOR](#) on April 22, 2015 I recently was a guest on the [Laura Flanders Show](#) to discuss the factors contributing to the mass opt out movement that has developed around the nation, now the largest uprising in U.S. history against high-stakes, standardized testing (see the below video). I have been traveling around the country on my book tour for [More Than a Score: The New Uprising Against High-Stakes Testing](#) and meeting with an outpouring of people looking for inspiration and organizational strategies for resisting the testocracy. Last week I spoke to packed audiences in Washington, D.C., Baltimore, and Chicago where parents, students, and teachers turned my book reading event into an organizing session to forge connections and relationships that will undoubtedly lead to new testing boycotts. In my home town of Seattle, we are already seeing the greatest number of opt outs in our city's history with so many hundreds of opt outs of the new common core tests at my school that the teachers are no longer being asked to administer the test. At Seattle's Nathan Hale High School, [100% of the school's 11th graders opted out of the 11th grade Common Core test!](#) During the past year students have refused to take high-stakes tests at unprecedented rates. The largest walkout against high-stakes tests in U.S. history happened this school year in Colorado when [more than 5,000 students refused the new end-of-course exams](#) and rallied to express their view that standardized testing is eroding the quality of public education. Then in New Mexico in March, [over one thousand students walked out of school against the Common Core PARCC test](#). But it is in New York State where the revolt has truly reached a mass scale. Preliminary reports show [over 180,000 NY families have opted their children out of Common Core testing](#) in an unprecedented act of mass rebellion that is proelling the "Education Spring." This collective act of struggle to defend students' civil rights has the power to challenge NY Gov.

Como's test and punish policies—most recently enacting policy that mandates 50 percent of a teacher's evaluation to the state tests. In the first part of the Laura Flanders Show I explain the dynamics contributing to this uprising, but it is the second half of the show, "Perfect Storm," that explains what the real high-stakes are if our movement doesn't win. This expose explains how the testocracy moved into New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, labeled the schools failing, and converted 100 percent of the public schools into privatized charter schools. This is the vision that the testocracy has for the rest of nation: label our schools, students, and teachers failing so as to erode one of the last free and public institutions left in the U.S. The U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, even went so far as to say Hurricane Katrina was "the best thing that happened to the education system in New Orleans." Thankfully, New Orleans parent advocates such as Karran Harper Royal, who is interviewed in the segment, have exposed that [charter schools have not improved education in the city](#) and have organized to defend the public schools. Watch the Laura Flanders Show's portrayal of two possible futures: the end of public education or the mass rebellion of students, parents, and teachers against the testocracy. Then pick which of these futures awaits our nation. Source: <http://iameducator.com/2015/04/22/laura-flanders-show-video-the-privatization-of-public-schools-the-biggest-uprising-against-high-stakes-testing-in-u-s-history/>

"Parents rights" advocates have scored a victory now that Idaho has passed House Bill 113. But what does it mean for Idaho's children? Post Date April 07, 2015 Author [Janet Heimlich](#) On April 2, Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter signed into law [House Bill 113](#) known as the "parents rights" bill. It will become law on July 1 of this year. The bill was one of many similar pieces of legislation being lobbied around the country by the Home School Legal Defense Association, whose [mission](#) is to "preserve and advance the fundamental, God-given, constitutional right of parents and others legally responsible for their children to direct their education." According to the HSLDA, the law doesn't give parents more rights, it just codifies them, a necessary step say proponents who are convinced that the courts are beginning to strip them away. In announcing its victory, HSLDA [stated](#) on its website: "You don't have any more rights now than you did before. But the rights you already have by virtue of being a parent are now far safer." The lobbying group is particularly worried that government is interfering with parents' ability to make decisions about their children's education. According to HSLDA's website [parentalrights.org](#), "It is no accident, no coincidence. And it's not just your imagination. There really is a steady trend by the government and the courts to remove the influence of parents from the public schools." So it's no surprise that the Idaho parents rights bill specifically mentions education as an area of childrearing in which parents are entitled to "fundamental rights." (The law does not specifically call out any other area of childrearing but instead vaguely refers to the "care, custody and control" of children.) In addition, the law states that parents who feel their rights have been violated can sue the appropriate governmental entity. In other words, if parents don't like what their public school is teaching, and the school doesn't make changes as directed by parents, mothers and fathers can take the school district to court. Furthermore, the law states that parents who prevail in court are entitled to "attorney's fees and costs." (It's an ironic twist that Idaho lawmakers who are so aggrieved by what they perceive the courts to be doing are simultaneously turning to the courts as a remedy.) The Child-Friendly Faith Project got involved as soon as we found out the bill had been filed. We could see that much of it was largely unnecessary, since numerous court decisions had affirmed that parents held fundamental rights. Still, there was still great cause for concern, because as proponents were fretting about protections for parents, few lawmakers seemed concerned about maintaining or improving protections for their offspring, especially children whose parents were abusing or neglecting them. So we set up [#ProjectIdaho](#) and encouraged child advocates to join the campaign and testify against the bill. We were extremely pleased to be joined by child advocates within and outside of the state of Idaho, including the [Interfaith Alliance](#), the [Interfaith Alliance of Idaho](#), [Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy](#), [Professor Marci A. Hamilton](#), and others. We weren't the bill's only critics. Some worried that allowing parents broad rights over education would create chaos in Idaho's public schools. Currently, school administrators and teachers welcome parental involvement, but now instead of sitting down with them and discussing concerns, the law gives parents a cause of action in the courts. One editorial that appeared on the Idaho website [MagicValley.com](#) [stated](#) that the bill would "create an unworkable, a la carte education system where parents could suddenly ban the basic principles of biology, literature and U.S. history." One poll [showed](#) that more than 55 percent of Idahoans opposed the bill. Yet, in spite of this opposition, the Idaho House of Representatives [passed](#) the bill 37 to 31. When the bill got to the Senate, lawmakers were prepared to apply considerable more scrutiny. Even Republican members of the Senate State Affairs Committee acknowledged that the language of the bill had serious problems. For instance, the bill aimed to offer the same "fundamental rights" to legal guardians, a provision that conflicted with current Idaho statutes. The main point I made in my [testimony](#) before the Senate panel was that the bill offered no exceptions for parents who were abusive or neglectful. This time, criticism of the bill did not fall on deaf ears, and the Senate panel gave the bill a near complete makeover. We feel that the law that was passed is a better piece of legislation than what was originally passed by the House. However, we still have concerns about how it will impact the lives of children for these reasons: 1) The parents rights law grants "fundamental rights" to parents who don't deserve them. The bill states that actions taken under the law may not conflict with already-existing statutes that aim to protect children from maltreatment. This wouldn't be a problem if Idaho's laws did, in fact, protect children from harm. But they don't, because four state statutes provide exemptions for parents who [withhold needed medical care](#) for their children as long as the parents claim they were attempting to treat them with only prayer or other "spiritual means." 2) The parents rights law will interfere with children's right to a proper education. School districts, which have no resources to fight lawsuits, may choose to change curriculum, library materials, and hiring practices in a haphazardly fashion just to avoid being sued by disgruntled parents. Also, parents might be permitted to remove their children from classes they find objectionable, which could lead to educational neglect. 3) Professionals who are charged with protecting children from harm will be intimidated into not doing their jobs. The threat of parents suing school districts, child protective services, county health clinics, and other entities they feel have infringed on their fundamental rights is likely to have a chilling effect on the reporting of abuse or neglect. In addition, we fear that judges and juries will fail to properly protect children from unfit parents if they claim they acted according to their "fundamental rights." Some Idaho lawmakers have been equally alarmed. [Senator Cherie Buckner-Webb](#) wrote in an email that she agrees that parents have inalienable rights when it comes to their children. However, she described the bill as containing "vague language" and one that "creates a number of alarming uncertainties." She added, "Instead of truly safeguarding the rights of parents, I fear they would spur countless lawsuits and a legal free-for-all, ultimately forcing our judiciary to interpret our legislative intent. I voted no on this legislation. The parents rights law is nowhere as dangerous as it was when it was first being considered by the Idaho House, but what the state has now passed still does not bode well for children. Source: <http://childfriendlyfaith.org/2015/04/parents-rights-advocates-have-scored-a-victory-now-that-idaho-has-passed-house-bill-113-but-what-does-it-mean-for-idahos-children/>

Op-ed: How Many Kids Must Die Before Youth 'Treatment' Programs Are Regulated? The Los Angeles LGBT Center's CEO explains why 'treatment' programs to 'cure' people of their homosexuality are extremely dangerous for LGBT youth. BY Lorri L. Jean April 23 2015 6:00 AM ET [58](#) Above: Screen grab from Kidnapped for Christ We all know how rare it is for Congress to take meaningful action, but wouldn't you think protecting the lives of children could unite the parties? You'd be wrong. For decades, the industry of residential schools, camps, and wilderness programs that claim to treat troubled teens — including kids considered "troubled" simply because they're LGBT — has operated with less regulation and oversight than nail salons. While Congress fails, year after year, to pass sensible legislation to change that, thousands of children have been abused by these programs. Hundreds are reported to have died. Way back in 2007 there were congressional hearings on what's known as the troubled-teen industry, along with a damning investigation by the U.S. Government Accountability Office. The GAO reported that in just one year (2005), there were 1,619 employees of these programs in 33 states involved in incidents of abuse. And those were only the reported incidents. It's no wonder that a guiding principle of these programs is to deprive youth of all contact with family, friends, and the outside world, because we've heard from survivors forced to endure torture techniques that include food and water deprivation, physical abuse (beatings, electric shocks, hard labor), and weeks of solitary confinement in windowless cells. We've also heard from devastated parents whose children died in these programs. The nonprofit organization Survivors of Institutional Abuse reports the death of more than 300 people linked to these programs. When Bob Bacon sent his 16-year-old son to a program in Utah, he didn't know it wasn't regulated. Even after interviewing the owners, Bob thought this was a place where his son Aaron, a poet, would be cared for by staff who were experts at helping kids struggling with drugs and dealing with social pressure. They told him Aaron would get to explore the beauties of Utah while writing in his journal each night. Thirty days later, Aaron was dead. There was no poetry in Aaron's journal, just horrific firsthand accounts of torture. For two weeks he was deprived of any food, all while hiking up to 10 miles a day. During the freezing nights in the wilderness, he had only a thin blanket to cover him; for five nights he had nothing at all. By the 10th day he had lost 20 percent of his body weight and control of all bodily functions, but the staff refused to provide any medical treatment. When Bob saw his son's bruised, battered, and skeletal body, he couldn't believe it was him. He told us, "My wife and I will never escape our decision to send our gifted 16-year-old son to his death." During his senior year in high school, David Wernsman — whose story is depicted in the powerful 2014 documentary Kidnapped for Christ — was sent by his parents to a residential

treatment program. He told us the following: "When I was 17, two large men woke me up before dawn, tied a belt around my waist and forced me out of my home. I was taken to a dumping ground — guarded by men with guns — for kids whose families didn't know how to solve their child's issue. In my case, it was the fact that I'm gay. The program was an endless nightmare of torture, including public beatings and humiliation, hard labor, and sometimes solitary confinement in a windowless cell where we relieved ourselves in a bucket." Every day at the Los Angeles LGBT Center, we see the consequences of parents sending their LGBT kids to these programs to be "cured" or because they presume their children's sexual orientation or gender identity must mean they're troubled. Most suffer lasting trauma and some depend on us for a safe place to live because they end up homeless. Joined by the nonprofit organization Survivors of Institutional Abuse and with the support of a growing list of organizations, businesses and individuals, the center has launched the national Campaign to Protect Youth from Institutional Abuse to finally regulate this rogue industry. In California we're cosponsoring landmark legislation introduced by Sen. Ricardo Lara to require these programs to be regulated by the state Department of Social Services, with no exemption for faith-based groups. In fact, the bill will get its first hearing in the state Senate Tuesday, when the Senate Committee on Human Services meets. We expect California's legislation to set an example for the rest of the country, but state legislation isn't enough. When the abuses of these organizations are exposed in the media, it's common for them to close and reopen in another state, often under a different name. And parents frequently send kids to programs outside their home state. That's why we absolutely must have federal legislation. Though we know it won't be easy, and though previous attempts have failed, LGBT groups have never been a part of the movement to regulate this industry. Now the world's largest LGBT organization is dedicated to building a broad coalition, partnered with allies in Congress, to finally bring sensible regulation to this industry. Nationally, we've secured commitments from U.S. Reps. Adam Schiff and Bobby Scott, and we're working to identify other cosponsors to build on the work started by former U.S. Rep. George Miller and finally pass critically needed federal legislation. Please join our campaign, sign our petition at PYIA.org, and help us protect youth — whatever their sexual orientation or gender identity — from abuse. LORRI L. JEAN is the chief executive officer of the Los Angeles LGBT Center. Source: <http://www.advocate.com/commentary/2015/04/23/op-ed-how-many-kids-must-die-youth-treatment-programs-are-regulated> (HEAL Comment: California's approved accreditation agencies include Joint Commission (approves abusive facilities and fails to provide proper oversight time and again), CARF (approves abusive facilities), COA (approves abusive facilities), and any bill that relies on those agencies for regulation is doing a disservice to the public and the vulnerable populations it seeks to protect.)

Is Sheltering Foster Youth Akin To Incarceration? Executive Briefing | by [Howard Shiffman, M.A.](#) | April 18, 2015 [Howard Shiffman, M.A.](#) Last month, a headline in the Los Angeles Times really caught our attention here at OPEN MINDS — [L.A. County Supervisors Debate Whether To Lock Up At-Risk Foster Youth](#). The crux of the story — Los Angeles County (including foster care authorities, the district attorney, the sheriff, supervisors and voters) have decided "that sex-trafficked youth should no longer be tried and incarcerated as criminals but rather sheltered in foster care and offered services to protect them and help them heal." Early in my career I ran a locked unit for adolescents at a state hospital. We had prison screens on the windows and every staff including the psychiatrist was trained in dealing with assaultive behavior. We had several young adolescents on the unit that were involved in prostitution and had been recruited into this by other adolescents. In those days (the 1980s) we placed these adolescents in this type of unit because we saw them clearly as a danger to themselves. They were diagnosed as mentally ill and their behavior was clearly destructive. One night at about 2 a.m. one of them was broken out and taken back to the streets. Who were we protecting? Our patient or the community? Were we locking in our kids to protect them or locking out the community from re-victimizing them? We should not just be putting kids in locked units because of their behavior, or just to attempt to protect them. Rather, we should treat their self-destructive behavior and underlying mental health problem, in my estimation, and if a secure setting is needed this is one of our options on the continuum of available care. But, this type of setting should not be a corrections environment. Since we have closed most state hospitals and money to treat in this expensive environment is not available...what are our choices? This is a big dilemma for our society. The environment has changed but the problem still exists. I see possible "plug in telepsychiatry" solutions — virtual in-home psychiatric settings with around the clock supervision by hired staff; visiting therapists; and "school" in the home. The bottom line, however, is that the adolescent or child has to have the desire not to be recruited to this lifestyle — and building that desire is our job. And, this has drawn some strong opinions from members of the OPEN MINDS team who have had ample experience working in foster care. Patricia Wilson Patricia Wilson, Senior Associate, OPEN MINDS — This is an extremely tough one. Understandably, those trying to help are frustrated and worried about runaways. However, confinement conveys those very conditions that the intervention is trying to remediate — submissiveness and coercion. Presumably the confinement would be court ordered which means if the youth AWOL, there comes the opportunity for charges and the potential for racking up delinquency status. This is hardly what is needed. On the other hand, traditional foster care does not have a good track record with these youth. The key seems to be creating a community based foster care setting with parents (I like the phrase "foster carers" used by a foster care agency from the United Kingdom) trained in dealing with the culture of trafficking and the issues surrounding it. Perhaps for this group of youth, a small group setting in the community with 24-hour awake staff would offer the greatest opportunity for intervention, safety and normalization. Undoubtedly, child welfare and juvenile justice staff along with the Courts need all the help (education, training, resources for the youth) that can be mustered to deal with this. I would hope that they look to formerly trafficked individuals for guidance. Paul Neitman Paul Neitman, Senior Associate, OPEN MINDS — These children are victims and as such should not be locked up or placed in shelters indefinitely under the guise of protecting them. What the system is saying is that they are failing to protect these children, so the answer is to lock them up. Is that what we do with our mentally ill? The setting they are in for treatment services should be based upon clinical need, up to and including a secure treatment setting based upon a clinical assessment. It seems to me that all involved with these children — police, child welfare staff, courts, foster parents, etc. — need training in what to watch for and how to intervene in cases where these children may continue to be at risk of victimization. Overall, my belief is this is a system problem that needs system solutions other than further victimizing these children. I think that, as more states experiment with more approaches — such as locked and unlocked approaches, foster family approaches, and inter-state services (see [Georgia, Alabama sign unprecedented agreement to serve victims of child abuse and neglect](#)), providers will get a better look at what policymakers have in mind for the future. For more on the emerging market models in child welfare, be sure to join Howard and Cheryl Fisher, M.Ed., LPC, Sr. Director, Foster Care and Child Welfare, Cenpatco for their 2015 OPEN MINDS Strategy & Innovation Source: <https://www.openminds.com/market-intelligence/executive-briefings/is-sheltering-foster-youth-akin-to-incarceration.htm/>

Barnard Woman Battles DCF Over Safety Of Child Posted date: Friday, April 24 2015 In: [Archive](#), [Barnard](#), [NewsNo Comments](#) Barnard Resident Jennifer Duncan speaks about her fight against the state Department of Children and Families at Town Meeting Day in Barnard. (Rick Russell Photo) By Katy Savage, Standard Staff BARNARD — Jennifer Duncan had problems with the state Department of Children and Families — even before they took her foster child. In her five months as a foster parent, Duncan said she wasn't given access to information and decisions were made by the DCF without her consultation. On numerous occasions, Duncan says, the DCF failed to follow its own policies. In March, Duncan dropped off her foster child, 4, at a day care in Chelsea, where the child's maternal cousin came and picked her up. A DCF official told Duncan the child would be staying with the cousin's family for a week and would be continuing to go to school, she said. "All hell broke loose" when Duncan found out the child was permitted to go on a vacation to Massachusetts without her knowledge. The child left the Duncan residence permanently after that. "We felt like our child had been kidnapped from us," Duncan said. Now Duncan fears for the child's safety. Kate Kennedy, the attorney who represents the child, and Guardian Ad Litem Robin Goodrum who works at Have Justice Will Travel both declined to comment, citing privacy concerns. "There is no system of checks and balances," Duncan said. "DCF operates like a monarchy." No Checks And Balances The child, whose name is withheld for privacy, was four, but had the maturity of a two year old when she arrived at the Duncans' home last October, Duncan said. The child was in their care for five months. She hid under the bed, in a closet when she first arrived, didn't know her ABCs and tried to climb into the refrigerator, Duncan said. The family didn't know that the child had been physically and sexually abused before she arrived, Duncan said. In December, when the child started showing physical and sexual behavior toward her 13-year-old son, it was "shocking," she said. "I can't expand fully on the incident as it would infringe on her privacy, however, I can say that my son was hurt in the incident and quite upset," Duncan said. Duncan said the DCF deliberately withheld information about the child's case. She said she and her family "weren't prepared" and didn't receive adequate information prior to her arrival. She pointed to numerous occasions where the Department of Children and Families failed to follow its own policies and procedures. DCF Policy and Operations Manager Lisa Keller admitted to some of the policy violations in a letter to the Duncans, saying that the family should have been given information that was known about the child, documents provided by the Duncans show. An original document from the DCF listed the wrong last name as the four-year-old child in custody. When the DCF put a case plan together to ratify the situation between the child and parent, there was an incorrect first name for the child:

"Destiny." The case plan addressed "children" when there was only one child in custody and it addressed drug addiction plans for the parents, suggesting to Duncan that the document had been copy and pasted from another plan. The document was signed March 12 by three people responsible for the child's care at DCF, records show. A corrected case document was later signed in court, Duncan said. Duncan said she wasn't invited to participate in the child's case planning process, which is a violation of one of the department's policies. The child was put in DCF custody after a cousin (mother's stepsister) made a report of neglect in October, Duncan said, around the same time that the child's father was arrested for aggravated domestic assault, police reports show. Duncan believed the child was sexually abused by the way the child took her clothes off. On Feb. 9 Duncan said the child revealed to the family that her mother performed oral sex on her. Duncan reported that information to the DCF, but she isn't sure what happened with it. DCF officials declined to comment on the case. DCF policy leaves it to a social worker to address safety needs in the home if a child exhibits inappropriate sexualized behavior. DCF Senior Policy & Operations Manager Brenda Gooley sent Duncan an email at the end of February that said at the conclusion of an investigation by a trained forensic interviewer, there was no evidence to suggest that the child's mother sexually abused her or that she was sexually abused by anyone, a redacted email provided by Duncan shows. The child also underwent three months of training with a therapist to which there was no evidence of sexual abuse, Gooley wrote. The child was taken out of Duncan's care after DCF officials told her that she was trying to block the child from reunification efforts with her mother, Duncan said. Duncan thinks the real reason the child was taken was due to her questioning the department. "We're Not Perfect" The DCF has been under fire since the deaths of two children in their care last year. Last February Dezirae Sheldon sustained the injuries that led to her death two days later. Another child, Peighton Geraw, died under DCF watch last April. A number of studies have been conducted since then on the DCF to determine how it can make improvements. Although DCF Commissioner Ken Schatz couldn't speak directly to Duncan's concerns, citing privacy, he said that the DCF has been swamped with caseloads. He's seen a 20 percent increase since last year in the number of children coming into DCF custody. Each caseworker is dealing with 17.4 cases on average — too much, he said. "We do the best we can. I'm not going to say we're perfect, we're not," he said. "We have a process for (foster parents) to address concerns. They can be presented to a local district director." Other parents in the area have had issues with the DCF. Lisa Robar of Barnard was a foster parent a few years ago for teenagers 14-17 years of age. She said trying to get a caseworker on the phone was difficult. Decisions were made quickly and not communicated well to them, she said. Robar wouldn't go into specifics but said: "Sometimes decisions were made that we didn't understand. It seemed difficult for us to get help for some of the kids who needed more extensive counseling." Robar said. "It was difficult at times for us to get the support to help the kids." "High Burnout" Duncan is advocating for a bill in the legislature called S.9, which passed the Senate. The bill establishes a special investigation unit with law enforcement agencies to look at homes where children are suffering. It improves communication with the person who made the report to DCF by disclosing whether an investigation was conducted and if evidence of harm was found. It also calls for the commissioner to improve policies and make sure they are followed consistently. It asks him to determine how many cases are appropriate for each social worker. A provision in the bill that would make it a crime for failing to protect a child was eliminated recently in the House. It was one of the measures in the bill Schatz had apprehensions about. "Our concerns are that the way it's drafted now, many social workers — educators, babysitters — may be caught by what we believe is overly broad new crime through no fault of their own if harm is later caused to the child by someone else," he said. The bill initiated after investigators spoke with 700 witnesses across the state about DCF practices. There were many complaints about how system was run and the process itself, said Sen. John Campbell, who also is an attorney. "The people we have as caseworkers—a lot of them are just out of college," Campbell said. "Automatically, they're dealing with large caseloads. When you're dealing with emotional issues... that's a lot to take on, especially for a young person." There's also a higher volume of cases now than ever before. "There was a high burnout level," he said of investigations. "After being part of it, I certainly understand how that could happen." Schatz said the DCF supports most of the language in the bill, including the creation of an oversight committee. Duncan says it's not enough. She wants language in the bill to address the inequity of power between the DCF and the rest of the team that advocates for the child, including the lawyer and foster parents and guardian ad litem. Two Calls Left Duncan knows she may never see the child again, but she'll never stop fighting, until she knows the child is safe. "The manner in which she left was very traumatic," Duncan said. The DCF has allowed Duncan to have phone conversations with the child. She says she has two left before she's no longer allowed to call. This article first appeared in the April 16, 2015 edition of the Vermont Standard. Source: <http://www.thevermontstandard.com/2015/04/barnard-woman-battles-dcf-over-safety-of-child/>

Sometimes parents need to ask for help without fear of losing custody [Print Email Share Tweet Next](#) 1 of 2 Contributed photo Rep. Deborah Sanderson, R-Chelsea Contributed photo Rep. Stephen Stanley, D-Medway By Deborah Sanderson and Stephen Stanley, Special to the BDN Posted April 26, 2015, at 6:04 a.m. Nearly 2,000 children are living in Maine's foster care system, far outpacing the number of approved foster and adoptive families. While the Office of Child and Family Services [issued a plea last month for more families](#) to open their homes to children in foster care, we must do more to end this tragedy and ensure our children grow up in safe, loving homes. Eight of our colleagues in the Legislature are standing beside us to respond to this urgent need, sponsoring legislation that mobilizes the local community to prevent abuse and neglect by supporting families in crisis and helping them stay together. Our [bill](#), LD 1065, the Strengthening Families Act, empowers parents or guardians to provide for the short-term care of a child when life circumstances prevent them from doing so. Our goal is to protect families and their rights while giving them the courage to ask for help before the challenges they face spiral out of control. In many cases, abuse and neglect happen when a parent is in crisis and, feeling overwhelmed and with nowhere else to turn, makes a series of poor choices that often make a bad situation worse. Just consider a mother dealing with job loss, eviction, domestic violence, homelessness or even a hospitalization or jail time. If she lacks supportive extended family and friends, where can she turn? Unfortunately, the foster care system often is not adequately equipped or designed to reach families until it is too late, and the state only becomes involved with a family after there is sufficient reason to believe abuse or neglect has occurred. With the Strengthening Families Act, fewer children will enter foster care because of abuse or neglect, creating a greater number of strong, intact families throughout Maine. The Strengthening Families Act improves existing law by providing greater certainty for families in need in a number of ways. First, the bill clarifies that a temporary delegation of powers does not deprive any parent or guardian of their rights with respect to the child. Second, it provides that a power of attorney providing for the temporary care of the child does not, by itself, constitute abandonment, abuse or neglect. Finally, we distinguish the type of temporary care provided under this law from foster care to further protect parental rights and ensure timely family reunification. Each of these provisions provides essential parental rights protections to give families the courage to step out of the shadows and ask for help. Although we commend our public servants for the work they do protecting children, we all understand government has the power to permanently remove children from their families. This power, while important for rescuing children from dangerous environments, can leave families afraid to approach the state when they are in need of help. Through the bill's new protections, a family can now seek the help they need without fear. This bill was inspired by the work of [Safe Families for Children](#), a nonprofit organization already having great success helping families right here in Maine. Founded in Chicago in 2003, Safe Families provides early-intervention services to support families in crisis. Through a network of volunteer families and other local charities, Safe Families works to provide families in need with a loving, supportive community they can turn to when times get tough. The concept is simple, based on the fundamental value of neighbors helping neighbors. And, unlike foster care, Safe Families encourages the host family to build a relationship with the child's family, providing the additional benefit of a lasting friendship. Safe Families operates in [Down East Maine, as well as central and southern Maine](#), and has hosted more than 700 children since 2009. And more than 98 percent of children hosted since 2009 have been reunited with their families without ever entering foster care. This is a bipartisan commitment to protecting Maine's children and families. Through the Strengthening Families Act and the work of community organizations such as Safe Families for Children, we can dramatically reduce the number of children who enter foster care in Maine. We encourage our colleagues in the Legislature to join us in supporting this important piece of legislation, and we want to support and expand upon the compassion already shown by our fellow Mainers who open their hearts and homes to their neighbors in need. Rep. Deborah Sanderson, R-Chelsea, represents District 88 in the Maine House. Rep. Stephen Stanley, D-Stanley, represents House District 143. Source: <https://bangordailynews.com/2015/04/26/opinion/contributors/sometimes-parents-need-to-ask-for-help-without-fear-of-losing-custody/>

SUPPORT WASHINGTON STATE SB 5870 - 2015-16 [Comment on this bill](#) **Prohibiting the use of aversion therapy in the treatment of minors.** Revised for 1st Substitute: Protecting youth from aversive mental health therapies. For more information and complete text of this bill, [click here](#).

SUPPORT WASHINGTON STATE SB 5408 - 2015-16 [Comment on this bill](#) **Removing references to faith-based exemptions regarding criminal mistreatment of children and vulnerable adults.** For more information and complete text of this bill, [click here](#). Also see sister bill in Washington House, [HB 1476](#).

New Video Book Trailer--"More Than a Score: The New Uprising Against High Stakes Testing" By [I AM AN EDUCATOR](#) on May 2, 2015 VIDEO --More Than a Score: The New Uprising Against High-Stakes Testing More Than a Score editor Jesse Hagopian reads from the book at a recent tour stop in Washington, D.C. "Exceptional" --Publishers Weekly "Exciting" --Truthout "Arguments to win over even the most skeptical school reformer." --Kirkus As the opt out movement explodes nationwide, the tour for the new book, [More Than a Score: The New Uprising Against High Stakes Testing](#) has been generating inspiration, excitement, strategy, and tactics in the struggle against unfair testing across the country. Now there is a new [video](#) trailer, featuring several of the contributors, to help share the lessons of this book inspire resistance to the reduction of teaching and learning to a data point--please share it far and wide. For too long the "testocracy," mostly billionaires, politicians, and others with little or no background in teaching, have gotten away with using standardized testing to punish our nation's youth and educators. Now students are walking out, parents are opting their children out, and teachers are refusing to administer these detrimental exams. In fact, the "reformers" today find themselves facing the largest revolt in US history against high-stakes, standardized testing. More Than a Score book tour in Baltimore. From left to right: Ben Dalbey, parent of Baltimore City Public School students, preschool teacher, activist; Jesse Hagopian, editor of More Than a Score; Matthew Prestbury, a parent of Baltimore City Public Schools students; Jerry McNutt, a member of the Baltimore Algebra Project. Jessica Shiller, a parent of two public school children in Baltimore and a professor of education at Towson University. (Photo Credit: Junior Bijou) More Than a Score is a collection of essays, poems, speeches, and interviews--accounts of personal courage and trenchant insights--from frontline fighters who are defying the corporate education reformers, often at great personal and professional risk, and fueling a national movement to reclaim and transform public education. More Than a Score features the voices of students, parents, teachers, administrators, and grassroots education activists, including: Wayne Au, Carol Burris, Nancy Carlsson-Paige, Sarah Chambers, Mallory Clarke, Jeanette Deutermann, Alma Flor Ada, Rosie Frascella, Alexia Garcia, Emily Giles, Helen Gym, Nikhil Goyal, Jesse Hagopian, Brian Jones, Alfie Kohn, Amber Kudla, John Kuhn, Jia Lee, Karen Lewis, Malcolm London, Barbara Madeloni, Cauldierre McKay, Mark Naison, Monty Neill, Diane Ravitch, Aaron Regunberg, Mary Cathryn D. Ricker, Stephanie Rivera, Kirstin Roberts, Peggy Robertson, Falmata Seid, Tim Shea, Phyllis Tashlik, Dao X. Tran Source: <http://iamaneducator.com/2015/05/02/new-video-book-trailer-more-than-a-score-the-new-uprising-against-high-stakes-testing/>

Cities offer public boarding school to teens from troubled homes [Education](#) By [Laura Edgill](#) Posted May 5, 2015, 10:17 a.m. Leaders in Buffalo's chronically struggling school system are considering launching a publicly funded boarding school. The proposal aims to combat the problems many of the city's students face outside of school that dramatically impact their success such as poverty, domestic instability, transient living arrangements, lack of proper nutrition, and truancy. "We have teachers and union leaders telling us, 'The problem is with the homes; these kids are in dysfunctional homes,'" said Buffalo school-board member Carl Paladino. Paladino and other leaders have reason to be concerned; the urban district's students face tremendous odds. Eighty percent of their students meet federal guidelines for free or reduced lunch, English and math proficiency rates hover 20 points below the state average, and only 53 percent of its students graduate in four years. Source: http://www.worldmag.com/2015/05/cities_offer_public_boarding_school_to_teens_from_troubled_homes [HEAL Note-- The SEED Charter School is one of many proposed public boarding schools. The SEED is also the name of the original program from which most known abusive facilities have derived their practices including Straight, Inc., CEDU, Synanon, and more. We must unite to stop this threat to democracy and to future generations! Support families and help families, do not destroy and separate them! What is wrong with you, Buffalo?]

A. LGBT Center Holds Important Forum on "Troubled-Teen" Industry Tonight The efforts to end cruel psychological child abuse - known as so-called "conversion" or "ex-gay" therapy - are making headway but need support. May 7, 2015 - by [Karen Ocamb](#) Late last March, California State Sen. Ricardo Lara announced he was introducing legislation sponsored by the Los Angeles LGBT Center and the national Survivors of International Abuse to regulate what is known as the "troubled teen" industry. The Center has launched a campaign to support the bill, which will be discussed at a public forum Thursday night, May 7, at The Village. This billion dollar industry preys on religious and frightened parents who are at their wits' end trying to disciple or help their out-of-control children. The "troubled teen" industry offers "tough love" in a "safe" Christian environment where the behavior of the wild ones will be tamed--when in fact the facilities (such as the one in the Dominican Republic pictured above) and employees are often ill-trained, cruel and out of reach of law enforcement or authorities. In an [extensive, in-depth report on this institutionalized child abuse](#), I detailed how hundreds youth--many of them LGBT--have suffered extreme physical, emotion and psychological abuse and even died in these programs. The timing of Lara's bill and a forum sponsored by the survivors was fortuitous, coming just before an [announcement by President Obama](#) that he supports ending programs known as "reparative" therapy. Subsequently, both [Rep. Adam Schiff](#) and his California colleague, Rep. [Ted Lieu](#), announced their intentions to introduce congressional legislation to regulate the industry and cut federal funding to healthcare professionals that practice so-called "reparative" therapy, which is now considered "junk science." "We cannot ignore reports that far too many young people have died and suffered abuse at the hands of those who run and work at residential treatment programs under the guise of providing critical therapy and rehabilitation services," [Schiff said March 27](#). The timing is critical--not just to save lives of LGBT teens whose only "trouble" is that they do not think they need to be "repaired." But the push for so-called "conversion therapy" may wind up as a talking point in the 2016 presidential elections now that prospective Republican presidential candidate Florida Sen. Marco Rubio "headlined a closed-to-the-media fundraiser for the Center for Arizona Policy, the group that helped push the state's religious freedom bill later vetoed by former Gov. Jan Brewer," [according to BuzzFeed](#). One of the group's main tenets is a belief in "conversion" therapy. The public forum tonight is part of the Center's ongoing series of provocative community forums, Big Queer Convo, and will focus on the Center and the Survivors of Institutional Abuse's (SIA) campaign to regulate the troubled-teen industry in California and nationally. The Center says the forum "will reveal what really happens to many LGBT and other youth who are sent to residential programs that claim to "treat" them, the long-term consequences for those who survive these programs, and how to support the new campaign to pass statewide and federal legislation to finally regulate the troubled-teen industry." On hand for the discussion will be SIA President Jodi Hobbs, Kate Logan, director of the excellent and horrifying documentary [Kidnapped for Christ](#), survivor Rebecca Lopez, Dr. Meghan Moody, a psychologist who specializes in childhood trauma, and David Wernsman (pictured above), a survivor whose story is depicted in Kidnapped for Christ. Alan Acosta, the Center's Director of Strategic Initiatives, will serve as moderator. The forum will start at 7:00 and run until 9:30p at The Village at Ed Gould Plaza, 1125 N. McCadden Place, L.A. 90038. The forum is free but reservations are recommended: lgbtcenter.org/theatre or call 323-860-7300. Source: <https://www.frontiersmedia.com/frontiers-blog/2015/05/07/l-a-lgbt-center-holds-important-forum-on-troubled-teen-industry-tonight/>

Troubled Youth Center Closing, Agency In Charge Shutting Down May 13, 2015 4:54 AM [Share on email](#) [5 View Comments](#) (Photo Credit: KDKA) Related Tags: [Carrick](#), [Christine D'Antonio](#), [Circle C](#), [Human Services](#), [Jaymar Gilbert](#), [Malik Crosby](#), [Nicholas Grant](#), [Pennsylvania Department of Human Services](#), [Youth Home](#), [Yusif Shepard](#) Christine D'Antonio Christine D'Antonio joined the KDKA-TV news team as a general... [Read More](#) You've Earned Points for Reading! Claim points in our Reward Center, and earn more tomorrow. [Claim Points](#) CARRICK (KDKA)- The operating license for the Circle C Youth center in Carrick has been revoked. The state Department of Human Services revoked the license, pointing to a series of violations, including failure to report incidents, incomplete or inaccurate health and safety assessments and not identifying or arranging appropriate medical care for acute or chronic conditions of children. According to the Post-Gazette, the letter from human services department did not specifically refer to the Jan. 13 death of Nicholas Grant at the home on Carrick Avenue. The 16-year-old was beaten by two other teens living at the youth home. The report made it clear that Grant's death did play a significant role in revoking the home's license. Yusif Shepard, 15, and Malik Crosby, 16, have been charged with Grant's murder. Police say the teenagers used a vacuum cleaner to beat Grant and they also choked him. Both have been charged as adults. Another incident happened at the youth home back in May of 2014. Jaymar Gilbert, a 36-year-old counselor at the home, was charged with grabbing a teenager by the head and tossing him down a flight of stairs outside the home. In March, the family of several teenagers at the home sued Circle C, claiming that officials were negligent in their hiring of Gilbert. Hollie Geitner, a board member with Circle C, told the Post-Gazette that the Allegheny County Department of Human Services has decided not to renew its contract with Circle C. That contract expires on June 30. On May 6, the Circle C board voted to shut down the agency. According to Geitner, everything will be closed

by the end of May. Circle C also runs group homes for juveniles in Bellevue and the North Side. Those homes will close as well. Source:

<http://pittsburgh.cbslocal.com/2015/05/13/troubled-youth-center-closing-agency-in-charge-shutting-down/>

Charter School "Flexibility" Linked to Major Failures; More Than \$3.3 Billion in Taxes Spent Monday, 18 May 2015 00:00 By [Jonas Persson, PR Watch](#) | Report font size [decrease font size](#) [increase font size](#) [Print](#) 73 Email The fact that authorizers enjoy almost complete autonomy - not only from state regulations but also from public control through elected school boards - is a feature of the anti-regulatory environment in which charters have grown, rather than a bug. (Photo: [Empty Classroom](#) via Shutterstock; Edited: LW / TO) [Also see Part I: Feds Spent \\$3.3 Billion Fueling Charter Schools but No One Knows What It's Really Bought](#) [Also see Part II: Lack of Oversight of Charter Schools Designed as a Plus; More Than \\$3.3 Billion Spent](#) Arne Duncan is calling for a 48% increase in the US Department of Education's (ED) quarter-billion-dollar-a-year (\$253.2 million) program designed to create, expand, and replicate charter schools - an initiative repeatedly criticized by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) for suspected waste and inadequate financial controls. The Center for Media and Democracy (CMD) has issued a series of Freedom of Information Act requests for information about charter spending from ED as well as from states, and the findings shed new light on the deep flaws in the design, implementation and oversight of the federal program. For ED "Accountability" Means Very Little Real Accountability CMD's review of state applications for the federal charter schools program shows that, in some cases, states are rewarded precisely because they lack statutory authority to hold charter school and their authorizers accountable as these states tend to score high on one of the rubrics used to evaluate applications: "flexibility offered by state law." But grant applications are also judged based on the degree of "authorizer accountability" afforded by the state. How does this paradox play out in practice? One ED reader reviewing a 2010 application from Florida notes how schools and authorizers are held to the highest standards of accountability in the state: "[Florida] provides ample examples to illustrate its commitment to continuously improve upon its already strong processes and procedures to hold accountable their authorizing LEAs ... No weaknesses noted [Score] 20/20." Another reader joins in the chorus by remarking how the Florida Department of Education "has taken smart steps to oversee the authorizers in the state." Strikingly, a [2012 OIG audit](#) exposed a total lack of oversight and accountability in Florida: None of the three SEAs we examined [Florida, Arizona and California] monitored the authorizing agencies responsible for granting charter school licenses and monitoring charter school progress ... without proper monitoring of authorizing agencies, SEAs have limited ability to ensure authorizers were approving and granting charters to quality charter schools and providing adequate monitoring to them after they opened. Florida could not even "provide a reliable universe of charter schools that received SEA grants nor an accurate list of charter schools that received onsite monitoring, desk audits, or closed during the grant cycle." To understand how states with no statutory oversight of charter schools and authorizers could receive the highest score on the rubric it might help to realize that the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is a patchwork of conflicting provisions. The charter schools program was created as an amendment in 1994 with the purpose to incentivize states with charter school flexibility - that is, states where charters are exempt from democratic oversight and control. The "accountability" criterion was added in 2010 following Obama's reauthorization of ESEA, after which Secretary Arne Duncan [pledged in a blueprint on school choice](#) that charter schools receiving funding under the program would now be held to even higher standards of accountability than traditional public schools. But for all the rhetoric, CMD's review shows that this new safeguard, which is flatly at odds with the original purpose of the program, was never more than a rubber-stamp rubric. In fact, reader feedback on this section of the applications spans the gamut from the Orwellian (Florida) to the nonsensical. "To be an authorizer [in Minnesota] you must show capacity and commitment to quality chartering not chartering because it politically correct," one reviewer remarks, and scores the rubric 20/20. Lack of Oversight Is a Design Feature Rather Than a Bug The fact that authorizers enjoy almost complete autonomy - not only from state regulations but also from public control through elected school boards - is a feature of the anti-regulatory environment in which charters have grown, rather than a bug. For decades, a small group of millionaires and billionaires, like the Koch Brothers, have backed a legislative agenda to privatize public education in America. Lobbying groups funded by them, like the corporate bill mill ALEC (the "American Legislative Exchange Council"), have been pushing states to create and expand charter schools outside of the authority of the state public school agencies and local school boards, confining the state to limited oversight of whether authorizers have adequate policies, not over how charters spend tax dollars. This includes pushing bills to ["stomp out local control"](#), as stated by a member of ALEC's Education Task Force - where charter school lobbyists vote with lawmakers on bills. How? The keynote speaker to the California Charter Schools Association in 2014, Netflix CEO Reed Hastings [elaborated](#): "[T]he fundamental problem with school districts ... is that they don't get to control their boards ... Now, if we go to the general public and say 'Here's an argument why you should get rid of school boards' of course no one is going to go for that. School boards have been an iconic part of America for 200 years. So what we have to do is to work with school districts to grow steadily. By waging a war of attrition, Hastings hoped that elected school boards would be eliminated within 20 years. Source: <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/30830-charter-school-flexibility-linked-to-major-failures-more-than-3-3-billion-in-taxes-spent>

Seattle Educators Set To Strike For The Schools Our Children Deserve: Video interview with Jesse Hagopian on the rolling strike wave in Washington State By [I AM AN EDUCATOR](#) on May 18, 2015 Educators are walking out of the public schools in Seattle on Tuesday, May 18th, [joining a one day rolling strike wave of educators unions around the state](#), with a powerful message for the State Legislature: Fully fund education. These educators will be joined by many parents and students who are asking that the Washington State Legislature do what is not only right, but what is lawful. The Washington State Supreme Court has ruled that the State Legislature is in violation of state law and has mandated that they add billions of extra dollars to fund education. Moreover, Washington State voters have approved I-1351 which would reduce class size around the state, yet the legislature is preparing to ignore that law. To make matters worse, the [Washington State Legislature is getting ready to take an 11% raise](#), even while educators have had their voter approved cost of living adjustment revoked for the past six years, and now only offer educators a 1.8% increase. [The Real News Network covers the rolling strike wave across Washington State in this special segment](#): DHARNA NOOR, PRODUCER, TRNN: Welcome to The Real News Network. I'm Dharna Noor joining you from Baltimore. Thousands of public school teachers went on strikes across nine Washington State school districts on Wednesday. These single-day strikes are part of a protest against the new state budget proposal. The teachers, who are members of a union called the Washington Education Association, are demanding smaller class sizes, better compensation, and less testing. Teachers of other districts are set to strike this Friday. Joining us from Seattle to discuss these strikes is Jesse Hagopian. Jesse teaches history and is also the black student union advisor at Garfield High School, where teachers just voted to join the strike. Jesse is an associate editor of the acclaimed magazine Rethinking School. He's also a founding member of Social Equality Educators. He blogs at [I'mAnEducator.com](#) and is the editor of More than a Score: The New Uprising Against High-Stakes Testing. Source: <http://iamaneducator.com/2015/05/18/seattle-educators-set-to-strike-for-the-school-our-children-deserve-video-interview-with-jesse-hagopian-on-the-rolling-strike-wave-in-washington-state/>

Charter Schools Won't Solve Racial Injustice In Baltimore, Or Anywhere Else The disturbing death of Freddie Gray in Baltimore while in police custody, and the ensuing riots after news of his death spread, have continued to prompt countless analyses of the chronic problems in our nation's urban centers. My colleague [Terrance Heath](#) correctly assigns blame to a direct source: chronic abuse committed by police against people, especially black and brown people, taken into custody. A recent report from progressive news outlet [Alternet](#) reveals "nearly 2,600 detainees" from Baltimore police were turned away from the city's detention center in the past three years because they were too injured to be accepted. Jelani Cobb, writing for [The New Yorker](#), expanded his analysis to historic cases - including a similar event in Ferguson, Missouri - and found, indeed, incidents of police brutality sparked "every major riot by the black community of an American city since the Second World War." Cobb correctly connects police violence against communities of color to "historical roots in segregation" that plague the country yet remain largely unaddressed as incident after incident persistently calls our attention to racial discrimination. Editors of [The New York Times](#) seem to agree, declaring, "Racism doomed Baltimore." However, this common sense analyses hasn't stopped others from spinning Baltimore, and other big metropolitan communities plagued with racial inequity, into an argument de jour for more charter schools. Will Charters "Save" The City? After riots broke out in Baltimore, [prominent advocates for charter schools](#) took to Twitter to contend their schools had the power to "save" the city. Editors at The Washington Post, in an editorial, ["The schools Baltimore needs"](#) declared, "Baltimore's tumult underscores the need to go back to the drawing board and come up with a plan that welcomes high-quality charter organizations." The editors contend "competitive pressure" charters impose on public schools "might help," and they criticize Maryland state lawmakers for being "so hostile to charter schools." Similarly, editors of [The Wall Street Journal](#) make the same illogical leap in their support for charter schools while criticizing anyone who stands in the way of expanding these institutions willy-nilly. While claiming that charter schools are "an escape for poor children," the editors rail against Maryland laws that give local authorities governance over new charter start-ups - a bizarre argument coming from a conservative news outlet for sure. First, let's be clear that what plagues public schools in Baltimore, and [other big cities for that matter](#), is not lack of charter schools. The Equity Problem Writing at his personal blogsite, [Rutgers University professor Bruce Baker](#) explains that

a long time ago Maryland isolated Baltimore as a segregated, high-poverty school district with inadequate funding and support. "Baltimore City really isn't provided sufficient resources to address its extreme needs," Baker argues, pointing to data indicating that, relative to the socio-economic conditions of students across the state, Maryland earns a grade "D" for the way it funds high-poverty schools like those in Baltimore. Maryland's new Republican governor Larry Hogan is likely making matters worse. As [Politico](#) points out, in its daily education newsletter, Baltimore's mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake has demanded the governor "release \$68 million in funding for school districts" including hers. And the state's teachers' union has held events "urging Hogan to release the funding," which would send nearly \$12 million to Baltimore's schools. A recent report on these events in [The Baltimore Sun](#) notes that advocates want some of the money targeted to turning more city schools into community schools, which provide health and social services to children of low-income families who often come to school with learning problems associated with poverty. Further, Baker points out that given the way funds are spread within the district of Baltimore, schools serving the highest percentages of the lowest-income children spend less on teacher salaries – a pretty good indicator that the city's high-poverty schools have lower ratios of certified teachers per student and higher percentages of novice (first two years) teachers. Charter schools in particular have high ratios of these novice teachers, "a staffing model," Baker argues, that "isn't likely sustainable in the long term, unless as a matter of policy, large shares of teachers are annually dismissed." Although charter schools advocates like to point to data indicating charters in Baltimore serve some of the city's neediest kids, these statistics are skewed in a really crafty way. As Baker points out in [an older post](#), charter schools located in lower poverty zip codes in the district tend to enroll the lowest income kids. "But, in the higher poverty zip codes, charters tend to be serving lower poverty populations." See how that works? Get your poverty cred from serving the lowest income students in the part of town where families are generally better off, and then cream the best students in neighborhoods where families are really struggling. How clever. So Baltimore public schools are by no means an example of "throwing money at the problem" of racial inequity, and charter schools, rather than helping to solve racial inequity, may be adding to it. Public School Progress Also, rather than contributing to chronic poverty and racial injustice, Baltimore's public schools may be one of the city's few institutions that is creating some genuine progress. As Baker finds in his first blog post, "Baltimore has shown reasonable average gains, given expectations," on the most common measure of academic achievement, the National Assessment of Education Progress. "Although nearly all the pro-reform commentators insist Baltimore schools are failing, statistics suggest otherwise," [Take Part's Joseph Williams](#) points out. "According to the school district's website, 83 percent of pre-kindergarten students emerged ready to learn, state standardized assessment reading test scores jumped nearly 20 percent from 2004 to 2013, and math scores climbed more than 25 percent during that same time frame." In the wake of the turmoil in Baltimore, the city's public schools are promoting some genuine understanding and community healing. According to a report in [Education Week](#), school leaders have declared their intentions to conduct "classroom activities and events to help students process what happened." How is that effort helped by adding to the [divisiveness](#) that has become one of the primary features of charter school expansions? Further, there are [some indicators](#) that new efforts to change from zero tolerance discipline policies to more positive [restorative justice practices](#) may be taking hold in Baltimore, which would reduce student suspensions and expulsions and de-escalate tensions that lead to school and community violence and end the city's [school to prison pipeline](#). Instead Of More Charters Instead of adding to the numbers of charter schools in Baltimore, Maryland state lawmakers made the right decision by [putting the brakes on](#) Governor Hogan's plan to expand these schools for what amounts to ideological reasons. State lawmakers, rather than ignoring the plight of poor kids as they are accused of doing by newspaper editors, are likely paying attention to recent revelations that [charter schools expel students at a higher rate](#) than traditional schools and are plagued by [millions of dollars in waste, fraud, and abuse](#) nationwide. The federal government has spent billions on charter schools with [virtually no accountability](#). Where there are cases of charter schools out-performing public schools on standardized tests, there [doesn't seem to be anything especially innovative](#) about these schools to indicate they've found [new approaches that need to be rapidly expanded](#) throughout a school system like Baltimore's. Rather than calling for unproven gimmicks like charter schools, advocates for racial equity and social justice would do more for their cause by urging government and policy leaders to actually address these problems directly. In communities like Baltimore, what's more likely to advance real progress are new policies that take real steps to end racial discrimination in law enforcement, alleviate the chronic underfunding of high-poverty schools, promote racial integration in housing and education, and transform punitive education policies to practices that advance understanding, cooperation, and respect. Source: <http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/charter-schools-wont-solve-racial-injustice-in-baltimore-or-anywhere-else/>

Congress to Consider Scaling Down Group Homes for Troubled Children At a hearing in Washington, a renewed call for addressing the violence and neglect that plagues group homes for foster youth. by [Joquin Sapien](#) ProPublica, May 20, 2015, 12:47 p.m. [5 Comments Print Print](#) This is part of an ongoing investigation: [Level 14](#) How a home for troubled children came undone and what it means for California's chance at reform. Spur Reform in 2015 Support ProPublica's mission to expose abuses of power and corruption. [Donate](#) Latest Stories in this Project [Investigations of California Group Homes Marked By Delays and Uncertainty Podcast: Reporting the How and Why After a Disaster Level 14 Investigative Journalism, Illustrated: A Q&A With Level 14 Creators How We Reported 'Level 14'](#) Sen. Ron Wyden talks with Sen. Orrin Hatch, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, in April. Hatch proposed shutting down group homes and Wyden circulated draft legislation that aimed to prevent children from entering foster care. (Tom Williams/CQ Roll Call) When 17-year-old Lexie Grüber first entered the Allison Gill Lodge group home for girls in Manchester, Connecticut, she said it felt less like a home than a business. Instead of family photos, the walls were covered in informational posters and licensing certificates. When her emotions got the better of her, she said, the only conversations she had were with a doctor with a prescription pad at the ready. Now 22 and a recent college graduate, Grüber came before the Senate Finance Committee this week to testify about the experience. She recalled being medicated to the point that she developed a facial tic. She said she lost basic privileges like phone calls and television time for what she now considers normal teenage behavior. "Often, the group home residents were treated like second-class human beings," she said in her testimony. "I could not understand why I had to act perfectly just to have the basic social privileges of a child. Why was I being penalized for having been removed from an abusive home?" Grüber was one of roughly 57,000 children who live in group homes for foster youth across the country. Many child advocates believe that's far too many. The Senate Finance Committee, which authorizes roughly \$12 billion a year for child welfare programs, held this week's hearing to examine alternatives. The homes are supposed to offer intensive care for the nation's most troubled youth. But the homes have come under fire in recent years – as a failed model of care, and as places vulnerable to violence and sexual predation. Earlier this year, a [ProPublica examination](#) showed how one of California's largest group homes descended into chaos – an unraveling that took place with the full knowledge of the home's staff, state regulators and the local police. Children disappeared for days at a time and began living in local parks. They became involved in fights, sexual assaults and drug abuse. Reports of neglect and abuse poured into the Department of Social Services, which oversees group homes in California, but the department did not aggressively act against the home until an 11-year-old girl from the facility was allegedly raped by two older boys from the home. ProPublica also [found](#) that the Department agency failed to reach any conclusion in investigating hundreds of allegations of abuse at similar homes throughout the state. As well, the Chicago Tribune last year published a [scathing series of stories](#) on group homes in Illinois, finding that children had repeatedly been sent to facilities that were rife with abuse and that had become known recruiting grounds for pimps. "Group homes, sometimes referred to as 'congregate care,' are literally breeding grounds for the sexual exploitation of children and youth," Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, said in [a statement](#) Tuesday. "As the committee heard during a hearing on domestic sex trafficking and of children and youth in foster care, traffickers know where these group homes are and target the children placed in them for prostitution." Hatch has proposed a simple solution to longstanding problems in group homes: begin shutting them down. In 2013, Hatch introduced legislation that would have cut off funding for children under age 13 living in group homes for longer than 15 days. The bill also sought to end funding for children over 13 after they had spent a year in such a facility. The bill didn't pass, but child welfare experts expect him to introduce a similar version of it at some point after this week's hearing. "Here's how I look at it: No one would support allowing states to use federal taxpayer dollars to buy cigarettes for foster youth," said Hatch in his statement on the hearing. "In my view, continuing to use these scarce taxpayer dollars to fund long-term placements in group homes is ultimately just as destructive." Earlier this month, Sen. Ron Wyden, the ranking Democratic member of the committee, [circulated draft legislation](#) that aimed to prevent children from entering foster care by better funding, training, and supporting biological parents and relatives of at-risk children. Both bills [echo recommendations in a report](#) released yesterday by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, one of the nation's largest child welfare organizations. The report encourages state agencies to place children with relatives as opposed to foster families or group homes, only using group homes as a last resort for children who need intensive mental health care. "There is tremendous momentum and truly bipartisan support for this right now, so hopefully we're at a real turning point," said Rob Geen, director of policy reform and advocacy for the Casey Foundation. "There are far too many children being separated from their families and being placed in what is available instead of what is best for them. Now we have an agreement that there is a problem and a growing consensus on how to fix it." According to the report, 40 percent of children living in group homes don't have a diagnosis that warrants such a placement. The report suggests that children

are often sent to the homes because there is nowhere else for them to go. President Obama's 2016 budget proposal aims to address that need. There is a \$78 million dollar line item in it that would go toward specialized training for foster parents who agree to care for mentally ill children. Joo Yeun Chang, a representative for the Department of Health of Human services who handles child issues, described the budget draft in her written [testimony](#) for the Senate hearing yesterday. In addition to foster parent training, the proposal would also require periodic mental health assessments for children living in group homes and smaller caseloads for social workers. Chang estimates that the proposal would save \$69 million in foster care dollars over the next 10 years. "The Administration believes that children are best served when raised in safe, loving families, and congregate care use should be limited to children who need intensive residential care due to medical issues, and only for as long as those interventions are needed," Chang said at the hearing. Child welfare policy over the decades has regularly swung back and forth between efforts to keep troubled or vulnerable children in their homes and aggressively seeking to remove them at the first evidence of risk. The Miami Herald, over the same months that the Chicago Tribune series of articles was running, published a [devastating investigation](#) of how Florida's push to keep families intact had led to the deaths of scores of children. Grüber, the former foster child who testified at the hearing, said she certainly would have preferred staying with a family member as opposed to living in a group home for two years. In an interview, she told ProPublica that when she was first removed from her biological parents' home at age 15, she was placed with her uncle and his three sons in a three-bedroom home. She wanted to stay there. But she said that the Connecticut Department of Children and Families moved her to a homeless shelter and then into a foster home based on a technicality: that there weren't enough bedrooms for all the children living in her uncle's home. "If I had stayed with my uncle, I would've had more stability. It would've been so much better to feel more involved with my family. My uncle is very involved in the church. He's really strict, but I think that would've been helpful to me. I needed that structure," Grüber said. Kari Sisson, executive director for the American Association of Children's Residential Centers, told ProPublica that Australia closed its residential programs in the 1990s because foster care was cheaper. In time, she said, foster parents got overwhelmed and quit. Many youngsters ended up homeless or in jail. And Australia had to reopen the homes with more intensive therapeutic services in the mid-2000s. "The conversation is fair, but it's not informed," she said. "I worry that they are making decisions that will seriously affect children who need therapeutic residential treatment. I've been a foster parent for many years and there are a lot of kids in the system that can't live in my house, because it's not safe for us and it's not safe for the community. They need a lot more intensive care than a foster parent can offer. It's very challenging." Sisson was not called to testify. Source: <http://www.propublica.org/article/congress-to-consider-scaling-down-group-homes-for-troubled-children>

Report: Thousands of Arizona children living in group homes [Share Story](#) [Tweet](#) [Share](#) [Share](#) [Share](#) [Print](#) By [Mac & Gaydos](#), | May 19, 2015 @ 5:08 pm Listen: 17,000 Arizona Children Removed - Dana Wolfe Naimark - President / CEO of the Children's Action Alliance Mac and Gaydos talk with Dana Wolfe Naimark, the President/CEO of the Children's Action Alliance, to try to find out why 17,000 kids have been removed from their homes and what to do about it. 00:00 08:09 [Pop Up In Player](#) | [Download\(Right Click + Save As\)](#) Update Required To play the media you will need to either update your browser to a recent version or update your [Flash plugin](#). In this Thursday, April 24, 2014 photo, Jose Osario, 20, a resident of the transition cottage, sits in the living room of another cottage at the Children's Village campus in Dobbs Ferry, N.Y. (AP Photo/Seth Wenig) With Arizona children getting removed from their homes at record-high numbers, officials have attempted to identify a cause for the removals. A [recent policy report from Kids Count](#) found that out of the 17,000 children removed from their homes, about 2,100 of them are placed in congregate care settings. These settings include emergency shelters and group homes, which cost the state approximately \$123 per child, per day. Licensed foster family housing costs around \$23 per day. Dana Wolfe Naimark, president and CEO of the Children's Action Alliance, spoke with KTAR News 92.3 FM's Mac and Gaydos about the reasons children are being taken from their homes. "One (reason) is that families are struggling here in Arizona," she said. "Even though the Great Recession is technically over, many families are struggling and still facing unemployment or underemployment. Families have a lot of overwhelming stress and sometimes that stress makes them unable to take good care of their children." Naimark said although the number of Arizona children removed from their homes is bigger than ever, the state is an outlier compared to the rest of the country. "In other states they are reducing the number of children and care," she said. "They are spending time and energy on helping children stay home safely with their parents instead of being removed into foster care." More children are being placed into congregate care settings due to a shortage of foster families, Naimark said. "We have a shortage of foster families, but the shortage is not because we've lost the number of foster families," she said. "It's because the number of children we've taken out of their homes has grown. The demand of foster care has outstripped the supply." Arizona made a commitment to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, promising to reduce the number of children in congregate care settings last year in order to qualify for a greater amount of flexibility in federal fund use. The Arizona Department of Child Safety pledged to develop service reforms to prevent placement into these services, place children in less restrictive forms of care and reunite families. DCS must prevent specific strategies within the next month. One former foster child, Desaray, whose last name was withheld, said living with her relatives after being removed from her mother's care allowed her to experience a continued sense of encouragement and support. "I feel fortunate to have grown up in a family setting," she said [in an interview with the Children's Action Alliance](#). "I know people who lived in group homes, and they didn't have the same support system that I continue to have. Their care ended when they turned 18, but I continue to have encouragement and guidance from my family." Desaray, a member of the Fostering Advocates Arizona Young Adult Leadership Board, said being able to grow up beside her siblings granted her the ability to establish a close bond with them. "Those bonds I have with my siblings are among the strongest in my life," she said. "I know that if I had ended up in a group home without them, I would have missed out on the relationships that helped me be successful." In order to reduce the number of children being placed into congregate care settings, Naimark said there needs to be changes with state funding and leadership. "It comes down to money and leadership and you need both combined," she said. "You certainly need money into the system to provide families with services in their home, but it also takes leadership to make that a priority." Source: <http://ktar.com/95/1835425/Report-Thousands-of-Arizona-children-living-in-group-homes>

Report warns about effects of group homes on W.Va. kids By [Samuel Speciale](#), Capitol reporter West Virginia's child welfare system places more kids in group homes than most states, a practice a national report released Wednesday says has left more than 1,000 children without immediate attention from an extended or foster family. That report, compiled by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, suggests the absence of family in such placements is harmful to a child's development and hinders them from forming strong, nurturing attachments. Children who don't grow up with families are at a greater risk of experiencing trouble in school and having run-ins with the law later in life. Of the 4,403 children in the care of West Virginia's child welfare system, 27 percent have been placed in residential group settings, putting the state in a tie with Wyoming for the third highest percentage of children in group homes in the country. About 57,000 out of 400,000 American children in the custody of their respective states live in group homes, the report says. "Far too many West Virginia children under the care of our child welfare system are missing the support of a family because they are being unnecessarily placed in long-term, residential care," said Margie Hale, executive director of West Virginia KIDS COUNT, a subsidiary of the Annie E. Casey Foundation that aggregates state-level data on child and family well-being. Hale went on to say that group placements are taxing on both children and the state. Placing a child in a group home costs seven to 10 times more than sending them to a relative or foster family, the report says. "These group placements exact too high a price," Hale said. "As a state, our top policy priorities should be keeping kids connected to family or kin and strengthening the foster care system so that foster parents are available to nurture and protect children until they can live with a permanent family." In recent years, state officials have made efforts to reduce the high number of children in group homes as well as reduce state reliance on residential care through a program called Safe at Home West Virginia. In a statement responding to the KIDS COUNT report, West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Cabinet Secretary Karen Bowling said the program, when it launches in October, will serve adolescents in 11 counties. The long-term goal is to go statewide within two years, she said. "The department's goals with the Safe at Home project are to ensure youth remain in their home communities whenever safely possible," she said, adding that the program will seek to reunite children with their families. Bowling went on to say the program will provide services to children, family members and caregivers and that the department's Bureau for Children and Families is working to recruit more foster and adoptive parents through awareness events, social media and advertisements. While some states are attempting to reduce the number of children placed in group homes, efforts vary widely between states and often are not consistent within a state, the report says. The report goes on to say that one in seven children live in group homes, even though federal law requires they live with families whenever possible, and that many who do have no documented behavioral or medical need that warrants such placement. The rate of children living in group placement around the country range from as low as 4 percent in Oregon to as high as 35 percent in Colorado. Contact writer Samuel Speciale at sam.speciale@dailywv.com or 304-348-4886. Follow him at www.twitter.com/samuelspeciale. Source: <http://www.charlestondailywv.com/article/20150519/DM01/150519173/1298>

Hamblen County group home owner accused of abusing patients Updated: Wed 6:04 AM, May 20, 2015 [Home](#) / [Headlines List](#) / Article MORRISTOWN, Tenn. (WVLT) - The owner of a group home in Hamblen County has been charged with abuse after an investigation by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit. The TBI says Rebecca Ann Rogers, 44, say from September 2, 2014 to September 7, 2014, two patients at her home became ill and were taken to a local emergency room. The investigation showed that both patients had controlled substances in their system that had not been prescribed to either of them. On Monday, the Hamblen County Grand Jury returned indictments charging Rogers with two counts of intentional abuse, neglect or exploitation of a dependent adult and two counts of Delivery of a Controlled Substance. On Tuesday, Rogers was booked into the Hamblen County Correction Center, where she is being held on a \$20,000 bond. Source: <http://www.local8now.com/home/headlines/Hamblen-County-group-home-owner-accused-of-abusing-patients-304347661.html>

Ohio coroner: Disabled boy's death in foster care accidental Associated Press [Share on email](#)[Share on facebook](#) [Share on facebook](#)[Share on twitter](#)[Share on twitter](#)[More Sharing Services](#) Published: May 19, 2015 - 04:54 PM Ohio coroner: Disabled boy's death in foster care accidental May 19, 2015 08:54 PM CLEVELAND: An Ohio medical examiner says the death of a 10-year-old disabled boy at a foster home in January was an accident. A spokesman says the Cuyahoga County medical examiner has ruled that Xavier Brothers-Bartholomew died of positional asphyxiation on Jan. 4 at a home in Cleveland. The boy, who had a genetic disorder that left him physically and mentally impaired, was found in full cardiac arrest. Xavier and his five siblings were sent to foster homes in November 2012 after their 18-month-old brother, Isaac, was found dead in his crib at the family's home near Vermilion, west of Cleveland. Authorities say Isaac died of malnourishment and that his siblings were neglected. The children's parents and their paternal grandmother pleaded guilty to child endangering charges and were sentenced to prison. Source: <http://www.ohio.com/news/break-news/ohio-coroner-disabled-boy-s-death-in-foster-care-accidental-1.593206>

Marion Police Investigating Death of Foster Care Infant Tools [0 Comments](#) [Email this article](#) [Dig](#) [Print this article](#) By Matthew Searcy By Jared Roberts Story Created: May 20, 2015 at 5:52 PM CDT Story Updated: May 21, 2015 at 9:01 AM CDT Related Content [Death of 10-Month-Old Under Investigation](#) MARION -- Marion Police have launched an investigation into the death of a 10-month-old girl, who died Wednesday morning. Foster parents had cared for the girl since birth, and the cause of her death remains undetermined. At the same time, her biological parents have begun speaking out about the tragedy. "You (DCFS) took her from good parents and turned around and gave her to somebody," said biological mother Katrina Hill. "Now she's dead!" Katrina Hill cries outside the Cairo DCFS office, just hours after she learned from case workers, her youngest child died in foster care. "All they (DCFS) can tell me is that they found her unresponsive, that's it," asked Hill. "I don't get to see my daughter, I don't get to hold my daughter!" The girl's father, Issac Hill says, since he lost custody DCFS has documented incidents of child abuse against his children at the hands of foster parents. "This ain't the first time," said Issac Hill. "This resulted in the death of my daughter. And three times my kids have been abused. Three times!" Marion Police and DCFS investigators have launched an investigation into how the child died. Marion Investigators call the cause of death "undetermined", while DCFS says it has put a task force on the case Issac Hill says he wants to see his daughter before doctors complete an autopsy. "Everybody in this country has the right to identify their dead relative," said Issac Hill. "These foster parents are put above the biological parents. They have more rights. Right now these people know more about what happened to our daughter than we do." Katrina and other family members say they want their children back. They don't want harm to come to another child. "Don't tell me she (Katrina) ain't a good mother," said relative Annette Welch. "Her kids were alive when they were with her. I know that much!" "I have nine other children besides my dead baby," said Katrina. "I want my children home before they end up dead with these foster parents!" The Williamson County coroner has scheduled an autopsy for tomorrow. Source: <http://www.wsilv.com/home/top-story/Marion-Police-Investigation-Death-of-Foster-Care-Infant--304491291.html>

Report: Too many foster kids institutionalized [Adam Rodewald, Press-Gazette Media](#) 7:05 p.m. CDT May 22, 2015 Brown County stands out as a bright point in an otherwise dismal report released this week on the state of the nation's foster care system. (Photo: File/Press-Gazette Media) 59 CONNECT [1 TWEET](#) [11 LINKEDIN](#) [1 COMMENT](#) EMAIL MORE Brown County stands out as a bright point in an otherwise dismal report released this week on the state of the nation's foster care system. The study published Tuesday by the Annie E. Casey Foundation says the system puts too many foster youths into group homes and institutions when they should, and could, live with a family. Nearly 1 in 8 Wisconsin foster kids lived in a group setting in 2013, according to the report. Nationwide, about 1 in 7 lived in a group setting. The problem is many of those kids shouldn't be there. The foundation estimates 40 percent of foster youths in a group home or institution have no mental health diagnosis, disability or behavioral problem that might warrant such a setting. By contrast, Brown County, one of the state's most populated areas, placed only 4 percent of foster kids in those settings, according to [data from the state](#) Department of Children and Families. County foster care staff couldn't be reached for comment. In the past, they've touted the region's abundance of resources as a boon for children. There are more than 80 licensed foster homes in Brown County. Research shows children raised in family settings have healthier physical, social, emotional and psychological development in life. On the other hand, youth who do not grow up in families are at greater risk of being abused in group placements and of being arrested, according to the Annie E. Casey report. The report also notes that group placements can cost seven to 10 times as much as a family placement. "Most of us live in family settings most of our lives where we're learning what it means to be a family member and a member of society. If you're removed from that and are in some sort of institution, it's just not as good for you," said Ken Taylor, executive director of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families. Taylor said he's concerned about the [wide variation](#) in placements from county to county in Wisconsin. The rate of group-home placements across the state ranges from zero in Kewaunee County to 38 percent in Sawyer County. He said he sees the greatest opportunity for improvement as giving financial support and training for relatives of children removed from their homes who are willing to become the caregivers. Taylor said Wisconsin also needs to strengthen its preventive programs to support families. He said services focus heavily on families after their children are removed from the home, but there isn't support for struggling families. Several Brown County agencies have [partnered](#) to bolster those preventive programs. One initiative connects families to support services if they are reported for possible abuse and neglect but the incident doesn't rise to the level of a government intervention. Another initiative, called [Parent Cafes](#), provides a support network for moms and dads. —arodewald@pressgazette.com and follow him on Twitter [@AdamGRodewald](#) and on Facebook at [Facebook.com/AdamGRodewald](#). Source: <http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/story/news/local/2015/05/22/report-many-foster-kids-institutionalized/27814987/>

Salem group home closing after break-ins lead to questions about management Published May 22, 2015 7:43PM Updated May 23, 2015 2:07PM By [Jessica Hopper](#) [4](#) [1](#) [1](#) Salem — The group home on Witch Meadow Road, which was a [source of controversy](#) following neighborhood break-ins by a resident earlier this month, will be closed. The three remaining residents will be relocated and the house will be sold. In a release sent out Thursday evening, First Selectman Kevin Lyden said the remaining residents will be relocated within the next 60 days. He said the "isolated and unfortunate incident" at the Witch Meadow group home, operated by Key Human Services, will not affect the other group home currently in town or any group homes that may come to Salem in the future. At a special town meeting called last week to address neighbors' concerns, Lyden and residents of the Witch Meadow neighborhood said it was mismanagement that allowed for the break-ins on May 2 and another similar incident in December. Representatives from Key Human Services could not be reached for comment. Lyden said that, while he had not requested the group home be closed entirely, he is pleased Key took action. "I think they decided it was best just to close and relocate to another place and I don't disagree. It is more than I asked for, but that's their choice," Lyden said. He called the closure bittersweet, saying that neither he nor the Witch Meadow neighbors wanted to displace the remaining residents of the group home, but the move has provided peace of mind to the neighbors whose homes were broken in to. Lyden quoted an email from a neighbor, saying "I'm grateful Key decided this is the best thing for the community and (that they are) following through with it, but it's unfortunate their gross failures make it necessary." [j.hopper@theday.com](#) Twitter: @JessHoppa: [undefined](#) Source: <http://www.theday.com/local/20150522/salem-group-home-closing-after-break-ins-lead-to-questions-about-management>

Sexual assault allegation in province's foster care system [CTV Saskatoon: Foster care neglect allegation](#) Child care workers in Sturgeon Lake say a child was sexually assaulted in foster care in 2010 17 6 21 CTV Saskatoon Published Thursday, May 21, 2015 6:40PM CST Last Updated Thursday, May 21, 2015 6:54PM CST More allegations have surfaced about the neglect of children in foster care. Child care workers in Sturgeon Lake said a child was sexually assaulted while in the care of the province in 2010. "Our First Nation has lost two young children who were in the care of the province within six months of

each other. A third child was sexually assaulted by (another) child in care during the same interval," Eleanor Brazeau, executive director of Sturgeon Lake's Child and Family Services, said. Related Stories [Sask. children's advocate says foster care plagued by systemic problems](#) Photos Eleanor Brazeau and Shirley Bighead of Sturgeon Lake Child and Family Services The allegations come a day after the Ministry of Social Services apologized following the 2010 death of 22-month-old Evander Lee Daniels, also from Sturgeon Lake. The community's child and family services organization said the system failed another child from Sturgeon Lake in 2010. The organization said it found out about the sexual assault in September, but the incident happened in 2010. "It's going to be coming up and it's another tragedy for our community," the organization's board of director's chair Shirley Bighead said. The Ministry of Social Services wouldn't confirm or deny that a child from the community was sexually assaulted. But, a spokesperson told CTV News, if a child was injured there would be a comprehensive review. Sturgeon Lake's Child and Family Services would likely be involved. "If you're not performing your job and if you're missing and making big mistakes, and children are dying in care, it just doesn't add up," Brazeau said. "Someone's got to be held accountable." A report released earlier this week revealed gaps between what social services says it will do and what actually happens. The ministry said its policies weren't being followed in 2010 when Daniels ended up in an overcrowded foster home. That's where he was burned and drowned in a bathtub after being left unattended by his foster mother. She was acquitted of a charge related to his death. The ministry said it's added 93 new case workers since Daniel's death and said fewer children are in need of foster care. Source: <http://saskatoon.ctvnews.ca/sexual-assault-allegation-in-province-s-foster-care-system-1.2385206>

Carrick group home shuts down months after teen resident beaten to death —A group home for children that was the scene of a deadly beating early this year has now shut down permanently, and the other homes run by the same organization will close soon. Related [Pittsburgh bike-share program to debut Sunday morning](#) [Former Pittsburgh Police Chief Nate Harper out of prison](#) [Kenny Chesney concert guide: Everything you need to know](#) [Norris' grand slam lifts Padres to win vs Pirates](#) [Woman dies, kids flown to hospital after school van crash](#) Circle C Youth and Family Services board member Hollie Geitner said Tuesday that the organization will essentially shut down at the end of the month after 47 years of operation. The organization's group home in Carrick was temporarily closed after 16-year-old resident Nicholas Grant was beaten and later died in a fight with other residents in January. The other teens allegedly involved, 16-year-old Malik Crosby and 15-year-old Yusuf Shepard, have been charged with homicide. In 2014, an employee at the Carrick home was accused of pushing a resident down stairs. In an email, Circle C's executive director Rich Knouff, said the group was forced to shut down. "Circle C operates three other group homes in addition to the Carrick house, and Geitner said all are expected to be closed soon. Source: <http://www.wtae.com/news/group-home-shuts-down-months-after-teen-resident-beaten-to-death/32990456>

Meriden group home counselor charged with assaulting intellectually disabled client Published: May 13, 2015 | Last Modified: May 13, 2015 09:36PM By Andrew Ragali Record-Journal staff MERIDEN — A counselor at a group home has been charged with assaulting a disabled client. Victor Forbes, 57, of New Haven, turned himself in on May 9. He is charged with third-degree assault of an intellectually disabled person, a misdemeanor. He posted \$10,000 bond and is due to appear in Meriden Superior Court on May 22. The charge stems from a reported incident on Jan. 9 at Continuum of Care, 480 S. Colony St., a provider that serves clients through the state Department of Developmental Services. On Jan. 12, a man accompanied by a Continuum staff member reported that he had been assaulted by Forbes, said police spokesman Lt. Sal Nesci. The man told police he suffers from an intellectual disability and had been assaulted three days earlier but hadn't reported it because he feared no one would believe him. Nesci said the man who filed the complaint had been listening to music on another counselor's smart phone the morning of the assault. Every so often, the screen would freeze and require a password. So the man went to the kitchen to look for the counselor who provided him with the phone so that he could enter the password and continue listening to music. The man went to the kitchen and asked Forbes where the counselor was, Nesci said. According to a police investigation, a verbal altercation ensued. "At some point (Forbes) engaged the client by pushing him up against the wall, actually indenting the wall before punching him on the right side of face," Nesci said. The altercation was broken up by another counselor. Police obtained photos of the indented wall and bruises on the man's face, according to the arrest warrant. The counselor who broke up the fight told police he was shoveling snow outside when he heard an argument inside. He found Forbes and the client yelling at each other. After breaking up the altercation, the counselor went back outside, and a short time later heard another altercation. He went inside and witnessed Forbes pinning the client against the wall and punching him in the face, the arrest warrant states. Representatives from Continuum of Care couldn't immediately be reached for comment. Forbes' employment status with the group home is unclear. Joan Barnish, spokesman for the state Department of Developmental Services, said Forbes was an employee of Continuum of Care. Source: <http://www.myrecordjournal.com/meriden/meridennews/7263641-129/meriden-group-home-counselor-charged-with-assaulting-intellectually-disabled-client.html>

Hatch to Hold Finance Hearing on Foster Care Group Homes on 12 May 2015. Posted in [Featured Articles](#) Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) will convene a hearing on Tuesday, May 19, to examine the problems facing foster children in group homes and how Congress can work to achieve better outcomes. The hearing, titled "No Place to Grow Up: How to Safely Reduce Reliance on Foster Care Group Homes," will take place at 10:00 a.m. in Room 215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building. "Children who experience long term placements in foster care group homes face high rates of incarceration, homelessness and other negative outcomes. What's more, these group homes are three to five times more expensive to taxpayers than family-based placements. It's clear there needs to be change, and this hearing will allow members to hear about the need to reduce the reliance on foster care group home and learn about effective strategies that can connect vulnerable children and youth with a permanent, loving family," Hatch said. Source: <http://utahpolicv.com/index.php/features/featured-articles/5641-hatch-to-hold-finance-hearing-on-foster-care-group-homes>

Former Tunkhannock Teacher Sent to Prison 5 05/13/2015 05:40 PM 05/13/2015 06:59 PM Former Tunkhannock Teacher Sent to Prison [By Associated Press](#) 05/13/2015 06:59 PM [Share on facebook](#) [Share on twitter](#) [Share on email](#) [Share on print](#) [Share on gmail](#) [Share on pinterest](#) [Share on favorites](#) [Share on reddit](#) [More Sharing Services](#) A former Wyoming County teacher is going to prison for sending inappropriate text messages to a female student. A former teacher from Tunkhannock Area High School is going to prison. Michael Chase was sentenced Wednesday in Wyoming County for sending inappropriate text messages to a female student. Chase will spend between one month and 18 months behind bars. He pleaded guilty to one count of corruption of minors. He could have spent up to five years in prison. The former Tunkhannock Area High School history teacher and drama coach admitted crossing the line with text messages he sent to a teenage girl. "He was talking to them about sex, showing them videos, things of that nature," Wyoming County District Attorney Jeff Mitchell said. "It was just completely inappropriate. Teachers, of course, are professionals and they're held to a higher standard especially in a school setting." Stacy Altenhain has two kids who went to Tunkhannock Area High School. Her son just graduated and had Chase as a teacher. "He's like wow, that's just surprising. I wouldn't have thought he would have done that," Altenhain said. Besides inappropriate texts, investigators say Chase also gave the girl money to buy a phone card so her parents wouldn't know they were talking and also gave her money to buy the morning-after birth control pill. "Kids look at you as their role model and parents send their kids to school thinking they're safe and so he was wrong," Altenhain said. "He should be professional enough to know not to do that. That is somebody's child!" parent Shana Worsham of Meshoppen said. District Attorney Jeff Mitchell hopes the prison sentence handed down will send a message but also not paint all teachers with a broad brush. "Most teachers do an excellent job. They're great people. This is an exception but I believe that he got the message," Mitchell said. As part of his plea, the Wyoming County District Attorney says when Chase is released from prison he will no longer be able to be a teacher. Source: http://www.pahomepage.com/story/d/story/former-tunkhannock-teacher-sent-to-prison/19249/8p-sOhAW_0ys3ibgeViCWw

Human Rights Youth Awards honor students for public service Andy Davis, aldavis@press-citizen.com 9:53 p.m. CDT May 13, 2015 Buy Photo Joey Trom is honored during the Iowa City Human Rights Commission's Youth Awards at the Englert Theatre on Wednesday. (Photo: David Scrivner / Iowa City Press-Citizen) Buy Photo 50 CONNECT [6 TWEETLINKEDIN](#) COMMENT EMAIL MORE The Englert Theatre was filled with applause and appreciation Wednesday night for the work and community service of local high school students. Thirty-two students from City High, West High and Regina High were recognized by the Human Rights Commission for their volunteerism and received Human Rights Commission Youth Awards during the 12th annual ceremony. After comments from members of the Human Rights Commission and Iowa City Mayor Matt Hayek, the awards were presented by Shams Ghoneim, vice president of the American Civil Liberties Union of Iowa board of directors. "We the commission are very pleased to have so many of you being recognized tonight," said commissioner Harry Olmstead. "We're here to recognize the annual contributions of youth in this community and your acts of goodwill, and to encourage humanitarian actions regardless of age." Iowa City Human Rights Coordinator Stefanie Bowers said the awards were started in 2003 as a way to recognize young people who make an impact on human rights in the community. "These awards are not only to recognize the students, but to also encourage

them to continue making human rights contributions toward the community," Bowers said. Among the recipients was 16-year-old West High junior Joey Trom. Trom said last year, as part of earning his Eagle Scout merit, he reached out to the Arc of Southeast Iowa — which serves children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities — to lend a hand in creating a recycled tire dragon for an accessible park at the Arc's facility at 2620 Muscatine Ave. Trom said he was inspired to help with the project so his older brother, Jackson, could enjoy the park. "I helped build the dragon because my brother has special needs and we spend a lot of time at the Arc," Trom said. "I wanted to help build something he and the other people there can enjoy. This award ceremony shows that youth here are involved in community service and know there's a need for help." Buy Photo Emma Hartwig shakes hands with Mayor Matt Hayek as she and fellow Regina classmates are honored during the Iowa City Human Rights Commission's Youth Awards at the Englert Theatre on Wednesday. (Photo: David Scrivner / Iowa City Press-Citizen) Emma Hartwig, 17, a Regina High senior, said she spends her time volunteering at Mercy Hospital, a YMCA summer camp and also does fundraising for the University of Iowa Operation Smile, a chapter of the international organization that helps to fund cleft lip and cleft palate surgeries around the world. "This is a great way to show other people our age that it's very important to give back to the community. I am blessed enough to be able to share my time with those who really need it," Hartwig said. The commission also honored Henri Harper, executive director of KoNec, with the Youth Ally Award during the ceremony. Bowers said the commission created the award in 2012 to recognize an adult in the community who consistently works to inspire young people to become involved in community service. KoNec is an organization that helps seventh- to 12th-grade students select and stay involved in extracurricular activities and after-school programs around the city. It also works to keep parents involved and accountable for their children's success. Harper said this is one of the most meaningful awards he has received. "This nomination actually came from a student that went through the program years ago and is doing very well," Harper said. "She wrote in the nomination for me this year, so this award in itself is probably one of the most rewarding ones I've had because it came from a young person that I worked with in 2007 and 2008." Buy Photo Mayor Matt Hayek speaks to guests at the Iowa City Human Rights Commission Youth Awards at the Englert Theatre on Wednesday. (Photo: David Scrivner / Iowa City Press-Citizen) Hayek reminded the students during his comments to continue their work and consider the opportunities volunteerism offers. "You're here because you have given of yourselves and you have engaged in an act of service in this community," Hayek said. "There is so much need for this kind of service in this community and the state, across the country and around the world. You don't have to look far to see that need, and there's always something you can do, no matter what age you are." Reach Andy Davis at 319-887-5404 or at aldavis@press-citizen.com, and follow him on Twitter as [@BylineAndyDavis](https://twitter.com/BylineAndyDavis). 12th annual Human Rights Youth Awards recipients Molly Arndt Cora Bern-Klug Akash Borde Laura Cornell Daniel Dagle Aaron Demory Abby Dickson Anoushka Divekar Sonali Durham Emma Hartwig Grant Hogan Emily Hollingworth Lauren Hudachek Badra Kalil Molly Kuehn Riley Lewers Molly Lipman Kathryn Lorenger Maggie Morony Thomas Nepola Max Otoadese Willem Paul Sarah Rinehart Anna Schuchert Haley Steffen Nathan Stenger B.J. Sullivan Gabby Thomsen Joey Trom Anna Utech Morgan Welter Ken Westrick Youth Ally Award recipient Henri Harper, executive director of KoNec Source: <http://www.press-citizen.com/story/news/local/2015/05/13/human-rights-commission-youth-awards/27280889/>

NC bill targeting group home abuse heads to governor [NEXT STORY](#) [Father, son found shot in Dobson](#) Text Size: [ASmall Text](#) [AMedium Text](#) [ALarge Text](#) RALEIGH, N.C. — The General Assembly has agreed to put new rules in place targeting people who harm group-home residents and increasing responsibilities on those who work at the homes to report abuse they see. The Senate agreed Thursday to its measure after the House made a small change. The bill now goes to Gov. Pat McCrory's desk. The measure increases the severity of the misdemeanor against someone found to have knowingly injured or caused pain to residents, who often have disabilities or mental illness. New or more severe misdemeanors also are proposed for home employees or volunteers who witness abuse or are aware of harm caused but don't tell authorities. Parents of a group-home resident lobbied for changes after allegations surfaced that their son was sexually abused but workers didn't report it. Source: <http://www.wxii12.com/news/NC-bill-targeting-group-home-abuse-heads-to-governor/33039984>

State House Approves Bill To Form Task Force On Group Homes Commissioner Rehmer Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services Commissioner Patricia Rehmer testified before a state panel in February about a related bill. Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services Commissioner Patricia Rehmer testified before a state panel in February about a related bill. By [Jesse Leavenworth](#) [contact the reporter](#) [Laws and Legislation](#) State house approves bill on group home task force - grew from #Manchester officials' concerns The state House of Representatives has approved a bill that grew out of Manchester officials' concerns about the number of state-contracted group homes in town. The House voted 129-15 in favor of a bill to establish a task force to study the distribution of group homes throughout the state and whether the placement of homes is equitable. The Senate has not acted on the bill, which was introduced by state legislators representing Manchester. [cComments](#) @MJD For one task force, consider the "Gun Control" Task Force set up by Malloy. They proposed a whole slew of additional "gun control" laws that our law makers are seriously trying to get passed. That's in addition to the 2013 draconian Sandy Hook Gun Control Laws (all... RICHARD PIECZARKA at 4:52 AM May 16, 2015 [Add a comment](#) [See all comments](#) 3 "I think that's very positive," town General Manager Scott Shanley said Friday. "I think it moves us in the direction we need to go — and that is to have a better understanding statewide of how these decisions are being made, with the hope for better coordination in the future." The focus on group homes in Manchester followed a raucous meeting in October over residents' objections to a halfway house for convicted sex offenders on Clinton Street. East Side residents and local leaders criticized the state Department of Correction for failing to notify the town when the facility was established in a neighborhood with many single women and children. The problem, however, is much bigger than one group home, local leaders said. Figures from the state Office of Legislative Research show that Manchester hosts many more state placement facilities than other area towns. Some residents in those facilities, town officials have said, repeatedly turn to local police, fire and human service agencies rather than the state officials and state-contracted agencies appointed to care for them. A local task force appointed by Mayor Jay Moran recommended that municipal leaders receive notification before the placement of group homes or like facilities and that an administrative appeal process be established, among other proposals. "Group homes provide vital services to people in need," said Rep. Jeff Currey, a Democrat whose district covers parts of Manchester, East Hartford and South Windsor. "But at the same time, there is an inequity in the location of homes such as in Manchester, and they need to be spread out more evenly across the state so that all towns better serve the people who need help. This study will help us to address this important issue." "There is a clear disparity in the use of municipal services for cities and towns that have larger numbers of group homes and community-based residential facilities. This is unfairly costing many of our municipalities a lot of money," said Rep. Mark Tweedie, a Republican who represents Manchester and Glastonbury. If the bill becomes law, the state task force will examine the question of notification, how group homes are placed and whether towns need additional resources to offset costs related to group homes, among other issues, said Rep. Jason Rojas, a Democrat representing East Hartford and Manchester. "The big thing is notification," he said. "Can we do that? And to what extent are we limited by federal law?" State officials told a legislative panel in February that advance notification of group home placement would violate federal laws on fair housing and patient information protection. Patricia Rehmer, commissioner of the state Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, also said community-based care is much less expensive than hospitalization, which costs \$1,200 each day. Source: <http://www.courant.com/community/manchester/hc-manchester-group-home-bill-0516-20150515-story.html>

California reforms to cut use of foster care psych meds will cost millions By Karen de Sá kdesa@mercurynews.com Posted: 05/18/2015 05:48:33 AM PDT2 Comments Updated: 05/18/2015 12:05:29 PM PDT Drugging Our Kids [Read the Bay Area News Group investigation about psychiatric drugs in the California foster care system.](#) California will have to invest millions of dollars to better protect its 63,000 foster children from the excessive use of powerful psychiatric medications in a state where prescribing physicians, caregivers and the courts have long supported the drugging of as many as one in four foster teens. Cost estimates for a package of bills moving swiftly through the state Senate vary, but spending could reach \$8 million a year -- and possibly more than \$22 million -- to curb the child welfare system's heavy reliance on mind-altering medicine for behavior management. That cost is significant but not excessive in populous California, and the legislation has so far received unanimous, bipartisan support. Now, all eyes are on Gov. Jerry Brown, who will weigh the investment this fall if the bills pass both houses of the Legislature. "When you consider the long-term harm and consequences to the kids being doped up like this, it's really pennies -- I personally believe \$8 million is budget dust," said Mike Herald, a legislative advocate with the Western Center on Law and Poverty. "But in my experience, just about anything is subject to his rejection if it's going to cost millions of dollars." In an early sign of possible support, however, Brown's \$115.3 billion budget plan released Thursday included two surprises: \$149,000 to improve data on prescribing to foster children, and an increase of \$1.5 million for social worker training that includes psychotropic medication issues. Advertisement "This is an exciting development," said Kathryn Dresslar, who was chief of staff to former Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg and is with the nonprofit advocacy group Children's Partnership. "The fact that there are dollars in the budget right now that specifically mention training for psychotropic drugs, and the kind of tracking that we need, is good news -- I think

that means that the administration intends to address this problem in some way to a greater extent than they have in the past." Under four bills inspired by this newspaper's ongoing investigation "Drugging Our Kids," a mix of federal and state funds would be used to hire 38 new public health nurses; provide second medical opinions, and train social workers and caregivers to watch out for side effects and to advocate for alternatives to mind-numbing meds. Juvenile court judges could not approve prescriptions for foster children without lab tests and ongoing monitoring and unless kids 14 and older consented in writing. Social workers would be alerted about prescriptions for young children and those on multiple meds; and there would be new oversight of residential group homes, where the medications are most frequently prescribed. Policy analysts say the four reform bills authored by Sens. Jim Beall, D-San Jose; Holly Mitchell, D-Los Angeles, and Bill Monning, D-Carmel, will save the state money, with fewer costly and unnecessary drugs billed to the public health system. California taxpayers spend more on psychotropics than on drugs of any other kind for foster children, this newspaper found, more than \$226 million over a decade. As his two bills sailed through the Human Services Committee last month, Sen. Beall touted the return on investment, saying: "I can't wait for this to get to the appropriations committee, because this is going to save the state of California a lot of money." The precise cost of the reforms is still in dispute. The most costly bill, authored by Mitchell, could total more than \$12 million alone, according to an early analysis prepared for the Senate. But Frank Mecca, executive director of the County Welfare Directors Association of California, said its costs are not yet final and that federal funding will be available for as much as three-fourths of the social worker training. "The authors of all of these bills know that there's going to be some investment to put the reforms in place on a mandatory basis," Mecca said. "But there's a consensus that the state needs to do more, and none of these bills are bank-breakers." The Judicial Council has not taken a position on the two bills that would improve court oversight. But it projects a \$9.4 million annual cost for new administrative duties and additional hearings. That figure was found to be "greatly overstated," by the National Center for Youth Law, however. And the court costs may soon be revised downward, according to the council's government affairs office. The \$8 million to \$22 million expense places the bill package well within the cost range of other foster care reforms. Dependency court attorneys are seeking \$33 million to lower caseloads, and the governor's January budget proposes \$7 million in state general funds aimed at reducing reliance on residential group homes. Leslie Heimov, executive director of the Children's Law Center of California, which represents 33,000 children, supports the psych med bills. But she said her lawyers cannot fulfill the work they require unless the statewide average of 248 kids per attorney is significantly reduced; in at least one county, caseloads are as high as 1,000. Judges rely on the attorneys to relay how foster kids are faring on meds and to ensure they appear in court to speak for themselves whenever possible. Under the pending bills more hearings could be needed, requiring more attorney time for interviews with clients, teachers, doctors and caregivers. "There's a very obvious intersection between the psych meds issue and caseloads," Heimov said. "And without us, the court will not know what the child is experiencing." Source: http://www.mercurynews.com/breaking-news/ci_28135541/california-reforms-cut-use-foster-care-psych-meds

Too many foster children are in Michigan group homes, report finds [Print Email](#) By [Kyle Feldscher](#) | kylefeldscher@mlive.com MLive.com on May 19, 2015 at 10:53 AM Reddit Email LANSING — Too many foster children in Michigan are in residential programs or group placements instead of being placed with foster families, according to a new report. Courtesy logo [In its quarterly Kids Count report](#), the Michigan League for Public Policy expressed concern over their findings that 1 in 5 children in Michigan's child welfare system live in a group home. The national average is 1 in 7 children, according to the report. The report states the percentage of Michigan foster children in group placements is 18 percent, tied with Kentucky and Alabama for 36th in the nation. That's an increase of 3 percent since 2007. Jane Zehnder-Merrell, project director of Kids Count in Michigan, said there is cause for concern. "All the research tells us this is not a good idea to put these kids in residential placements," she said, "unless they really need the services being provided in those settings, and as soon as possible, you move those kids out of those settings." According to the report, court-appointed monitors of Michigan's child welfare systems reported last year the state still places hundreds of children in shelters for long periods of time. This despite a court agreement in 2008 requiring children be placed in an emergency or temporary facility no more than once in 12 months, and for no more than 30 days. The last report from September shows 40 percent of 355 children placed in temporary homes between July 2013 and December 2013 were there for more than 30 days. Nationwide, 40 percent of children in group placements do not have a clinical need to be in those settings, the report states. Staying in a group home for long periods of time instead of going to a foster family can have traumatic effects on children, Zehnder-Merrell said. "If those children age out of those settings, they're not going to have any support systems," she said. "It's really critical, especially for teenagers, that they have a connection to a family. Kids never stop needing a family." The report recommends the state increase services for families so children can stay at home and not enter the system. The report also recommends recruiting more relative and foster families, providing support for those families, keeping residential treatment short and requiring justifications for restrictive placements and prohibiting group placements for very young children. The state has many programs at the community level that work, but the report states the Michigan Legislature cut funding for prevention services from \$57 million in 2006 to \$42 million in 2014. However, the focus needs to be on keeping kids with their biological parents, Zehnder-Merrell said. "You want to first prevent the removal," she said. "And then, you want to make sure that the child's next setting (if removed from their home) is successful." •[Read the full report here](#). Kyle Feldscher is the Capitol education and MSU reporter for MLive Media Group. Reach him via email at kylefeldscher@mlive.com or follow him on Twitter at [@Kyle_Feldscher](#). Read more stories [here](#). Source: http://www.mlive.com/lansing-news/index.ssf/2015/05/too_many_children_in_michigans.html

Too Many Abused, Neglected Children in Group Homes Too Long, Report Says By: Matt Smith | May 19, 2015 [View as "Clean Read"](#) [Print](#) Click to read the full report "Every Kid Needs a Family" by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. More than 20,000 American children were placed in group homes unnecessarily and for longer periods than they should, at higher cost to taxpayers and often to the kids' detriment, according to data from 2013, the latest available. Those findings are at the heart of the Kids Count [report](#) released today by the [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#). Even though both research and federal law now emphasize keeping children who suffer from abuse or neglect with relatives or in foster homes, some states still put more than a quarter of those kids in group placement, the study found. "A small number of kids have such complex needs that they will need specialized care in a residential setting," said Rob Geen, the Casey Foundation's policy reform director. "But that should be a small number. It should be used like an emergency room, as a short-term intervention to stabilize kids." The report recommends keeping children with their families whenever possible, with the help of services "that are designed to come to them." Child welfare authorities should try to recruit and train more foster parents, courts should have to provide "substantial justification" for placements in settings like group homes and agencies should be keeping detailed data on both placements and outcomes to guide their decisions, the foundation urged. Geen said there's bipartisan support to move public policy in that direction. The Senate Finance Committee, which oversees foster care legislation, is holding a [hearing](#) on the issue today, and President Obama's latest budget includes [increased support](#) for foster care and treatment. "We feel like we're at a tipping point," he said. "We've got momentum. We know from research what the right thing to do is, and we're aligning our resources and our policy with what we now know." Courtesy of the Annie E. Casey Foundation But of the more than 400,000 kids in the care of child welfare agencies in 2013, about 57,000 — roughly one in seven — were placed in group homes rather than in the care of relatives or foster families. And about 23,000 of those had "no documented clinical or behavioral need that might warrant placing a child outside a family," according to the report. Geen said that figure is likely to be "just the tip of the iceberg." "There are lots of other kids who have clinical needs who could be cared for in their own families or in another family setting," he said. "I think if you apply the 'my child' test to these kids — what would we do if this child was ours? — just because a child has depression doesn't mean you send a child off to an institution." Children in group homes are more likely to test lower than their peers in English and math, less likely to graduate from high school and more than twice as likely to be arrested as those placed in foster homes. In addition, young children in group placements are at high risk of attachment disorders, experts say. More than 11,000 of the group-home population was under 13, the report found. "Those are particularly concerning, because child developmentalists will tell you the family setting is even more critical for young kids," Geen said. As if that's not bad enough, Geen said the average group-home stay is far longer than most experts recommend. Most children see improvement in three to six months, after which the gains tail off or even reverse — but the average stay is now eight or nine months, at a cost to taxpayers that can run up to 10 times the cost of family placement. "We're keeping kids long past the time that's long past any therapeutic value that's being provided by the residential setting," he said. "So we've got to prevent kids from coming in in the first place if they don't need it, then using the residential setting for what it's meant — to stabilize them so that they can perform and succeed in a family setting." The states with the lowest share of kids in group homes were Oregon, Kansas, Maine and Washington, where the numbers were 5 percent or less. In four states — West Virginia, Wyoming, Rhode Island and Colorado — the share of children and teenagers placed in group homes topped 25 percent. The highest was in Colorado, at 35 percent. In part, Geen said, that's because different states have adapted more quickly to the shift in policy that now emphasizes keeping youths in a family

setting whenever possible. They've set up mechanisms to train and support relatives who can take in traumatized children or recruited more foster families; the states that haven't done that are sending more kids to group homes "because that's all that they've got," he said. "Until recently we thought that institutional care with nice buildings and rolling hills was actually good for kids," Geen said. "What we know now from the research is that family is critical for a child to overcome the trauma they've experienced from abuse and neglect." Source: <http://jiiie.org/too-many-abused-neglected-children-in-group-homes-too-long-report-says/>

Smaller Role for Residential Care, Witnesses Urge Senate Finance Committee By [John Kelly](#), May 19, 2015 [Share on Tumblr](#) [PRINTER FRIENDLY](#)

Group settings should only be used for brief and emergency interventions in the foster care system, a panel of witnesses told members of the Senate Finance Committee today. "There is a wide consensus that children are best served in a family setting," said Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) ranking minority member on the committee, who added that group care should last "only for as long as necessary to stabilize the child...before returning to a family setting. "This theory is finally catching on," Wyden said, noting that the number of youths in congregate care is down 33 percent over the decade. The hearing continues the Congressional discussion on child welfare financing, which has taken shape over the past three years. [Limits on federal support for foster care](#), greater [flexibility for the use of federal funds](#) by states and curbing the use of [psychotropic medication on foster youths](#) are among the reform concepts that have been pressed by various members of congress and national advocacy groups. Today's hearing focused on the use of group care, also known as congregate care. About 57,000 (14 percent) of the nation's foster youth live in group care, according to a report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, released just hours before the hearing. The rate of group care use is erratic from state to state. Twelve states hold more than 20 percent of foster youth in group settings, and 15 hold less than 10 percent, according to the Casey report. Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) who called for the hearing, [introduced legislation](#) two years ago that would cut off federal IV-E dollars after 15 days for children under age 13 who are placed in congregate care. For all foster youths placed in child care institutions or emergency group settings, officials would have to appear in court to demonstrate that efforts to locate potential homes for the child were made in order to receive IV-E funds. Hatch was forced to miss the hearing because of the major trade bill on the Senate floor. Senators on both sides of the aisle shuffled in and out of the hearing to ensure it could continue as the trade bill was discussed. Sen. Charles Grassley, who also co-chairs the Senate's Foster Care Caucus, chaired the hearing on his behalf. "Foster youth want the same thing as other children, a place to call home," Grassley said. Meanwhile, he said, group homes "create conditions that make young people vulnerable to homelessness, substance abuse, and poverty." All of the witnesses acknowledged a need for residential care as part of the child welfare continuum, but urged limits on the use of it. Group care is "simply the wrong intervention for most youth, including teens," said Jeremy Kohomban, CEO of Children's Village, a major provider of residential and community-based family services in New York City. "There is a belief that most children in group care need to be there because of serious mental health problems. That's not true. They are children in pain, and born in poverty. And they are predominantly black and increasingly brown." Asked by The Chronicle how many of the youths placed in Children's Village residential care by the city could be served in their homes or with foster families, he said, "at least 50 percent or more." Kohomban said that changes to federal law should address the "perverse incentives" that steer most federal child welfare dollars into foster care, including group settings. "When we are paid by the day for each child, we are forced into business models that require keeping kids in beds" instead of "helping them live with families." Matthew Reynell, an adoptive parent from Rochester, N.Y., who testified at the hearing, said time limits should be placed on residential care, and that group care providers should be required to have family inclusion policies and "always be trying to identify a permanent home resource." In its 2016 budget request, the Obama administration proposed the inclusion of increased reimbursements for specialized foster home placements and greater oversight requirements for congregate care, said Children's Bureau Associate Commissioner Joo Yeun Chang, who testified today. But further reining in congregate care, she said, will require Congress doing "something bold for the states that says, 'This is what we expect of you, and we're going to give you the resources to do it.'" John Kelly is an editor for The Chronicle of Social Change. Source: <https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/news/smaller-role-for-residential-care-witnesses-urge-senate-finance-committee/10214>

Chris Minor Investigates: Teen sex abuse allegations at youth-treatment facility Posted 5:00 pm, May 18, 2015, by [Chris Minor](#), Updated at 05:43pm, May 18, 2015 [Facebook52](#) [Twitter5](#) [Google](#) [Pinterest](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Email](#)

A state agency is investigating a former youth worker at Arrowhead Ranch over allegations of abuse. The Coal Valley facility has already fired the case worker and now the Department of Children and Family Services is looking into what happened. Michaela Rosenow was court ordered to the state-licensed juvenile facility after aiding with an armed robbery. While in custody at Arrowhead, the now 17-year-old says her caseworker came on to her in a series of text messages and inappropriate contacts, including kissing on the lips in the juvenile's room and a staff office. "She would go underneath the blanket and rub my feet and she tried touching my vagina. She also touched my butt when we were making popcorn and when we had an "individual" (which is a one-on-one session) she went in my room and pulled down my pants and told me my panties were cute," Michaela said. Michaela eventually told her mother, Kelly Fullington, what was happening. "She said that some lady at Arrowhead Ranch has been flirting with her. I asked her details and she wasn't telling me so I went through her Facebook," Fullington said. Fullington said messages sent from the case worker's account include: "Just let me know how to please you," "Don't be afraid to show yo freak," "I got you something for Christmas, I got lip gloss from Victoria's Secret. I wanna see them babies shine," "I work with kids. I could get that on my record and not be able to do what I wanna do later in life. But I trust you 100," and "Your secret's safe with me." "I thought it's disgusting. There's more going on. This lady should not be there working with these kids. She's there to help my daughter, not to hurt her," Fullington said. The teen says the case worker threatened her as well. "She did come in my room, and her exact words were if I were to say anything to anybody, that she'd catch a murder case," which Michaela says is slang for "she'd kill me." Fullington notified Arrowhead about the allegations, and it conducted an internal investigation, which led to the caseworker's dismissal. "The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services is currently investigating a former employee of Arrowhead Ranch for allegations of abuse. Arrowhead Ranch has fired that employee," said Andrew Flach, a spokesman for DCFS. The Rock Island County Sheriff's Department also launched a criminal investigation into the allegations, and Michaela's mom believed some kind of criminal charge would follow. According to police reports obtained by WQAD, the case worker was questioned by investigators and admitted kissing the teen and said she might have tried to touch the teen's vagina, but never made contact because she had on baggy sweatpants. She said she may have said something about "catching a murder case," and said the text messages were all a joke, that she likes to "play." She admitted flirting with the teen, but said she "would never let it go too far." In the end, the Sheriff's Department and the State Attorney's Office declined to press charges. Sheriff Gerry Bustos says there wasn't enough evidence of a crime that could be proven in court. "There was inappropriate texting. I just have to keep referring back that it didn't raise to the level of a crime within the State of Illinois," Sheriff Bustos said. "We could not substantiate it had gotten to that point and I'm not saying it couldn't have. Luckily we were able to get it stopped," he said. DCFS says after it concludes its investigation, it could red-flag the caseworker, making it tougher to find work in her field. But Fullington and her daughter believe that is not enough to protect the public and future troubled teens. "I don't feel it's right since I was in a residential facility and she had taken advantage of me," said Michaela, who had suffered sexual abuse at the age of 11. Michaela said she told the caseworker about her past. "She's been sexually abused before, she spills her guts to a staff member and then she takes advantage of her? She should never be allowed to work with children again. She needs to be arrested for what she's done," Fullington said. "I don't know what to do. I don't know what to do as a mom. She deserves to be arrested." Arrowhead CEO Angela Moody says she can't talk about the case, calling it a "personnel issue" but said any questionable allegations get turned over to DCFS. "We feel it's important that our kids feel safe. We have very strict policies," Moody said. Source: <http://wqad.com/2015/05/18/chris-minor-investigates-teen-sex-abuse-allegations-at-youth-treatment-facility/>

Report: Too Many Foster Kids Unnecessarily in Group Homes [Share on facebook](#) [Share on twitter](#) [Tweet](#) [Share on email](#) [E-mail 0](#) [Comments](#) [Share on print](#) [Print](#)

By New Mexico Voices For Children ALBUQUERQUE—A new report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation shows that, nationally, one in every seven children in the welfare system is in a group home. This, despite the fact that more than 40 percent of these children have no clinical need to be in such restrictive settings. The Casey Foundation report, "Every Kid Needs a Family," makes the case that children do better when they are placed in a family setting. "We have an obligation to help all of our kids succeed," said Patrick McCarthy, president and CEO of the Casey Foundation. "If our children couldn't live with us, we would want them to live with someone close to us — and if that couldn't happen, with a caring foster family who could provide them with as normal a life as possible during a turbulent time. This report shows more kids can live safely in families and get the nurturing they need while under the care and protection of our child welfare systems." New Mexico does better than many states in terms of placing children in family settings, according to the report. While 84 percent of foster children nationally are in family placements, the percentage in New Mexico is 92. Just six states have a higher percentage of children in family placements than New Mexico. New Mexico also does well in terms of the percentage of children who are placed in kinship care—in the care of a

relative such as grandparents. Five percent of New Mexico's foster kids are in the care of relatives. Only four states have a higher percentage. "I think the kinship care rate speaks to our cultural roots and history—New Mexico is very family-focused," said Veronica C. García, Ed.D., executive director of New Mexico Voices for Children, which is a grantee of the Casey Foundation. "As a state we must do our best to support these special families and the children in their care by ensuring that they can access the benefits those children are entitled to and that they have assistance in navigating those systems," she added. The Casey Foundation report, "Every Kid Needs a Family," is available online at <http://www.aecf.org/resources/every-kid-needs-a-family/>. Source: <http://krwg.org/post/report-too-many-foster-kids-unnecessarily-group-homes>

West Virginia third highest in percent of kids in residential group care Last updated: May 19, 2015 12:20PM - 256 Views By [Fred Pace](#) - fp@cvitasmedia.com Story Tools: Font Size: Social Media: [Tweet](#) CHARLESTON — On any given night, about 57,000 children under the care of our nation's child welfare systems are going to bed without the care and comfort of a family, according to a new report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. In West Virginia, that number is 1,189, which means that 27 percent of the 4,403 kids in our child welfare system are being placed in residential group care, as opposed to with immediate, extended or foster families. That puts West Virginia in a tie with Wyoming for the third highest percent of children in residential group care nationwide. These placements also have been shown to be harmful to a child's opportunities to develop strong, nurturing attachments. Group placements can also cost seven to 10 times the amount it takes to place a child with a relative or foster family. In its latest KIDS COUNT® policy report, Every Kid Needs a Family: Giving Children in the Child Welfare System the Best Chance for Success, the Annie E. Casey Foundation highlights this and other sobering statistics that point to the urgent need to ensure, through sound policies and proven practices, that everything possible is being done to find loving, nurturing and supported families to help raise more of these children. Specifically, Every Kid Needs a Family emphasizes making and keeping a lifelong connection to a family. The report also highlights the promising ways that state and local government leaders as well as policymakers, judges and private providers can work together as they strive to help these 57,000 children who are living in group placements - and overall, the more than 400,000 children in the care of child welfare systems. According to the report, 40 percent of young people who live in group placements while in the care of child welfare systems in the United States have no clinical need to be in such restrictive settings, threatening their well-being and chances for finding a permanent family. Every Kid Needs a Family recommends how communities can widen the array of services available to help parents and children under stress within their own homes, so that children have a better chance of reuniting with their birth families and retaining bonds important to their development. And it shows ways in which residential treatment — a vital option for the small percentage of young people who cannot safely live in any family during treatment — can help those young people return to families more quickly and prepare them to thrive there. "Kids do best in families. Kids who live in families, supported through the tough times, have the best chances for life success," said Margie Hale, Executive Director of West Virginia KIDS COUNT. "Far too many West Virginia children under the care of our child welfare system are missing the support of a family because they are being unnecessarily placed in long-term, residential care. These group placements exact too high a price - in both human terms and taxpayer dollars. As a state, our top policy priorities should be keeping kids connected to family or kin; and strengthening the foster care system so that foster parents are available to nurture and protect children until they can live with a permanent family." Research shows the secure attachments provided by nurturing caregivers are vital to a child's healthy physical, social, emotional and psychological development throughout his life. Young people who do not grow up in families are at greater risk of being abused in group placements, and of being arrested. Despite this, many children - especially teens - are sent to a group placement as their very first experience after being removed from home. "We have an obligation to help all of our kids succeed," said Patrick McCarthy, president and CEO of the Casey Foundation. "If our children couldn't live with us, we would want them to live with someone close to us - and if that couldn't happen, with a caring foster family who could provide them with as normal a life as possible during a turbulent time. This report shows more kids can live safely in families and get the nurturing they need while under the care and protection of our child welfare systems." While more jurisdictions are finding ways to increase the number of children being placed with families, these efforts vary widely from state to state, and even within states. Among the report's findings across the United States: • One in 7 children under the care of child welfare systems live in group placements, even though federal law requires that they live in families whenever possible. • Forty percent of the children in group placements have no documented behavioral or medical need that would warrant placement in such a restrictive setting. • While research shows children who need residential treatment likely need to stay no longer than three to six months, young people are staying in group placements an average of eight months. • Percentages of young people in group placements within states range from as low as 4 percent in Oregon to as high as 35 percent in Colorado. • The Foundation reports that common-sense policies and practices can safely reduce use of group placements, and that these placements may be used when caseworkers feel they cannot find an appropriate family quickly. Jurisdictions that employ strategies to improve decision making, for example, see more children safely return home; use of kinship care often goes up as group placements go down. Policy and practice change can improve in four ways: • Increase service options. Communities that provide a wide range of services have more options that enable children to remain safely in families. For example, state and local child welfare and Medicaid agencies should work together to ensure adequate support by the behavioral health system for services that can be conveniently provided in a home setting. • Strengthen pool of families. Public and private agencies should do more to find families for children and to make sure those families have the support they need to help children thrive. Washington, D.C.'s Child and Family Services Agency, for example, has created a rapid-response program for locating and licensing kin that finds relatives for children in need day or night. • Keep residential treatment short, with family in focus. Residential treatment should be strengthened to meet children's acute needs in a customized, short-term way that equips young people to live in a family and to maintain family connections throughout treatment. In New York, Children's Village — one of the country's first residential treatment centers for children — has greatly expanded its community services and network of foster families in recent years, including foster families prepared to take on the older teens receiving treatment in the facility's residential cottages. • Require justification for restrictive placements. Substantial justification should be required by child welfare systems and by the courts before young people are sent to group placements. In Connecticut and Philadelphia, for example, the top child welfare executive must approve all group placements. Judges can require caseworkers to provide regular updates to make sure a child still needs residential treatment. Every Kid Needs a Family will be available May 19 at 12:01 a.m. at www.aecf.org. Additional information is available in the KIDS COUNT Data Center, which also contains the most recent national, state and local data on hundreds of indicators of child well-being. The Data Center allows users to create rankings, maps and graphs for use in publications and on websites, and to view real-time information on mobile devices. Fred Pace is an editor for Civitas Media. He can be reached at 304-369-1165, ext. 1661, in Madison; at 304-752-6950, ext. 1729 in Logan; by email at fp@cvitasmedia.com or [@fcp62](https://twitter.com/fcp62) on Twitter. Source: <http://www.coalvalleynews.com/news/news/153539191/West-Virginia-third-highest-in-percent-of-kids-in-residential-group-care>

Scared child or troubled son? Boy found in basement testifies Elisha Anderson, Detroit Free Press 7:53 p.m. EDT May 20, 2015 Charlie Bothuell IV, left, and Monique Dillard-Bothuell appear in court in Detroit on April 15, 2015. (Photo: Paul Sancya/AP) 6 CONNECT [38 TWEETLINKEDIN](#) 1 COMMENTEMAILMORE DETROIT -- Different descriptions have emerged of a 13-year-old boy discovered in the basement of his family's home last June during an ongoing court hearing for his father and stepmother, [who are accused of abusing him](#). The first was of a scared kid, disciplined by his father, Charlie Bothuell IV, with a PVC pipe, required to complete twice-daily workouts, and forced into the basement by his stepmother, Monique Dillard-Bothuell. The second depicted a troubled child, who lied, stole, got in fights at school and got poor grades. He was sent to live with his dad and once lied about being kidnapped by a man with gray hair. The teen, who is not being identified by the Free Press, was cross-examined for more than three hours today — his third day on the stand — as the defense pointed out contradictions with his version of events. He testified that he left the basement and went upstairs to use the bathroom when nobody was around. But according to a transcript from an interview last June, the boy, then 12, said he hadn't gone to the bathroom in 10 days. Shawn Patrick Smith, Bothuell's attorney, also brought up the boy's interview with the FBI in July when he was asked if his stepmother brought him food. He responded "No, I got it myself," according to a transcript. In court, he testified she brought him cereal and protein shakes and told him if he heard anything to be quiet and not say anything. He said he obeyed because he didn't know what would happen to him if he didn't. "I was afraid that nobody would believe me," he said. [USA TODAY Boy found in basement testifies he was afraid](#) Bothuell and his wife, Dillard-Bothuell, face charges of second-degree child abuse and torture. Their preliminary examination before 36th District Judge Shannon Holmes will determine whether the couple will stand trial on the charges, which are felonies. Defense attorneys maintain the boy wasn't abused and have accused him of making up his story about being in the basement the whole time. He was found behind boxes in the basement on June 25 during a police search of the home 11 days after he was reported missing by his family. Defense attorneys also contend the teen wanted to be lose weight and was on board with working out. "I liked the way I looked," he testified of the results he got from exercising. The

teen denied trying to poison his family by mixing cleaning solutions on a sponge. Smith introduced a document the teen said he wrote, dated Feb. 6, 2014. "I washed the dishes with the same sponge that I used to clean the table, countertops, and cabinets," it said. "I used bleach to clean the counters. I used the window cleaner to clean the table. I used bleach to clean the cabinets." "I did it because I thought everybody would get sick ... and I thought they would send me back to my mom's house," the document said. [USA TODAY Sheriff: Boy 'kidnapped' to teach him a lesson](#) The teen testified the letter wasn't an apology, "it was what Monique believed that she thought I did." Later, during questioning by Wayne County Assistant Prosecutor Carin Goldfarb, the boy was asked if those were his words on the document and he said "no", adding they were his stepmother's words. He explained he had one sponge for washing the dishes and another for cleaning things, said they looked the same and sometimes he had mixed them up by mistake. "I never purposely tried to poison anyone," the teen said. The hearing resumes June 8 at 9:30 a.m. Prosecutors said they expect to call up to two more witnesses. Source: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2015/05/20/detroit-boy-basement-testimony/27679941/>

Many Children Placed in Group Homes Unnecessarily, Report Finds May 22, 2015 Facebook 5 Twitter 32 LinkedIn 8 Google Email Share 44 Print One in seven children under the care of the child welfare system lives in a group placement, even though federal law requires that children in the system be placed with a family whenever possible, a report from the [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#) finds. The [KIDS COUNT](#) policy report [Every Kid Needs a Family: Giving Children in the Child Welfare System the Best Chance for Success](#) (HTML or PDF, 20 pages) found that 40 percent of the nearly fifty-seven thousand children in group placements have no documented behavioral or medical need warranting such a restrictive setting, and that stays in group homes average eight months, despite research showing that even those who need residential treatment are unlikely to need a stay longer than three to six months. According to the report, the secure attachments nurtured by caregivers and the stability of routines in family settings are vital to a child's healthy physical, social, emotional, and psychological development, while young people who do not grow up in families are at greater risk of being abused in group placements and of being arrested. Although the rate of group placement ranges from as low as 4 percent in Oregon to as high as 35 percent in Colorado, the report calls for changes in policy and practice to limit the use of such placements to situations in which caseworkers cannot find an appropriate family quickly. Recommendations in the report include greater collaboration between state and local child welfare and Medicaid agencies to increase options for providing behavioral health services at home; increasing the pool of and support for relatives and foster families; keeping residential treatment periods short; and requiring justification and stricter approval procedures for group placements. "We have an obligation to help all of our kids succeed," said Casey Foundation president and CEO Patrick McCarthy. "If our children couldn't live with us, we would want them to live with someone close to us — and if that couldn't happen, with a caring foster family who could provide them with as normal a life as possible during a turbulent time. This report shows more kids can live safely in families and get the nurturing they need while under the care and protection of our child welfare systems." "[Too Many Kids in U.S. Child Welfare Systems Not Living in Families](#)," Annie E. Casey Foundation Press Release 05/19/2015. Source: <http://philanthropynewsdigest.org/news/many-children-placed-in-group-homes-unnecessarily-report-finds>

Foster parent facing charges in 22-month-old girl's death COVINGTON, La. (AP) - A 40-year-old Lacombe woman faces charges in connection with the death of a 22-month-old foster child who had been placed in her care. Meanwhile, the state family services department says it has launched an investigation and placed staff on leave. Authorities said Trenique Faciane (treh-NEEK' fah-SHAHN') had already been booked on a count of second-degree cruelty to a juvenile after she told detectives she used a hairbrush to beat the little girl. The child died after being taken to a hospital. George Bonnett (bah-NET'), a spokesman for the St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office, said Friday that authorities were seeking a warrant on a more serious charge. St. Tammany Coroner Charles Preston identified the child as Madison Parrott, whose biological mother lives in Bogalusa. Source: <http://www.katc.com/story/29141942/foster-parent-facing-charges-in-22-month-old-girls-death>

State lifts admissions ban after northern Idaho home for troubled youth promises changes THE ASSOCIATED PRESS First Posted: May 23, 2015 - 3:49 pm Last Updated: May 23, 2015 - 3:53 pm [AAA](#) We also have more stories about: (click the phrases to see a list) Places: [Lewiston](#) (14) [Idaho](#) (243) LEWISTON, Idaho — A northern Idaho facility for troubled youth can accept new kids after promising to address problems found during a state inspection. The Lewiston Tribune reports (<http://bit.ly/1BiLALK>) that the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare lifted the ban on admissions Thursday after the Northwest Children's Home submitted a plan of correction. The state barred the home from accepting new children on April 1 after identifying issues ranging from unresolved maintenance problems to mishandled assault reports. The inspection was prompted by a complaint that claimed a teen from the Lewiston facility broke into a neighboring house and attacked a resident. State officials conducted a progress review at the home before lifting the ban and will assess the facility again in June. The acting executive director of the facility says state inspectors were satisfied with their most recent inspection. Source: <http://www.dailyjournal.net/view/story/d58a9ac033ae42fcb32d909aaf557dc0/ID--Childrens-Home/>

What is the School-to-Prison Pipeline? Tuesday, 26 May 2015 02:01 PM By Erica Baum Close More ways to share... Stumbled LinkedIn Vine Reddit Delicious Newstrust Tell my politician Technocrati [Short URL](#) [Email Article](#) [Contact](#) [Print](#) [A](#) [A](#) 0 [inShare](#) [inShare](#)0 There are currently over four times as many police officers stationed in the nation's public school system than are stationed in the nation's capital. VOTE NOW: [Should Convicted Felons Be Allowed to Vote?](#) The School-to-Prison Pipeline, a term coined to characterize the policies and practices within the U.S. school system that, [as the ACLU says](#), "reflects the prioritization of incarceration over education" is blamed for the increasing police presence in schools. The School-to-Prison Pipeline is an explanation of why certain minority groups tend to go straight from the public school system into the prison system. The ACLU attributes zero-tolerance policies including expulsion and suspension, policing of school hallways, and disciplinary alternative schools as 3 of the main causes of the School-to-Prison Pipeline. Zero tolerance policies impose severe punishments without proper due process protections. Such policies that remove students who are in trouble from school leads to students becoming disengaged with their studies, further encouraging them to drop out of school, which ultimately increases the likelihood of ending up in the prison system. Rather than hiring trained administrators to deal with student conduct, the number of school resource officers, police officers stationed to police school hallways, has increased in recent years. As a result, school based arrests for disruptive behavior has become more common, further contributing to the School-to-Prison Pipeline issue. [The New York Times reports](#) that there are over 17,000 police officers in the public school system. TELL US: [How Do You Feel About Voting Rights for Convicted Felons?](#) Disciplinary alternative schools send students from regulated public schools to inferior facilities with no educational standards. Disciplinary alternative schools hinder students' abilities and opportunities to learn, placing them at a disadvantage even after returning to the public school system. The School-to-Prison Pipeline is an issue that has sparked advocacy throughout the country. [Texas Appleseed, a non-profit organization](#) that reports the effects of school disciplinary policies issued a report in March 2015 that identified African-American and Hispanic students and students with disabilities as being most harmed by the School-to-Prison Pipeline. The Texas organization has issued multiple statements and lobbying efforts to end policies that contribute to the Pipeline. Californians for Safety and Justice, another non-profit organization, has launched the #SchoolsNotPrisons public education campaign. The campaign has created multiple petitions and PSAs to educate the populace about the effect of the Pipeline as well as making a social media mark. Read Latest Breaking News from Newsmax.com <http://www.newsmax.com/FastFeatures/school-prison-pipeline/2015/05/26/id/646797/#ixzz3bldbkltl> Urgent: Rate Obama on His Job Performance. [Vote Here Now!](#) Source: <http://www.newsmax.com/FastFeatures/school-prison-pipeline/2015/05/26/id/646797/#>

China executes boarding school teacher who molested or raped 26 girls as young as 4 | Fox News China executes boarding school teacher who molested or raped 26 girls as young as 4 Published May 29, 2015 [Associated Press](#) Facebook 6 Twitter 11 [Email](#) [Print](#) BEIJING — A former Chinese elementary school teacher has been executed for molesting or raping 26 students, some as young as 4 years old. The intermediate People's Court in the western province of Gansu says it carried out the sentence against Li Jishun on Thursday after it was upheld by the nation's Supreme People's Court. ADVERTISEMENT In its ruling, the Supreme Court said all of Li's victims were girls younger than 12 who attended his village boarding school. It said Li took advantage of his status as teacher and the girls' fear and shyness to repeatedly assault them in the classroom, dormitories and surrounding forest. The ruling said many of the girls had been left in the village by parents working in cities. Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2015/05/29/china-executes-boarding-school-teacher-who-molested-or-raped-26-girls-as-young/#>

Parents sentenced to 7 years in prison for caging autistic son in O'Fallon, Mo. : News Parents sentenced to 7 years in prison for caging autistic son in O'Fallon, Mo. Saved Save Article [My Saved Items](#) [Print Email](#) 2015-05-30T00:05:00Z 2015-05-31T09:14:04Z Parents sentenced to 7 years in prison for caging autistic son in O'Fallon, Mo. By Mark Schlinkmann St. Louis Post-Dispatch stltoday.com May 30, 2015 12:05 am • By [Mark Schlinkmann](#) [Mark](#)

[Schlinkmann mschlinkmann@post-dispatch.com Loading...](#) × Related Photos « × Close Ad A 6-year-old autistic boy in O'Fallon, Mo., was kept in this cage, according to police. P Terry and Victoria Smith, formerly of O'Fallon, Mo., were each found guilty of child endangerment. [Read more St. Charles County parents of autistic boy kept in cage say on stand that they did their best](#) Family physician says Smiths were exemplary parents. [Read more Custody of children in cage case is in limbo](#) Child at the center of the abuse case could face institutional care. [Read more Cage for autistic boy in St. Charles County never OK'd by state, official testifies](#) Police, paramedics testify about trying to open the cage and the boy's condition. [Read more Couple charged with keeping autistic son in cage in O'Fallon, Mo., basement](#) A plywood roof was secured to the top of a metal crib with zip ties and bungee cords, police say. [Read more ST. CHARLES COUNTY](#) • A couple were sentenced Friday to seven years in prison for keeping their severely autistic son in a makeshift cage. Terry and Victoria Smith, formerly of O'Fallon, Mo., had been convicted last month of child endangerment in the case. Circuit Judge Ted House also ordered the Smiths to each pay a \$500 fine. "The court finds no compelling reason to deviate" from the jury's recommendation of seven years and fines, House said. In 2010, authorities found the Smiths' son, Josiah, then 6, in a urine-and-feces-soaked enclosure held together with zip ties and bungee cords. Police, paramedics and a case worker had gone to the Smiths' home following a tip to a state child abuse hotline. [The Smiths also have five other children](#). County Prosecutor Tim Lohmar's office sought prison time for Victoria Smith, 44, and Terry Smith, 45, but didn't specify how much. "They are not responsible adults under any circumstances," assistant prosecutor Becky Shaffar said at the sentencing hearing Friday. She pointed out that the Smiths hadn't apologized. Attorneys for the Smiths argued that jailing them would also punish Josiah and their other children. They urged House to put them on probation. They said since the 2010 incident, the [couple had done everything they had been told](#) to do for the children by authorities. "Their large family needs two parents," said Courtney Harness, Victoria Smith's attorney. "This case is about what's best for Josiah" and the other children. Shaffar, however, said it's about punishing the defendants for what they did — "putting the child in a cage over and over because he was an inconvenience to them." It's unclear what will happen to the Smiths' children now. Steven Kobal, another assistant prosecutor, said that will be up to the Missouri Department of Social Services. Department officials could not be reached for comment. The family now lives in Elsberry in Lincoln County. The seven-year sentence imposed on the parents is the maximum allowed. However, Shaffar predicted during the hearing that the Smiths as first-time offenders might spend only a year in prison before they're released by the state Board of Probation and Parole. Lohmar has said previously he understood the challenges facing the couple but that child neglect, endangerment or abuse isn't an option for overwhelmed parents. The defense had argued that the state failed to provide an appropriate safe bed and that the Smiths did the best they could for their child under bad circumstances. Victoria Smith testified in the trial that she had been told by state officials to keep him in the makeshift device until she could get funds for a new bed. That was disputed by Allison Haney with the Missouri Department of Mental Health, who testified that the state never provided or approved the cage. At the hearing Friday, Shaffar repeated their argument that the case was really about money — a reference to the state and federal money the Smiths receive for Josiah's care. "They just keep having more children and expect all of us to take care of them," Shaffar said. The defense, in arguing that prison terms would damage a happy family, showed a recent video of the Smiths with Josiah and the other children in everyday activities at home and a park. In the video, Victoria Smith, her voice cracking, said she didn't know if she would ever see Josiah while she's imprisoned because he might not be able to handle being in a visiting room with other people. Terry Smith said Josiah doesn't understand how to use a phone. Shaffar said the Smiths "pretend their children are important" to them but that the jury in recommending prison time "could see through this fake facade." During the trial, witnesses supporting the Smiths included their family physician, Dr. David Easterday, who said they had always been exemplary parents and that Josiah appeared to be well cared for when brought in for office visits. Dr. John Constantino, a professor of psychiatry and pediatrics at Washington University, testified that the makeshift cage was completely inappropriate. He suggested that the Smiths should have used a "timeout room" where Josiah could be safe from harming himself or running away. Source: http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/parents-sentenced-to-years-in-prison-for-caging-autistic-son/article_92ac01a9-c00b-537d-9bb7-3643e68194e7.html

'We need to rebuild: Residential school report to show extent of abuse Residential school survivor Kim Good, of the Snuneymuxw First Nation near Nanaimo, B.C., wipes away tears as she listens to Truth and Reconciliation Commission Chair, Justice Murray Sinclair release the commission's interim report during a news conference in Vancouver, B.C., on Feb. 24, 2012. (Darryl Dyck / THE CANADIAN PRESS) 11 8 18 1 Chinta Puxley, The Canadian Press Published Friday, May 29, 2015 7:15AM EDT Mike Cachagee was just four-and-a-half when he was taken from his home and sent to a residential school in northern Ontario. For the next 12 years, he never celebrated a birthday. He was never hugged. Related Stories [Highway of Tears emails deleted, alleges former B.C. ministry staffer](#) [Child welfare agencies must follow hotel ban or risk gov't takeover: Manitoba minister](#) [Music was an 'outlet' for Inuit 'throat boxer' during turbulent childhood](#) Photos Residential school victims Mick Cachagee, Crystal Merasty and eldest surviving victim Wabano Marguerite, left to right, listen to Prime Minister Stephen Harper officially apologize for more than a century of abuse and cultural loss involving residential schools in Ottawa, June 11, 2008. (Chris Wattie / THE CANADIAN PRESS) He never heard "I love you." He was never encouraged or praised. He was beaten and sexually abused. When he and his younger brother finally returned home, his mother had remarried and started a new family. She barely recognized her sons. It took Cachagee two failed marriages, years of alcohol and drug abuse and therapy before he started to come to grips with what happened to him. His brother never did. He descended into a life of addiction on Winnipeg's streets. "He was only three years old when he went there," Cachagee said. "He came out when he was 16 and the rest of his life was just a mess with alcoholism. Just horrid. He never had a chance -- all because he was sent off to a residential school." The brothers rarely speak now. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission examining Canada's Indian residential schools is to release a summary of its final report Tuesday after hearing testimony from 7,000 survivors. The final report marks the end of a five-year exploration of one of the darkest chapters in Canada's history. About 150,000 First Nations, Inuit and Metis children were taken from their families and forced to attend government schools over much of the last century. The last school closed outside Regina in 1996. For survivors such as Cachagee, the torment doesn't abate with the commission's report. "We don't need to heal, we need to rebuild," said Cachagee, who now counsels other survivors in Sault Ste Marie, Ont. Ken Young remembers the day in the 1950s when he was taken from his home at age eight along with his brothers and sisters. He remembers boarding a train with other aboriginal children and the laughter while on the novel journey. Then they reached the Prince Albert Indian Residential School in Saskatchewan. "We were lonesome," Young said. "I remember a lot of us crying a lot." There were public floggings in the dining hall. Children had their heads shaved and their legs shackled in pyjamas because they had tried to go home. The school was more like a prison, he said. "I thought it was normal because I was just a young guy. Later, I realized how bad that was that adults would treat children like that," said Young, a Winnipeg lawyer. "I was ashamed to be who I was because that's what we were taught." It took a long time to let go of his anger. Young is hoping the commission will recommend a healing strategy developed by survivors that will address the aftermath of Canada's failed policy to "take the Indian out of the child." But he suspects the commission's report will go the way of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. "There'll be recommendations made and then it will go on a shelf like all the other reports that have been sanctioned by government. "I'm not overly optimistic." David Harper is more interested in what happens after the final report. Harper's mother was in a residential school, but the first time he heard details of her abuse was at her compensation hearing with adjudicators before she died. "Every word that came out of her mouth, I kept thinking, 'How dare you Canada, allowing this to happen to my mom.'" Just recently, Harper, who is the grand chief of Manitoba Keewatinowik Okimakanak representing Manitoba's northern First Nations, learned one of his uncles was in a residential school and was whipped until he defecated. Those stories are just starting to be told, Harper said. Harper points to Israel where one of the Holocaust memorials includes an eternal flame. "I would like to see something like that for our First Nations, where they could go and sit down and tell their stories to their children," he said. "We want to make sure we don't pass on this generational curse." Source: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/we-need-to-rebuild-residential-school-report-to-show-extent-of-abuse-1.2396854>

Child Dies While in Foster Care, Parents Want Justice Tools [0 Comments](#) [Email this article](#) [Digge Print this article](#) By Craig Choate Story Created: May 30, 2015 at 4:26 PM CDT Story Updated: May 30, 2015 at 10:05 PM CDT CAIRO -- The birth family of 10-month-old Kalisha Hill laid her to rest Saturday. It's been a rough three years for this large family. In 2012, after the father, Isaac Hill, admitted abuse, he and Katrina Hill lost custody of each of their ten children. "They took me to jail, I admitted my wrongs," Isaac said. Since losing their kids, DCFS has admitted to documented evidence of abuse to several of the Hills' kids inside the foster care system. "They kept my kids in danger," Hill exclaimed. "This is the fourth time. There's three times our kids have been abused." Then, last week they learned their youngest child, 10-month-old Kalisha, died while in foster care. They say if it wasn't for one person they still wouldn't know the cause of death. "Had it not been for the coroner, we wouldn't have known anything," Isaac added. The news the coroner delivered was horrifying. "It was rough hearing what he had to say," Isaac continued. "He said that my daughter had blood stress behind her eyes and in her lungs and that she had struggled to

fight to breathe and said that it was either from co-sleeping or layover." Isaac and Katrina Hill want their kids back and they want justice. "This ain't going unchecked. So they can try as they may to try to hide this one but it's not that simple, it's not gonna happen," Isaac explained. "We want the rest of our kids back." Little Kalisha's death is now under investigation by the Child Death Task Force and the Williamson County State's Attorney's Office.

Source: <http://www.wsiltv.com/news/local/Child-Dies-While-in-Foster-Care-Parents-Want-Justice-305577601.html>

Residential schools findings point to 'cultural genocide,' commission chair says Final report from Truth and Reconciliation Commission to be released June 2 By John Paul Tasker, [CBC News](#) Posted: May 29, 2015 9:04 PM ET Last Updated: May 30, 2015 10:29 AM ET Justice Murray Sinclair interview 9:03 14967 shares Facebook Twitter Reddit Google Share Email Related Stories ['Cultural genocide is probably the best description of what went on here'](#) [Residential schools: Promises of reconciliation saved in bentwood box](#) [Truth is hard but residential school reconciliation harder: Murray Sinclair](#) [Justice Murray Sinclair on Truth and Reconciliation](#) External Links [Canadian Press interactive: Residential schools by the numbers](#) (Note: CBC does not endorse and is not responsible for the content of external links.) At least 6,000 aboriginal children died while in the residential school system, says Justice Murray Sinclair, the chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Sinclair, who has been tasked with studying the legacy of the residential schools, says that the figure is just an estimate and is likely much higher. Residential schools were established in the 19th century and the last ones closed in 1996. [A history of residential schools in Canada](#) [Aboriginal nutritional experiments had Ottawa's approval](#) [How ballet slippers, broken chalice are helping to heal residential school wounds](#) "We think that we have not uncovered anywhere near what the total would be because the record keeping around that question was very poor," Sinclair told Rosemary Barton of CBC's Power & Politics. "You would have thought they would have concentrated more on keeping track." Sinclair offered the figure of 6,000 in a later interview with Evan Solomon to air Saturday on CBC Radio's The House — much higher than earlier estimates that put the number of school children who died in the system at less than 4,000, but still possibly far short of the real outcome. Sinclair, who was Manitoba's first aboriginal judge, said one estimate made in the early part of the 20th century was that 24 to 42 per cent of aboriginal children who attended the residential schools died at school or shortly after leaving school. Source: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/residential-schools-findings-point-to-cultural-genocide-commission-chair-says-1.3093580>

Authorities Investigate Child Abuse Claims At Police-Run Boot Camp Posted: Jun 03, 2015 7:28 AM PDT Updated: Jun 03, 2015 7:30 PM PDT By: Phil Shuman, Reporter / Anchor BioEmail_Connect_Biography_phil.shuman@foxtv.com Authorities Investigate Child Abuse Claims At Police-Run Boot Camp [More>> on Twitter: @mariofoxa on Twitter: @mariofoxa E-mail Mario Ramirez E-mail Mario Ramirez Like & follow us on Facebook here: FOX 11 Los Angeles Like & follow us on Facebook here: FOX 11 Los Angeles](#) Comment and share our stories with your Facebook friends. Comment and share our stories with your Facebook friends. [E-mail Phil Shuman](#) [E-mail Phil Shuman on Twitter: @FoxPhil on Twitter: @FoxPhil](#) San Luis Obispo, CA - (FOX 11 / AP) Authorities are investigating claims that seven children from Southern California suffered physical abuse while attending a police-run boot camp on the Central Coast. From Phil Shuman: The seven mothers weren't happy to be in front of television cameras and reporters, but they wanted their story told. They say they thought they were helping their troubled teens by sending them to a "tough love"-style police sponsored and staffed boot camp called "LEAD", which stands for leadership, empowerment, and discipline. The moms say the stories their kids told when they came home after a week were outrageous and possibly criminal. Veronica Bernal has a 16-year-old son and she tells me "he said they beat him, slammed him against bus, and handcuffed him". Aracelli Pulido has two daughters, twelve and 14. "They said they were hit in the face, kicked, and when they didn't do exercises correctly, they were stomped in the back", according to Pulido. Bridget Salazar, the mother of a 13-year-old boy tells a similar story. "They were socking him in the stomach, kicking him, telling him to get up." The boot camp is operated by Huntington Park Police, South Gate Police, and the California National Guard. It's held in San Luis Obispo at an old military base. It has been operating for some 15 years without any apparent problems, until now. The county sheriff's department in San Luis Obispo is now investigating the claims. They've done interviews. They aren't saying anything more. Huntington Park's Police Chief Jorge Cisneros, when I asked him if these claims of physical and emotional abuse could be true, answered this way. "The intent of this program is to redirect children to a more positive role in society. The allegations that I've heard are not part of the program". That statement should be obvious, even though the program is designed for so-called "troubled" kids, though not violent and not with any drug problems. So, we'll see if these complaints are substantiated. The accused South Gate officers are off the street. Their counterparts at Huntington Park have not been reassigned as of this writing. RELATED: [LAUSD Settles Remaining Miramonte Sex Abuse Lawsuits For \\$139M](#) RELATED: [Former Miramonte Teacher, Pleads No Contest To Molestation Charges](#) San Luis Obispo County sheriff's officials said Tuesday the investigation began May 28 after one child claimed abuse by drill instructors at a Leadership Empowerment and Discipline Boot Camp. The event from May 17 to 24 was put on by Huntington Park and South Gate police using the Army National Guard's Camp San Luis Obispo facilities. The program is for children between 11 and 17 years old. Sheriff's spokesman Tony Cipolla says when investigators went to Southern California to interview the 39 children who attended the camp they identified six more potential victims. Police chiefs from both departments met with parents and pledged a thorough investigation. From Susan Hirasuna: The mothers of four youths came forward Tuesday to allege their children had been abused at a disciplinary boot camp. This is a voluntary program called LEAD, affiliated with the Huntington Park Police Department, South Gate Police Department and the California National Guard. The cost of the program is \$400 per child for a 3-month program that includes a one week trip to a camp in San Luis Obispo. The mothers would only give their last names and each shared a look of distress or guilt on their faces for sending their children somewhere that wasn't safe. Miss Salazar said she had a 13-year-old son who came home from the trip in tears. He told her he had been taken into a dark room where he was beaten and kicked. He was then handed a towel to wipe away the blood. Salazar said, her son told her he was hurt so badly he couldn't move. Miss Pulido sent her daughters, age 12 and 14 to LEAD. She claims that the abuse was done by two Huntington Park police officers known as the Gomez brothers. The abuse included face slapping, hair pulling and when the kids were told to do push-ups, apparently one of the officers would step on the teen's back. Greg Owen, the attorney, representing the youths say, the Gomez brothers have been removed from the LEADs program but are still on patrol for the Huntington Park PD. At a news conference in Commerce, he said, that if the allegations are true, the officers need to be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. He said, the abuse was discovered when a boy came back with bruises. His parent apparently took him to the hospital where the injuries were so severe, the hospital apparently called the Department of Child Protective Services. Owen says, 7 to 10 of 30 youths from last month's session have claimed to him some sort of abuse. I tried to get some kind of response from both the Huntington Park and South Gate Police department, to no avail. I did get a response from the California National Guard. The statement released basically read; no comment while there's an ongoing investigation. And, indeed, the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Department is investigating the abuse allegations. Source: <http://www.myfoxla.com/story/29228359/authorities-investigate-child-abuse-claims-at-police-run-boot-camp>

Lebanon County to close group homes for troubled teens in cost saving move By John Latimer johnlatimer@ldnews.com @johnlatimer on Twitter Updated: 06/04/2015 05:44:13 PM EDT Jim Holtry, director of Lebanon County Children and Youth Services, explains why he believes the county's two group homes for teenage boys and girls should be closed at Thursday's Lebanon County commissioners' meeting. (John Latimer — Lebanon Daily News) The Lebanon County commissioners on Thursday authorized the closing of two county-owned group homes for teenage boys and girls that were operated by the county's Children and Youth Services agency. The vote to close the homes was unanimous and was done on the recommendation of Children and Youth Services Director Jim Holtry after he determined the services could be provided by private group homes at a significant cost savings. The homes — one for boys between 13 to 18 in Fontana and another for girls of the same age in Lebanon — each have room for six troubled youth who are not suitable to remain with their families or be placed in traditional foster homes, Holtry said. The county opened the group homes in 1977 at a time when there was a need for them because the only placement options were foster homes and institutions, Holtry told the commissioners. "There was no go between," he explained. "Counties developed group home placements that were a little more structured than foster care but not nearly as structured as institutional placements." In the intervening years as more private homes offering specialized foster care opened, counties began closing their group homes, Holtry said. Lebanon County is just one of two counties in the state that still operates its own facilities, he added. Holtry came to his decision that it's time for Lebanon County to close its group homes after reviewing the cost of operating the homes and their occupancy rates over the past five years. Advertisement "Our occupancy rate over that period was a little over 60 percent," he said. "I also found our per diem rate over that same time period was a little over \$178 a day." Through the first 10 months of this fiscal year, Holtry said, the per diem cost has risen to \$214, nearly double the \$110 per diem cost of a private provider. At the current occupancy rates projected over the entire year, if the county switched to a private provider, it would result in about \$262,000 in savings, Holtry said. Because the agency receives most of its funding from the state and about 20 percent from the county's general fund, the savings for the county by switching to private providers would be about \$52,000. The remaining money could be diverted to the agency's other program needs that are over budget, Holtry said. Another consideration in making his

recommendation, Holtry said, is the difficulty in staffing both of the homes. The agency has been short-staffed most of the year and is on pace to pay \$75,000 in overtime expenses. "The bottom line is, I just really truly feel the group homes have not been as cost effective as they have been in the past," he said. "I just think it has come to a point that we really should close them. I think we can get as good a service, if not better service, from the providers we have." Holtry said every effort would be made to place the teens currently living in the homes in privately run homes located in Lebanon County. However, he had no timetable for when that might happen. "I assure you that in no way will the youth that are at our group homes suffer in any way by not having our own group homes," he said. "We have contracts with some very good providers who will provide very adequate care for these children. ... Because the private providers have more staff than we do, they are able to provide many more activities and functions for the kids than we are able to provide." The five full-time employees working at the two homes were informed of their potential closing earlier this week and efforts will be made to place them in other suitable county jobs, said county administrator Jamie Wolgemuth. The children's homes are owned by the county, and once they are closed will likely be sold and their contents auctioned, Holtry said. In other news related to Children and Youth Services's budget, Holtry told the commissioners that the state Department of Children, Youth and Families has agreed to his appeal for reimbursement of its portion of the \$1.5 million in county expenses that were over budget last year. "The state has agreed, and in a couple of weeks, you will be getting a check for almost \$952,000 in additional revenue for the county to offset those over expenditures," Holtry told the commissioners. "I was optimistic that we would get something, but I never anticipated it would be the full amount, and that is good news." Source: http://www.1dnews.com/local/ci_28252103/lebanon-county-close-group-homes-troubled-teens-cost

Lara Moves Bill to Regulate 'Troubled Teen' Industry Finally, proponents of "cures" for homosexuality are being regulated and called frauds! June 4, 2015 - by [Karen Ocamb](#) 7 Out California State Sen. Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens) has followed up his promise last March to start regulating the billion dollar "troubled teen" industry—and it looks like he's bringing the Legislature on board. On Monday, June 1, the Senate passed Lara's SB 524 by a bipartisan vote of 31 to 1. The bill "defines private residential facilities for youth and requires them to obtain a license from the Department of Social Services (DSS) to protect youth health and safety," according to a press release. As [Frontiers reported in an in-depth look](#) at what critics call the "troubled teen industry," many residential facilities throughout California, the country and the world prey on desperate parents with emotionally or behaviorally difficult teenagers with promises to "cure" the teens through "tough love" and often, religious fervor. The young people are sent to boarding facilities that use military boot camp tactics to change their attitudes and behavior, often around alcohol and drug abuse. But the facilities are also often promoted with promises of "curing" young people suspected of being gay. Lara's bill requires private facilities to provide the same protections and receive the same oversight as state-funded and state-licensed institutions. A 2008 Government Accountability Office Report found 69 reported cases of abuse, 15 cases of physical abuse, 45 cases of neglect or deprivation of necessities, 2 cases of sexual abuse, and 6 cases of psychological and emotional maltreatment in California. "Over the past few decades hundreds of facilities have been established nationally for youth with emotional or behavioral problems nationwide and abroad, including camps that claim to scare the gay away or cure homosexuality," Lara said in a statement. "Tragically, many young people have experienced horrendous abuse, neglect, and even death at these unregulated institutions. My bill would require private residential facilities to meet basic standards of care and ensure essential health and safety standards are met to protect youth." Lara's bill also got a boost from gay Los Angeles City Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell, who [introduced a resolution of support last April](#). "Breaking someone's spirit because of who they are is unconscionable," O'Farrell said in a press release. "We must stop the abuse of those forced to live in the shadows because of their sexual identity. I applaud Senator Lara for his work on this issue, as well as the LA LGBT Center and Survivors of Institutional Abuse, who helped co-author the senate bill. Through this action, we will provide protection to minors who will otherwise be vulnerable." O'Farrell's resolution was seconded by Councilmembers Paul Koretz, Nury Martinez, Mitchell Englander and his fellow gay colleague, Mike Bonin. At the Lara news conference last March, the LA LGBT Center also launched the website www.PYIA.org for its "Protect Youth from Institutional Abuse" campaign with an online petition to members of congress and the California legislature. "No institution should be free to abuse children," said Dave Garcia, Director of Policy and Community Building at the LA LGBT Center. "This legislation is an important step toward providing common sense supervision, regulation and oversight of an industry that for far too long has been able to operate in the shadows. The Los Angeles LGBT Center, along with The Survivors of Institutional Abuse, are proud partners in this important effort and we will not stop until all youth, whatever their sexual orientation or gender identity, are adequately protected." It seems almost impossible to those who remember lobotomies as a "cure" for homosexuality—that the whole premise that being gay is a perversion is finally being deeply challenged and proponents of "cures" are being called "frauds." Last month, [Rep. Ted Lieu introduced the federal "Therapeutic Fraud Prevention Act"](#) and there is a [trial underway in New Jersey now](#) in which plaintiffs claim the non-profit organization JONAH violated state consumer fraud laws when it promised to turn gays into heterosexuals, using techniques such as having them get naked and spend time with their fathers. In 2013, Gov. Chris Christie signed a law banning so-called "conversion" therapy in the state, joining California, Washington DC and the state of Washington. Lara's bill, SB 524, now goes to the State Assembly. Source: <https://www.frontiersmedia.com/frontiers-blog/2015/06/04/lara-moves-bill-to-regulate-troubled-teen-industry/>

How Standardized Testing Reveals Stark Inequalities Between Rich and Poor Friday, 05 June 2015 00:00 By [Molly Knefel](#), [AlterNet](#) | News Analysis font size [decrease font size](#) [increase font size](#) [Print](#) 58 Email Classes are let out at Bennett Intermediate School, part of the Onteora school district, in Boiceville, New York, April 29, 2015. By the first day of testing, two of every three students in the district who were expected to take the exams had opted out; part of a small, if vocal, movement across the state urging parents to have their children sit out standardized exams that took off this year. (Emma Tannenbaum/The New York Times) Last month, USA Today [reported on](#) the hundreds of thousands of children across New York State who opted out of the state standardized English Language Arts (ELA) tests. Data from the tests is high stakes all around; it's linked to individual students' academic advancement, teacher evaluations, and overall school performance ratings. Proponents of testing usually argue that collecting such data is necessary to measure student achievement and hold educators accountable, but the state director of Democrats for Education Reform (DFER), Nicole Brisbane, offered USA Today a surprising explanation for why students really ought to take these tests: "Schools are one of the biggest differentiators of value in the suburbs," Brisbane told USA Today. "How valuable will a house be in Scarsdale when it isn't clear that Scarsdale schools are doing any better than the rest of Westchester or even the state? Opting out of tests only robs parents of that crucial data." The opt-out movement was bigger than ever this year, with an estimated [200,000 New York children](#) refusing the state exams that test ELA and math. After a budget season in which Governor Cuomo [pushed hard](#) to have student test scores count for 50% of a teacher's evaluation, critics of high stakes testing had even more evidence to argue that the so called "education reform" agenda has more to do with firing teachers and closing public schools than it has to do with ending inequality. Following Brisbane's statement about potential Scarsdale homebuyers to its logical conclusion would suggest that testing is actually about maintaining inequality, not fighting it. "It is apparent that this competition, market-based ideology accepts that there will be inadequate resources for some and an abundance for others," says Jia Lee, a New York City public school parent and teacher. "I would argue that all public schools should and could be excellent places for all of our children and communities." Lee rejects the premise of pro-testing reformers that standardized tests are reliable indicators of quality education. "Historically, standardized tests have been reliable indicators of access to resources and nothing more." When it comes to resources, there's no question that wealthy school districts in New York State have an abundance compared to those that serve poorer children. According to [data](#) from the Education Trust, the highest poverty districts in the state receive 10% less funding per student in state and local revenues than those with the lowest poverty rates. Adjusted for the needs of students in poverty - who, according to the federal Title 1 formula, cost at least 40% more to educate - the poorest districts actually receive 16% less than those with the least poverty. On top of that, districts serving the most students of color receive 11% less per student than those serving the fewest students of color. Given these funding disparities at the state and local level, on top of the individual advantages that wealth provides students, like access to school supplies, tutoring, and enrichment, it becomes clear that students in a place like Scarsdale aren't on remotely the same playing field as students in the Bronx, where there is a 45% [child poverty rate](#). Using the data provided by standardized tests to argue that wealthier neighborhoods have "better" schools further entrenches that inequality. Wealthier neighborhoods simply have wealthier schools. "It makes me so angry that there are people who have so much money and so much power who are using that power to keep my students in poverty, by putting policies in place that they know will keep some property values high and some property values low," says New York City public school teacher Megan Moskop. For Moskop, Brisbane's quote is significant because it unveils what's beneath the successful narrative of so many education reformers who advocate for closing public schools in the name of equality. "The narrative of DFER has been so carefully constructed and thoughtfully worded to call it a civil rights narrative. I think there are a lot of well intentioned people that buy into that narrative," including passionate teachers who believe in the charter school movement, says Moskop. "They're not seeing the other side of that, which is that this is a competitive system where kids are losing more and more." Victoria Frye, a New York City public school

parent whose son has chosen to opt out of the tests since fifth grade, was surprised to hear DFER's focus on wealthy communities, given that the organization's agenda is all about focusing on accountability for schools in under-resourced communities. (A national reform organization, DFER [advocates](#) for "policies which stimulate the creation of new, accountable public schools" ([particularly charter schools](#)) "and...simultaneously close down failing schools.") "They're supposed to be concerned with the so-called 'failing' schools that are failing poor students, not with suburban property owners," Frye says. Her son is now a seventh grader and is opting out this year even though the tests are a determining factor in high school admissions; his current school goes through 12th grade, and he's happy to stay. "[Opting out] really diminishes your opportunities for applying to different schools, which is, of course, part of the whole market-based consumer model of education ushered in by Bloomberg," says Frye. Frye and her husband are both scientists and firm believers in quantitative measurement. But as her son lost increasing amounts of instruction time to test prep, and as the tests became further connected to teacher evaluations, "it just became more and more obvious that they were used for political reasons and not for pedagogy." Indeed, according to DFER's website, the organization's mission is to support leaders who "champion America's public schoolchildren." But Brisbane's USA Today quote is not an outlier. She expressed a similar sentiment in a DFER blog post, writing: "How will suburban communities maintain their draw if there isn't a measure of how the schools are actually doing in comparison to those across the state?" She went on to argue that test data has "sparked so many positive changes for low income students." In a statement to AlterNet, Brisbane claims it is the opt-out movement, not testing, that really harms low-income students: "The people who are opting out of tests are largely those who already feel like their child has access to a high-quality education, and are doing so in a way that directly harms low-income and minority students throughout New York. We should be supporting students and teachers throughout New York, whether they are in Scarsdale or the Bronx, and making sure all students have a fair shot at a quality education. Rather than maintain the status quo where wealth determines a quality education, data can and should highlight where the gaps are so we can invest in schools that need it the most." Brisbane's suggestion that the resistance to testing is populated by people who have no stake in the matter is evidently an attempt to make the protest seem less legitimate than it actually is; it is, however, an accusation that is demonstrably untrue, as reports of just who is opting out make clear. New York principal Carol Burris, for example, [has written](#) about her district, Brentwood, which had a 49% opt-out rate for ELA tests, and a 57% rate for the math tests administered the following week. Burris notes that, "Ninety-one percent of Brentwood students are black or Latino, and 81 percent are economically disadvantaged. Brentwood is not unique - Amityville (90 percent black or Latino, 77 percent economically disadvantaged) had an opt-out rate of 36.4 percent; Greenport (49 percent black or Latino, 56 percent economically disadvantaged) had an opt-out rate that exceeded 61 percent; and South Country opt outs (50 percent black or Latino and 51 percent economically disadvantaged) exceeded 64 percent." Those numbers clearly run counter to the narrative that the movement is exclusively white and middle-class. And while [new data analysis](#) from the New York Times reveals that districts with the highest opt-out rates had 50% or fewer students receiving free and reduced lunch, the opt-out numbers were higher this year in nearly every district where data is known. Critics of testing also point out that there are a number of factors making it harder for low-income families to refuse, from language barriers to a lack of educational options. "Families who are struggling financially are in even more difficult situations because they've been pressured to raise the scores to keep their schools open," parent and teacher Jia Lee says. "High stakes standardized tests are a distraction when we already know what the problems are. That is why families, especially in the shrinking middle class, are realizing more and more that the only way to push back against policies that deepen inequities, is to refuse the tests." Source: <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/31199-how-standardized-testing-reveals-stark-inequalities-between-rich-and-poor>

Refugee group home caretaker accused of sexual abuse Written By Michael Lansu Posted: 06/01/2015, 04:16pm Jose Cerda | Supplied photo A 28-year-old caretaker at a U.S. Department of Human Services group home for refugees has been charged with sexual abuse after prosecutors claim he had sexual contact with a teenage resident. Jose Cerda is accused of touching the buttocks of a 16-year-old resident lying on a couch at the home in the 5800 block of South Indiana Avenue on April 10, Assistant State's Attorney Enrique Abraham said. The girl got off the couch and started doing chores, but Cerda followed her and rubbed up against her, Abraham said. The girl pushed Cerda away and went back to the couch, where Cerda touched her buttocks again, he said. Prosecutors claim Cerda rubbed up against the teen several more times that night and eventually went to lie in her bed. Later that night, Cerda went into the girl's room, kissed her and asked her to watch a movie on the living room couch, Abraham said. The two had sexual contact on the couch and then the girl eventually ran to her room, he said. The girl told a friend and counselor the next day, and Cerda was asked to leave the home, Abraham said. Advertisement: Replay Ad Ads by ZINC After being asked to leave the home, Cerda went on a planned vacation out of the country, his lawyer said. He was arrested May 30 upon his return and charged with aggravated criminal sexual abuse. Cerda was born and raised in Chicago, graduated from Farragut Career Academy in 2004 and has "substantial contacts with the community," his lawyer said. Cerda was sentenced to one year's probation for a felony aggravated unlawful use of a weapon conviction eight years ago, authorities said. On Monday, Judge Maria Kuriakos Ciesil ordered Cerda held on \$50,000 bail and said he is to have no contact with children except his own. He will be back in court June 23. Source: <http://chicago.suntimes.com/crime/7/71/653448/group-home-caretaker-charged-sexual-abuse>

Gateway to Shutter Six Group Homes by August Seventy residents will be affected in North Kingstown, Woonsocket, West Greenwich, South Kingstown and Central Falls. By [Mark Schieldrop \(Patch Staff\)](#) June 1, 2015 [Share Comments](#) Citing declining reimbursement rates and budget deficits, Gateway Healthcare has announced that it is closing six group homes in Rhode Island. The closure will affect 70 residents, of which 15 are children and adolescents. "We did not make this decision lightly. It followed an extensive and exhaustive review of each of our programs and all of our options," said Richard Leclerc, president of Gateway Healthcare. "The reality is these programs have been losing money for many years and reimbursement rates have been cut. It is no longer possible to sustain the level and quality of services we provide at the current reimbursement levels." The company said that the decision comes after "a decade of reimbursement rates that have remained flat or have been cut significantly," including a 40 percent cut four years ago. The group homes affected include four for adults with mental health or substance use/abuse issues - LaBelle House (North Kingstown), Central Street (Central Falls), King House (Woonsocket) and Men's House (Woonsocket), and two for children and adolescents -- the Arcadia Children's Home (West Greenwich) and Lighthouse for Youth (Waketfield), which was already scheduled to close at the end of June. We've had to subsidize these services for well over a decade and we are at a point now where we can no longer do that and maintain the quality and level of care needed for this population," Leclerc said. "As the major provider of community behavioral and mental health services, we need to make difficult decisions to ensure that we are able to protect and maintain our mission of providing services to 25,000 people each year in Rhode Island." As required by state law, Gateway Healthcare has notified the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals, and the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families about the decision to close the six group homes within 90 days. Gateway Healthcare will still maintain operation of eight adult group homes and four group homes for adolescents. The company said it is trying to find work for 60 affected staff members elsewhere in the organization. The cuts come at a time that state leaders are grappling with significant substance abuse and mental health issues among Rhode Islanders. Source: <http://patch.com/rhode-island/coventry/gateway-shutter-six-group-homes-august-0>

Girl missing from foster care shot to death in Kansas City - SFGate Girl missing from foster care shot to death in Kansas City Updated 11:25 pm, Monday, June 1, 2015 KANSAS CITY, Kan. (AP) — A girl who was reported missing from the Kansas foster care system in 2012 has died after a shooting. Kansas media outlets report 16-year-old [Jamie J. Hernandez-Zubia](#) was shot early Saturday morning in Kansas City, Kansas. Police say they responded to calls about shots being fired and found the victim dead in the street. According to police, the occupants of two vehicles fired shots at each other and Hernandez-Zubia had been a passenger in one of those vehicles. She had been listed as missing since running away on June 9, 2012, from a foster care placement in Wathena in northeastern Kansas. Police said they are searching for a late-1990s or early-2000s white Ford F-150 pickup in relation to shooting. It may have a bullet hole in its tailgate and tinted windows. Source: <http://www.sfgate.com/news/crime/article/Girl-missing-from-foster-care-shot-to-death-in-6300730.php>

Former Foster Care Provider Charged with Child Sex Assault in Delaware [Share on facebook](#) [Share on twitter](#) [Share on gmail](#) [Share on email](#) [Share on print](#) [More Sharing Services](#) 7 Posted: Jun 02, 2015 8:32 AM PDT Updated: Jun 02, 2015 8:35 AM PDT By Ryan Dennis, Web Producer [Email Connect](#) [Ryan.Dennis@FOXTV.com](#) Officers say Lazarus Rougier, 61, has been charged with numerous counts of sexual abuse of a child. Newark, DE - New Castle County Police have arrested a 61-year old man following a sexual abuse investigation. Officers say Lazarus Rougier has been charged with numerous counts of sexual abuse of a child. The Criminal Investigations Unit, Family Services Squad began an investigation of sexual abuse of a young child in March of 2015. Investigators learned the victim was subjected to abuse at the hands of Rougier over a number of years. Detectives also learned the Rougier family fostered young children in their home starting in 2003 and ending in 2012. The children were as young as 10 years of age and resided in the Rougier home before being adopted. Lazarus Rougier has been charged with (two counts) unlawful sexual contact in the first degree, continuous sexual abuse of a child and sexual abuse of

a child by a person of trust in the first degree. He has been arraigned and committed to the Howard R. Young Correctional Institution in lieu of \$265,000 cash bail and issued a no contact order. Source: <http://www.myfoxphilly.com/story/29218169/former-foster-care-provider-charged-with-child-sex-assault-in-newark>

Managing Conflict and Anger with your Tweens and Teens By Kortney Peagram, Monday at 8:38 pm With our parent training we often get on the discussion of anger and conflict. Below are some strategies to use when managing your child's anger outbursts. Managing Angry Outburst Pick a time when your child is calm and more apt to listen. We recommend soon after the emotional meltdown but leave enough time for your child to calm down. Phrase the conversation as you are looking to better understand him/her and help with the anger. Replay the scenario and say something like: "I would like for you to tell me what happened. I might have missed something when you got into a fight with your brother or sister and I want to see your point of view." Have your child replay the situation and find out what is triggering the anger. You can share that you don't know how to communicate sometimes. Explain that you hate to yell, but when he/she does not listen or is mean you resort to yelling. I could also share that you don't know how to communicate with him/her when situations escalate. Add in that he/she is growing up so fast and you don't want to treat your child like a kid anymore, so if he/she could help you better learn how to communicate, you will make an effort to yell less. Honestly, this conversation will really help you. It will clear the air and give you a chance to start over with your child. When asking that question make sure you are genuinely asking and do not sound accusatory. Again, you are looking to understand. Then try to identify with him/her triggers that set your child off. Ask your child: How can we avoid these incidents? What would he/she recommend to do? What can he do to not be mean or volatile? What could you do to help him/her? Come up with strategies to manage your child's anger. Walk away from the situation Go to his/her room Go listen to some music until he/she calms down Have a code word that you and your child use when anger strikes Take deep breaths Close his/her eyes and count to 10 Remember you are doing a great job and this is so difficult. Be yourself and show your child that sometimes you don't know what to do...and that is ok. You are an amazing parent filled with love and you are doing everything in your power to help your child grow. Until Next Time... Kortney Peagram Be Brave*Be Strong*Be a Bulldog Source: <http://www.chicagonow.com/bully-boot-camp/2015/06/managing-conflict-and-anger-with-your-tweens-and-teens/>

Nine reported over abuse at Catholic boarding school Fort Augustus. Picture: WikiCommons/Colin Wilson CHRIS MARSHALL 18:23 Tuesday 02 June 2015 NINE men have been reported to prosecutors in connection with historical abuse at a former Catholic boarding school. Police have now concluded their investigation into allegations of physical and sexual abuse at Fort Augustus Abbey in the Highlands. The men are alleged to have been involved in incidents dating from September 1967 to December 1992. In a statement, the Crown Office said: "The procurator fiscal at Inverness has received reports concerning nine men in relation to incidents alleged to have occurred between September 1967 and December 1992. "The reports remain under consideration." The school was run by Benedictine monks but closed down in the 1990s. Police began their investigations in 2013 following a report from a former pupil and further allegations which were made in a BBC documentary. The programme contained allegations against seven monks. Two headmasters were also accused of covering-up the abuse. The documentary heard accounts from former pupils at Fort Augustus and its East Lothian prep school, Carlekemp. The accounts included allegations of physical violence and sexual assault. Source: <http://www.scotsman.com/news/scotland/top-stories/nine-reported-over-abuse-at-catholic-boarding-school-1-3790546>

Abuse allegations in Pueblo group homes a key factor in DHS turmoil By Joey Bunch The Denver Post Posted: 06/03/2015 12:01:00 AM MDT 14 Comments Updated: 06/03/2015 01:02:44 PM MDT Colorado DHS director Reggie Bicha put 11 people on paid leave in the wake of the abuse investigation that he says he instigated. (Craig F. Walker, Denver Post file) May 27: [Colorado faces \\$1 million sanction for federal infractions related to food-assistance program](#) May 24: [Colorado human services director Reggie Bicha pledges better communication](#) May 19: [Previous letter sent to Hickenlooper raised similar complaints about human services](#) May 14: [Gov. John Hickenlooper defends human services director Reggie Bicha](#) PUEBLO — After four years and a string of controversies, one of the key criticisms from lawmakers of Colorado human services director Reggie Bicha was his handling of a search for physical abuse in a cluster of Pueblo group homes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Some of the homes have had a series of incident reports that were self-reported and self-investigated that included sexual abuse, physical abuse, theft and neglect that ranged from a resident being left in her feces to a field trip that left one behind and home alone. There was also a mistake over what "Do not resuscitate" meant when a patient was unresponsive. Bicha said he lost trust in what his staff in Pueblo was telling him. He sent a team of nurses to the city to search for evidence in March without permission from any of the 62 residents' guardians — family members, individuals or charities with the legal rights to speak for individual residents. Investigators performed intimate examinations, or "body audits," of residents to determine whether wrongdoing had taken place. As a result, the Department of Human Services may have to answer questions in court about civil rights issues. That could compound the problems for the beleaguered political appointee of Gov. John Hickenlooper. More than 80 lawmakers signed a no-confidence letter directed at human services leadership last month. Advertisement "There's no doubt that it was very, very inappropriate and was an overreach of authority," said Jim Malila, whose 43-year-old son lives in one of the Pueblo homes. "I don't see any way that they didn't violate those people's rights. And if they did that, then I don't see how Reggie Bicha can keep his job." The state Department of Public Health and Environment is investigating a civil rights complaint by guardians against DHS. The health department report could be available in a matter of days, a spokesman said. Although it is still confidential, four people who were informed about the preliminary findings said the report cited "deficiencies" in how the department handled residents' civil rights. If deficiencies are found, the health department will ask DHS to submit a plan to correct its actions, but the American Civil Liberties Union, other organizations or the guardians could file suit on residents' behalf. "I feel certain the Pueblo situation is going to lead to some kind of litigation," said Denise Maes, policy director for the ACLU of Colorado. "I think everyone is waiting to see what this report says." Bicha put 11 people on paid leave in the wake of the abuse investigation he says he instigated. Bicha's critics, including the Pueblo Regional Center director who resigned after the abuse investigation began, claim he is aiming eventually to close or consolidate the regional centers in Pueblo, Grand Junction and Wheat Ridge. They point to dwindling numbers of residents there during Bicha's tenure. They say the abuse investigation was a means of harming their reputation. "If you can denigrate, degrade, call into question, it makes it a lot harder for people to defend it," said Valita Speedie, who [resigned as head](#) of the Pueblo Regional Center in April. Working on the case Bicha said he could not discuss the investigation. Neither would the Colorado attorney general's office, because its lawyers are working on the case. "What I can tell you is those medical professionals asked each and every one of those clients if it was OK," he said. Bicha calls opponents' concerns unwarranted suspicion and misplaced blame. Several outside agencies are looking into issues at the Pueblo Regional Center, including the Pueblo Adult Protective Services and Disability Law Colorado, an independent nonprofit that represents the legal rights of people with disabilities that specializes in civil rights and discrimination issues. The Pueblo County Sheriff's Department is investigating 10 cases related to the center, Bicha said. Bicha said intentions were in the best interest of the residents. "It really was done under an abundance of caution to make sure those residents were safe," Bicha said. He added: "In hindsight, I wish we had stopped and picked up the phone to call the guardians." Events were set in motion when Bicha learned in March of a potential abuse case that happened last fall. He would not elaborate on the case, but he said he had reason to doubt he got a straight story from the center's staff. He said he talked to the Pueblo Sheriff's Department and Adult Protective Services in Pueblo County and "connected the dots" about the three agencies' shared concerns. "At that point, I didn't know who we could rely on to give us good, accurate information," Bicha said. "A strip search"? "Let's call it what it was," Speedie said of the body audits. "It was a strip search." She said when a team of nurses showed up at the center, they wanted to bring all the residents to one home and search them in a restroom. DHS disputes that. Ultimately residents were checked in their bedrooms. Speedie is convinced the abuse allegations are part of Bicha's goal to close or consolidate the three regional centers. The three homes have 356 beds total, and over the past five years, the vacancy rate has grown from 6 percent to 25 percent, according to DHS documents. Speedie said she told Bicha he was moving too fast on closing or downsizing the centers, because a lot of residents have nowhere to go. Their home for years has been in a group home in Pueblo. She said the plan would uproot fragile people who have a history of not being able to make it in private nursing homes. "I made a decision to speak up, and politically it was the wrong thing to do. And I knew at the time I'd done the wrong thing," Speedie said. "I knew there would be consequences for not going along with the marching orders." Bicha doesn't deny having conversations with Speedie about the future of the regional centers, but he denied having any vendetta against her or any intention to close the centers, since legally that's a decision for legislators, he said. Group of guardians Lynne Parker Crooks, whose 46-year-old son lives in the Wheat Ridge regional center, was among a group of guardians who [formed Save Our Regional Centers](#) after a meeting with Bicha in 2013. She and others in attendance said Bicha told them about plans to downsize and possibly close some of the centers. Bicha said his conversations about the future of the centers is being mischaracterized. Colorado has been trending toward fewer residents since the 1960s, when there were more than 2,000 people in the regional centers, he said, adding that privatization and less desire from guardians to use the state homes

has driven the decline. Some states have eliminated group homes entirely after the U.S. Supreme Court's [Olmstead vs. L.C. ruling](#) in 1999 that said government should move to end "isolation and segregation of individuals with disabilities as a serious and pervasive form of discrimination." That same year, DHS issued a report on "downsizing initiatives" for the group homes. The number of people in Colorado's group homes has been nearly cut in half since then. "This started long before Bicha came to Colorado," Bicha said. Moreover, Bicha said he doesn't personally support closing them. He said a home for people with disabilities who have no place to go will always exist, and no one has been moved to a private facility without the consent of guardians. A report to legislators in December said that as of September, 85 of the three centers' 266 residents at the time were ready to be transitioned to private care. Guardians of 67 of them declined the offer. In 2014 the [Colorado legislature created a 15-member task force](#) to study whether it could feasibly close the centers and still care for the people who need the level of care the group homes provide. Not unusual Speedie said the 86 incidents reported at the Pueblo Regional Center during the past three years are not unusual, based on the 8½ years she was there. The "homes of last resort" typically are for those whose behavior is so severe that private nursing homes won't take them. The 86 incident reports since 2012 are less than half the 180 that were filed the previous three years, including some that involved accusations against staff members, according to the state health department. "We can't get rid of people who are hard to deal with," Speedie said. "We have to figure out how to deal with them. It's not easy." Bicha would not discuss his specific reasons for suspecting abuse, but the publicly available incident reports show a handful of problems. On May 23, 2014, a female resident said a male staff member touched her inappropriately at a Pueblo home. An internal investigation by the Pueblo Regional Center said the allegation was substantiated and the employee was fired. In another Pueblo home on Feb. 7, 2014, a resident in his 70s died after he was found unresponsive. A senior staff member misinterpreted a directive on the person's chart as "Do not resuscitate." The directive, however, meant "full resuscitation." Staff told investigators they were confused. Another resident in his 70s had a digital home theater and other valuable electronics stolen from his room the day after Christmas in 2012. The DHS incident report indicated the case was unsolved, but "the facility implemented a new system to keep track of residents' property," the report states. There are other accounts of staff manhandling or neglecting individual care, including one resident inadvertently left behind at the home when the rest left in a van for a field trip. Stephanie Garcia, executive director of the ARC of Pueblo, which has guardianship of seven of the 62 residents who were searched, said the investigation and uncertainty have weighed on the residents. Some residents are worried they did something wrong, and some are concerned they might live in an unsafe place, she said. "The residents are internalizing all of this," Garcia said. Joey Bunch: 303-954-1174, jbunch@denverpost.com or twitter.com/joeybunch [Follow @joeybunch on twitter](#) Source: http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_28239934/abuse-allegations-pueblo-group-homes-tipping-point-dhs

For Advocates, Push to End Solitary Confinement in Prison Only Begins With Youth Isolation Saturday, 06 June 2015 00:00 By [Victoria Law](#), Truthout | News Analysis font size [decrease font size](#) [increase font size](#) [Print](#) 24 Email (Image: [Jared Rodriguez / Truthout](#)) DeAngelo Cortijo was 11 years old when he locked himself in a group home van. For that, he was sent to a juvenile prison in San Francisco. There, he got into a fight and was kept in his room for four days. Locking a person in a room or cell is frequently referred to as isolation, isolated confinement or solitary confinement. That was his first time. But it wasn't his only time. During the seven years he spent in and out of California's juvenile legal system, Cortijo also spent increasing amounts of time in isolation. When he was 13, he recalled, he spent four or five months confined to his room for 23 hours a day. He was supposed to be allowed out of his room for half an hour at the start of each day and for half an hour at the end of the day, but most days, he remained locked in for the full 24 hours. Being locked in his room did not protect Cortijo from physical violence. Once, he recalls, a guard asked him for his lunch tray. "He was being very disrespectful about it," Cortijo said. "I told him to talk to me with more respect." In response, the guard, along with several other staff members, entered Cortijo's cell and "began punching me and kicking me. They cuffed my left wrist to my right ankle, stripped all the clothes off my back, cut my pants off me, left me naked in my cell, took everything out of my room, turned the fluorescent lights on high and left me on the cement floor for about an hour and a half." Cortijo was 14 years old. "We began looking at the laws and realized there was no uniform definition around the use of solitary confinement." At age 17, he spent seven and a half months in isolation. After the first couple of days, he said, "everything just turned into one. I would wake up and there would be white walls everywhere and a gray toilet. I'd be highly depressed." He remembered lying on his bed for three or four hours, thinking about all the different ways he could end his life. Sometimes he felt extreme rage, and banged and kicked at the door in the hopes that someone would talk to him; sometimes, he would cover the lights and lay in his bed for hours. Cortijo's experience is far from rare. Court documents reported 249 uses of solitary confinement at five juvenile prisons in California during a 14-week period in 2011. California's Senate Bill 124, which passed the State Senate on June 2, would change that practice, drastically curtailing the use of isolation in the state's juvenile prison system. SB124 is one of several efforts across the nation focused on ending the placement of children in extreme isolation. The bill is, in part, a result of [research](#) and publicity about the [effects of solitary](#) confinement particularly on the [still-developing brain](#) of adolescents and teenagers. In children and adults, the effects of solitary confinement, also referred to as isolated confinement or isolation, often include depression, hallucinations, panic attacks, cognitive deficits, paranoia, anxiety and anger. In adolescents, who are still developing socially, psychologically and neurologically, the [results](#) can be particularly devastating. One study found that, among those who died by suicide in juvenile prisons, [half occurred in solitary confinement](#), and 62 percent had a history of being in isolation. Since 2012, [eight states](#) have prohibited placing youth in solitary for punitive reasons. In May 2015, a federal judge approved new rules limiting the use of isolation in Illinois' juvenile prisons. In New York City, the Board of Correction, which makes rules governing the city's jail system, voted to end solitary for 16- and 17-year-olds and to develop alternatives to solitary for people ages 18 to 21. In New York State, two class-action lawsuits have pushed the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision into settlement agreements requiring that, even in isolation, 16- and 17-year-olds be allowed out of their cells for five to six hours on weekdays and for two hours on weekends. On May 19, 2015, in response to a lawsuit, California's Contra Costa County Probation Department agreed to a settlement ending solitary confinement in its juvenile hall. These efforts come after years of advocacy. In California, the impetus for SB124 began in 2011, when several family members contacted the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights about their children held in youth prisons. One mother told advocates about her son, who had attempted suicide six or seven times while in a youth prison. Each time, the boy was placed in solitary confinement. "We began looking at the laws that were in place and realized there was no uniform definition around the use of solitary confinement," said Jennifer Kim, director of programs at the Ella Baker Center. Different terminology - such as "secure housing unit" and "behavior treatment program" - also made it difficult for advocates and family members to talk about their children's experiences of being locked in their rooms 23 hours a day without programs or services. The following year, in 2012, the Center brought the issue to the attention of State Sen. Leland Yee, who, Kim said, was horrified at the practice and introduced [SB1363](#). The bill drew fire from the California Correctional Peace Officers Association, which represents guards in juvenile and adult prisons, as well as the Chief Probation Officers of California, the California Probation, Parole and Correctional Association, and the California State Sheriffs' Association. In January 2015, State Sen. Mark Leno introduced the bill again, this time as [SB124](#). "This is an opportunity for California to be proactive rather than reactive," Kim said. "We don't want a young person dying in isolation to be the impetus for the legislature to act." Limiting Teens in Isolation Elsewhere As advocates in California are learning, the fight to limit solitary - for youth or adults - often requires years of organizing, including advocacy by those who have experienced it firsthand. Johnny Perez, who has spent time in isolation in New York prisons, is one of those advocates. Though Perez was placed in solitary as both a teenager and an adult, all of the occurrences took place in adult facilities. New York is one of two states that automatically charge people 16 and over as adults. Shortly after he arrived at Rikers Island, New York City's island jail complex, Perez got into a fight when he tried to use a gang-controlled phone. He was sent to isolation for 60 days. There, he said, he lost all sense of time. When it got dark, he tried to go to sleep. But the cell was cold and the one thin blanket was little help. He remembers feeling sad and helpless. He spent a lot of time crying. "My self-esteem took a hit," he told Truthout. "After a while, you start to think, 'Wow, maybe I really am a bad person. Maybe I do deserve to be here.'" He was 16 years old. An officer sat outside their cells and was able to watch them dress, undress or go to the bathroom. Perez spent eight months on Rikers before being released. Four years later, he was back at Rikers where he spent eight months in isolation. "It affects the value that you see in yourself. It teaches you to shut your emotions down, but what you're doing is keeping everything inside." Comparing his two experiences, he says, "It's hard when you're younger. You're not understanding what's going on. If someone walks by your cell and doesn't talk to you and you want to talk to them, you think it's something about you. Especially if they do it over and over. As a youngster, I internalized it and thought there was something wrong with me." In contrast, he said, "As an adult, you don't internalize it. You know, it's not me; it's you. You're the problem." Trauma stemming from isolation doesn't stop once a teenager hits 18. "Lilia" is now a writer and activist with the HerStory Writers Workshop, which conducts writing workshops at the Suffolk County Correctional Facility, a local jail on Long Island, New York. She herself experienced the devastating effects of solitary when, at 19, she was placed in the jail's protective custody. "The way that they have the cells set up is that anyone who's either in isolated confinement or protective custody, it's the same amount of time in lock," she told Truthout. Each person spent 22 hours in her cell. The cells in the jail's isolation unit each

had three solid walls and one "wall" that was a row of bars facing the jail's corridor. For the women inside, the lack of a fourth wall also meant a lack of privacy. An officer sat outside their cells and was able to watch them dress, undress or go to the bathroom. "There was always an officer in front of you," she said. The officer was usually a man. Being in protective custody also didn't "protect" anyone from the violence of the jail, Lilia recalled. "They would do random cell searches for drugs and things that you shouldn't have," she said. "The way in which they went about it was that they would bring in a group of very large officers who were in combat gear from head to toe with black masks over their face, helmets - riot gear really was what it was. They would come marching in and they would, in five minutes, ransack everybody's individual cells. I specifically remember seeing peanut butter and jelly go flying across the wall, hitting the other wall and sliding down." It wasn't only food and inanimate objects that were subject to violence. The unit also housed women with severe mental illnesses. Lilia remembers a woman who talked, paced and shouted incessantly from her cell. "They came into her cell in riot gear," she said. "From the sounds that I heard and the force of them, I'm assuming holding her down. It was terrible to even hear. She lay in her cell for two days after that, totally quiet and sedated." When the woman left her cell, she was black and blue. No one ever told Lilia why she was in isolation. "I never knew to ask," she said. "I had never been in jail or prison before. For half of those six months, I didn't know there were other units that were run differently. I just thought everyone was in isolated confinement or, as they would say, protective custody. The level of understanding was just not there." Nearly 20 years later, that experience still affects her. "You internalize the fear in a very deep way," she said. "If I'm ever locked in a small area or confronted with officers in riot gear, it definitely brings up post-traumatic stress disorder. I have to say to myself, 'This is not jail. They're not going to do anything to me.' There was also the impending threat that your life might have been at risk. Whether it was perceived or real, it was definitely palpable." They had no contact with other people. They were deprived of education, mental health services and, often, even something to read. In some states, litigation has forced changes. Adam Schwartz is the senior staff counsel at the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois. In 2012, after investigating conditions in the state's juvenile prisons and interviewing youth, the ACLU filed [R.J. v. Jones](#), a civil rights class-action lawsuit around conditions and services in youth prisons. Four years ago, Schwartz explained, youth confined by the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice were placed in isolation for days - or in some cases, weeks - at a time. They had no contact with other people. They were deprived of education, mental health services and, often, even something to read. The isolation induces further anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. "It's fundamentally counter-therapeutic and destructive," he said. Moreover, solitary confinement was often used as a form of punishment. Under a settlement agreement, the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice agreed to change its policies around solitary confinement. On April 24, 2015, a federal judge [approved the new policies](#), under which, Schwartz explained, isolation cannot be used specifically to punish a youth for breaking a rule. Instead, isolation can only be used temporarily to remove a person from the immediate situation. The policies also impose time limits if a youth is separated from others for exhibiting aggressive or violent behavior (24 hours maximum), disruptive behavior (four hours maximum), for administrative reasons (72 hours maximum) or because of an investigation (four days). In addition, the new rules require that any youth confined for 24 hours or more must spend eight hours out of their cell each day in the company of staff members and have the ability to talk to a staff member. They also will no longer be excluded from programming, such as school. In 2012, the New York Civil Liberties Union and Cardozo School of Law filed [Peoples v. Fischer](#), challenging solitary confinement practices in the adult prison system. The following year, the suit was expanded to a class action, encompassing not only the plaintiffs, but those in similar situations. In February 2014, the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) agreed to an [interim stipulation](#), including a requirement that 16- and 17-year-olds be allowed out of their cell five hours daily on weekdays and that a separate disciplinary confinement unit be created for 16- and 17-year-old boys. On weekends, however, youth can still be confined to their cells for 23 to 24 hours. That same year, Prisoners' Legal Services of New York filed [Cookhorne v. Fischer](#), challenging DOCCS policies around 16- and 17-year-olds in solitary. In fall 2014, DOCCS entered a settlement agreement, which expanded the amount of time out-of-cell for 16- and 17-year-olds to six hours on weekdays. In addition, four of those six hours had to be for educational or other programming unless the youth was deemed a risk to himself or others. Every youth in solitary had to be offered two hours of recreation every day. Cookhorne also specifically required that 16- and 17-year-old girls in isolation be allowed the same opportunities as boys in isolation. "Solitary Confinement Is Torture for All People" Scott Paltrowitz, the associate director of the Prison Visiting Project of the Correctional Association of New York and a member of the [Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement](#), monitors prison conditions statewide. He notes that practice can often be different than written policy. "In practice, many people in SHU [secure housing unit] often do not go out to recreation due to a variety of reasons and thus are held in solitary confinement 24 hours a day," he told Truthout. "Fear of a confrontation with security staff on the way to recreation, cold or inclement weather without proper clothing, the fact that the recreation itself involves just being alone in a cage without any equipment, and simply being denied the opportunity by staff are some common reasons people do not participate." One of the prisons he has visited is Greene Correctional Facility, a medium-security prison in which the median age is 22. Many sent to Greene are between the ages of 16 and 21. Greene is also one of eight New York State prisons with an S-Block or SHU200, a solitary confinement unit of 200 beds in 100 cells. "Solitary confinement is torture for all people." Younger people are disproportionately sent to the SHU, Paltrowitz told Truthout. In [October 2014](#), 70 percent of the 185 people in Greene's S-Block were under 30. The median age of a person confined in S-Block was 24. In addition, people in the S-Block were disproportionately people of color: 57 percent were Black, 25 percent were Latino and 14 percent were white. "Solitary confinement is torture for all people," said Paltrowitz, noting that the [UN special rapporteur on torture](#) has stated that no person should be subjected to isolation for 15 days or more because of its devastating mental, physical and psychological effects. "We believe that no person should be subjected to the torture of solitary." Paltrowitz and others are advocating for the [HALT Solitary Act](#) to limit solitary to 15 days regardless of age. It would also end the practice altogether for people ages 21 and younger. Under the act, Paltrowitz explained, after spending 15 days in solitary, people would be sent to a residential rehabilitation unit (RRU) where they would be allowed out of their cell for seven hours each day. Six of those hours would be spent in programs in congregate settings - in other words, not just exercising in a solitary cage or sitting in an empty classroom. Johnny Perez is now an adult, and works as the safe re-entry advocate at the Urban Justice Center in New York City. He's also working to ensure that no one ever has to go through a similar experience. In September 2014, the New York City Department of Correction [ended the practice](#) of placing teenagers under 18 in solitary. In January 2015, one month after hearing approximately [six hours of testimony](#) from Perez and many others, the Board of Correction unanimously voted to phase out solitary for people ages 21 and younger in all New York City jails. The [phaseout remains contingent](#) on funding for alternative programming. In California, advocates are hopeful that youth solitary will end soon. Cortijo is now 21, a college student and juvenile justice advocate. He has [testified about his experiences](#) before the Senate Public Safety Committee to emphasize SB124's urgency. Dredging up these memories is painful, he says, but he is committed to speaking about them publicly. "I keep in mind I'm doing it for the tens of thousands of youth," Cortijo said. "It's my life goal to help youth who don't have a voice - whether in the foster care or juvenile justice system. They should have the chance to live a normal life and not have to spend life in prison or be dead or be on probation." Source: <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/31166-for-advocates-push-to-end-solitary-confinement-in-prison-only-begins-with-youth-isolation>

California boot camp for at-risk kids leaves 7 with injuries consistent with abuse, police say | Fox News### California boot camp for at-risk kids leaves 7 with injuries consistent with abuse, police say Published June 04, 2015 [Associated Press Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Email](#) [Print](#) LOS ANGELES – A weeklong boot camp run by Los Angeles-area police departments that was meant to turn around misbehaving youth left seven of the kids with injuries consistent with abuse, investigators said. Those seven were among 39 children who attended the boot camp from May 17 to 24, and all were being interviewed along with the drill instructors, the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Office said Wednesday. Sheriff's spokesman Tony Cipolla declined to describe the injuries and said no charges have been filed. The agency has never gotten a complaint about the 17-year-old camp before, Cipolla said. Greg Owen, an attorney representing the parents of the children who had injuries, said most of them had cuts and bruises after being beaten bloody at times, and that one boy had a fractured hand. He said the lasting injuries will be emotional. "Talking to the parents today, their kids can't sleep through the night, they don't want to go out of the house," he said. "That will never go away." He said the parents are considering filing a lawsuit in the case but that they're waiting for his office and the sheriff's office to finish their investigations first. Meanwhile, he said the parents want the police officers who were drill instructors at the camp to be taken off the streets and California boot camp for at-risk kids leaves 7 with injuries consistent with abuse, police say | Fox News### held accountable. The program is run by the Huntington Park and South Gate police departments, and drill instructors are employed with those agencies, Cipolla said. "Both agencies believe in complete transparency and take all allegations very seriously," South Gate police Capt. James Teeple said in a statement. He said the police chiefs of both agencies met with the parents involved in the most recent program Sunday "to provide assurance that any matters of concern will be investigated thoroughly." He and a spokesman for Huntington Park police did not respond to calls for further comment. The LEAD program began in 1998 as an intervention for troubled California boot camp for at-risk kids leaves 7 with injuries consistent with abuse, police say | Fox News### youths from Southern California. Participants can range from kids who've

joined gangs or use drugs to children with bad grades or attitude problems. Veronica Bernal said her 16-year-old son came back from the boot camp in tears with an untreated fractured hand. "They put him in a dark room, and they would beat him," she said. Aracely Pulido said her 14-year-old daughter came back with bruises covering her arms, and said that drill instructors had slapped and kicked her, and stomped on her back. "She's traumatized," Pulido said. Parents pay \$400 for children ages 11 to 17 to join the voluntary, 20-week LEAD program, short for Leadership, Empowerment and Discipline. The camp includes a one-week boot camp at the California National Guard's base in San Luis Obispo, and then daylong Sunday sessions. ____ Follow Amanda Lee Myers on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/AmandaLeeAP> Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2015/06/04/california-boot-camp-for-at-risk-kids-leaves-7-with-injuries-consistent-with/#>

State shuts down Hutto group home By [Sophia Beausoleil](#) Published: June 3, 2015, 8:45 pm Updated: June 4, 2015, 6:44 am [12Click to share on Twitter](#) [Click to share on Google+](#) [453Share on Facebook](#) [Click to share on Pinterest](#) HUTTO, Texas (KXAN) — The state has terminated its contract with a group home in Hutto after multiple violations. The Department of Aging and Disability Services said it is in the process of canceling of A Step Beyond's contracts and certification. The agency provided services for people with intellectual disabilities. Cecilia Cavuto, a spokesperson for DADS, said the state decided to terminate the contracts after investigations in May and April showed the agency did not fill and administer medications to clients. The state also said A Step Beyond did not have a nurse to monitor medications. [Concern with group home after man pounds on doors in middle of night](#) "I started putting everything together and realized it was really bad, it was scary, and I didn't want to be apart of it," said a former employee who asked KXAN News to conceal her identity. "Ashley" was a former nurse who worked at the home part-time between August 2014 and April 2015. "I had tried to make changes and tried to get training for the staff and had been met with defiance," said Ashley. "I wanted to stay and protect the clients, but at the same time, it was bigger than I was. "The staff wasn't trained, wasn't prepared, didn't know what to do," she added. "There was no behavioral plan in the home." The state said during its investigation it found A Step Beyond staff members were not trained on client behavioral support plans. Officials also found there were more clients living in at least of the group homes than the number allowed by regulations. Hutto Mayor Pro-Tem Michael Smith is listed as the CEO and Director of A Step Beyond. KXAN News went to the company's location, but Smith had left. However, he did send a statement. We are currently in the process of helping the individuals we serve find new homes and are unavailable for an on camera interview. These individuals are like family to us and we are doing everything in our power to ensure a smooth transition and would appreciate your respect and privacy in regards to them. In relation to the state's decision to terminate our contracts; we disagree with the allegations that have been brought forth and were given no chance to prove our innocence. The majority of infractions were caused by a previous RN. That RN had already been terminated and the new RN was rectifying their mistakes. The state refused to acknowledge that and allow us to show the progress that had been made." Ashley said Smith is referring to her, but she denies that claim. "I resigned; I gave two weeks notice because I couldn't deal with what was going on anymore," she explained. Hutto Mayor Pro-tem Michael Smith According to public franchise tax papers for A Step Beyond, Sahn Moss, the mother of Michael Smith, has been listed as director of the group home as recently as Feb. 2, 2015. Police arrested her earlier on Jan. 29, 2015 on a DWI charge after she crashed her Suburban in Hutto, according to court records. Those documents said Moss "confessed to taking (ingesting) two Lorazepam pills that she stole from consumers at the group home where she is employed." Court records said police found a "pill bottle" in the open glove box which was prescribed to her ex-husband and officers also found multiple prescriptions belonging to different individuals in the trunk. DADS said local law enforcement notified them about the situation when it happened. The state said A Step Beyond, the contract owner, program director and HR director are banned from contracting with DADS for eight years. They are able to keep their day-rehabilitation program since that is not regulated by DADS. What happens to residents? DADS said during its investigation, A Step Beyond had 23 home and community-based services clients. According to the state, the program provides services and support to people with intellectual disabilities who are living with their families, or in group homes with no more than four people. During the investigation, A Step Beyond also had 14 clients in its Texas Home Living, also known as TxHmL, program. The state said that provides selected essential services and supports to people with an intellectual disability or a related condition who live in their own home or their family's home. Clients who receive services in their own homes or in the homes of family members will not need to relocate. Clients who live in group homes operated by A Step Beyond might choose to relocate. Some of the clients will remain in their current group homes, because home modifications were designed specifically for their individual needs. A search for a different provider to take over services at the home is currently under way. The local authorities are monitoring them and we have staff visiting in person and via phone daily," said Cavuto. Billing DADS said home and community-based services providers, like A Step Beyond, bill the state for the number of units they provide to a person and are reimbursed for the services based on rates by the Texas Health and Human Service Commission's Rate Analysis Department. The average is \$5,200 per month for an individual in a group home and \$2,645 per month for an individual living in their own home, with their family or foster care. Source: <http://kxan.com/2015/06/03/state-shuts-down-hutto-group-home/>

Lebanon County to close group homes for troubled teens in cost saving move By John Latimer johnlatimer@ldnews.com @johnlatimer on Twitter Updated: 06/04/2015 05:44:13 PM EDT Jim Holtry, director of Lebanon County Children and Youth Services, explains why he believes the county's two group homes for teenage boys and girls should be closed at Thursday's Lebanon County commissioners' meeting. (John Latimer — Lebanon Daily News) The Lebanon County commissioners on Thursday authorized the closing of two county-owned group homes for teenage boys and girls that were operated by the county's Children and Youth Services agency. The vote to close the homes was unanimous and was done on the recommendation of Children and Youth Services Director Jim Holtry after he determined the services could be provided by private group homes at a significant cost savings. The homes — one for boys between 13 to 18 in Fontana and another for girls of the same age in Lebanon — each have room for six troubled youth who are not suitable to remain with their families or be placed in traditional foster homes, Holtry said. The county opened the group homes in 1977 at a time when there was a need for them because the only placement options were foster homes and institutions, Holtry told the commissioners. "There was no go between," he explained. "Counties developed group home placements that were a little more structured than foster care but not nearly as structured as institutional placements." In the intervening years as more private homes offering specialized foster care opened, counties began closing their group homes, Holtry said. Lebanon County is just one of two counties in the state that still operates its own facilities, he added. Holtry came to his decision that it's time for Lebanon County to close its group homes after reviewing the cost of operating the homes and their occupancy rates over the past five years. Advertisement "Our occupancy rate over that period was a little over 60 percent," he said. "I also found our per diem rate over that same time period was a little over \$178 a day." Through the first 10 months of this fiscal year, Holtry said, the per diem cost has risen to \$214, nearly double the \$110 per diem cost of a private provider. At the current occupancy rates projected over the entire year, if the county switched to a private provider, it would result in about \$262,000 in savings, Holtry said. Because the agency receives most of its funding from the state and about 20 percent from the county's general fund, the savings for the county by switching to private providers would be about \$52,000. The remaining money could be diverted to the agency's other program needs that are over budget, Holtry said. Another consideration in making his recommendation, Holtry said, is the difficulty in staffing both of the homes. The agency has been short-staffed most of the year and is on pace to pay \$75,000 in overtime expenses. "The bottom line is, I just really truly feel the group homes have not been as cost effective as they have been in the past," he said. "I just think it has come to a point that we really should close them. I think we can get as good a service, if not better service, from the providers we have." Holtry said every effort would be made to place the teens currently living in the homes in privately run homes located in Lebanon County. However, he had no timetable for when that might happen. "I assure you that in no way will the youth that are at our group homes suffer in any way by not having our own group homes," he said. "We have contracts with some very good providers who will provide very adequate care for these children. ... Because the private providers have more staff than we do, they are able to provide many more activities and functions for the kids than we are able to provide." The five full-time employees working at the two homes were informed of their potential closing earlier this week and efforts will be made to place them in other suitable county jobs, said county administrator Jamie Wolgemuth. The children's homes are owned by the county, and once they are closed will likely be sold and their contents auctioned, Holtry said. In other news related to Children and Youth Services's budget, Holtry told the commissioners that the state Department of Children, Youth and Families has agreed to his appeal for reimbursement of its portion of the \$1.5 million in county expenses that were over budget last year. "The state has agreed, and in a couple of weeks, you will be getting a check for almost \$952,000 in additional revenue for the county to offset those over expenditures," Holtry told the commissioners. "I was optimistic that we would get something, but I never anticipated it would be the full amount, and that is good news." Source: http://www.ldnews.com/local/ci_28252103/lebanon-county-close-group-homes-troubled-teens-cost

Pasadena youth group home sued for teen's alleged abuse Posted by [Colleen Park](#) on June 3, 2015 in [Crime](#) | 202 Views | [Leave a response](#) A teen was physically and mentally abused by adult staff members who were supposed to protect him while he resided at a Pasadena youth group home, according to a lawsuit filed on his behalf. The lawsuit was filed by John Stewart, guardian of the now-14-year-old boy, against [Five Acres – The Boys' and Girls' Aid Society of Los Angeles](#), alleging assault, battery, intentional infliction of emotional distress and negligence. The complaint seeks unspecified damages. A representative for Five Acres did not immediately respond to a request for comment. According to the lawsuit, the boy was placed in Five Acres' Solita group home in 2011 after a judge declared him a ward of the court. The boy's mother died and his father was in prison, leaving no other family members available to care for him or raise him, according to the complaint. The suit states that a "significant incident of mental and physical abuse" against the boy occurred last September when an adult staff member with a history of attacking and choking the plaintiff punched and knocked him down in an isolation room. The boy was 13 years old at the time. "The staff member then jumped on plaintiff, continuing to beat him with his fists, until another staff member finally intervened and pulled the attacker off of plaintiff and told the staff member to leave the room," the lawsuit alleges. The alleged assailant left, but returned with a pair of scissors and cut the boy on his back, causing him "significant fear, pain and bleeding" and requiring him to be taken by ambulance to a hospital emergency room for treatment, according to the complaint. On other occasions, staff members elbowed the boy until his face bled and stomped on his head after knocking him down during a basketball game, the suit alleges. The employees also threatened the plaintiff with more beatings, ridiculed him and told him his parents were "retarded," according to the suit. He was additionally kept in isolation for lengthy periods and "made to feel that he was worthless and unprotected," the complaint says. Source: <http://mynews1a.com/crime/2015/06/03/pasadena-youth-group-home-sued-for-teens-alleged-abuse/>

This Teen Is Using Her Graduation Dress to Support Human Rights Around the Globe [Nora Crotty](#) June 3, 2015 Photo courtesy of Erinne Paisley At first, Erinne Paisley, an 18-year-old from Victoria, British Columbia, simply wanted to create a high school graduation dress from recycled materials. "Someone I know made a grad dress out of newspaper a few years ago, and then her other friend did a different dress out of neckties, so the idea of recycled dresses had kind of always been in the back of my mind," she says. Outdoor Clothing & Gear Appalachian Outdoors Sponsored [I don't like this ad](#) Thank you for your feedback We'll review and make changes needed. [Undo](#) Why don't you like this ad ? It's offensive to me I keep seeing this It's not relevant to me Something else But soon, that initial idea took a much more meaningful turn. "As graduation got closer, the fact that 62 million girls around the world don't have access to secondary education as I was preparing to celebrate my own secondary education was something that was really moving to me." So, instead of shopping for a dress like her peers, Paisley gathered up her old precalculus homework papers, along with some velvet and satin ribbon, and transformed it into a skater-esque frock. She finished the look off by writing on the skirt, "I've received my education. Not every woman has that right," along with "[MALALA.ORG](#)." 17 Unbelievable Recolored Historical Images Answers Did You Know Sponsored [I don't like this ad](#) Thank you for your feedback We'll review and make changes needed. [Undo](#) Why don't you like this ad ? It's offensive to me I keep seeing this It's not relevant to me Something else The latter, of course, is the website for the Malala Fund — the charitable initiative founded by human rights activist Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani teen who survived a brutal gun attack by the Taliban and was awarded the Nobel Prize for her work in advocating female education around the world. Though Paisley was aware of Malala's plight before ("I've been interested in activism, charity, and giving back for as long as I can remember," she tells Yahoo Style), her interest piqued after hearing Malala speak in person at last year's [We Day UK](#), a rally to help inspire young people to contribute to global change. 27 Memories Every 90s Kid Has About Grade School Answers Offbeat Sponsored [I don't like this ad](#) Thank you for your feedback We'll review and make changes needed. [Undo](#) Why don't you like this ad ? It's offensive to me I keep seeing this It's not relevant to me Something else Malala Yousafzai. Photo: Getty Images "Being in the same room as her was absolutely moving to me; something I can't even describe," Paisley says of the experience. "The fact that she's the same as me or any other teenage girl that I know, there's really no difference — it's just the circumstances that she was born into, and the extent that she had to fight to receive her education was something that really resonates." Source: <https://www.yahoo.com/style/this-teen-is-using-her-graduation-dress-to-support-120620890688.html>

Treatment center director accused of raping patient By [FNS](#) on Jun 5, 2015 at 11:49 p.m. [Email](#) [Sign up for Breaking News Alerts](#) news Fargo, 58102 Fargo ND 101 5th Street North 58102 EAST GRAND FORKS, Minn. — The director of an East Grand Forks residential treatment center pleaded not guilty this week to charges he raped a then 28-year-old patient. Bruce Lee Biddlecome, 40, of Crookston, is charged with one count of third-degree criminal sexual conduct in Minnesota 9th District Court in Crookston, a felony with a maximum penalty of 15 years imprisonment. Biddlecome, a licensed drug and alcohol counselor, was the director of the Douglas Place, a residential treatment center in East Grand Forks, according to court records. The charges were filed against him on May 20 after East Grand Forks Police received a report from Polk County Social Services in late December, saying a female patient at the center told a counselor she had recently been sexually assaulted by Biddlecome, according to an affidavit of probable cause, a court document that details the charges against a defendant. When interviewed by police in February, the woman told investigators Biddlecome sexually assaulted her twice in his vehicle while she was a patient at the Douglas Place, the affidavit says. Both times, she told police, Biddlecome demanded she have sex with him and threatened she would go back to where she came from — she understood him to mean jail — if she did not comply, according to the affidavit. The woman, now 29, told investigators Biddlecome raped her a third time on Christmas Eve when he went into her room at the Douglas Place and woke her up around 8 a.m. by stroking her hair, the affidavit says. The woman told investigators he said he had come for an early Christmas present and that it was her, according to the affidavit. He then raped her, she told investigators. A Douglas Place counselor gave police what the victim claims to be Biddlecome's semen, which the victim said she provided, the affidavit says. A Minnesota Department of Human Services investigator told police condoms were found in Biddlecome's office, according to the affidavit. Biddlecome entered a not guilty plea to the charges Monday. His next scheduled court hearing is a motion hearing at 9 a.m. June 15. Biddlecome posted bond and has been released from the Northwest Regional Corrections Center in Crookston. According to the Minnesota Board of Behavioral Health and Therapy, Biddlecome's license to practice alcohol and drug counseling is active and is effective until July 31. Source: <http://www.inforum.com/news/3760816-treatment-center-director-accused-raping-patient>

Teen incarceration leads to less school, more crime "Some judges are more likely to have children placed in juvenile detention than others, but it's effectively random which judge you get," said study co-author Joseph Doyle. By [Brooks Hays](#) | Updated June 9, 2015 at 4:32 PM [Comments](#) A new study suggests juvenile detention may result in recidivism and lower high school graduation rates. Photo by Alexander Rath/Shutterstock BOSTON, June 9 (UPI) -- If you want troubled teens to shape up and stay in school, new research suggests jail isn't the ideal strategy. According to a new study, students who spent time in juvenile detention were less likely to finish high school and more likely to end up in prison later on in life. On the surface, it doesn't sound like much a revelation. A bad seed is a bad seed, a skeptic might argue. But the latest study, conducted by economists at the MIT Sloan School of Management, accounts for the bias. Researchers say they've isolated the effects of juvenile detention by honing in on a group of very similar teens -- teens whose legal fates were decided on the whims of local judges, not necessarily on the merits of their character. "Some judges are more likely to have children placed in juvenile detention than others, but it's effectively random which judge you get," study co-author Joseph Doyle explained in a press release. "Some kids get a judge who will place them in juvenile detention, other ones get a judge who will be less likely to do so, and comparing the outcomes of the kids across the judges, we can actually say what the causal outcome is of placing the kids in juvenile detention." By comparing seemingly similar teens -- all of whom were guilty of offenses that offered judges leeway in determining punishment -- researchers showed that time spent in juvenile detention was linked to less time in school and more trouble later. The correlation was especially strong for those around the age of 16 at the time of their sentencing. In analyzing the outcomes of more than 35,000 juvenile offenders in Chicago over a ten-year period, researchers found that a juvenile detention sentence lowered the average graduation rate by 13 percent and boosted the chance of adult incarceration by 23 percent. "The kids who go to juvenile detention are very unlikely to go back to school at all," Doyle said. "Getting to know other kids in trouble may create social networks that might not be desirable. There could be a stigma attached to it, maybe you think you're particularly problematic, so that becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. It would be great to see more research like this done in other locations with different criminal justice systems, and see if the results continue to hold." [The work](#) of Doyle and lead author Anna Aizer was published in [the Quarterly Journal of Economics](#). Source: http://www.upi.com/Science_News/2015/06/09/Teen-incarceration-leads-to-less-school-more-crime/9141433874513/

Worker at NYC group home for troubled youth is arrested BY JAKE PEARSON and COLLEEN LONG - Associated Press - Thursday, June 11, 2015 NEW YORK (AP) - A worker at a now-closed city group home for troubled youth has been arrested on charges he doctored a logbook to falsely show he was checking regularly on three teenage residents the night they slipped out and raped a woman, authorities announced Thursday. Denzel Thompson, 24, pleaded not guilty at his arraignment and was released following his arrest on charges of falsifying official documents, officials said. Thompson's lawyer said there was

no criminal intent and that he hoped the case wouldn't turn into a "political football." Department of Investigation Commissioner Mark Peters, whose officers arrested Thompson with investigators from the Brooklyn district attorney's office, said in a statement that the arrest shows the "tragic results" of not following protocol. Thompson made checks every half hour on the teens as required from 11 p.m. May 31 until 1:30 a.m. at the six-bed Boys Town facility in a Brooklyn brownstone, officials said. But for the next five hours, he wrote in the logbook: "All youths down in bed" every half hour, but never made the checks and was actually on a floor below, they said. The Associated Press first reported the arrest. Meanwhile, a window alarm on the boys' floor had been disabled and the teens escaped and made their way to Manhattan, where they encountered a 33-year-old woman at an Internet cafe in Chinatown at around 3 a.m., police said. Surveillance video shows the boys pawing at the woman, prosecutors said. They pulled her outside, then to a nearby building where they raped her in a stairwell, prosecutors said. They took her keys, cellphone and credit cards and left her there, prosecutors said. The woman, missing her camisole and underpants, eventually made her way to a nearby deli. While she was being taken to a hospital, the boys were using her keys to get into her building - but fled when they discovered someone inside, prosecutors said. Police said they also have video of the boys at her apartment. The nonprofit Boys Town had been contracted by the city's child welfare agency to operate the home. A spokeswoman for the Nebraska-based organization said in a statement that the nonprofit is cooperating with investigators and conducting their own probe. Thompson and another worker at the home were fired last week. The second worker was also being investigated. The Administration for Children's Services said last week that they were closing the home, which was part of a citywide juvenile justice program called Close to Home that tries to house minors in residences near their relatives and schools instead of in far-off detention centers. The boys were the only three residents there. The teens, Emanuel Burrowes, Sanat Asliev and Erik Pek, have been charged as adults with crimes including rape and attempted rape. An attorney for Burrowes said last week that the boy just finished ninth grade and was a month away from completing a program for juvenile delinquents. Asliev's lawyer said his client was an emigrant from the former Soviet Union and was placed in the group home by a family court judge. An attorney for Pek hasn't returned a phone message. A live-in companion of his mother's told The New York Times last week that Pek "would never do something like this." —

This story has been corrected to show that Thompson was a worker, not a supervisor. Source: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/jun/11/apnewsbreak-nyc-supervisor-at-troubled-group-home-/print/>

Berrick: California must bolster education outcomes for foster children By [Ken Berrick](#) Tools [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Google](#) [Bookmarks](#) [Reddit](#) [StumbleUpon](#) [Email](#) [Print](#) [Save to Instapaper](#) [Favorite](#) Saving... Bay Area residents and all Californians should take the opportunity to focus our attention on the needs of some of the most vulnerable among us — our foster youth. Our responsibility to the over 60,000 youth in the California foster care system and 6,000 foster youth in the Bay Area, cannot be overstated. Not only do they face the day-to-day challenges of children living in more traditional circumstances, foster youth also confront a myriad of stressors that impact their ability to thrive in the very setting we rely on to support their safety, stability and development—our schools. The nature of California's educational funding has changed dramatically in recent years, moving control away from the state and closer to local school districts where decisions about program design and implementation can be tailored to the community's individualized needs. This shift marked a significant change in the autonomy and control of each school district, but was asserted with one important caveat: districts would be held accountable to the public for the educational outcomes in their schools. One of the most significant and positive implications of this change was the impact on foster youth, a group previously overlooked in California's education system. The regulations now require districts to be accountable for the educational outcomes of the state's most vulnerable children. This should have been unremarkable; indeed, one might assume that school districts track, monitor and report the educational outcomes for all youth in their schools, including foster youth. Unfortunately, many districts could neither identify the foster youth in their schools, nor report their educational outcomes. The decision to track the outcomes of foster youth came about after a landmark study by the Stuart Foundation, which found that foster youth were the single most disadvantaged study-group. Graduation rates were abysmal, hovering at 45 percent, and the academic achievement of foster youth was astonishingly poor. It became clear that California had failed to provide for one of the primary parental responsibilities of its foster youth — their education. While it is easy to place blame with school districts, foster homes, or county social service departments, this is a whole-system failure. Recognizing the importance of remediating the educational needs of the children we are responsible to parent, the revised regulations communicated a powerful statement by simply requiring school districts to track their outcomes. Tracking and monitoring outcomes itself, however, is not enough. Foster youth are affected not only by the educational system, but by the profound impact of the abuse and/or neglect that initially resulted in their entry into the foster care system. The state needs a solution that does not segregate foster youth from the broader community, but instead facilitates opportunities for schools and communities to embrace them. Assembly Bill 741 and Assembly Bill 1025 are two important examples that help generate a solution. Independently, each supports critical and unmet needs of all youth, including foster children. Together, they begin to fill significant gaps in our educational and social systems by creating comprehensive stabilization services for youth experiencing acute mental health crises and implementing integrated and inclusive, whole-school reform efforts. Both bills have found wide-sweeping support across disciplines, departments, funders and consumer groups, not only because there is consensus of the needs of our foster youth, but more importantly, because these needs are not new and there is agreement that significant reform and attention to them is needed now. With a system finally prepared to act, it is our responsibility to take the courageous step toward delivering on the promise to support our schools with policies and processes that ensure that foster youth can succeed. Ken Berrick is Chief Executive Officer of Seneca Family of Agencies (www.senecafoa.org) based in Oakland. He is co-author of the book, *Unconditional Care: Relationship-Based, Behavioral Intervention with Vulnerable Children and Families*. Source: <http://archives.sfxaminer.com/sanfrancisco/berrick-california-must-bolster-education-outcomes-for-foster-children/Content?oid=2932552>

Boarding School Syndrome review – education and the pain of separation A gripping study of the mental wounds inflicted by classic British institutions Character forming: boys at Eton watching the Wall Game. Photograph: Christopher Furlong/Getty Images [Alex Renton](#) Monday 8 June 2015 01.30 EDT I once knew an American psychoanalyst who worked in a Bangkok practice, specialising in expats. He'd first come to east Asia on contract for an international church whose missionaries kept getting into trouble. He never went home: there was more than enough work. "Specifically," he said, "with people like you. Middle-aged, middle-class Brits who went to your crazy private schools may just about be the most damaged social sub-group I've ever come across." It's long been known that the practice of sending young children off into the care of strangers is not wholly safe. The ancient "public" schools worried the Victorians as much or more than did the workhouses: three parliamentary commissions sat in the 19th century to look at the financial frauds, riots and the astonishing numbers of deaths – from suicides, assaults by teachers and pupils, starvation, epidemics – in the schools of the rich. [Tom Brown's Schooldays](#) only scraped the surface. Does boarding school really help disadvantaged students? While disadvantaged students who are already academically strong can benefit from being sent away to be educated, weaker pupils tend to struggle, new research finds Read more In the 20th century a clutch of authors, from George Orwell to Roald Dahl, wrote in their different ways about the systemic cruelty, psychological and physical, and of its wider effects. One of those was the establishment of the principle, among the elite and the ordinary, that to have been brutalised at a boarding school was key to becoming the right sort of Briton – one that might run an empire or a corporation, or a cricket team. Naturally, as the proven best way to educate a ruling caste, the system spread across the English-speaking world. Psychology seems to have taken a long time to catch up with the issue, perhaps because Freud famously dismissed most of his child patients' allegations of abuse by adults as fantasy. Given the importance the boarding-school class had and still has in running modern Britain – from the City to Westminster, not forgetting the BBC – that seems to have been an omission. Joy Schaverien coined the term "boarding school syndrome" only a decade ago, though she follows in the footsteps of Nick Duffell, a psychotherapist who started work in the field in 1990 and wrote a passionate and influential book about the wounds boarding can inflict, [The Making of Them](#). Back to school Kathryn Hughes Tom Brown's Schooldays is more a junior Pilgrim's Progress than the jolly romp most of us remember. Kathryn Hughes on the moral fable written for a son who died before he was old enough to go to Rugby Read more Duffell is himself a "boarding school survivor" – his own term – and that inevitably fuels his work. But Schaverien, a Jungian psychoanalyst, did not go to boarding school: it was as a practitioner that she became intrigued, noting how often boarding school featured in the past of surprising numbers of her patients. That makes her book – an academic work, academically priced, though a gripping read – all the more important. There's a confused debate going on about private boarding schools, with arguments about class and unfair privilege mixed up with a bewildering range of notions about children's emotional health. Schaverien brings a clear eye and the experience of 25 years of collecting data to an issue that should concern everyone worried about how children fare in professional care – which, of course, is what boarding school is. She's not impartial. In Britain, you don't have to have gone to a private boarding school to be affected by them and their product. Schaverien's experience comes from her father, who, in old age, told his family how he still ached at memories of being left at his boarding school in Brighton,

in 1916, aged six. The fact that he arrived in short trousers and wearing a velour hat with elastic under the chin ensured that he was savagely bullied from the first minute. "If I was so precious that mother dressed me this way, why then did she part with me?" he was still wondering, 70 years later. That's by no means the most upsetting story to be found in Schaverien's awful case studies. But it does go to the heart of the issue, both for angry ex-boarders, their spouses and children and anyone bemused by the system. I've talked and corresponded with all of those since I started writing for this newspaper about sexual abuse and bullying in British boarding schools, state and private. The many hundreds of emails I've received make it pretty clear that the schools of the elite suffered the same cover-ups and the same astonishing failings in regulation and in policing as did the hospitals, care homes and young offenders' prisons. The difference? As several correspondents put it, in anger or amusement, "Posh people's parents paid to have them abused." That, of course, is what most hurt Hymie Schaverien, and thousands of others. "Boarders cannot console themselves with the thought that their parents did not want them to go," Professor Schaverien states. Their parents chose to send them from home into hell or prison – words her patients frequently use – and so to break the bond with their child. Advertisement Attachment – the crucial establishment of trust and security through a primary carer – is the basis of modern child development psychology. Boarding schools could not have broken or redirected healthy attachment more effectively, as Schaverien illustrates. From the moment the parent drove away, a child had to adjust to the fact that not only was privacy and safety no longer guaranteed – let alone the consolation of a hug – but that their parents had chosen this future. [John Bowlby](#), the psychologist famous for first coming up with attachment theory in the 1960s, described public school as part of "the time-honoured barbarism required to produce English gentlemen". Bowlby boarded at 13: he was against it. Schaverien has, of course, accounts of children who enjoyed boarding school: though some patients inform her that that was because home life was so deficient in love or structure that the necessary attachments were better made at school. It's hard not to conclude that boarding schools were meant to do this job: replace infantile loyalties to mummy with the bonds that tie you to the team. It worked: but the side-effects of this abrupt intervention in a six- or eight-year-old's development could be savage. Symptoms that a therapist in boarding school syndrome addresses are problems with anger, depression, anxiety, failure to sustain relationships, fear of abandonment, substance abuse and so forth. A common effect is amnesia: many of Schaverien's patients – and my correspondents – have sad gaps where, in a normal childhood and adolescence, there would be a wealth of memory. Forgetting the pain is yet another coping mechanism. In a fascinating account of four years' analysis with one deeply traumatised patient, Theo, Schaverien takes us to the point where she believes boarding school syndrome is born. On the way we see Theo – often using drawings – recover memories of awful injustice. That is a key issue for many boarders – children, she says, have an ethical sensibility from an early age and it is traumatic when something – like brutality on the part of an adult – violates it. Trauma affects the normal development of a child's brain. Eventually, and in Theo's case this happened dramatically, a traumatised child, exhausted by perpetual fear, may be forced for their own survival to separate their selves – the normal, vulnerable home self, and the boarding-school self. That's the syndrome, and though sceptics of Jungian theory may be dubious, my correspondence has many people who talk unhappily of the child they left behind at the school, their other self who was never able to grow up. It's a profound effect, an "encapsulation of self... that may last a lifetime", Schaverien says. It's obvious enough that these institutions, full of emotionally needy and incompetently supervised children, have provided havens and hunting grounds for sexual criminals since their beginning. Hence the extraordinary wave of allegations about historic child abuse in institutions. Schaverien devotes an interesting chapter to sexual abuse but, for her, it is not the main issue. Theo never experienced sexual abuse. It grabs the headlines, but I suspect that for those who want truly to protect and succour healthy children, the shocking revelations about paedophiles in institutions may be a distraction. Again, while my correspondence contains many awful allegations, it's also full of people apologising for not having a story of sexual predation to tell. "It was only bullying," people write, "not what you'd call abuse." But emotional cruelty is what exacts the greatest toll on the developing mind. Children are resilient, they can recover from physical hurt: it's clear from reading Schaverien that what most reliably damages children is long-term emotional neglect, the absence of safety, the failure of justice, the loss of love. We need the psychological abuse of children to be properly outlawed – a long-awaited "Cinderella law" came into force last month, but it is weak – and we need to ask the rich and aspirational to think again before they put their children into care. They should read this book: it could save them a lot of money. Boarding School Syndrome is published by Routledge (£27.99). [Click here to order it with free UK p&p](#). Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/jun/08/boarding-school-syndrome-joy-schaverien-review>

Detention center receives child care license from state of Texas [Nuri Vallbona](#) | Jun. 10, 2015 [Share on facebook](#) [Share on twitter](#) [More Sharing Services](#) [11 PrintemailPDF](#) [Austin, Texas](#) A corrections corporation that manages a family detention center for [Immigration and Customs Enforcement](#) received a child care license from the state of Texas in May, raising questions among attorneys and activists as to whether the company is trying to comply with a court ruling forbidding the detention of minor children in unlicensed facilities. A second company is still awaiting approval for its license, according to Patrick Crimmins, media relations manager of the [Texas Department of Family Protective Services](#), the department that oversees the licensing. The applications were filed by the Corrections Corporation of America for the [South Texas Residential Center](#) in Dilley, Texas, and by GEO Group for the [Karnes County Residential Center](#) in Karnes City, Texas. Both facilities, which house children typically accompanied by their mothers, paid a \$35 application fee in addition to background check costs. "Dilley got its Temporary Shelter Program (TSP) certificate on May 22 for a capacity of 24," Crimmins said in an email. "On Karnes City, we just received their application June 2. The inspection is scheduled for June 16." The move to apply for licensing puzzled activists and attorneys who wondered if this is an attempt to comply with the [1997 Flores v. Meese Settlement Agreement](#) that says unaccompanied minors may not be held in restrictive unlicensed facilities. Attention subscribers and donors! We're rolling out an online account management tool. Don't miss out. [Add or confirm your email address today](#). "I think that they filed the applications first as a Band-Aid effort, as an attempt to be able to say that they've received some kind of licensing," said Jonathan Ryan, executive director of [RAICES](#), a non-profit organization that provides legal representation to immigrants. RAICES, which means "roots" in Spanish, stands for Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services. Family detention had all but ended in 2009, but when large numbers of immigrants came across the southern border last year, overwhelmed immigration officials revived the practice. Attorneys for the U.S. government filed a motion in February to amend the Flores Settlement saying the influx of immigrants made it "impossible to mandate full and strict compliance with all terms of the nearly two decades-old agreement while expecting DHS to fulfill its core function of protecting the public safety and enforcing U.S. immigration laws." Lawyers representing detainees countered by filing a motion to enforce the settlement leading to a tentative ruling in April by Judge Dolly Gee of the Ninth Circuit in Central California. "The court's tentative order indicated that the court agreed with plaintiffs that putting children in secure facilities that are not licensed by the state violated the language and spirit of the settlement agreement," said a memo outlining the ruling and circulated to attorneys and advocates representing detained clients. Both sides in the case are now working out a plan to implement Gee's ruling and are expected to complete the process by mid-June. But corrections companies did not appear to be seeking a broad childcare license, rather one for a small subset of children in detention, according to the applications. The Corrections Corporation of America was granted a temporary shelter day care license in its Dilley center for the supervision of 24 children, Crimmins said. The license applies to children whose mothers need to attend court hearings or visit their doctors, according to the application. It does not mention extended overnight care. "Neither Karnes nor Dilley have applied for a license from Residential Child Care Licensing (RCCL) — that is separate from a day care license," Crimmins said. Residential treatment centers, emergency shelters or child-placing agencies are examples of the types of facilities that would fall under that type of license. "I can tell you that in September 2014, Karnes submitted a request that they be exempt from residential child care licensing regulations, which we granted," Crimmins said. It was unclear why the center in Karnes is exempt while the one in Dilley is not. When asked about the license applications, both companies issued statements. "CCA sought and obtained this licensure for the facility pursuant to the contractual requirements of our government partner, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)," said Steve Owen, managing director of communication for Corrections Corporation of America. "GEO has and will continue to work in conjunction with ICE to ensure that the Center adheres to all pertinent standards and requirements," said Pablo Paez, vice president for corporate relations. Both companies referred further questions to ICE. While ICE did not reply to requests for comment, in the past it has issued statements about the quality of its care for residents. "We are constantly assessing our ability to provide care for those in our custody that meets the highest standards, and we welcome the ongoing dialogue with stakeholders to ensure that we are transparent and consistent in our approach," said ICE press secretary Gillian M. Christensen. Ryan and other advocates do not think this move satisfies the requirement set forth in the Flores Settlement Agreement. "Flores speaks to the entirety of the custodial setting environment," Ryan said referring to the 24/7 operation of family detention centers. "Cordoning off a small area within it that is deemed child appropriate by no means sanctions the remaining 99.9 percent of the facility." Michelle Mendez, training and legal support attorney with the [Catholic Legal Immigration Network](#) thought it was more of a practical solution. "It's hard to tell why they're moving forward with this, but it seems to be more beneficial for the staff than it does for the women and the children because fewer children in the courtroom is going to be easier on the staff; it's going to be easier on the court that is presiding over the hearings for the judges." [Nuri Vallbona is a freelance documentary photojournalist. She

[worked for the Miami Herald from 1993 to 2008 and has been a lecturer at the University of Texas and Texas Tech University.] Source:

<http://ncronline.org/news/politics/detention-center-receives-child-care-license-state-texas#>

The truth about 'boarding school syndrome' - Telegraph The truth about 'boarding school syndrome' As a new book suggests our classic British institutions inflict lifelong mental wounds, boarding school 'survivor' Wendy Leigh examines the lifelong effect of being sent away from home, aged 10 Facebook 1K Twitter 101 Pinterest 1 LinkedIn 13 Share 1K Email The author at school By Wendy Leigh 8:00PM BST 09 Jun 2015 [547 Comments](#) The nightmares come more often these days, but lose nothing of their intricacy for their increase in frequency. They all begin on a cold morning in 1968, when I am 12 years old and standing on the platform at Charing Cross Station, surrounded by a gaggle of girls dressed, as I am, in navy blue uniform. In the near distance, my mother's image is already fading – I've long since learned that the last thing I need is to draw any more attention to the tears beginning to brim than having her taking me right up to the carriage before she leaves. Even when I wake at 4am in a cold sweat in my flat overlooking the Thames, my home for the past ten years, I still can't shake the smell, noise and desolation of my nightmare's destination: St Margaret's, Folkestone, the [boarding school where I was incarcerated for four years](#) of my life. I don't use the word "incarcerated" lightly; even (perhaps, especially) as a child, it always seemed more akin to Wandsworth Prison than an educational establishment for the upper classes. But it is one that seems all the more fitting now I have read *Boarding School Syndrome: The Psychological Drama of the 'Privileged Child'*, a newly published study of former boarders like me, by [Professor Joy Scheverin](#). Wendy Leigh as a child (Photo: Jeff Gilbert) A Jungian psychoanalyst, Schaverien first coined the term "boarding school syndrome" a decade ago, after seeing a multitude of former pupils among her patients – characterised by problems with anger, depression, anxiety, a failure to sustain relationships, fear of abandonment, substance abuse, and so forth. She, herself, was following in the footsteps of Nick Duffell, a psychotherapist and author of influential study, *The Making of Them*, about the wounds such schooling can inflict. Duffell defines ex-pupils, and indeed himself, as "boarding school survivors" – a term that resonates strongly with me, given I still feel scarred by the six formative years I spent attending two of the (minor) cornerstones of the British establishment. Before St Margaret's, I was sent to Hookstead, Crowborough, when I was 10; ostensibly because my parents had just divorced, and also because my mother, a teacher, was certain that boarding school would provide me with the best and most gilded start in life. I was keen it wouldn't disappoint her, and initially, given I had been steeped in [Enid Blyton's St. Clare series](#) – [bracing books about boarding schools](#), populated by top drawer, kind and jolly girls, each one a brick – I was happy to be going. [•Could boarding school be the best thing for your child? •Inside the most expensive boarding school in the world](#) But nothing could have prepared me for the pain of being far from home, and the mother I adored. A sensitive loner of a child, I struggled with the lack of privacy by isolating myself from the other girls – an odd and ungainly peg rammed into an ill-fitting hole. The only consolation was that I could spend every weekend at home with my mother – the only moments of love and happiness punctuating long weeks of cold baths, regulation knickers and barebones dinners of baked beans and bread. Much, I know, has changed for today's pupils, which Schaverien readily acknowledges. But however warm and cuddly modern boarding schools may be in comparison to mine, she insists children sent away to school – no matter how well they are looked after – will still suffer trauma at being separated from those who love them best. My two years at Hookstead were a holiday camp compared to the four years I spent at St Margaret's, from which I was only allowed to escape three times a term. These rare weekends at home compensated somewhat for my increasing unhappiness at school – my mother made sure each was akin to a party, filled with my favourite food on hand, a trip to see any movie I wanted (even the musicals she hated). But however pampered I was, I could never forget each tick of the clock brought me closer to the moment we would have to part again at Paddock Wood Station in Kent. Somehow these partings never got easier. Although I was outwardly stoic and careful never to cry in front of her, the jaunty carefree air I managed to maintain up to the carriage would turn to flood of tears as soon as we pulled out of the station – and then I would hate myself for my babyishness as much as I hated the return to my nightmare ahead. I never told my mother that I loathed school with every fibre of my being, or begged her not to send me back; even then, I understood her subconscious motives for dispatching me, her cherished only child. I knew she was doing everything she could to give me what she thought was a superior education. And that, never mind money, it had cost even more pride to get her to convince my father – who was dead set against the idea of wasting money on my education – to foot the bill. It was only many years later, when I was 28, and my maternal grandmother's death overwhelmed me with enough grief to seek therapy, that distinguished psychoanalyst Dr Erika Padan Freeman helped me join up more dots. My mother, Marion, had been traumatised as a child herself when, at the age of 11, in July 1939, she was sent out of Germany on the Kindertransport, which spirited her and 10,000 other children to safety in England. The train, of course, left from the railway station, where little Marion was forced to part from her father on the platform, never to see him again. As Dr Freeman explained, in sending me away at a similar age, and continually re-enacting that heartrending scene on the railway station, my mother was unconsciously repeating the pattern of her past. Putting me on the train, separating from me and unconsciously hoping that I wouldn't be hurt like she was, I wouldn't suffer, and that, this time, the story would end happily. Of course, it didn't. Instead, just as Schaverien posits, it forged a kind of dual identity within me. She explains: "One of the characteristics of the child coping with leaving home and living without love is that they form a psychological split into two aspects of personality, which I call the 'home self' and the 'boarding school self'." So there was the fragile Wendy, beset by separation anxiety, crying late at night under her counterpane. And there was tough Wendy, who developed a thread of steel in her soul, and knew she needed to protect herself from this pain as much as her mother. Uncannily enough, both those sides of me are currently merging, as my mother, now 87, has been diagnosed with terminal non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. She has been in hospital since April, and may have very little time left. While my softer self is reliving the trauma and heartbreak of that first enforced separation, at just 10 years old, my tough boarding school self would still die before crying in front of her when I visit each day – determined to bring nothing but love and cheer to her bedside. Instead I busy myself, when tears threaten, with the pragmatic details of palliative care. Here, at least, I am able to see one boon to being a boarding school survivor: however tough it may be when my mother leaves me again, for good, I know that I have already forged the strength I'll need to endure it. Source:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/secondaryeducation/11662001/The-truth-about-boarding-school-syndrome.html>

Former Houston hospital exec sentenced to 45 years in prison for fraud - Modern Healthcare Former Houston hospital exec sentenced to 45 years in prison for fraud By [Lisa Schencker](#) | June 9, 2015 The former president of a Houston hospital, his son and a third person were sentenced to prison Tuesday for billing Medicare \$158 million for mental health services that were medically unnecessary or never provided. Earnest Gibson III, the former president of Riverside General Hospital; his son Earnest Gibson IV, who operated one of the hospital's satellite locations; and Regina Askew, a group-home owner, were convicted in October of conspiracy to commit [healthcare fraud](#), conspiracy to pay kickbacks and related counts of paying and receiving illegal kickbacks. The Gibsons also were convicted of conspiracy to commit money laundering, according to a U.S. Justice Department release. The elder Gibson was sentenced to 45 years in prison and his son was sentenced to 20 years. Askew was sentenced to 12 years in prison. Dick DeGuerin, an attorney for the elder Gibson, said Tuesday he's frustrated the federal sentencing guidelines were applied in "such a harsh manner." "Perhaps more importantly I'm frustrated with the government's efforts to prosecute criminally violations of policy and procedures rather than real criminal acts," DeGuerin said. "It seems to me that the partial hospitalization program is fraught with traps for the unwary where mere failure to follow procedures can end up in criminal court, things that would ordinarily be handled by either a refund or a civil penalty." Attempts to reach attorneys for Earnest Gibson IV and Askew were not immediately successful Tuesday afternoon. Earnest Gibson III was also ordered to pay restitution of \$6,753,180; Earnest Gibson IV was ordered to pay restitution of \$7,518,480; and Askew was ordered to pay \$46,255,893. Between 2005 and 2012, Riverside and its satellite locations billed Medicare for partial hospitalization program services for Medicare beneficiaries who did not need or qualify for the services, which are a form of intensive outpatient treatment for severe mental illness, the Justice Department said. The beneficiaries rarely saw psychiatrists and did not receive intensive psychiatric treatment. Some were suffering from Alzheimer's, meaning they couldn't have participated in treatment even had they qualified for it. Earnest Gibson III also paid kickbacks to patient recruiters, owners and operators of group-care homes, including Askew, in exchange for them sending ineligible Medicare patients to the hospital's partial hospitalization programs, according to the government. Earnest Gibson IV also paid patient recruiters to do the same for his program, prosecutors said. Proceeds from the fraud were used to further the scheme by paying kickbacks to patient recruiters and group-home owners for sending their Medicare beneficiaries to the programs, according to the government. A number of other individuals have also pleaded guilty in connection with the fraud. Source:

<http://www.modernhealthcare.com/article/20150609/NEWS/150609882>

Chester Co. boarding school teacher charged in sex assault of student He was a teacher at a prestigious private school, but now he's at the center of a sexual assault investigation. Wednesday, June 10, 2015 04:48PM MALVERN, Pa. (WPVI) -- Police have arrested a teacher at a Chester County boarding school for the alleged sexual assault of a former student. 31-year-old Matthew Scavitto, who worked as a teacher, coach, and dorm supervisor at the Phelps School in

Malvern, was arrested on Tuesday. Investigators say the incidents happened on the campus of the school where Scavitto lived in campus housing. The former student alleges that the abuse occurred from 2013 to 2014 while he was enrolled as a full time boarding student. The victim explained that he had become friends with Scavitto, and that in May of 2013, when the victim was 17-years-old, Scavitto began to sexually assault him at his on-campus apartment. The abuse allegedly continued through the summer of 2013 while both were at a camp in New Hampshire and throughout the victim's senior year, authorities said. In addition, Scavitto would allegedly communicate with the victim by cell phone and text messages, which allegedly contained code words for sexual activity. The victim says Scavitto would then instruct him to delete the messages immediately after the conversation. Scavitto was immediately fired by the Phelps School upon learning of the accusations, and authorities say the school is cooperating fully with law enforcement. The school released a statement Wednesday, which reads in part: "The Phelps School was shocked and saddened to learn of the arrest of a faculty member late yesterday evening. We can assure members of The Phelps School community that the safety and well-being of our students is paramount, and the staff member in question will not be returning. We are cooperating fully with the authorities on this matter, including the District Attorney's Office of Chester County." First Assistant District Attorney Michael Noone says, "This is another example of a person in a position of trust grooming a victim and abusing that trust. This defendant manipulated a student who he was responsible for teaching and coaching." Scavitto is charged with Institutional Sexual Assault, Corruption of Minors, Unlawful Contact with a Minor, and Endangering the Welfare of Children. He is currently being held in lieu of \$250,000 cash bail. Police are concerned that there may be other victims. Anyone with additional information is encouraged to contact authorities. Source: <http://6abc.com/news/chester-co-teacher-charged-in-sex-assault-of-student/776393/>

15:16 Thursday 11 June 2015 **A pervert has been convicted of abusing two under-age girls while they were in foster care.** Kevin Gillan had access to the youngsters – one of them aged just nine at the time – because he was staying in the house where they were placed for emergency respite care. The younger girl claimed Gillan groped her when she was alone in the living room with him. The older girl, 19, who was 14 at the time of the offence, gave evidence that he touched and handled her breasts over her clothing and smacked her on the bottom after entering her bedroom. Neither of the victims can be named for legal reasons. Sheriff Susan Craig ordered that Gillan's name be placed on the sex offenders' register with immediate effect and called for background reports before sentencing. Gillan, 24, of Katherine Street, Livingston had denied committing a total of four sexual offences against two girls between May 12, 2010 and June 25, 2013. He was convicted of using lewd, indecent and libidinous practices towards a nine-year old in 2010 and sexually assaulting the 14-year-old in 2013. During his trial at Livingston Sheriff Court he was cleared of making sexually indecent remarks and a further charge of sexual assault. The court was told he has no previous convictions. He will be sentenced on July 30. Source: <http://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/news/crime/pervert-abused-children-in-foster-care-1-3799767>

Berea group home employee accused of punching teen in face An OhioGuidestone staff member is no longer employed there after being accused of punching a 13-year-old resident in the face June 5, according to police. (Evan MacDonald, Northeast Ohio Media Group) [Print Email](#) By [Evan MacDonald, Northeast Ohio Media Group](#), Sun News Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#) on June 12, 2015 at 11:30 AM, updated June 12, 2015 at 12:52 PM Reddit Email BEREa, Ohio -- A former Berea group home employee could face charges after she punched a 13-year-old resident in the face, according to police. No charges have been filed in the June 5 incident but the investigation is ongoing, Berea police Lt. Joseph Hedinger said. The 26-year-old Cleveland woman is no longer employed at OhioGuidestone, the organization said in a statement. "OhioGuidestone reported the incident to and is cooperating fully with ongoing police and department of children and family services investigations, and will take any appropriate steps to ensure its mission of safety," an OhioGuidestone spokeswoman said in the statement. The two were arguing when the woman pulled the resident's hair and punched her in the face. The resident retaliated by pulling the woman's hair before other staff members could break up the fight, another employee wrote in a statement to police. Erie County Job and Family Services is also investigating the incident. The agency was not immediately available for comment. Source: http://www.cleveland.com/berea/index.ssf/2015/06/berea_group_home_employee_accu_1.html

Social work diary: "A teenager in care says his foster carer starves and beats him" A children's social worker talks about late nights, flat car batteries and a difficult child protection enquiry June 15, 2015 in Monday I return to an area where I had previously worked to give evidence in care proceedings. The social worker complains about everything not done on the case. I point out I had done everything possible in the time and wrote a detailed transfer summary. I wonder why colleagues so often tend to look on the negative side? Tuesday It's duty day for my team; it can be easy or a nightmare- today it's the latter. A teenager in care presents saying his foster carer starves and beats him. As he looks well nourished with no visible injuries, we are sceptical. However, neither the fostering social worker nor his leaving care social worker are available so we have to find him a new placement and organise a child protection enquiry. The foster carer is shocked - it was their first placement. Hoping fervently that nothing else as challenging comes in on top of this, the duty team divide up the tasks and get the young person placed locally. We advise the foster carer not to be alone with him. Wednesday My car battery is flat and I miss a looked-after child review. Luckily it was straightforward and we don't have to reschedule since we are already in the middle of care proceedings. However, on arriving at the office I am drawn back into the care leaver's child protection enquiry, as his social worker is on leave. This takes up the rest of the day. A colleague covers a child protection visit for me after much juggling of schedules. By 5pm three of our departments, the police and a doctor are drawn into the investigation as the young person alleges they have internal injuries that cannot be seen. Thankfully, the allocated social worker is back tomorrow, so will take over. I wonder if the internal injuries are really feelings of hurt at leaving care, but say nothing. The investigation has a direction that I know won't be changed now. Thursday With all the time taken up yesterday I had to postpone a visit to a child's aunt and uncle. They want to take up Special Guardianship Order but have not visited much. I get a lift from a colleague to catch a train but don't get back till very late. I've no alternative but to get a taxi home but wonder if I will get the cost back in my expenses claim. Friday I visit some children in primary school who come from a very deprived home where the parents struggle to provide basic needs. The boy tells me he only has margarine on his sandwich today. He and his sister tell me they want to become space tourists and go to Mars. They have seen it on the internet, so it's possible – they have the charming, innocent optimism of childhood. My manager confirms I won't get yesterday's taxi fare reimbursed. One day, there will be an acknowledgement of the hours needed to do this work. Just about the time those children reach Mars, I think. Source: <http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2015/06/15/social-work-diary-teenager-care-says-foster-carer-starves-beats/#>

Anti-SLAPP Law Crosses State Lines By JONNY BONNER [ShareThis](#) SALT LAKE CITY (CN) - A California woman who claimed a "therapeutic boarding school" starved and abused students may apply her state's anti-SLAPP law to defamation proceedings in Utah, a federal judge ruled. Diamond Ranch Academy sued Chelsea Filer in 2014, claiming "maliciously and falsely" defamed it on her website, Facebook and elsewhere. The website drasurvivors.com is devoted to denunciations of the boarding school for "troubled teens," in Hurricane, Utah. The school claimed Filer defamed it by calling it a "private prison" that abused, starved and strip-searched students, scamming their parents "out of millions of dollars." In a June 9 ruling on Filer's motion to strike, U.S. District Judge Tena Campbell found that "much of" Filer's speech "likely originated in California" and applied that state's anti-SLAPP statute. However, Campbell also found that though "California has the most significant relationship to the immunity issue raised by Ms. Filer in her Special Motion to Strike ... Utah's and California's anti-SLAPP statutes materially conflict." She ordered the parties to brief the issue of whether discovery is needed before they fully brief the merits of Filer's Special Motion to Strike. After ruling on the school's motion to stay briefing on the motion to strike, Campbell will either set a discovery schedule or set deadlines for filing briefs on whether California anti-SLAPP law bars the school's defamation claims. A typical "strategic lawsuit against participation" accuses a litigant of using the judicial system to silence or intimidate a critic on a matter of public interest. "Ms. Filer, apart from one trip at the age of 11, has never been to Utah, so it is safe to say that she did not post anything on her website from the State of Utah," Campbell wrote, in weighing whether to apply Utah or California anti-SLAPP law. "Filer's California residence, California's strong interest in protecting its citizens' free speech activities, and the court's conclusion that the record, fairly construed, shows that much of the speech likely originated in California, all weigh strongly in favor of applying California's, not Utah's, anti-SLAPP law." The judge said the California law does not conflict with federal rules of civil procedure.

Diamond Ranch's attorneys at Bangerter Sheppard & Frazier of St. George, and Filer, now Chelsea Papciak, did not respond to requests for comment. In a separate federal lawsuit in December 2014, four teenagers called Diamond Ranch a "private prison" that "sadistically and verbally" beat teens down and forced them to go barefoot in winter. "At Diamond Ranch Academy, there was no forum for complaint, explanation, appeal, or grievance against the placement, before, during, or after it occurred," they claimed. "The only option available to the hapless youth there confined was to 'fake it in order to make it,' for Diamond Ranch Academy is a lock down, closely guarded private prison, where punishments are harsh for any rule infraction, real or instigated by the Diamond Ranch Academy staff for their amusement." Filer was not a party to that lawsuit. In May, the Washington Supreme Court [found](#) that state's anti-

SLAPP law unconstitutional. Justice Debra Stephens wrote that Washington's state law "seeks to protect one group of citizen's constitutional rights of expression and petition by cutting off another group's constitutional rights of petition and jury trial." In [Nevada](#), the Assembly Judiciary Committee is studying a bill that would impose much tighter deadlines to that state's anti-SLAPP law. The bill sailed through the state Senate in April. Source: <http://www.courthousenews.com/2015/06/16/anti-slapp-law-crosses-state-lines.htm>

State fails to meet foster care lawsuit requirements Jimmie E. Gates, The Clarion-Ledger 8:52 p.m. CDT June 16, 2015 The latest report by an independent federal court monitor says Mississippi doesn't have the capacity to meet many of the court order's basic requirements to improve the state's foster care system. CONNECT [4](#) [TWEET](#) [LINKEDIN](#) [COMMENT](#) [EMAIL](#) [MORE](#) The latest report by an independent federal court monitor says Mississippi doesn't have the capacity to meet many of the court order's basic requirements to improve the state's foster care system. "The evidence shows that in most instances defendants did not meet Period 4 performance requirements," said Grace Lopes, the Washington, D.C.-based monitor appointed by a Mississippi federal judge. "Based on the history of defendants' performance since 2008 when the remedial stage of this lawsuit began, it appears that defendants do not have the capacity to meet many of the MSA's most basic requirements. Defendants' ongoing failure to meet these requirements has a substantial and continuing impact on the safety and well being of the thousands of children in defendants' custody every year and their timely placement in permanent and nurturing homes." Lopes said the parties and the court must confront reality and determine a course that will protect the children in defendants' custody on an urgent timeline. Marcia Robinson Lowry, head of New York-based A Better Childhood Inc., said the monitor's report that was issued Monday reinforces the organization's petition to seek to hold the Mississippi Department of Human Services in contempt of court for allegedly failing to implement settlement agreement of more than seven years. Lowry said the court order in the Olivia Y lawsuit was entered in 2008 to resolve the original lawsuit filed more than a decade ago claiming widespread constitutional failings in the state foster care system. "The contempt motion will include the issues that are in this report," said Lowry, an attorney who was part of the initial group filing the lawsuit. The contempt citation, which was already filed, will be updated to include the latest monitor's report, according to Lowry. Lowry was with another New York-based organization, Children's Rights, when the lawsuit was filed in 2004. The suit asserted widespread violations of the constitutional rights of children in the Mississippi foster care system. The class action, originally known as Olivia Y. v. Barbour, cited dangerously high caseloads, untrained caseworkers, a shortage of foster homes, and a widespread failure to provide basic health care. In 2008, a settlement was approved by the federal court. But in 2010, the plaintiffs asked the state to be found in contempt for noncompliance. A modified settlement was approved in July 2012. According to Lowry, the modified settlement contained an action plan to address the state's consistent failure to meet court-ordered performance standards. U.S. District Judge Tom S. Lee has set Aug. 10 for an evidentiary hearing on the contempt motion. The Mississippi Department of Human Services has not commented, citing pending litigation. During state budget hearings last year, Mississippi Department of Human Services Executive Director Rickey Berry said the state needs to spend an additional \$12 million to meet requirements of the lawsuit. Contact Jimmie E. Gates at (601) 961-7212 or jgates@jackson.gannett.com. Follow [@jgatesnews](#) on Twitter. Source: <http://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/2015/06/16/state-fails-meet-foster-care-lawsuit-requirements/28843645/>

Sheriff Recommends Charges For Group Homes Accused Of Abuse By: AP Posted: Wed 8:56 AM, Jun 17, 2015 By: AP [Home](#) / [Headlines List](#) / [Article](#) To join the conversation on this story and others, "like" our [KKTU 11 News Facebook page!](#) The Pueblo County Sheriff's Office is asking the district [attorney](#) to file charges in six cases involving residents at state-run Pueblo Regional Center group homes who say they were abused. The Pueblo Chieftain reports Sheriff Kirk Taylor and his deputies investigated 19 complaints of long-term abuse, maltreatment and unlawful sexual contact. The [office](#) ultimately referred six of those cases to the district attorney for review. Taylor says his office is still investigating four cases. Pueblo Regional Center is operated by the Colorado Department of Human Services and runs 11 group [homes](#) in Pueblo West. It's unclear which specific group homes the allegations stem from. Department Director Reggie Bicha said in an [email](#) that the investigations strengthen the state's commitment to stabilizing the center. In April, eight staffers including the center's director joined three others on paid [administrative](#) leave. Source: <http://www.kktv.com/home/headlines/Sheriff-Recommends-Charges-For-Group-Homes-Accused-Of-Abuse-307890891.html>

Former Monticello group home counselor convicted on felony sex charges MONTICELLO – A former counselor employed by the Orange/Sullivan Division of Rehabilitation Support Services was convicted of having a sexual relationship with a female resident in his care from June to December 2013. The group home is licensed by the state Office of Mental Health. Michael Cubero, 37, of Monticello, was convicted by a jury of two counts of criminal sexual act and one count of endangering the welfare of an incompetent or physically disabled person, all felonies, and two misdemeanor counts of sexual abuse. He faces up to eight years in prison and will be required to register as a sex offender when sentenced in September. The investigation was conducted by the New York State Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs, Monticello and State Police. Rehabilitation Support Services cooperated in the investigation and prosecution. Cubero was terminated from his job. Source: http://www.midhudsonnews.com/News/2015/June/20/Cubero_guilty-20Jun15.html

Families 'strong-armed' by St. Amant By [David Larkins](#), Winnipeg Sun First posted: Friday, June 19, 2015 04:56 PM CDT | Updated: Friday, June 19, 2015 05:03 PM CDT Tony Warzel of the St. Amant Family Association is concerned that patients requiring 24/7 care are being moved into group homes. Warzel's brother has been in St. Amant for over 40 years. (Brian Donogh/Winnipeg Sun) Article [1](#) [Change text size for the story](#) [Print this story](#) [Report an error](#) An association concerned for the well-being of their family members who suffer from developmental disabilities say they are being "strong-armed" by the very organization enlisted to care for them. Members of the St. Amant Family Association say the non-profit St. Amant organization, which cares for people with severe developmental disabilities and autism, is going back on its word and forcing some residents to move out of the River Road facility into community group homes. Association spokesman Tony Warzel said the group isn't opposed to residents being moved to community facilities, but said family members were initially told those moves would be voluntary. "We were consulted, but told it was voluntary," Warzel said. "We were not told this was a forced move. When it became forced, they were wanting to meet with us only to explain why they should be moving into the community, not to talk about options, not to hear our point of view." Warzel, whose brother Mark is a resident, said the association struck a sub-committee to meet with St. Amant's board. He said "it's really been a one-way conversation." "We feel we're being strong-armed and given no options," Warzel said. "The conversation has only been about why they are moving." Warzel said his brother, 49, needs 24-hour supervision and, in 2013, claims he told St. Amant management he did not want his brother to be placed in a group home, citing his health concerns. In November 2014, according to Warzel, he was told his brother had been identified as someone capable of transition. "No discussion, no options given, no consultation," said Warzel, noting a number of other families have the same concerns. However, John Leggat, St. Amant's CEO, said his board meets with the family association monthly and a "sub-group" that meets every two weeks "to work through any concerns or questions they might have." Leggat said discussions on a strategic plan were launched internally three years ago to help the facility, which currently holds 167 residents, transition down to 115 by 2018. "For 30 years, we've been transitioning people from River Road to community homes," Leggat said. "This isn't new for us. What we did introduce to the process is that people who need 24-hour nursing care, they will remain here at River Road. For the remaining individuals, we definitely know we can support them in the community, because we support both kids and adults with challenging developmental needs already." Warzel fears those being moved from River Road are being subjected to a change they'll find very stressful. "There is no way for them to assess the reaction of someone to something as stressful as a move like this," Warzel said. Leggat, however, said the community homes offer more privacy and amenities to residents, as well as a 3-to-2 resident-to-caregiver ratio, which he said surpasses that of St. Amant. "We offer what we think is a better life in our community homes," Leggat said. [david.larkins@sunmedia.ca](http://www.winnipegsun.com/2015/06/19/families-strong-armed-by-st-amant) Source: <http://www.winnipegsun.com/2015/06/19/families-strong-armed-by-st-amant>

Foster parents accused of sexual abuse may have earned \$1.6 million from state By [Aaron Martinez](#) / [El Paso Times](#) / [Follow @AMartinez31](#) Posted: 06/19/2015 06:14:18 PM MDT [Related >> El Paso foster parents accused of sexual abuse](#) An El Paso couple arrested in April on suspicion of sexually abusing two foster children might have earned as much as \$1.6 million from the state as foster parents over 14 years, documents show. The actual amount is not exact because three child-placing agencies took a share of the money in administrative fees. Sandra Huerta, 55, and Antonio Huerta, 62, had been foster parents to 36 children since they were licensed in 2000, officials said. The Huertas were arrested after two former foster children in September reported to police that they were sexually abused by the couple 13 years ago, officials said. One of the victims told police she was 7 years old at the time, while the other victim said he was 10 years old when the incidents happened, an arrest affidavit states. The woman told police that Sandra Huerta would take her into a bedroom, force her to watch pornographic movies and then tell her to mimic what she was watching, the affidavit states. The victim claims she was forced to touch both the Huertas

and have sex with Antonio Huerta while his wife watched, according to the affidavit. [Related » Police affidavit: Couple accused of having sex with foster children](#) The man told police he was forced to watch porn in the couple's bedroom, watch the Huertas engage in foreplay and then have sex with Sandra Huerta, according to the affidavit. Sandra Huerta was arrested April 24 on suspicion of indecency with a child and aggravated sexual assault of a child, officials said. She was booked into the El Paso County Jail on a \$175,000 bond. She bailed out of jail the same day. Antonio Huerta turned himself over to El Paso police April 30. He was arrested on suspicion of two counts of aggravated sexual assault of a child. He was booked into the El Paso County Jail on a bond totaling \$175,000. He bailed out of jail the same day. Attempts to reach the Huertas were unsuccessful. El Paso District Attorney's Office officials said the cases against the Huertas are still being reviewed. If the cases are approved, they will be presented to a grand jury, which will decide if they will be indicted. According to records released by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, the Huertas were paid, either directly from the department or through a private child-placing agency, about \$1,684,000 during their 14 years as foster parents. The money is given to foster parents to help cover child care related costs such as food, clothing, recreation, transportation and housing, officials said. Between 2000 to 2002, Sandra Huerta was paid by the department about \$79,187, according to the payment records. Beginning in January 2002, the Huertas were moved under the management of several child placing agencies, officials said. The agencies are in charge of placing children in foster homes and managing the homes. The state pays the agencies, which then pays the foster parents. Each agency takes a portion of the money as an administrative fee before giving the rest to the foster parents, officials said. The amount taken by each agency was not disclosed. The Huertas were placed under the Bair Foundation of Texas between January 2002 to May 2003. During that time, the state paid \$92,766 to the Bair Foundation to help pay for the cost of the children under the care of the Huertas, according to the payment records. Officials from the Bair Foundation, which is headquartered in New Wilmington, Pa., said their office in El Paso is closed. They declined to comment on the amount of money paid to the Huertas while they were foster parents under the Bair Foundation. Between May 2003 to July 2014, the Huertas' foster home was under the El Paso Center for Children. The state paid \$1,495,525 to the Huertas through the El Paso Center for Children, according to the payment records. Officials from the center could not be reached for comment on how much of that money went to the Huertas. The last few months of the Huertas' time as foster parents were under the Children's Hope Residential agency. The state gave Children's Hope Residential \$16,628 to cover the cost of children under the Huertas' care. James Aldrich, director and founder of Children's Hope Residential, said the payments made to the Huertas were private information and could not be released. "I am not able to release the payments made to any foster family," Aldrich said. "I can tell you that we pass through DFPS funds to verified homes in the amount required by statute to the families and often times it is in excess of the minimum pass through rate." According to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services' website, the minimum daily amount paid to a foster family varies from about \$23 to \$92, depending on the needs of each child. Aaron Martinez may be reached at 546-6249. Source: http://www.elpasotimes.com/news/ci_28348278/foster-parents-accused-sexual-abuse-may-have-earned

Sexually trafficked girl endures new torment — in foster care Judge Maria Sampedro-Iglesia blasted child welfare administrators for what happened to a 17-year-old girl in foster care. [Peter Andrew Bosch Miami Herald Staff By Carol Marbin Miller cmarbin@MiamiHerald.com [LinkedIn](#) [Google+](#) [Pinterest](#) [Reddit](#) [Print](#) [Order Reprint of this Story](#)] It was the kind of encounter that gives child welfare judges nightmares: A 25-year-old male "transporter" with all of three days on the job, and no real background check. And a 17-year-old girl who wound up in foster care partly because she had fallen victim to forced prostitution. When the eight-hour drive was over, the foster child had been victimized yet again, and the driver was under investigation for rape. It was also the kind of encounter that prompts child welfare judges to write scathing orders, which is what Miami-Dade Circuit Judge Maria Sampedro-Iglesia did late last month, when she called the actions of a private social service agency borderline "reckless." "The Court feels impotent as to what actions or sanctions it can legally take," Sampedro-Iglesia wrote in an order dated May 29. "Nothing that this Court can do or order the agency to do can fix all the wrongs this child has suffered. The agency is one more entity that has failed this child." Our Kids, the organization that oversees foster care and adoption services in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties under contract with the Department of Children & Families, declined to discuss the 17-year-old, whose case was being managed by the Family Resource Center, an Our Kids subcontractor. The Family Resource Center's director, Oren Wunderman, at first agreed to discuss the girl, but, later, inquiries were referred to a Miami law firm, which also declined to comment. "The alleged abuse this child suffered, at the hands of the employee of the Family Resource Center of Miami, is outrageous," a spokeswoman for DCF said. "Upon learning this information, the department immediately contacted law enforcement. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to ensure they have what they need during their active investigation, in order to bring a just resolution to the issue." The girl, who is not being named by the Miami Herald to protect her privacy, first came to the attention of the Department of Children & Families in the winter of 2013. Court records say she was abandoned by her parents, struggled with mental health, and had been forced into prostitution by human traffickers — the term child welfare and other authorities use for pimps who prey upon children or vulnerable adults. For about a year, the girl lived on the streets as a runaway. Currently there are about 226 such children in Florida — 62 of them from Miami-Dade or Monroe — who have fled their foster or group homes. Last March, records say, the girl returned to court from the streets and "begged" Sampedro-Iglesia to allow her to live with her mother, whose legal rights to the child had earlier been terminated. "While with her biological mother, the child stopped running, was doing well and finally began to engage in services," the judge wrote in her order. But there was a small glitch, which led to a big mistake with colossal consequences: When the teen registered for school, she was told she had to first resolve an outstanding warrant with state juvenile justice authorities. And that required a trip to Palm Beach County. The Department of Juvenile Justice took care of the first leg of the trip, records say. For the teen's return to Key West, the privately run Family Resource Center sent a "transporter" to drive her. What occurred during the eight-hour drive now is the subject of a criminal investigation by both the Monroe County Sheriff's Office and the FBI. The federal agency, a DCF report said, "would be filing charges" against the man. The girl's mother became concerned that something terrible had happened when she found "inappropriate sexually [explicit] text messages on her daughter's phone [sent] by the 'transporter,'" the judge wrote. In an interview with the State Attorney's Office, the girl disclosed details of her encounter with the man. The driver, the girl said, stopped at a Walmart along the way and bought Smirnoff Ice, a citrus-flavored malt drink, and cigarettes, which he shared with her. He "asked the victim how she would feel if he kissed her." After the two had sex, the driver dropped the teen off at home at 3 a.m. "The Court finds that the actions of the agency are not only negligent, but border on reckless," Sampedro-Iglesia wrote. "The agency is entrusted with caring for and protecting those most vulnerable to our society: the voiceless children. Clearly, the agency has failed to do this." For Sampedro-Iglesia, the incident itself was only part of the problem. Though the four-county drive took place on May 1, administrators of the Family Resource Center, or FRC, did not disclose it to the judge until almost two weeks later — at a routine hearing. The judge has ordered child welfare authorities to report adverse incidents involving children under her jurisdiction "immediately." Sampedro-Iglesia said she suspected something was amiss when a number of "higher ups" from FRC and Our Kids, South Florida's lead foster care agency, showed up for the hearing unexpectedly. In her order, Sampedro-Iglesia called the event "criminal in nature." Then, she blasted child welfare administrators, both for leaving a human trafficking victim alone with an unvetted young man and for failing to quickly disclose the results. FRC did not help itself, the judge wrote, by suggesting that what an incident report called "sexual abuse" or "sexual battery" could have been prevented by better training. "It shocks the conscience of this Court that the incident report indicates 'the issue in this case was not of negligence, but of one where additional training would have helped and guided process development,'" Sampedro-Iglesia wrote. "It is insulting to this Court that the agency feels that any type of training would have educated a transporter that perhaps having sex with a child [who] was entrusted to him is inappropriate and criminal in nature," Sampedro-Iglesia wrote. "It is equally repugnant to this Court that the agency testified that, had it known 'that the child was a victim of human trafficking, perhaps a male transporter would not have been the most appropriate person' for the several-hour drive. 'The agency's remarks make it sound as if the incident that occurred was actually the child's fault and not the adult that the agency entrusted her to.'" Details of the 25-year-old driver's background are unclear. The Herald was given his name by a source with knowledge of the investigation, but the name cannot be matched to a person in any available database. His name is not in court records reviewed by the newspaper. And FRC administrators did not quickly release the man's employment records. In her order, Sampedro-Iglesia said the agency's "background check" on the man was confined to Miami — though he "had lived most of his life [in] Tampa" — and relied instead "on the fact that the 'transporter' was recommended [by] and related to one of FRC's 'good employees.'" What is known about the man: He got his job driving kids partly upon the recommendation of another FRC employee, a case worker, to whom he is related, records say. The driver had been working for the foster care and adoption agency three days when he was assigned to transport the teen. Said the DCF incident report, written by an employee of a Key West shelter that is working with the family: "Mother and myself do not understand how a 17-year-old girl with her background [redacted] was released to a single male transporter and why a female transporter was not accompanying her." Source: <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/miami-dade/article25021960.html>

East Lansdowne KO's group home for troubled youth By Linda Reilly, Times Correspondent Posted: 06/20/15, 10:37 PM EDT | Updated: 2 hrs ago [#Comments](#) EAST LANSDOWNE >> After a zoning hearing, borough council denied the application for a group home for troubled youth in the former St. Cyril parish rectory. The Academy was seeking a special exception to change or reinstate a preexisting nonconforming use and/or a variance to permit the use of the property for offices in the R-Residential zoning district. According to officials, the participants would be assigned by the Commonwealth Court and attending either Upper Darby or William Penn School Districts. Consultant Mark DuFrayne, of Lansdowne, testified the children would be in school all day and picked up by a counselor and transported to The Academy. Advertisement "The Academy is not a school, it's a guidance service for students," DuFrayne said. "We can make a difference. They live here and they deserve a second chance. During the summer they will be supervised all day long. Our plan is to go to local parks and local schools with rakes and keep them occupied." The board voted to deny the application after a closed session to make decision. Marian Fitti, of Hirst Avenue, a school director on the William Penn School Board, was disappointed in the council's decision. "I mentor these kids," Fitti said. "The program is awesome. I'm sorry the council didn't approve it." Council also conducted a public hearing for an ordinance to limit the number of day care centers in the borough and voted in favor of limiting the number to six. "We want to cap the number of day care homes in the borough at any one time to six," Councilman William Callahan said. "That's what this ordinance does. It caps it at six. We now have six." Source: <http://www.delcotimes.com/general-news/20150620/east-lansdowne-kos-group-home-for-troubled-youth>

Chaotic midtown boarding house shuts its doors Chaotic midtown boarding house shuts its doors [6](#) Saved Save Article [My Saved Items](#) [Print Email](#) Respond: [Write a letter to the editor](#) | [Write a guest opinion](#) [»](#) City of Tucson news 2015-06-21T19:11:00Z Chaotic midtown boarding house shuts its doors By Joe Ferguson Arizona Daily Star Arizona Daily Star June 21, 2015 7:11 pm • By [Joe Ferguson](#) [Joe Ferguson](#) jferguson@tucson.com [3](#) An unregulated, unlicensed group home in midtown Tucson has shut its doors — but the city's chronic shortage of authorized, affordable housing for those needing mental health treatment means other unregulated homes will crop up. In recent weeks, city and county officials descended on the home at Broadway and Craycroft, uncovering various problems during their inspections. Issues ranged from serious health concerns like a massive bed bug infestation to smaller infractions like needing to replace a fire extinguisher. In early June, homeowner Sally Le said she was evicting the last two tenants so she could shut down the house and remodel it. Several years ago, social service agencies like La Frontera referred some clients to boarding houses, including the five owned by Le. "We have clients, and we have had clients historically — low-income clients with a mental illness — that may not need to be in a group home where treatment is provided and staff is provided," said State Sen. David Bradley, the chief development officer for La Frontera. Le says she never offered services for the mentally ill — and unless she did, federal Fair Housing laws could make it difficult to shut down a boarding house, Bradley said. "Unless there is some evidence that the facility is providing treatment, then there is no state licensing law that would apply," he said. La Frontera no longer refers clients to boarding houses or pays to house people in them, said Dan Ranieri, the president and CEO of La Frontera. But sometimes clients voluntarily sign over a portion of their Social Security check to pay for rent in a group-home setting. The homes have mostly fallen out of favor with the expansion of Medicaid in Arizona. It has allowed some La Frontera clients to afford better living conditions, Ranieri said. Police, TFD called in When Le bought the house next door, neighbor Cindy Ramirez had high hopes that the home, which had fallen into disrepair, would be fixed up and a family would move in. Instead, the home sat vacant. Eventually, a parade of strangers started flowing in and out of the house. Two trailers were parked on the front lawn, along with a red sedan the Les would periodically pick up and move a few feet — presumably to make it appear it had been recently driven, Ramirez said. Frustrated, Ramirez turned to City Councilman Steve Kozachik for help last month. Soon, police and emergency personnel became a regular sight in front of the red-brick house. In the first six months of the year, Tucson police and fire departments responded to calls to the home 38 times, records indicate. Calls have ranged from minor health-related issues to police matters such as fights, disturbances, mental-health issues and general poor behavior. "Obviously these calls are a drain on our first responders, but also disturb the quality of life of the surrounding neighbors," TPD Capt. Michael Gillooly wrote in an email to Kozachik. Curious about the influx of visitors next door, Ramirez began approaching cars dropping off people at the group asking how they learned about the home. Their answers varied, but some said they were referred to the house by various social service agencies. Bradley says his agency no longer refers people to the five homes operated by the Le family under the Blessing House Boarding name, but it did have a client living inside the home. "The La Frontera worker has tried repeatedly to help him move, but he has so far declined the help," Bradley said. Ranieri said the patient has since been moved into another boarding home. Inspections pile up Over several weeks, inspectors have forced the Le family to make improvements. The fire department found no working fire detectors in the home, and required a ventilation hood over the kitchen stove. The Pima County Health Department was allowed into the house by an occupant, who told the inspector there was no management on-site at the time. Staff observed a bed bug infestation and believed mosquitoes were breeding in the house. City code enforcers told the owners to fix a portion of the roof, remove nonworking vehicles and trailers and clean up debris around the house. They were also concerned about the pool, labeling its condition as "hazardous." It is unclear how many people were staying in the home, although one resident was sleeping on a couch before it caught fire, said Kozachik. Failed attempt to help those less fortunate Le said she had tried to help those with few alternatives to homelessness. But now she intends to remodel her homes and offer them to more traditional renters. Fewer group homes is good news for neighbors who have similar complaints as Ramirez. But there is a downside, Ranieri said. Some of his clients, ineligible for certain benefits, simply don't have enough money and can't earn enough to afford traditional housing. With few alternatives other than these group homes in some circumstances, he said, the only other choice is to live on the streets. Contact reporter Joe Ferguson at 573-4197 or jferguson@tucson.com On Twitter: [@JoeFerguson](#) Source: http://tucson.com/news/local/chaotic-midtown-boarding-house-shuts-its-doors/article_49624e85-e770-5fc0-b556-e15fc2af441b.html

Disproportionality in Foster Care [Share on Tumblr](#) [PRINTER FRIENDLY](#) SOURCE: National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges SUBJECT: Child Welfare TYPE: YEAR PRODUCED: 2015 The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) annually publishes Disproportionality Rates for Children of Color in Foster Care Technical Assistance Bulletins, which identify national and state level disproportionality rates. In most states, there are higher proportions of African American/Black and American Indian children in foster care than in the general child population, and in some states, Hispanic/Latino children are disproportionately represented, according to the 2015 Bulletin. NCJFCJ uses the most current (2013) Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data and 2013 census data to calculate current disproportionality indexes for the nation, every state, and Washington, D.C. This index demonstrates whether children of different races and ethnicities are overrepresented or underrepresented in the foster care system. The Bulletin makes comparisons between 2000 and 2013 disproportionality rates to illustrate changes that have occurred in the last decade. Click [here](#) for the full report. Source: <https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/research/disproportionality-in-foster-care/10524>

Pennsylvania Latest State To Try To Curb Psychotropic Prescribing To Foster Children [In The News](#) June 23, 2015 [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Email](#) [Print](#) [4 Comments](#) 197 Views Like in many other states, foster children in Pennsylvania are being given psychotropic drugs by physicians at rates that are "disturbing" and "unacceptable," according to a press release and new report from the state's Department of Human Services (DHS). The state government also announced its plans to try to rein in the practice. DHS Secretary Ted Dallas said in the press release that, "The research confirms our concerns and shows an unacceptable use of these medications for children in foster care. The steps we are announcing today are designed to address this disturbing analysis. Starting with the Department, all of us have a responsibility to make sure children in foster care receive the care they need." The commissioned investigation from PolicyLab in Philadelphia reported that, "For youth ages 6-18 years old in 2012, the use of psychotropic medications was nearly three times higher among youth in foster care than youth in Medicaid overall (prescribed at 43% versus 16%)." The researchers also found that the use of antipsychotics was four times higher among youth in foster care (22%) than youth in Medicaid overall (5%) in Pennsylvania, and that half of the antipsychotic users in Medicaid had a diagnosis of ADHD but no appropriate clinical indication for being prescribed the antipsychotics. In addition, four times as many youth in foster care were being given multiple drugs (12% versus 3%). The investigators further found that the youth in foster care in Pennsylvania "were more likely to have not received any visits within the year with a provider for their behavioral health concerns while on psychotropic medications." Some of the report's recommendations that DHS decided to take action on included offering telephone consultations to physicians and encouraging the use of trauma-screening tools. DHS said it would also more closely monitor prescribing. The report, however, also recommended that Managed Care Organizations that oversee children and youth in foster care should be required to obtain prior authorization from independent experts before prescribing antipsychotics to a child, as most other organizations in Medicaid in Pennsylvania currently do. And it recommended that DHS "expand investments in and reimbursements of non-pharmacological behavioral health interventions(.)" The DHS press release did not address these recommendations. [Pennsylvania Takes Action to Address](#)

[Psychotropic Medication Use among Medicaid-Eligible Foster Children](#) (DHS press release on PRNewswire, June 16, 2015) [Psychotropic Medication Use by Pennsylvania Children in Foster Care and Enrolled in Medicaid](#) (PolicyLab, June 2015) --[Rob Wipond](#), News Editor Source: <http://www.madinamerica.com/2015/06/pennsylvania-latest-state-to-try-to-curb-psychotropic-prescribing-to-foster-children/>

Safe Families: An Alternative To Foster Care [Matt Vespa](#) | Jun 24, 2015 Share on Facebook SHARES I admit to total ignorance on this issue, though it usually forms the basis of any crime drama story regarding missing or abused children in the media. It's foster care, and how it's failing our nation's children. The basis for foster care is to make sure the well being of the child is properly maintained. It's a good principle, but one that is lacking in today's government-based system, which is fraught with failure. Right now, there are over 400,000 children in foster care, with 24,000 aging out of the system every year. Seventy percent are placed into the system over neglect. The average length of time a child stays in the system is 717 days. The cost to taxpayers is between \$25,000-30,000. Around 50 percent of the time the child is reunited with their families. It's not a shining example of government in action taking care of those who have truly fallen on hard times. When it comes to children, I'm pretty sure both political parties will do all they can to ensure that the general welfare is being met adequately. Thus, isn't it rational to have as many allies making sure that goal is met besides just saddling it with government-run Child Services? Yes, and there is an amazing organization that's pitching in to help families that are in dire straits. The Chicago-based [Safe Families for Children](#) (SFFC) began in 2002. It rallies the faith-based community to volunteer and open their homes and hearts to children whose parents are simply overwhelmed with hardship. Whether it is a medical emergency, lay offs, drug abuse, or domestic abuse, Safe Families' goal is reunification. They also offer job-training programs for parents who are undergoing financial hardship. Katie Couric did a segment on this organization on CBS' Evening News in 2010, adding that there's a stigma attached with parents giving up one's child due to the severity of their circumstances. There's guilt, shame, and feelings of inadequacy. Yet, at Safe Families, it's more of an extended sleeper for the kids, as parents work to get back on their feet either by gaining new employment or getting sober. Safe Families also has an impressive record of success. Families are reunited 90 percent of the time; the average length of a child residing with a host family is 45 days; and the average cost is \$1,500. All efforts are privately funded. Another positive aspect is that it's volunteer-driven. Only the truly passionate are within the ranks of Safe Families. The host families are vetted, and do not have parental rights over their host child; that right still remains with the parents who can visit or pick up their child from a host family at any time. This dramatically reduces the risk of a child becoming lost in the system. Furthermore, one could look at SFFC as a first-strike vehicle regarding family welfare. Usually, Child Protective Services arrive when a family's issues become overwhelming; SFFC is known to reach families before conditions reach a critical point. These conditions usually are based around homelessness, domestic abuse, drug abuse, or a medical crisis. Yet, with success comes trouble in the form of government regulation concerning this humanitarian effort. The Child Welfare complex has allies who think SFFC is illegal, or must be regulated in order to continue its operations. There are 27 states where Safe Families are operating, but only three—Oregon, Wisconsin, and Oklahoma—have specific SFFC laws on the books. Earlier this month, the Foundation For Government Accountability hosted a conference in Atlanta, Georgia that discussed this issue. They are dedicated to sustaining the SFFC model by promoting the Supporting and Strengthening Families Act in other state legislatures where SFFC has a presence. The bill protects the rights of the parents, bars host families from receiving compensation for their participation in SFFC, clarifies that SFFC is not foster care, offers limited decision making authority to the host family, and removes the stigma of asking for assistance. When it comes to serving children, SFFC appears to be a better alternative. Source: <http://townhall.com/tipsheet/mattvespa/2015/06/24/safe-families-the-alternative-to-foster-care-n2016508>

Cadet Crisis 06.24.15: 25 AM ET Kiddie Boot Camp Accused of Abuse A group of parents is suing a boot camp-style private school, along with the state of Wisconsin, over the alleged abuse of children in its care. A group of parents is suing a boot camp-style private school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, claiming the teachers there abused seven children without the parents' knowledge in the name of turning young lives around. Their complaint, filed this week in Milwaukee County circuit court, alleges seven elementary and middle school students enrolled at **Right Step**—a school program for some 200, mostly low-income students—were the victims of the organization's structure and disciplinary system, one meant to instill self-control into students who have previously failed in a traditional school setting. According to the complaint, in the 2014 fall semester, these students were: pushed, kicked, and punched; threatened and called derogatory names; forced to stay in smoke-filled rooms until they passed out; and exercised to exhaustion with limited food and water. The complaint goes on to list specific mistreatments by instructors. Instructors allegedly urinated on a student's clothes, held a student on the ground by placing a foot on his back, forced a student to drink a beverage that the instructor had spit in, and regularly flipped them from their beds in the middle of the night. One student was made to lie in his vomit for half an hour, according to the complaint. "[These children] were taken to a boot camp in central Wisconsin and physically abused and humiliated. Their parents had no idea that physical abuse and humiliation was part of the school's program. They felt deceived by the school and were upset that they enrolled their kids in the school, thereby subjecting them to this abuse," said Aaron DeKosky, the lawyer representing the three parents in their civil suit. via Facebook Calls by The Daily Beast to the school were returned by Right Step's Rebecca Fitch—a named defendant in the suit. She said one of the defendants, Randy R. Martus, hadn't worked with Right Step for three or four years, but she wasn't familiar with the current case and couldn't comment on the allegations. Fitch said a similar sounding case had been brought against the school last year. Since its founding in 2006, Right Step Inc. has marketed itself as a lifeline to what its founders call Milwaukee's "lost youth." Its mission, as advertised on its [website](#), has been "to develop the minds, bodies, and spirits of the community's most challenging youth, through discipline, and motivation toward positive outcomes." "Our kids have been weapon-carrying, drug-using habitual truants," Fitch, Right Step's director of education, told [the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#) in 2008. The boot camp and school are part of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program administered by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Government subsidies enable a large majority of the students to attend. As such, the parents are also suing the state of Wisconsin and its education arm, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, arguing the extensive voucher program there uses public and taxpayer dollars to fund private, mostly religious and sometimes—as in this instance, critics say—unregulated schools, effectively turning the majority of the private institution public. "The state does not require that schools in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program provide parents of prospective students with information on the school's academic achievements or punishment practices," DeKosky said. Instructors allegedly urinated on a student's clothes. Despite the advertised achievements of Right Step cadets, [numerous studies](#) of juvenile boot camps have found the "scared straight" model to be ineffective and claim the highly-structured routine and intense physical labor often results in a temporary obedience. Children often leave these programs more hostile and distrusting of authority figures than when they entered and most reoffended in short order—at similar rates to juveniles in traditional correctional institutions. These studies, however, are mostly for camps where juvenile offenders go to be reformed and then return to their normal lives. Right Step and other boot camps that also operate as schools and have students for years may have better success rates. A promotional [video](#) for the school shows students—known as cadets—running military drills in the yard as well as receiving instruction in a classroom. Several members of the student body—90 percent of whom are at least three grades behind, according to a drill sergeant quoted in the video—offer testimonials of how the tough love of Right Step kept them off the streets, away from gangs and criminal activity. Along with low graduation rates and test scores and high truancy rates, Milwaukee's public school system boasts one of the largest black-white achievement gaps in the country. Furthermore, the area consistently ranks on the country's most dangerous cities [lists](#) and at least 28 city children have been [shot](#) there this year. In light of those abysmal statistics, there's no denying that Milwaukee children—particularly the poor, black children Right Step primarily enrolls—are in need of quality educational alternatives. Whether Right Step is saving or harming the children entrusted to its care will be for the courts to decide. Source: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/06/24/kiddie-boot-camp-accused-of-abuse.html>

The Anti-Union Bosses' Group Fighting Fast Food Organizing Is Now Going After Home Care Workers Can workers centers and unions create a movement strong enough to fight back? BY [Mariya Strauss](#), [Political Research Associates](#) [Email Print](#) For-profit home care employers are taking federal dollars and using them to hire workers at subminimum wages—with virtually no public accountability. The home health aide in scrubs pushing a client's wheelchair up the ramp from street to sidewalk may appear to have little in common with a cashier at McDonalds or Pizza Hut. But chances are, the company that employs the home care attendant is part of the same type of national franchise structure that the burger giant and other fast food companies use. And just as it has for fast food corporations, the industry's lobbying outfit, the [International Franchise Association](#) (IFA), is suing on behalf of home health corporations to keep workers' pay low. The IFA has already emerged as one of the primary opponents of the Fight for 15, the SEIU-backed movement that advocates for a \$15-an-hour minimum wage and the unionization of fast food workers. Wherever employers lash back against the Fight for 15, the IFA is there: helping McDonald's argue to the National Labor Relations Board that it is not responsible for franchisees' wage theft and workplace abuses; trying to block a new rule at the NLRB that would speed up the union election process; suing to suppress Seattle's recent minimum wage increase to \$15 per hour. "The [Seattle]

ordinance is clearly discriminatory and would harm hard-working small business owners who happen to be franchisees,” railed IFA President and CEO Steve Caldeira after the groups’ argument failed the first round in court. “Those who have set out to destroy the long-accepted, time-tested and proven franchise business model must be stopped.” And now, the IFA is suing the federal government in an attempt to keep home health aides from earning the minimum wage and overtime pay. Profiting from care Instead of selling burgers or pizza, for-profit home care staffing agencies such as BrightStar sell the care, companionship and feeding services that seniors and people with disabilities once typically received in a nursing home. Many people, such as Rosa Hendricks, who was profiled in a 2011 [National Public Radio series](#) that examined the benefits of home care versus nursing homes, prefer to live at home. Hendricks put it this way: “It makes you feel so much better and know that you are somebody.” “[Home-based care] is preferable to nursing home care for many reasons. But we have gotten it on the cheap,” says Eileen Boris, a women’s studies professor at the University of California/Santa Barbara. Taking advantage of a Jim Crow-era loophole in federal labor law known as the “companionship exemption,” companies like BrightStar can legally pay the nearly 2 million home care workers in the United States at less than the minimum wage (as little as the market allows), and have the option to not pay overtime. Like agricultural workers, another then-mostly African-American sector, home care workers were carved out of the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) (which set wage and hour protections for nearly all other workers) and again when Congress amended the FLSA in 1974. Home care workers can be paid less than the \$7.25 per hour federal minimum wage and aren’t entitled to overtime pay in roughly half of the 50 states. Such low wages have a profound impact on home care workers. “I’m not able to save anything,” says 53-year old Marilyn Blackett, who has been a homecare worker in Brooklyn, New York for the past 14 years. “I try not to ask family members [for money]. You don’t let people know what’s happening to you.” Since the mid-20th century, Boris says, “the structure of the [home-care] industry was built in part on this exemption.” According to an August 2014 study in [Health Affairs](#), the majority—62 percent—of the home care industry consists of for-profit franchises. It’s a lucrative model: the industry rakes in \$84 billion a year, with median revenue for a single franchise at around \$2 million, according to one industry study. The [relatively low start-up cost](#) of home health care franchises ([around \\$150,000 or less](#), compared with around a half million dollars to start a fast food franchise), combined with the cheap labor, has triggered a home-care boom. Franchisors such as BrightStar, run by CEO Shelly Sun (who also serves as IFA treasurer), are taking advantage of this burgeoning demand. Sun and her husband and business partner, as Sarah Jaffe [wrote recently](#) in *Dame* magazine, have boasted that they “had no medical, home-care, or health-care experience when they started their business, and that would-be franchisees need none either.” Franchisors and franchisees leave such health care expertise to the actual home care attendant—the person who lifts the client, helps her eat, mops up her messes, reminds her to take her medication, reads to her, takes her to the grocery store. What’s more, federal dollars are flowing to these for-profit staffing agencies. In most states, the person receiving care can pay for it out of his or her Social Security check—or have it paid for by Medicare or Medicaid. “It was the availability of hiring people using federal monies ... that allowed the franchise industry to blossom,” says Boris. In other words, for-profit home care employers are taking federal dollars and using them to hire workers at subminimum wages—with virtually no public accountability. “For-profit home care agencies are bleeding Medicare,” Steffie Woolhandler, a professor at the City University of New York’s School of Public Health and senior author of the *Health Affairs* analysis [told Modern Healthcare magazine](#) in August 2014. And lack of regulatory oversight means quality of care also suffers. Woolhandler and her co-authors concluded that, “Overall, it appears that proprietary (for-profit) home-care agencies deliver slightly lower-quality care at a substantially higher cost.” David Weil, head of the U.S. Department of Labor’s Wage and Hour Division, recognizes that action is needed to reverse this race to the bottom. In September 2013, his agency issued a final rule to close the companionship loophole. The home care industry promptly sued Weil, with the IFA as one of the lead plaintiffs. The case, *Home Care Association of America v. Weil*, is now in federal court; the DC Circuit Court of Appeals has expedited the case and could issue a decision at any moment. In the meantime, the exemption remains in place. With the U.S. senior population [projected to reach](#) 88.5 million, or 20 percent of the total population, by 2050, the demand for home care services is on the rise. The job of home health aide is now the third fastest growing occupation in the United States, according to [Forbes](#). If the IFA and home health companies are able to persuade the courts to keep the companionship exemption, CEOs like Sun will see their profits grow while workers remain in poverty. A common foe With home care workers and fast food workers facing a common enemy, the question arises: Can they join and create a single movement for workplace justice in the franchised economy? Two separate, non-traditional worker organizing campaigns are underway in the fast food and home care industries. But the franchised structure of these industries presents unique challenges for workers who may wish to actually form labor unions: it isn’t always clear whether the franchisor (the brand) or the franchisee (the storefront owner/operator) is responsible for setting wages and workplace conditions. What’s more, home care workers are in some states explicitly prohibited from forming labor unions—and where they can form unions, the Supreme Court last summer ruled in *Harris v. Quinn* that the workers cannot be required to join or pay the fees that would keep the union running. Because of these and other challenges, the two campaigns—SEIU’s Fight for 15 for the fast food workers and the coalition-based Caring Across Generations for the home care workers—focus more on advocating for worker-friendly policies and regulations than on unionizing these growing workforces. That said, SEIU is forging ahead with organizing fast food workers through Fight for 15, using short-term strikes to protest and raise awareness about the need for a living wage and the right to unionize. Domestic workers, with their solitary shuttling between clients’ homes, have historically been a tough group to bring together. But the National Domestic Workers’ Alliance (NDWA) and the SEIU have been organizing them in recent years, with some success. NDWA is an alliance of over 40 local domestic worker groups that organize domestic workers for expanded rights and dignity on the job, and push for laws to improve rights for domestic workers at the local, state and federal levels. Both groups say their campaigns aim to raise wages and benefits for the entire industry. NDWA and its partners have won legislative victories on a Domestic Workers’ Bill of Rights in New York, California, Oregon, Hawaii and elsewhere by building common cause with home care clients. With its Caring Across Generations campaign, NDWA has formed regional and state-based coalitions with the families of the elderly people and people with disabilities that home care workers serve. NDWA founder and director Ai-Jen Poo says that Caring Across Generations is building a counterforce to the franchised home care industry’s unscrupulous pursuit of profit over quality care. “In its own complaint, the IFA said that their mission is to ‘protect, enhance and promote franchising.’ You have to ask, should a trade association like this be determining the future of homecare for millions of workers and consumers?” As an alternative to the franchise system, workers’ organizing efforts are starting to include developing more worker-friendly models of employment, such as worker-owned cooperatives. Jaffe [writes](#) that in New York, “worker-owned Cooperative Home Care Associates has more than 2,000 worker-owners who make \$16 an hour (more than twice the federal minimum wage) plus benefits and have a guarantee of working hours.” Home care workers are already organizing through Caring Across Generations, and SEIU’s participation provides a national infrastructure that could allow Fight for 15 and home care workers to join forces to challenge the IFA. SEIU’s own home care and fast food campaigns began in April to link up with a [series of teach-ins](#) and protests in SEIU Healthcare’s Midwest region, and such solidarity actions could extend to other regions in the future. But these are only beginnings. As Maria de Fatima Moscani, a Mineola, New York home care worker with 14 years on the job, says: “Something has to be done about low pay, and the money is there. This is not acceptable at a human level. The cost of living is skyrocketing, food is up, and rent is so much. How can we live?” With a juggernaut of major franchised brands moving against home care workers’ rights, another question surfaces: Can fast food and home care workers create a movement powerful enough to fight back against the corporate forces up against them both? Kelsey Howe and Jacey Rubinstein contributed research to this article. Source: <http://inthesetimes.com/article/18108/international-franchise-association-fast-food-home-care-workers>

Former Berea group home employee charged with assault, accused of punching resident A former Berea group home employee is charged with assault in connection with a June 5 incident involving a resident, according to court records. (Evan MacDonald, Northeast Ohio Media Group) [Print Email](#) By [Evan MacDonald, Northeast Ohio Media Group](#) Sun News Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#) on June 25, 2015 at 10:42 AM, updated June 25, 2015 at 10:45 AM Reddit Email BEREa, Ohio -- Charges have been filed against a former Berea group home employee accused of punching a 13-year-old resident in the face. Larquisha Davis, 26, of Cleveland, is charged with assault in the June 5 incident. Her arraignment is scheduled at 9 a.m. July 1 in Berea Municipal Court. Detectives spent several weeks investigating the incident and interviewing witnesses before the charge was filed in court Wednesday, according to police. [Davis is no longer employed at OhioGuidestone](#), the organization said in a statement released June 12. “OhioGuidestone reported the incident to and is cooperating fully with ongoing police and [Erie County Job and Family Services] investigations, and will take any appropriate steps to ensure its mission of safety,” an OhioGuidestone spokeswoman said in the statement. Davis and the resident were arguing when Davis pulled the resident’s hair and punched her in the face. The resident retaliated by pulling Davis’ hair before other staff members could break up the fight, another employee wrote in a statement to police. Erie County Job and Family Services, which provides services to the resident, is also investigating the incident, director Karen Balconi Ghezzi said earlier this month. She declined to elaborate, citing healthcare privacy laws. Source: http://www.cleveland.com/berea/index.ssf/2015/06/former_berea_group_home_reside.html

Report: Human services violated rights of disabled in body checks - The Denver Post Report: Human services violated rights of disabled in body checks Ordered to produce corrective action plan after violating residents' rights [By Jennifer Brown The Denver Post](#) Posted: 06/26/2015 04:50:26 PM MDT [17 Comments](#) Updated: 06/27/2015 01:49:53 AM MDT Department of Human Services director Reggie Bicha talks to The Denver Post. (Craig F. Walker, The Denver Post) Jun 20: [Colorado to pay \\$1 million sanction to settle a federal complaint that DHS misused money](#) Jun 3: [Abuse allegations in Pueblo group homes a key factor in DHS turmoil](#) May 27: [Colorado faces \\$1 million sanction for federal infractions related to food-assistance program](#) May 24: [Colorado human services director Reggie Bicha pledges better communication](#) May 19: [Previous letter sent to Hickenlooper raised similar complaints about human services](#) May 14: [Gov. John Hickenlooper defends human services director Reggie Bicha](#) Colorado human services officials violated the "privacy, dignity and respect" of people with disabilities — disregarding state policy and federal law — during body checks to determine whether residents at state-run group homes had been abused, the state public health department said Friday. The report, from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, was another blow for embattled human services director Reggie Bicha, already under fire [after 84 state lawmakers signed a letter last month](#) calling for leadership changes at his department. The health department's findings, based on interviews with group-home staffers and residents' guardians, said human services officials failed to adhere to policies regarding "mistreatment, abuse, neglect and exploitation." Human services officials "could not provide a specific explanatory catalyst" for the body inspections, which happened in late March, the report said. Relatives of the residents complained that 62 people were "strip-searched" at 10 community group homes and a day center for people with developmental disabilities. Human services officials did not allow the patients or their guardians to "give informed consent to inspections of their bodies," the health department found. Also, the "body audits" or skin checks were conducted without adequately informing patients of their purpose. Advertisement "It was found in numerous instances that the search was conducted in such a way as to cause significant distress," according to the findings. Bicha, in an e-mailed statement, said he regretted not asking for guardian permission before the skin checks but that he had "significant factual basis to believe residents in all 10 group homes and the day program were subject to unacceptable and imminent risk to their health and safety." Among those searched, 40 residents previously were found incompetent in court to make decisions about their own health. Their guardians were not contacted, investigators found. Patients who are nonverbal indicated through "behaviors" that they did not want to participate, "yet the inspections were conducted in spite of the persons' protests," state health officials said. "Ultimately, the body inspections resulted in the persons being confused, scared, and some were distraught to the point it negatively affected their behavior." The state health department investigation was prompted by a March 30 complaint alleging medical staffers entered the Pueblo Regional Center group homes "in mass" and "strip-searched" all of the residents. State health officials called for a corrective action plan from human services officials, who released the plan in conjunction with the release of the investigative findings. Human services executives in February and March learned of several allegations of resident abuse by center staffers — including some not reported to state health officials or law enforcement, Bicha said. There were reports that words were scratched into the backs and stomachs of nonverbal residents, that two unsupervised residents stole a vehicle, and that staffers had struck, choked, shoved and humiliated residents, he said. "Due to the significance and severity of the allegations that had come to our attention, we needed to take swift action to ensure the safety and well-being of our residents," Bicha said. "However, in hindsight, I wish we would have engaged the parents and guardians sooner." The body checks uncovered 10 suspected incidents of maltreatment. Pueblo County Sheriff Kirk Taylor recently announced he is seeking charges against seven current or former Pueblo Regional Center staffers who were involved in six cases of abuse, neglect or sexual misconduct. As part of its corrective-action plan, the human services department will appoint a committee to review incident reports, medication and nutrition at the group homes. The department will create a "standardized consent process" for body checks. Also, staffers will have to report any allegations of abuse or exploitation to department executives within 24 hours. Jennifer Brown: 303-954-1593, jenbrown@denverpost.com or twitter.com/jbrownpost Source: http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_28390716/report-human-services-violated-rights-disabled-body-checks

Report: Human services violated rights of disabled in body checks Ordered to produce corrective action plan after violating residents' rights [By Jennifer Brown The Denver Post](#) Posted: 06/26/2015 04:50:26 PM MDT Updated: 06/27/2015 01:49:53 AM MDT Department of Human Services director Reggie Bicha talks to The Denver Post. (Craig F. Walker, The Denver Post) Jun 20: [Colorado to pay \\$1 million sanction to settle a federal complaint that DHS misused money](#) Jun 3: [Abuse allegations in Pueblo group homes a key factor in DHS turmoil](#) May 27: [Colorado faces \\$1 million sanction for federal infractions related to food-assistance program](#) May 24: [Colorado human services director Reggie Bicha pledges better communication](#) May 19: [Previous letter sent to Hickenlooper raised similar complaints about human services](#) May 14: [Gov. 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Tulane study says foster children in stable homes fare best in adolescence June 25, 2015 Keith Brannon Phone: 504-862-8789 kbrannon@tulane.edu Foster children placed in a consistent, stable home throughout their development have fewer emotional and behavioral problems as they reach adolescence — even if they experienced significant neglect as infants, according to a new Tulane University [study](#) published in The Lancet Psychiatry. "Our study provides greater evidence for the importance of high-quality foster care that is consistent across the child's life," said lead author Kathryn Humphreys, a postdoctoral fellow in infant mental health at Tulane University School of Medicine. "The reality is that often children move between families if they are in foster care, and those disruptions from stable placements are likely to be harmful for their psychological health." The study, which is part of the [Bucharest Early Intervention Project](#), followed 110 children abandoned in Romanian orphanages in the early 2000s. Half were randomly assigned to foster care while others continued in institutional care. These groups were compared to a separate group of children raised by their families. Researchers found that abandoned children placed in the same high-

quality foster families by age 12 had low levels of internalizing disorders, such as anxiety and depression, and externalizing symptoms such as oppositional behaviors or defying adults. They were no different than community comparison children who were raised by their own families. However, children who were disrupted from their original foster family had worse outcomes with higher levels of both internalizing and externalizing symptoms that were no different than children in the institutional care group. "Our study found that it isn't just placing children in foster homes that is beneficial for long-term psychological health, but rather having the same foster family over time that results in those benefits," Humphreys said. The [study](#) was co-authored by Tulane researchers Dr. Charles Zeanah, Dr. Mary Margaret Gleason, Dr. Stacy Drury and Devi Miron in collaboration with Dr. Charles Nelson of Harvard University and Nathan Fox of the University of Maryland. Source: <https://tulane.edu/news/releases/tulane-study-says-foster-children-in-stable-homes-fare-best-in-adolescence.cfm>

State agency accused of violating rights of disabled [Google Survey FAQ](#) The Associated Press • Updated: June 27, 2015 at 4:12 pm • Close Advertisement Skip Ad » 00:00 | 00:00 DENVER — The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment has determined that human services officials violated the privacy, dignity and respect of people with disabilities during body checks to determine whether residents at state-run group homes had been abused. + caption DENVER, CO. - MAY 22: Reggie Bicha, executive director of the Colorado Department of Human Services during an interview in Denver, CO May 22, 2015. (Photo By Craig F. Walker / The Denver Post) Related Information Related Articles (5) [US Supreme Court wants another review of Colorado TABOR suit](#) [Colorado Springs NAACP chapter airs issues, vows to move forward](#) [Suthers wants no sitting, lying on sidewalks and planters in downtown Colorado Springs](#) [Colorado officials praise progress of restorative justice programs](#) [Colorado's senators take bipartisan 'wheat tour' + show more](#) The health department's findings, based on interviews with group-home staffers and residents' guardians, said human services officials failed to follow policies regarding mistreatment, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Relatives of the residents complained that 62 people were strip-searched at 10 community group homes and a day center for people with developmental disabilities. It was found in numerous instances that the search was conducted in such a way as to cause significant distress, according to the findings. Human services director Reggie Bicha said in a statement that he regretted not asking for guardians' permission before the skin checks but that he had "significant factual basis to believe residents in all 10 group homes and the day program were subject to unacceptable and imminent risk to their health and safety." Human services officials learned in February and March of several allegations of resident abuse by center staffers, Bicha said. There were reports that words were scratched into the backs and stomachs of nonverbal residents, that two unsupervised residents stole a vehicle, and that staffers had struck, choked, shoved and humiliated residents, he said. Among those searched, 40 residents previously were found incompetent in court to make decisions about their own health. Their guardians were not contacted, the Denver Post reported (<http://tinyurl.com/q5nmzjdj>). Source: <http://gazette.com/state-agency-accused-of-violating-rights-of-disabled/article/1554576>

Mob beat boarding school director to death after two pupils aged 10 and 11 are found drowned in a pond on the grounds in India and teachers are accused of murdering them Images show an enraged mob beating a school director with huge sticks Locals blamed the school staff for killing two students, aged 10 and 11 The students' bodies were found in a pond and tests showed they drowned Indian police are now investigating after the man died from his injuries By [Corey Charlton for MailOnline](#) Published: 09:56 EST, 29 June 2015 | Updated: 18:01 EST, 29 June 2015 13shares [9 View comments](#) An angry mob in northern India has beaten a school director to death after claiming the facility's staff were responsible for killing two students aged 10 and 11. Shocking footage broadcast on local TV stations showed the man being beaten with sticks and writhing on the ground as others watched and stomped on his chest, stomach and limbs. The students had disappeared a day earlier from the school grounds, and villagers accused school staff of killing them and dumping them in a pond. SHARE PICTURE Copy link to paste in your message +1 The school director died from his injuries on Sunday night after being beaten by an angry mob Post-mortem examinations later showed the boys had drowned, while the school director died from his injuries on Sunday night. When police arrived at the scene of the lynching, the enraged mob pelted them with stones, injuring six officers, while police also suspended an officer for failing to stop the attack. RELATED ARTICLES [Previous](#) [Next](#) [The terrifying moment a passenger plane's engine catches... Now ISIS brings its evil to Egypt: Terror group kills... Incredible footage taken by Tunisian hotel worker as he...](#) Share this article Share 13 shares Residents of the director's home village held angry protests after the man's death, blocking road and train traffic and setting a vehicle on fire. The breakout of violence occurred in Nirpur village, about 55miles (90km) southeast of Patna, the capital of Bihar state, and police have vowed to investigate. Despite authorities' attempts to crack down on vigilante justice, there have been several reports of lynchings throughout India in recent months. In March, Indian police charged 42 people after the killing and lynching of a rape suspect who was dragged from his prison cell. Police charged the men with rioting, arson and unlawful assembly over the widely-condemned attack by a frenzied mob on Syed Farid Khan in northeastern Nagaland state. Thousands of people stormed the Dimapur Central Prison on Thursday to snatch Khan, stripping him naked and beating him to death with sticks in the streets before stringing him up to a clock tower. Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3143313/Mob-beat-boarding-school-director-death-two-pupils-aged-10-11-drowned-pond-grounds-India-teachers-accused-murdering-them.html#ixzz3exlJInoQ> Follow us: [@MailOnline on Twitter](#) | [DailyMail on Facebook](#)

Foster care will not be privatized, officials say [Justin A. Hinkley](#), [jhinkley@lsj.com](#) 6:30 a.m. EDT June 29, 2015 In this 2007 LSJ file photo, Michigan foster children and supporters gather for the kickoff of the Michigan Heart Gallery exhibit at the Capitol. Countering rumors, state officials said they're not planning 100% privatization of foster care case management. (Photo: Rod Sanford/The Lansing State Journal) Story Highlights State officials said no plans for 100% private case management State employees say clues point in the other direction 244 CONNECT [3 TWEETLINKEDIN](#) 2 COMMENTEMAILMORE LANSING — Despite official statements to the contrary, state employees and some private providers suspect Michigan is working toward fully outsourcing foster care services in the state. Currently, the more than 12,000 foster care cases in Michigan are [split about evenly](#) between private providers and the more than 700 foster care workers at the state Department of Health & Human Services. The division varies by county, but state employees and others look to Kent County — where [recent legislation](#) fully privatized foster care case management and established a pilot program for a performance-based funding model — as one of several clues that 100% outsourcing is coming down the pike. READ MORE: [The state's contract with Public Consulting Group](#) BACKGROUND: [Task force report on performance-based funding](#) Several private providers separately told the State Journal they expected the state to move that direction. But Steve Yager, executive director of DHHS' Children's Services Agency, speculated folks conflated two separate issues to form an incorrect theory. Private agencies already handled about 90% of the caseload in Kent County, Yager and others said, and language in the 2014 state budget that gave all cases to private agencies was spurred by community members there. The county's selection as the test site for performance-based funding was a separate issue, Yager and others said. "I've not heard anyone say the performance-based funding work is tied to 100% privatization," Yager said in a recent interview, adding the state wants "a balanced system" of public and private services. State Rep. Earl Poleski, R-Jackson, chairman of the state [House Human Services Committee](#), said in a separate interview that private, nonprofit agencies "do an excellent job" and he'll "press for using the not-for-profits to the extent we can." But he said full privatization wouldn't work because nonprofits have no presence in some of Michigan's most rural areas. RELATED: [Child care workers rip pricey, glitchy computer system](#) "We try to employ them as best we can." "I believe the state and locals should do what works specifically for their community and more importantly what's best for children in their communities," state Sen. Peter MacGregor, R-Rockford, Poleski's [counterpart in the Senate](#), said in an emailed statement. "What we have in Kent County isn't easily replicated in other counties." Janet Snyder, executive director of the [Michigan Federation for Children & Families](#), an advocacy group for private providers, said separately she's spoken to agencies about privatization "in the areas of the state where it makes sense to do that," but "there's no intent or desire from the private agencies to eliminate state jobs. The goal is looking at how we provide service to the kids." But privatization could solve a complex arrangement in which DHHS currently pays, regulates and in some cases competes with private agencies, said David Gehm, president and CEO of the Flint-based [Wellspring Lutheran Services](#). RELATED: [Outsource state jobs 'in the sunshine,' reps say](#) "I think what you need to talk about is, is this the best role for government in all of this?" Gehm said. Private agencies said they offer some advantages over the state, such as more flexibility and a more direct connection to the community. The state in April approved a [five-year, \\$1.6 million contract](#) with Boston actuary firm [Public Consulting Group](#) to help it develop the new funding model "for all public and private child welfare providers." But Ray Holman, legislative liaison for the United Auto Workers Local 6000, which represents most DHHS workers, said performance-based funding is meant to remove one of the union's chief arguments against privatization: That current payments to private agencies for the amount of time they care for kids provides "a perverse incentive" for them to keep kids in foster homes. Performance-based funding would pay providers for results, including more quickly getting kids into permanent homes. But Holman said private agencies, nonprofit or no, still have the incentive to cut costs and make money, while state workers' only incentive is to do good work for kids. The five private agencies piloting performance-based funding in Kent County have collectively been paid nearly \$300 million over the past four-and-a-half years, according to [state](#)

[transparency records](#). "Child welfare is not a good; we're not selling screw drivers or batteries or tires," Holman said. "It's a service (and) when you farm out and deputize other people to be responsible for human lives, you're often going to have bad outcomes." Holman said there are other clues the state wants to outsource: There's [increased lobbying](#) by private agencies, the state's encouragement of outsourcing in recent years, and the involvement of MacGregor, who in the 2016 budget successfully pushed to [close the state's W.J. Maxey Boys Training School](#) so youth there could be sent to private juvenile justice facilities. Then there's the fact that, as Michigan implements child welfare reforms, officials are trying to learn from Florida, which outsourced foster care beginning in the late 1990s. Florida privatized its service despite four of five pilot projects failing in the early years, and it's posted mixed results since then, according to a [2010 analysis](#) from the Seattle-based Casey Family Programs. Privatization didn't save money, the report said. But Jim Paparella, president and CEO of the Grand Rapids-based [D.A. Blodgett-St. Johns](#), said the state's "a little guilty by association" with Florida but "there's no hidden agenda of we're gonna privatize the entire state." "Where it goes is where all the stakeholders think it should go together," he said last week, fresh from a meeting with DHHS officials. Foster care, by numbers •12,248: Total number of foster care cases in Michigan, as of June 1 •6,413: Number managed by the state Department of Health & Human Services, or 52% •5,835: Number managed by private agencies, or 48% Source: DHHS report to the Legislature Source: <http://www.lansingstatejournal.com/story/news/local/capitol/2015/06/29/foster-care-will-privatized-officials-say/29365631/>

Child sex abuse inquiry: High turnover rate of foster families, youth workers leaves children vulnerable, royal commission hears By [Lucy Carter](#) Updated Sun at 8:14pm Sun 28 Jun 2015, 8:14pm [Photo: The royal commission heard from a panel of four youth workers who were themselves foster children. \(Supplied: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse\) Related Story: Foster carers' register 'could make situation worse for Aboriginal children' Related Story: Ratios of FACS caseworkers to children in care 'doesn't meet standards' Map: Sydney 2000](#) Instability caused by the high turnover rate of foster families and youth workers leaves children in care vulnerable to being targeted by sexual predators, an inquiry has heard. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse this week resumed public hearings into allegations of child sexual abuse in out-of-home care. Today it heard from a panel of four youth workers from around Australia who were themselves foster children. India Spicer told the commission that children and young people struggled to speak about abuse because they had trouble making "real connections" with their foster families and youth workers. "There's a lot of worker turnover which makes it hard for the young people to build a rapport with the workers, the people who they're involved with in a professional basis," she said. "It takes a lot of time to get to know and trust these workers and then the workers leave." He was moving every six months at one stage and he was never able to form a support system with a carer or an agency worker, or with the school system; he always knew he was going to be moved on. Youth worker Kate Finn told the inquiry that she believed the current system, with its high staff turnover rates, made it hard for children to feel any stability. "We work with someone who has moved like, 22 times across [Victoria]," Ms Finn said. "He was moving every six months at one stage and he was never able to form a support system with a carer or an agency worker, or with the school system; he always knew he was going to be moved on. "If you don't have the support system, you've got no one to fall back on, so when you're feeling isolated you reach out to anyone who's offering you friendship, which is why I suppose you'd have sexual abuse happening in out-of-home care, especially through the internet because they're looking for something they don't have," she told the commission. Ms Finn agreed with counsel assisting the commission Gail Furness, who suggested that people trying to "groom" children in-out-of-home care might try and provide the affection and connections that foster children were missing. The panel of youth workers recommended more funding for the sector as well as better social media and online training for children in care and their foster families. Foster children unlikely to report abuse: youth worker The commission also heard from a youth worker that foster children are reluctant to speak up about issues like abuse because they lose government support when they come of age. Tash Dale told the inquiry that many foster children turn 18 and lose their home and support services and feel they have nowhere to turn to. "When you're in care, you stop being a ward of the state when you're 18, you stop getting help, you stop getting anything, so you're on your own and there's a fear behind that," she said. "[It's] like you're in the big bad world by yourself so I really don't think that a lot of people will then come forward about what happened to them in care unless they have support from somebody else." The hearing continues. Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-06-29/foster-families-youth-worker-turnover-leaves-kids-vulnerable/6580090>

IG: Group home supervisor charged with identity theft Posted on June 30, 2015 at 4:51 pm by [Rick Karlin, Capitol bureau](#) in [Inspector General, Office for People with Developmental Disabilities](#) [Email](#) [Print](#) [Comments](#) The supervisor of a cluster of Long Island group homes for the disabled is charged with stealing the identity of a client. Blossom Officer Thame is charged with using a client's name to open a PSE&G electricity account. She is a treatment team leader for the State Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). Here are the details: New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott and Suffolk County District Attorney Thomas J. Spota announced the arrest of a supervisor of seven Long Island group homes for the developmentally disabled for identity theft in connection with her alleged use of a service recipient's personal information to obtain electric utility service for her own home. Blossom Officer Thame, 55, of, Ridge, New York was arrested on one count of Identify Theft in the Second Degree, a class E Felony. Thame is employed as a Treatment Team Leader for the State Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). The arrest follows an investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott's office that revealed that Thame used her position as Treatment Team Leader to gain access to a service recipient's name and personal information which she then used to open a PSE&G electricity account at her personal residence. The investigation determined Thame, since early March 2014, received more than \$1,400 worth of electric utility service at her residence using the name and information of the service recipient. Separately, On April 3, 2015, Thame was charged with allegedly providing false information on an application for a New York State Driver License. She was charged with one count of Offering a False Instrument for Filing, a class E Felony. In that matter, Thame allegedly applied for a second license using the name "Blossom M. Officer-Thame" and failed to disclose that her license under the name "Blossom Thame" had been suspended. The case remains pending. Inspector General Leahy Scott said, "This employee took advantage of an individual she was tasked to protect and care for, violating her professional responsibilities and violating the public's trust, and she will be held accountable for her actions." District Attorney Spota said, "The investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott's office uncovered this appalling scheme to exploit the vulnerability of a developmentally disabled person – a crime that this defendant will be formally charged with at her arraignment in a few weeks' time. Inspector General Leahy Scott and her team did a thorough job establishing the facts of this crime and our office will continue to work with the Inspector General as we move toward trial." At the time Thame allegedly stole the service recipient's identity, she was responsible for seven sites that are operated by OPWDD, five Independent residence alternatives (IRA's) and two Independent care facilities (ICF's). The facilities housed 57 service recipients. Since late March, Thame has been out on administrative leave. Thame is due to be arraigned in Suffolk County First District Court on August 25. The defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law. Source: <http://blog.timesunion.com/capitol/archives/237971/ig-group-home-supervisor-charged-with-identity-theft/>

Mother files lawsuit over son's treatment at residential center By Julie McClure - The Republic (jmccclure@therepublic.com) Published: 7/1/15 11:43 am EDT Updated: 7/1/15 5:03 pm EDT [AAA](#) Follow The Republic: Recommended for you [Area man arrested in robbery at center](#) [www.therepublic.com](#) [The Republic - Photos: 2 children killed in SUV accident on I-65](#) [www.therepublic.com](#) [The Republic - Photos: Murder suspect calls others before 911](#) [www.therepublic.com](#) [Police raid two massage spas in Columbus](#) [www.therepublic.com](#) [Add This](#) A Clark County mother has filed a lawsuit against Columbus Hospital LLC, alleging a staff member at the company's Columbus Behavioral Center held her son in a choke hold. Cynthia Wall alleges in the lawsuit that when her then 9-year-old son was an in-patient at the center from October 2013 to February 2014, staff members there used unwarranted physical force on the boy. For more on this story, see Thursday's Republic. Source: http://www.therepublic.com/view/local_story/Mother-files-lawsuit-over-son-1435765415

Rebekah King, who was beaten and sexually abused while in care, vows to change foster care system [True stories](#) by: EMILY MOULTON From: [news.com.au](#) 4 days ago July 01, 2015 11:20AM Share [Share on Facebook](#) [Share on Twitter](#) [Share on Google+](#) [Google Plus](#) [Share on LinkedIn](#) [Share inShare2](#) [Share on Reddit](#) Text Size [Increase Text Size](#) [Decrease Text Size](#) [Print](#) [Email](#) [Increase Text Size](#) [Decrease Text Size](#) [Print](#) [Email](#) [Share](#) [Add to Digg](#) [Add to del.icio.us](#) [Add to Facebook](#) [Add to Kwoff](#) [Add to Myspace](#) [Add to Newsvine](#) What are these? Rebekah King with her husband Darren. Source: Supplied WHEN Rebekah King was just six years old, her mother went to children services and told them she didn't want her and her brothers. When it refused to take them in, she then allegedly told them she would "kill them". According to Rebekah, her mother, an alcoholic prostitute, would regularly threaten to end their lives. It wasn't until she allegedly admitted trying to strangle Rebekah that the Department of Community Services (DOCS) began to take notice, however she claims they still placed her and her two brothers back into the care of the woman who didn't want them. It was months before the children were finally removed and placed into a group home. But, sadly, for Rebekah and her brothers, the abuse did not end. Instead, the trio were subjected to varying degrees of physical

and emotional abuse for their decade-long stint in the NSW foster care system. Rebekah was made a ward of the state at the age of eight and by the time she turned 13 she had tried to take her own life. She was beaten regularly and was emotionally and verbally abused. She was also sexually abused twice. Once, she claims, by a man who had come to visit her mother, another time while she was in a group home. Rebekah King when she was in foster care. Source: Facebook

Almost two decades on, Rebekah, who is now a mother of three, says she has dealt with her demons. However, she has not forgiven the system that failed her. And she claims that it still fails hundreds of children every day. Rebekah has set up a [Facebook](#) page, The Little Girl that Nobody Wanted, and posted her case file in a bid to share her experience with others. The Sydney mum also started a [Change.org](#) petition calling for the NSW Government to set up an independent complaints commission that will investigate and stamp out the abuse of children in the foster care system. So far, more than 35,000 people have signed the petition and Rebekah met NSW Family and Community Services Minister Brad Hazzard today to discuss her campaign. "We just have such a messed-up system," Rebekah explained. "It's broken. There's no common sense in it. "I was sexually abused both in my mum's care and in foster care. But it took [DOCS] a long time to get me counselling. I was sexually abused when I was seven or eight years old but they did not get me counselling until I was 12. By then I had learnt to block it out." An extract from Rebekah King's case file. Source: Facebook

In this extract from Rebekah King's case file, a social worker writes how a young Rebekah describes being sexually abused. Source: Facebook

Rebekah explained that, besides the sexual abuse, she was subjected to varying levels of physical abuse and neglect. But it there was one home that was particularly emotionally and physically abusive, the place she refers to as the "house from hell". "I remembered being placed with this woman who would put me in the garage for 90 per cent of the day," she said. "I wasn't allowed to talk to anybody in the street because I had let people know in the past what was happening. "So she hid me, so to speak. I was only allowed inside to go to the bathroom, shower and eat and go to bed." Rebekah said the woman's cruelty also extended to her brother, whose face the foster carer once rubbed in vomit. He was only five years old. "This woman used to belt me across the head," she said. "She told me I was never allowed to smile in photos because my smile was ugly. "She dragged me at least 50m to 100m by my hair to a public cubicle to do whatever she wanted to out of spite. "After that, I was placed into another family and it was pretty much the same. I was about nine or 10 then." Rebekah King with her husband Darren and two of their children Keiara and Jed. Source: Supplied

Rebekah said that when she turned 18 she became her brothers' carer, to spare them from further years in the foster care system. Since then she has managed to rebuild her life, married her loving husband Darren, and had their three beautiful children Keiara, 9, Jed, 6, and Braxton, 1. But she still bears the scars of her past. Rather than wallow in them, she wants to raise awareness of what she says is a flawed and broken system in desperate need of repair. "My mum abandoned me, but then my life became hell. The system that was meant to care for me descended into abuse and neglect," she said. "This system has had so many inquiries, reviews and commissions yet nothing has changed in over 30 years. That's not good enough anymore. "These kids (foster kids) just want some hope and a future to look forward to. Please don't let the abuse and deaths continue unchecked." Source: <http://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/real-life/rebekah-king-who-was-beaten-and-sexually-abused-while-in-care-vows-to-change-foster-care-system/story-fnq2o7dd-1227422346290#>

Denver man sentenced for trying to hire inmate to kill abuse victim Scot Copher sentenced to 32 years to life in prison [By Anthony Cotton The Denver Post](#) Posted: 06/29/2015 04:08:15 PM MDT [Add a Comment](#) Updated: 06/30/2015 12:08:02 AM MDT A Denver man was sentenced Monday to 32 years to life in prison after soliciting a fellow inmate to kill a child he had sexually abused. According to the 18th Judicial District Attorney's Office, Scot Alan Copher, 53, provided the other inmate with a physical description of the child, a map to where the child lived, a detailed description of how the child should be killed, and how the inmate could make it look like an accidental drug overdose. Five counts of sexual abuse were filed against Copher in January 2014 after an Englewood Police Department investigation found that he repeatedly sexually assaulted the child while he was in elementary school in the early 2000s. The abuse lasted approximately three years. Source: http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_28402651/denver-man-sentenced-trying-hire-inmate-kill-abuse

LAUSD misspent money on special education that was meant for foster care, English learners, lawsuit alleges [By Thomas Himes](#), Los Angeles Daily News Posted: 07/01/15, 11:39 AM PDT | Updated: 3 days ago [0 Comments](#) A lawsuit filed by civil rights groups claims the Los Angeles Unified School District violated state law when it spent hundreds of millions of dollars on special education students. The state funding was supposed to help students living in poverty or foster care or those struggling to learn the English language, according to the lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union, Public Advocates and the law firm Covington and Burlington LLP. A non-profit group, Community Coalition of South Los Angeles and an LAUSD parent, Reyna Frias, were claimants in the civil action that alleges \$400 million last school year and next is misspent on special education. "LAUSD is breaking its promise to provide my children and millions of other students in the future with the services they need and the law says they should receive," said Frias, whose children are among those meant to be helped by the new state funding plan, called Local Control Funding Formula, or LCFF. LAUSD General Counsel Dave Holmquist denied the allegations. The district's spending, he said, follows state law. District officials have been working with the civil rights groups in hopes of avoiding a lawsuit, Holmquist said. "We're disappointed they chose to file a lawsuit," Holmquist said. A [recent report from the University of California, Berkeley](#), and United Way of Greater Los Angeles criticized the district for its spending on special education, while leaving few dollars dedicated to students for whom the increased state funding was meant to help. Last month, this news organization [reported that with nearly 14 percent of all students in special education](#), LAUSD officials had identified more pupils with learning disabilities than the statewide average and the other four largest school districts in the state. According to the lawsuit, LAUSD was already obligated to fund special education programs when the state allocated additional funding to help students who are low-income, in foster care or English learners. "If every district uses its new LCFF funds to pay for things it's already legally required to do like LAUSD, the promise of California's new funding law will evaporate overnight," said John Affeldt, managing attorney with Public Advocates. "LCFF requires that LAUSD use these hundreds of millions of dollars to deliver new and better services to targeted students." Source: <http://www.dailybreeze.com/general-news/20150701/lausd-misspent-money-on-special-education-that-was-meant-for-foster-care-english-learners-lawsuit-alleges>

Juvenile detention mentor had sexual relationship with teen, police say [Print](#) [Font \[+\]](#) [\[-\]](#) [1 Comment »](#) [By Pat Reavy](#), Deseret News [Follow @DNewsCrimeTeam](#) Published: Thursday, July 2 2015 12:05 p.m. MDT Updated: Thursday, July 2 2015 3:43 p.m. M Sat Jul 04 16:50:34 2015 Police are investigating an alleged sexual relationship between a 15-year-old girl and a woman who was assigned to mentor her in the Salt Lake Valley Detention Center. Shutterstock.com [Enlarge photo»](#) Sat Jul 04 16:56:26 2015 WEST VALLEY CITY — Police are investigating an alleged sexual relationship between a 15-year-old girl and a woman who was assigned to mentor her in the Salt Lake Valley Detention Center. As of Thursday, the 22-year-old woman had not been arrested or charged. In May, police started an investigation involving a 15-year-old girl who had been placed in the 3rd District Juvenile Court's Village Project. The project is a mentor program that uses community volunteers who are willing to work with troubled youths, according to the Utah State Courts website. Mentors and youth offenders are matched up based on common interests and location. The teen was assigned a mentor employed by Salt Lake Valley Detention, according to a search warrant affidavit. Investigators say the two developed a relationship. "During this time Salt Lake Valley Detention Center had documented concerns of an inappropriate relationship between (the adult mentor) and (the teen), which came from a third party. Salt Lake Valley Detention ended the relationship and advised (the mentor) not to continue communication," the affidavit states. Yet after the teen was released from the detention center in January, the same woman was again assigned as the girl's mentor by the Village Project, according to the warrant. A third party later discovered nude pictures of the mentor and the teenager on the teen's cellphone, the affidavit states. The girl's stepfather was notified of the photos and called police. He later discovered two of his stepdaughter's journals and turned them over to detectives. Investigators wrote that the journals described "grooming behaviors" by the woman and that the teenager "continues to write passages about their sexual activity together." During an interview in June, the woman admitted to sexual activity, the exchange of nude photos and knowing the girl was 15, according to the affidavit. West Valley police this week confirmed they are investigating the case, but declined comment, saying it has been turned over to the Salt Lake County District Attorney's Office for possible charges. Utah state court administrators issued a brief statement Thursday saying the mentor has been suspended from the program pending the outcome of the investigation. According to the state court website, mentors for the Village Project are volunteers who are at least 21 years old and "must be willing to attend an initial interview and pass a criminal record check." Email: preavy@deseretnews.com, Twitter: DNewsCrimeTeam Source: <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865631837/Juvenile-detention-mentor-had-sexual-relationship-with-teen-police-say.html?pg=all>

An atrocious use of body checks by Department of Human Services [By The Denver Post Editorial Board](#) Posted: 07/01/2015 05:00:00 PM MDT [3 Comments](#) Colorado Department of Human Services executive director Reggie Bicha. (Denver Post file) There is no question the Colorado Department of Human Services made a deplorable decision to conduct body checks on residents of state-run group homes without their guardians' permission. A state health department report released last week said the the body checks, which occurred in March, violated the "privacy, dignity and respect" of the clients. Indeed, the

report notes, the body inspections resulted in residents being "confused and "scared," with some "distracted to the point it negatively affected their behavior." Human Services Director Reggie Bicha admits it was a bad call and regrets the decision. The incident is being seized by some legislators and critics of the department to again question the quality of DHS leadership. That's their prerogative, but it seems to overlook the larger story here. The body checks were authorized in the first place because of suspicions that state-run group homes were a terrible mess — and it turns out they were. In November, nonverbal residents in a Pueblo home were found with threatening words scratched into their backs and stomachs. The incident wasn't reported by staff. In February, two residents — one of whom needed intense supervision — stole a staff vehicle and left the facility. Further investigation found staff had covered up abuse and a staffer had reportedly threatened to kill a resident. After gathering the facts, Human Services took swift action — putting 14 group home staffers on leave and coordinating with law enforcement. And last month, the Pueblo Sheriff's Office asked the district attorney to file charges in six cases. Advertisement The director of the group homes has retired. Even the bungled body checks resulted in 10 new cases of neglect and improper care. In its response to the health department's findings, Human Services originally argued that informed consent does not require guardian approval for investigations into abuse or neglect. But Bicha told The Denver Post this week that the issues around consent need "further understanding and clarity." He will put together a group of stakeholders "to look into this issue of consent and provide us with recommendations." He also acknowledged once again that not involving guardians before the March body checks was a bad mistake — even if done with the goal of finding wrongdoing. It's a mistake that must never be repeated. To send a letter to the editor about this article, submit [online](#) or check out our [guidelines](#) for how to submit by e-mail or mail. Source: http://www.denverpost.com/editorials/ci_28416681/an-atrocious-use-body-checks-by-department-human

Death at Van Vleck under investigation Jackson Hole News & Guide So far no leads indicate a crime was committed in incident at group home for kids and teens. [Story Comments](#) Print [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) Posted: Wednesday, July 1, 2015 4:30 am [Death at Van Vleck under investigation](#) By Emma Breyse Jackson Hole News&Guide | [0 comments](#) Police are investigating the death of a student at Van Vleck House this week. Teton Youth and Family Services, which runs the facility, confirmed the death Friday. The student, whose identity, age and gender were withheld by authorities, was found unresponsive just after 10 p.m. Thursday, according to Teton Youth and Family Services and call logs from Teton County Dispatch. Staff members discovered the student and began resuscitation efforts, which all of the organization's staff members are trained to perform. The student could not be revived. The Jackson Police Department is investigating the matter to determine whether a crime was committed, Lt. Cole Nethercott said. "At this point there are no leads that suggest that is the case," Nethercott said Monday. Teton Youth and Family Services spokeswoman Sarah Cavallaro issued a statement on her organization's behalf, confirming the death and giving scant detail due to the age of the student. "This is a terrible tragedy," Cavallaro said. "We've been meeting with the student's mother, and we've let her know that we share her grief, and we're doing whatever we can to support her and other family members." Cavallaro also said her organization is assisting the police "in any way possible." "Members of the TYFS staff and community grief counselors [are] working with other residents of the group home to help them deal with the tragedy," Cavallaro said. Police also declined to give details of the death or the student due to the age of the deceased and the ongoing nature of the investigation. They referred all questions to Teton County Coroner Brent Blue. A call to Blue on Tuesday went unanswered. Van Vleck House, one of three programs that Teton Youth and Family operates, serves students between the ages of 10 and 18. The goal is provide a temporary living arrangement and a "safe and structured environment" for children in those age groups facing struggles at home. Residents are usually placed at the group home via a court order in juvenile court, according to the Van Vleck House's website. Students considered for admission are able to attend public school, and do not exhibit severe risk factors, including a recent history of violent episodes, active suicidal tendencies or severe medical or psychiatric conditions that are not stabilized, the website says. Contact Emma Breyse at 732-7066 or courts@jhnewsandguide.com. Source: http://www.jhnewsandguide.com/news/cops_courts/death-at-van-veleck-under-investigation/article_67831770-631c-56a2-ab00-f40bb1b6c3dc.html

Longtime foster parent arrested for sexual assault [Story Comments](#) Print [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) [1](#) [Previous](#) [Next](#) Stephen Darrell Taylor Posted: Thursday, July 2, 2015 8:38 am [Longtime foster parent arrested for sexual assault](#) SBSD HighlandNews.net | [0 comments](#) Stephen Darrell Taylor, 68, of Yucaipa and his wife served as a foster family for the Arrowhead Foster Family Agency, Inc. between the years of 2002 and 2008. During that time, Stephen Taylor allegedly sexually abused two of the female foster children placed in his care. Taylor allegedly sexually abused the children for several years. The victims ranged in age from five to eleven and were eventually adopted by the Taylors. The family resided in three different homes during that time frame on Crestline Road, Mile High Road, and Fir Lane in the Crestline community. The sexual abuse continued until the children were removed by the San Bernardino County Children and Family Services in 2008 due to allegations of physical abuse. The sexual abuse was reported to the Twin Peaks Sheriff Station and turned over to the Crimes Against Children Detail because it involved a certified foster family. Detectives from the Crimes Against Children Detail assumed the investigation and determined approximately 27 foster children were placed with the Taylor family from 2002 to 2008. The Taylor family lost their status as a certified foster family after allegations of physical abuse to the children. On July 1, 2015, Stephen Taylor was arrested by detectives on an arrest warrant for: Oral Copulation, Sexual Intercourse with Force, Aggravated Sexual Assault of a Child, and Continual Sexual Assault of a Child. Taylor was booked at the West Valley Detention Center on July 1, 2015, at 4:31 p.m., where he was being held in lieu of \$500,000 bail. Detectives are releasing his booking photograph due to concerns Taylor possibly abused other children who were in his care during that time. Anyone with information pertaining to this investigation is urged to contact Detective Jason Frey or Sergeant Dana Foster at (909) 387-3615. Callers wishing to remain anonymous are urged to call the We-tip Hotline at 1-800-78-CRIME (27463) or you may leave information on the We-Tip Hotline at www.wetip.com. Source: http://www.highlandnews.net/news/crime_and_fire/article_6294d588-20d0-11e5-a9ba-a3e7ffbe4fc4.html

Police: Springfield teacher sexually abused child in her foster care [Trevor J. Mitchell](#), Springfield News-Leader 6:57 p.m. CDT July 2, 2015 Jessica Jones (Photo: Greene County Sheriff's Office) 1033 CONNECT [7 TWEETLINKEDIN](#) 15 COMMENTEMAILMORE Police say a teacher at a Springfield elementary school repeatedly sexually abused a juvenile who had been in her foster care since 2013. Jessica A. Jones, 32, is currently employed as an art teacher at Watkins Elementary School in Springfield and also taught at Springfield Option Site, a school on Great Circle's campus (formerly Boys and Girls Town). Jones was charged June 27 with statutory sodomy and endangering the welfare of a child. According to court documents, the victim originally met Jones when she was a student of hers, although it is not specified at which school this occurred. The victim later requested to be placed into the foster care of Jones, who completed the necessary steps to become a foster parent for the victim, court documents say. The victim moved into Jones' home in May 2013. Another child was later taken into Jones' home as well. Police say the disclosure of an inappropriate relationship between Jones and the victim was first made in 2014. The victim was the subject of a forensic child interview at the Child Advocacy Center on July 1, 2014, but did not disclose any information regarding a relationship. However, during a July 10, 2014 interview, the second child under Jones' care told interviewers that Jones and the victim slept in the same bed together and had visited an adult entertainment store to purchase pornography. The second child also told interviewers she had located pictures on a phone of Jones and the victim kissing. The phone of the victim was collected by a detective investigating the case on Aug. 1, 2014, but the investigation was suspended based on "conflicting information," according to court documents. Police later obtained a warrant on June 10, 2015, to review the materials from the seized cellphone and said there were pictures of Jones and the victim kissing, which corroborated the victim's interview. On May 26, 2015, a new police report was made by a Children's Division investigator after the victim disclosed she was involved in a sexual relationship with Jones, documents say. Those documents also say: ■In a June 9, 2015 interview, the victim told interviewers that Jones had sexually abused her since she was 14. She also said she had lied in the last interview because she liked living with Jones and "felt she had nowhere else to go, so she did not want Jessica to get in trouble." ■The victim told interviewers that after the previous year's report, Jones had started acting "more like a parent," but had tried to continue the relationship. However, the victim said she began to spend more time with friends, and this upset Jones. ■The victim said she believed she was taken to the behavioral unit of a local hospital based on lies Jones told — specifically that she was aggressive and suicidal. ■The victim said the first incident of sexual abuse occurred in July 2013, after she and Jones had been drinking together. Jones performed oral sex on the victim, and the next morning Jones asked her if they were "together." ■The victim said the two had performed oral sex on each other "so many times she could not remember." She said the last time was in May 2015. ■The victim said Jones had told her that if someone found out what happened between them, "I'd probably go to prison because of statutory rape." ■The victim also said she smoked marijuana with Jones and in one instance was given \$80 by Jones to purchase marijuana. Jones' bond was set at \$25,000, which was posted on June 30. At an arraignment Thursday morning, a preliminary hearing was set for 10:30 a.m. on July 30. Teresa Bledsoe, public information officer with Springfield Public Schools, said the district is aware of the charges and had no other comment. She also said that as it is summer, Jones is not currently in contact with children. Jones' attorney, Roger Jones,

declined to comment. Source: <http://www.news-leader.com/story/news/crime/2015/07/02/police-springfield-teacher-sexually-abused-child-foster-care/29648567/>

Sexually trafficked girl recounts litany of horrors under DCF's watch Judge Maria Sampedro-Iglesia assured a foster child who was sexually trafficked she would be sensitive to the girl's wishes. | Peter Andrew Bosch Miami Herald Staff By Carol Marbin Miller cmarbin@MiamiHerald.com [LinkedIn](#) [Google+](#) [Pinterest](#) [Reddit](#) [Print](#) [Order Reprint of this Story](#) Neglect and abandonment landed the girl in foster care. But it's what happened next, she said, that nearly destroyed her. In a hushed courtroom in Miami's gleaming new downtown Children's Courthouse, a teenage foster child inventoried the traumas she had endured at the hands of those who were assigned to protect her: She had been starved and beaten, molested and forced to fight during her two years in foster homes and group care. As a runaway, she was trafficked into prostitution. And, just as her life appeared to be mending, the girl was raped by a driver in whose care she was entrusted by a privately run child welfare group, records say. Earlier this week, Miami-Dade Circuit Judge Maria Sampedro-Iglesia allowed the girl to read a long letter in court, detailing her many grievances against the state. The Department of Children & Families "has messed me up mentally and emotionally. I know I can never get my childhood back," the girl said in court, reading from the letter she had written to Sampedro-Iglesia, who is overseeing her case. "But I refuse to let my past take my future." The girl arrived in court Monday afternoon dressed in a crisp patterned dress, clutching a teddy bear. She hugged Sampedro-Iglesia, calling the judge "the only one working for the state who has ever looked into my care, and who has ever tried to fix the errors others have made." She then told the judge she wanted to fire her court-appointed lawyer, and chided the state for failing her still. The teen, who is not being identified by the Herald to protect her privacy, came into state care in the winter of 2013. Records say her parents abandoned her, which left mental and emotional scars. In her remarks to the court on Monday, the girl did not talk in detail about what sent her to foster care. "By the age of 14, I had already been through the worst," she said, adding: "so I thought." As to what followed, the girl had plenty to say. "Since my involvement in DCF, I have always been a throwaway case, and I knew it. I personally didn't think I'd even make it." In one foster home, the girl said, parents "starved us, and turned off the electricity for punishment at night. No air, no light. We couldn't open windows or doors; they were locked." "So, that's usually how fights started." In another group home, the caregivers themselves "instigated" fights among the children. "It's literally a war over who's gonna make it out alive or not." So the girl ran. As a runaway, she told the judge, the girl sold and abused drugs. She called her caseworker to report she'd been "trafficked" into prostitution — "having guns pointed to my head and having to put guns to [other] people's heads." A DCF spokeswoman said on Friday that the agency was investigating both the teen's accusation that she was raped in May, as well as other allegations of mistreatment while in state care. "The horrors described by this young girl are absolutely intolerable," said Michelle Glady, a spokeswoman for DCF, which contracts with a private foster care agency in Miami, called Our Kids, to oversee child welfare in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. Our Kids, in turn, subcontracts with another agency, the Family Resource Center, in whose care the teenager had been placed. "DCF opened an investigation immediately following the allegations of sexual abuse by an employee of Family Resource Center of Miami. All additional allegations of abuse or neglect will be investigated. DCF is reviewing her case history and will work with Our Kids ... on providing her the care she needs to support her recovery." A spokeswoman for Our Kids said the agency "is working diligently with all parties to carefully address the matters raised in court on Monday. In doing so, Our Kids wants to ensure the child receives the best available care and services, while also making sure the child is, and feels, safe in her surroundings. The safety and well-being of every child in our care is the only acceptable outcome for us — as is the case here." Sampedro-Iglesia scheduled Monday's hearing after child welfare administrators reported in May that the girl had been raped by a 25-year-old "transporter" hired by the Family Resource Center to drive her from West Palm Beach to the Keys. The judge was outraged: "The Court finds that the actions of the agency are not only negligent, but border on reckless," she wrote in a tartly worded order. The transporter, who recently moved here from New York and had been hired by FRC three days before he was assigned to drive the teen, quit days later. He now is under investigation by the Monroe County Sheriff's Office and the FBI. The girl told authorities that he stopped at a Walmart during the eight-hour odyssey to buy Smirnoff Ice, a citrus-flavored malt drink, and then began to kiss her. Records obtained by the Miami Herald show he had been recommended for the job by a relative of his who then worked for the foster care agency, and the relative's spouse. Both references appear to have been written by the same person. The driver has not been charged with any offense. Tensions between the teen and DCF persisted throughout Monday's hearing. The girl told Sampedro-Iglesia she was willing to see a female psychologist to address mental health issues, but was opposed to speaking with a male therapist. Her current caregiver said she had found a counselor the girl liked. DCF, however, was reluctant to retain the therapist, because the state's insurance carrier couldn't pay her. And the teen began to weep when DCF's lawyer suggested she might have to move from her current home because it wasn't appropriately licensed. "I'm not moving," the girl shot back. "You try to move me and I'm running." The girl's current caregiver urged the state to let her remain where she is finally happy. "She is a victim here," the caregiver said. "If everyone can just remember she's a victim. She feels stable now, and we ask everyone to remember that." Sampedro-Iglesia reassured the girl: "I think I've proven to you," she said, "that I've kept what you want in mind. They are not going to move you without court approval." What's left, the girl said, is to somehow craft a happy ending. She likes where she is living. She is making plans to go to college, and maybe law school, with scholarship money the state will give her. "I am a reborn [person]," she said, "and I have rewritten my story. I gave my life to the Lord and I have goals and dreams to accomplish." "I don't look for sympathy. Nor do I want a pity party," the girl said. "Actually, all I'm worried about is the other children's safety who have been labeled 'a lost case.'" Read more here: <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/miami-dade/article26423824.html#storylink=cpy>

Survey Results Prompt Public Advocate To Call For Reform Of NYC Foster Care System July 6, 2015 1:18 PM [Share on email](#) [9 View Comments](#) Letitia James (credit: Getty Images) Related Tags: [Administration for Children's Services](#), [foster care](#), [Letitia James](#), [NYC Foster Care Hotline](#), [Rich Lamb](#) NEW YORK (CBSNewYork/AP) — New York City's public advocate says children are spending too much time in the city's foster care system and between multiple homes. [Letitia James](#) conducted a survey by [setting up a hotline](#) for foster parents, birth parents and children, WCBS 880's Rich Lamb reported. She called the findings "disturbing." Fifty-seven percent of respondents said a child had been placed in more than one foster home, James said. Of those children, more than a quarter spent time in five or more placements, according to the survey. Public Advocate Calls For Reform Of NYC Foster Care System Rich Lamb reports [playpause](#) The public advocate said 71 percent of those surveyed said children spent more than two years in the system. James' survey also found a significant number of reports of physical, emotional and psychological abuse. "Thousands of children in our foster care system have been allowed to languish for years on end in abusive, unhealthy situations," James said. She said it's clear the Administration for Children's Services needs to be significantly reformed. An ACS spokesman said the city has reduced the number of children in foster care from 45,000 in the 1990s to 11,000 today. He said the drop was largely due to the agency working to keep families together. Source: <http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2015/07/06/public-advocate-foster-care-survey/>

Former foster dad pleads guilty to sex charges | The Columbus Dispatch Former foster dad pleads guilty to sex charges C More Articles By [John Futtty](#) The Columbus Dispatch • Monday July 6, 2015 3:54 PM A South Side man who had been considered "an exemplary foster parent" was sentenced today to two years in prison for having sexual relations with a 17-year-old boy in his care. Herbert C. King Jr., 42, of Barkwillow Lane pleaded guilty to four counts of sexual battery. Franklin County Common Pleas Judge David E. Cain imposed the prison sentence on two counts and put King on probation for five years on the other counts, which will begin when King is released from prison. If King violates the terms of probation, he will go back to prison for another five years, the judge said. He also must register as a sex offender every 90 days for the rest of his life. King did not speak during the hearing, which the boy did not attend. Assistant Prosecutor Jennifer Hunt said the boy was placed in King's home in April 2014. In mid February, King solicited sex from the boy, she said. From then until March 7, they engaged in oral and anal sex six or seven times. The boy told his grandmother about the relationship, and both contacted Columbus police on March 8. A hospital examination of the boy on March 9 recovered semen containing King's DNA, Hunt said. There was no evidence that King instigated any of the conduct through force, she said. Although the age of consent in Ohio is 16, state law prohibits anyone who is acting as a guardian or in place of a parent from engaging in sexual conduct with a person in their care. Hunt didn't ask for a specific sentence but recommended that the judge impose "substantial prison time." Defense attorney Sam Shamansky said the two-year sentence followed by probation "was appropriate given that my client had no record and the alleged conduct was consensual." He said King disputes the facts "but didn't want to go to trial or put the young man through a trial." The boy was placed by Franklin County Children Services with King, who had been certified through Buckeye Ranch, a foster-care provider. At the time of King's indictment in April, Nick Rees, the president and CEO of the Buckeye Ranch, said King had been licensed since 2010 and often handled the type of youths whom agencies struggle to place. King's clean criminal-background check and dedication, Rees said, made him seem "an exemplary foster parent." He had been caring for four teenage boys at the time the investigation was launched. All were removed from his home on March 9. Buckeye Ranch asked for his

license to be revoked by the state when he was indicted. @johnfuttly Source: <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2015/07/06/former-foster-dad-pleads-guilty.html>

Boy says foster carer dictated 'angry' letter to mother Boys made allegations of sexual abuse against relative after being taken into care As part of a review of the case, Judge Brendan Toale was told that the boy said he refused to see his parents for a year because his former foster mother told him he would have a better life with her. Photograph: Michaela Rehle/Reuters [Fiona Gartland](#) Topics: [News Crime & Law District Court Dublin District Family Court Brendan Toale More Topics](#) Director of Public Prosecutions Child and Family Agency Mon, Jul 6, 2015, 01:00 First published: Mon, Jul 6, 2015, 01:00 [More Sharing Services](#) A boy in care who wrote his mother a "why I'm angry" letter has now said his former foster carer told him what to write, the [Dublin District Family Court](#) has heard. As part of a review of the case on Friday, Judge [Brendan Toale](#) was also told that the boy said he refused to see his parents for a year because his former foster mother told him he would have a better life with her. The boy and his brother, taken into care due to neglect, have since moved placement to a rural foster family. Allegations After they were taken into care, the boys, both at primary school, made allegations of sexual abuse against a relative. The [Child and Family Agency](#) social worker said she understood a file was due to go to the DPP on those allegations. She also said recently that one of the boys had made allegations against his birth parents. At a meeting with gardai, officers said they would not be questioning the boy about the allegations at present. The social worker also said that at a recent child in care review – a meeting between social workers, the children, a court-appointed guardian and parents – the older boy was very upset and said he didn't go on access visits with his parents because his previous foster parents discouraged it. His younger brother had separately complained that he had been punched by this foster carer, who was appointed through a private fostering organisation. The organisation had brought the concerns to the agency's attention. Concerns Asked whether the complaints about the children's previous foster carers had been referred to gardai, the social worker – appointed after the boys had moved to their current placement – said no. They were dealt with under the "serious concerns policy" and she had investigated them. She said the younger boy said his brother was present when he was punched, but the older boy said he never saw it, she said. The social worker believed the complaints did not warrant Garda notification. She said the boys were now settled in their rural placement, though they consistently said they wanted to go home. Giving evidence, the boys' mother said that at the care review her elder son said "I missed a year of my ma's life because I was told not to go to access because I'd have a better life with her [the foster mother]". He told her he wrote the "why I'm angry" letter because "she put things into my head and told me what to say and told me what to write". The solicitor for the agency said the social worker denied this was said at the meeting. The case was adjourned to a date this week. Source: <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/courts/district-court/boy-says-foster-carer-dictated-angry-letter-to-mother-1.2274508>

No water, no heat, walls coated in feces: A tragic death at a Hamilton group home INQUEST File photo A coroner's inquest is looking into the circumstances surrounding the April 29, 2012 death of Guy Thomas Mitchell, who fell into a cistern at an Ancaster assisted living home. JERSEYVILLE ROAD Cathie Coward, The Hamilton Spectator A barn at a group home property at 2226 Jerseyville Rd., where Guy Mitchell died in 2012. The house is at the end of a long treed lane. FRIDGE Evidence photo Photos from the Ancaster home where Guy Mitchell died in 2012 after falling into a cistern. These were presented as evidence in the coronor's inquest into his death. ROOM Evidence photo Photos from inside the home where Guy Mitchell died in were presented as evidence on Monday. [next play/pause pre](#) 3/4 Hamilton Spectator By [Susan Clairmont](#) [SEE MORE](#) articles from this author Perhaps the mother of Guy Mitchell can find some comfort knowing that when her childlike son was found dead at the bottom of a well, he inadvertently rescued two other vulnerable souls from the hell they lived in. Related Stories [CLAIRMONT: Caregiver disappears...](#) [Agencies were told about group home...](#) Police officers who responded to the well call in Ancaster stumbled upon a group home so squalid that two veteran police told a courtroom it was the worst house they had ever seen. There was no heat or running water. Toilets and bathtubs were full of human waste. Feces was smeared on walls, floors and furniture. The fridge was a filthy mess containing nothing more than old condiments. Beds were stripped bare and smeared with vomit. The smell was horrendous. Yet this is where Guy Mitchell, 38, lived. With him, in that house, was another man with profound special needs, David, and an 11-year-old girl with autism, Jennifer. It is believed Guy — who had difficulty seeing and hearing and was "clumsy" — was fetching water from a deep cistern when he fell in and drowned. On Monday, a coroner's inquest began searching for answers to basic questions about Guy's death on April 29, 2012. The jury of two women and three men will spend two weeks determining where, when, how and by what means Guy died, at the end of which they may make recommendations in the hopes of preventing another similar death. Guy was three when his mother, Diane Paton, took him to doctors. Though a specific diagnosis has never been arrived at, he was determined to have a "developmental delay." All his life, he couldn't read or write or dress himself. He could not cross a road and was "clumsy," says Paton, tripping over things regularly. He didn't speak much and could be a handful. "He had outbursts and wouldn't want to do what he needed to do," Paton explained during her sometimes tearful testimony. "He just became kind of hard to handle at times." Paton was raising Guy on her own and when he turned 12, the Children's Aid Society introduced her to Karen and Bill Santor. They took Guy into their Jerseyville Road West home in Ancaster. That was 26 years ago. Oversight of Guy's care transferred to an agency called Choices, which operates with funding from the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS). The Santors moved in 2000 from a small house on their property to a larger one they built farther back from the road. For many years Paton — who remained very involved with her son — was pleased with the care Guy received from the Santors, she told the inquest. "Guy was a very happy person. Always wanted to talk to people." The Spectator has previously reported that Guy was a Special Olympian, earning medals for snowshoeing. He was also a championship bowler. Bill died in 1999, Karen died suddenly in August 2011. The Santors' daughter, Keri Santor was 26 when her mother passed. She vowed to continue her mother's work and care for Guy as well as David and Jennifer. Under Keri's watch, the house became unfit for living. And Guy died. But Keri will not be testifying at the inquest. Coroner's counsel Karen Shea told the jury police have no idea where Keri is. Parties with standing at the inquest are Diane Paton, Choices and MCSS. Weeks before Guy's death, Paton had dinner at the Jerseyville Road home. She described the house as "cluttered" but said the first floor — the only floor she saw of the three storey home — gave her no great concern. However, she also testified she once heard Keri shouting at her son, and that made her worry. Just after 7 p.m. on a Sunday night three years ago, Const. Adam Brown answered a 911 call. He pulled Guy from the open cistern. He had no vital signs. Meanwhile, Acting Sgt. Doug Hall arrived at the scene and went into the house. "It stunk ... It was absolutely disgusting," he testified. "It's probably one of the worst homes I've ever been in in 32-plus years of policing." "It was very dirty ... There was vomit. The bathtub was full of feces. It was terrible." Forensic officer Det. Const. Doug Moon took photos and measurements. "As soon as I walked in the home itself ... there was a very foul odour of feces and urine," he told the jury. "It was the worst I have seen." "Deplorable." Susan Clairmont's commentary appears regularly in The Spectator. sclairmont@thespec.com 905-526-3539 | @susanclairmont Source: <http://www.thespec.com/news-story/5710565-no-water-no-heat-walls-coated-in-feces-a-tragic-death-at-a-hamilton-group-home/>

Auditor Blasts California Foster Care Agency By NICK CAHILL [ShareThis](#) SACRAMENTO (CN) - Thousands of foster children may have been exposed to sex offenders due to California's failure to verify addresses of registered sex offenders, the state auditor says. A blistering audit, released July 2, revealed breakdowns in the state's Social Services Department, which may have allowed as many as 8,600 foster children to be placed near the workplace or home of a registered sex offender, due to a faulty method of cross-checking addresses. The 31-page report also found that the state could save more than \$100 million by paying private foster agencies the same rate as county agencies. [The audit](#) found that for 21 months Social Services did address-comparisons on sex offenders who were recently registered or active and "incorrectly excluded" addresses from previous months. Social Services failed to use the entire sex offender registry and may have unintentionally placed foster children in the same facility as sex offenders. "This error could have prevented Social Services from promptly identifying registered sex offenders who may have been living or working in licensed facilities or foster homes during the 21 months in which it used this flawed methodology," said State Auditor Elaine Howle. Howle's report was a follow-up to a 2011 audit in which she criticized Social Services for not using the sex offender registry. The follow-up report uncovered 216 cases of foster children coming into contact with sex offenders who lived, worked or were associated with foster care facilities between 2011 and 2014. In one instance, a foster home caregiver knowingly allowed a registered sex offender to live in the facility while he was on parole. Investigation found that both the caregiver and the sex offender struck and abused one of the foster children. The sex offender's parole officer let him stay at the facility because she thought the foster children were actually his. Three foster children were removed from the facility after investigation. In a response letter to Howle, Social Services Director Will Lightbourne said his agency has improved its safeguards to protect children. "The department developed comprehensive processes to ensure a consistent and thorough approach to evaluate and investigate addresses of RSOs [registered sex offenders] as matched against all state and county licensed facilities," Lightbourne wrote. The audit credits Social Services with improving its address checking process, but says it failed to implement cost-saving recommendations from the 2011 audit,

involving reimbursement rates for private caregivers. The audit reiterated that private foster agencies receive considerably higher compensation rates than county foster homes and that the department could save \$116 million over the next five years if it adjusts the pay structure. Howle blasts the department for its decision to wait until 2017 to revise its rate structure. "Social Services is causing counties to continue to pay rates that do not have adequate justification," the audit states. Howle recommends that the state improve its mechanism to track and monitor addresses of registered sex offenders and require counties to give licensed foster homes higher priority over family-run foster homes. Source: <http://www.courthousenews.com/2015/07/07/auditor-blasts-california-foster-care-agency.htm>

Foster mom warned to keep closer watch on missing autistic boy, 9, says caseworker 1 / 49 Police search for missing 9-year-old boy in Davison Township Davison Township Police Chief Rick Freeman briefs the media during a press conference concerning the search for 9-year-old Omarion "Mars" Humphrey Thursday, July 9, 2015, at the Davison Township Office. During the press conference, Freeman encouraged tips and information to be directly reported to investigators and not through social media. Danny Miller | MLive.com [Danny Miller | dmille17@mlive.com](#) Print Email By Ron Fonger | [rfonger1@mlive.com](#) The Flint Journal on July 07, 2015 at 4:00 PM, updated July 08, 2015 at 1:02 PM Reddit Email Missing 9-year-old boy [No foul play in death of missing boy found in lake, police say](#) Prayer vigil for Omarion Humphrey draws hundreds to Davison park Parents of missing 9-year-old believe foul play responsible for son's death Facebook post by Genesee County Sheriff confirms identity of body found in Lake Callis Police working to confirm body in lake is missing boy [Omarion Humphrey All Stories](#) | PONTIAC, MI -- The foster mother of a [missing 9-year-old boy](#) with autism who vanished from a Davison Township park Saturday, July 4, was warned that same day to keep a closer eye on him, a caseworker testified in Oakland County Probate Court today, July 7. Geneva Harvey, a representative of Alternatives for Children and Families, which placed Omarion "Mars" Humphrey, a severely autistic boy who doesn't speak, in the foster home, said she learned of the warning after talking to police after the boy's disappearance. [Mother of missing boy believes someone has taken her son](#) Khisha Humphrey says she believes her son was taken from the Davison Township area after he was reported missing by his foster family at Lake Callis Recreation Complex. Harvey testified at an emergency probate hearing today, and an attorney for Humphrey's father questioned her about the boy's disappearance, asking if the foster mother had been warned by park workers to keep a closer watch on him. The foster mother was not named in testimony at the hearing. "Yes," said Harvey, who also said there had been another, unrelated complaint about the same foster home that was lodged with the agency because of another accusation of improper supervision of another child in the past. "He should have been watched ... every second of the day," said H. Elliot Parnes, an attorney for Humphrey's father said. "I'm troubled by many of the answers we received today." Davison Township police and hundreds of volunteers have been looking for Omarion Humphrey since his disappearance. Khisha Humphrey, the biological mother of the missing boy, said 11 of her children were placed with relatives and in foster care in February because she had inadequate housing for them. I'm troubled by many of the answers we received today. Khisha Humphrey said she was shocked by what she heard in court today and believes more accountability is needed in the foster system. "If I would have did that, I would be in jail," she said of the situation in which her son disappeared. Probate Judge Lisa Langton ordered today that Omarion Humphrey be placed on the state's missing and AWOL docket, and ordered Alternatives of Children and Families to submit a report on its investigation of the incident, including whether the foster home had any training in dealing with autistic children. Khisha Humphrey said she was surprised to discover today that the foster home where her missing son was placed had been the subject of another complaint regarding supervision of another child in their care. "That was a shock to me ... I was just like, 'What?'" she said. Khisha Humphrey, who is fighting to regain her children, said she believes her son was taken from the park. "I think he's been taken ... I want my son back," she said. Source: http://www.mlive.com/news/flint/index.ssf/2015/07/caseworker_says_foster_mom_was.html

Study Shows '80s Metalheads, Groupies Are Well Adjusted Three Decades Later July 7, 2015 [61 Comments](#) Share25K Tweet261 Share27 Reddit2 Share25.8K image: http://assets.blabbermouth.net/media/80smetalfans_638.jpg According to [Pacific Standard](#), a newly published study has found that 1980s heavy metal fans "were significantly happier in their youth, and better adjusted currently" compared to their peers who preferred other musical genres, and to a parallel group of current college students. Research in the 1980s suggested that young "metalheads" were at risk for poor developmental outcomes. No other study has assessed this group as adults; thus, a research team led by Humboldt State University psychologist Tasha Howe examined 1980s heavy metal groupies, musicians, and fans at middle age, using snowball sampling from Facebook. Online surveys assessed adverse childhood experiences, personality, adult attachment, and past and current functioning in 377 participants: 154 who were heavy metal fans growing up in the 1980s (including musicians and "groupies"); 80 who typically listened to other types of music during their teen years; and 153 current students at a California university. [Results revealed](#) that metal enthusiasts did often experience traumatic and risky "sex, drugs, and rock-and-roll" lives. However, the "metalhead" identity also served as a protective factor against negative outcomes. They were significantly happier in their youth and better adjusted currently than either middle-aged or current college-age youth comparison groups. "Despite the challenges of adverse childhood events, and other stressful and risky events in their youth," the researchers wrote, former metal fans "reported higher levels of youthful happiness" than peers with other musical tastes as well as today's college students. "They were also less likely to have any regrets about things they had done in their youth." In fact, non-metal fans "sought psychological counseling for emotional problems more than any other group, indicating a less happy and fulfilling perspective on their 1980s adolescence." The study, published in the journal *Self And Identity*, added that participation in fringe style cultures may enhance identity development in troubled youth. "Social support is a crucial protective factor for troubled youth," researchers wrote. "Fans and musicians alike felt a kinship in the metal community, and a way to experience heightened emotions with like-minded people." The full text of the article, titled "Three Decades Later: The Life Experiences and Mid-Life Functioning of 1980s Heavy Metal Groupies, Musicians, and Fans," can be downloaded for \$40 at [this location](#). Read more at <http://www.blabbermouth.net/news/study-shows-80s-metalheads-groupies-are-well-adjusted-three-decades-later/#k1PyJ6lRclCoTGYm.99>

Lawsuit says NYC has one of the worst foster care systems in US By [Bruce Golding](#) [View author archive](#) [Get author RSS feed](#) Name(required) Email (required) Comment(required) July 8, 2015 | 2:12pm [Modal Trigger](#) Public Advocate Letitia James is one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit. Photo: Helayne Seidman Social service officials are turning a blind eye to the horrific physical and mental abuse of kids languishing in New York City's foster care system — which is costing taxpayers more than \$2.4 billion, according to a new class-action suit. Around 11,000 city kids are stuck in "one of the most dangerous foster care systems in the country," according to the Manhattan federal court filing. The massive complaint — which runs to 256 pages with exhibits — alleges systemic violations of their "right to be free from harm" and other rights granted by the Constitution and various federal and state laws. It was filed Wednesday on behalf of 10 foster kids, including "Eliza W.," 16, who was 4 when she was taken from her abusive, 19-year-old mom by the city's Administration for Children's Services, or ACS, and was "shuffled ... through so many foster placements that she is unable to account for all of them," the suit says. She also allegedly suffered repeated instances of sexual abuse, beatings and intentional starvation that were ignored by her caseworker — and led to her asking to be committed to a mental hospital in July 2014. "Since her hospitalization, she has been placed on heavy doses of psychotropic medication; she reports that, as a result, she can barely string a sentence together and no longer looks people in the eye because she gets nervous," court papers say. The plaintiffs also include Public Advocate Letitia James, who the suit says "has received myriad constituent complaints concerning foster care." "Lives of #fostercare children are being ruined during their most formative years," she tweeted Wednesday morning. The suit seeks a court order requiring that ACS immediately address "the systemic failures that have been plaguing New York City's foster care system for too long." "That the responsible state and city officials have known about these problems and done nothing to fix them is inexcusable," the suit says. Defendants named in court papers include the city, ACS and the state Office of Children and Family Services. In a statement, ACS touted "great strides in reducing the number of children in foster care from a high of 45,000 in the 1990s" and said that "in the last 18 months ACS has taken significant steps in preventive work designed to keep families together and avoid placing children in foster care in the first place." "The de Blasio administration is deeply invested in improving the lives of vulnerable children, and working very closely with many partners to improve our foster care placement system," the statement said. OCFS declined to comment, saying it didn't discuss "potential or pending litigation." Tami Steckler, head of the Legal Aid Society's Juvenile Rights Practice, blasted the suit as "short-sighted" and warned that it could "stall the progress being made by those of us actually working with these families and children." "As the organization that represents almost all the children in New York City foster care, we have been working very closely with the current Commissioner to improve outcomes," Steckler said in a prepared statement. "This lawsuit is being brought by attorneys who have never represented clients in New York City's foster care system, yet purport to know how to fix it, at a time when foster care numbers are at an all-time low and collaboration is at an all-time high." Source: <http://nypost.com/2015/07/08/lawsuit-says-nyc-has-one-of-the-worst-foster-care-systems-in-us/>

The Girls Matter Too: Addressing the Girls' Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline Posted: 07/09/2015 6:34 am EDT Updated: 07/09/2015 8:59 am EDT [Tim Pearce](#) [Los Gatos](#) | [Flickr](#) [Share 304](#) [Tweet 427](#) [Email](#) 1 Comment 35 [Tumblr](#) [fark](#) [stumble](#) It is time to talk about our girls and criminal justice reform. I have devoted many years to fighting for significant reforms to our broken criminal justice system. I have called for an end to mass incarceration because of its devastating impact on men and boys of color. But, like so many others, I did not focus on our girls enough. I believed that our girls were, comparatively, less harmed by the failures of our criminal justice system. However, it has become painfully clear to me that our girls of color are suffering too--and we must have a greater acknowledgement of what is happening to them. The Human Rights Project for Girls, Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality, and the Ms. Foundation for Women just released a report [The Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline: The Girls' Story](#) that exposes how Black and Brown girls are being criminalized. And, it is not because girls are suddenly becoming violent or joining gangs at any greater [numbers](#). It is because they are arrested for their experiences of sexual abuse and trauma. Sexual abuse is one of the [primary predictors](#) of girls' entry into the juvenile justice system. The most unbelievable example of the sexual abuse to prison pipeline is what happens to girls who are trafficking victims. When I served as The United Nations Goodwill Ambassador to The Permanent Memorial to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, I attempted to bring more attention to human trafficking that is happening right now, including in our very own country. I thought and still think it is important to deal with our issues at home, instead of pretending that they only happen abroad. The sad reality is that when our girls are bought and sold for sex, they are not seen or treated as victims. Instead, they are arrested for prostitution. In fact, according to the FBI, for prostitution arrests under the age of 18, African American children comprise [59 percent](#) of all prostitution-related arrests in the U.S. As the Executive Director of the Human Rights Project for Girls, Malika Saada Saar, has pointed out to me "Our girls are criminalized for being subject to commercial rape. They are not treated as the victims and survivors of child rape that they are--instead they are unjustly arrested, jailed and detained as prostitutes. Even though many are not of the legal age to consent to sex." There are other ways that girls are pipelined into the sexual abuse to prison pipeline. For instance, over the past twenty years, girls have accounted for approximately [60 percent](#) of runaway cases. It is a status offense to run away, so girls are getting locked up for running away--even though running is a common (and necessary) response to sexual and physical violence. We tell women to run from violence, but when girls run, we arrest and detain them. [The Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline: The Girls' Story](#) maps out those key points in the pipeline--the detention of girls who are victims of sex trafficking; the arrest of girls who run away from home or become truant; and those who cross from the child welfare system into juvenile justice -- to create an understanding of the ways that girls are wrongly punished after their experiences of sexual and physical abuse. We must see what is happening to our girls at the intersection of race, gender and poverty. The terrible truth is that if you are a poor Black or Brown girl who is victimized by sexual or physical violence and trauma, your suffering is denied. Instead, you are punished for it. You are told you are not a victim of child rape, you are a child prostitute; you are not a scared, hurt girl trying to run away from an abusive parent, you are a delinquent; you are not a survivor of the sexual assault perpetrated by those you were suppose to trust, you are a bad girl. For too long, our girls' lives have been lost, disregarded, or forgotten. As we continue on our path for true criminal justice reform and an end to mass incarceration and the school to prison pipeline, we must include how our Black and Brown girls are also being wrongly criminalized. We must see, name, and dismantle the sexual abuse to prison pipeline for our girls so that they have a chance to live out their full potential. I commit to giving voice to our girls, as the father to two, as a human rights defender, and as one of many Americans demanding an end to the criminalization of our young people of color. Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/russell-simmons/the-girls-matter-too-addr_b_7760366.html

DFS worker struggled to keep own grandchildren in safe environment DFS worker struggled to keep own grandchildren in safe environment Jody Holt, left, a former supervisor with the Department of Family Services, and her son Josh Holt appear in Regional Justice Center, 200 Lewis Avenue, on Wednesday, July 8, 2015. Jody Holt agreed to plead guilty to a gross misdemeanor, and her son agreed to a class C felony. Jeff Scheid on Twitter [@jlscheid](#) (Jeff Scheid/Las Vegas Review-Journal) DFS worker struggled to keep own grandchildren in safe environment Jody Holt, a former supervisor with the Department of Family Services, appear in Regional Justice Center, 200 Lewis Avenue, on Wednesday, July 8, 2015. Jody Holt agreed to plead guilty to a gross misdemeanor, and her son Josh Holt agreed to a class C felony. Jeff Scheid on Twitter [@jlscheid](#) (Jeff Scheid/Las Vegas Review-Journal) DFS worker struggled to keep own grandchildren in safe environment Josh Holt appears in Regional Justice Center, 200 Lewis Avenue, on Wednesday, July 8, 2015. Josh Holt agreed to a class C felony while his mother Jody Holt, a former supervisor with the Department of Family Services, agreed to plead guilty to a gross misdemeanor. Jeff Scheid on Twitter [@jlscheid](#) (Jeff Scheid/Las Vegas Review-Journal) DFS worker struggled to keep own grandchildren in safe environment Josh Holt, right, and his mother Jody Holt, a former supervisor with the Department of Family Services, appear in Regional Justice Center, 200 Lewis Avenue, on Wednesday, July 8, 2015. Jody Holt agreed to plead guilty to a gross misdemeanor, and her son agreed to a class C felony. Jeff Scheid on Twitter [@jlscheid](#) (Jeff Scheid/Las Vegas Review-Journal) DFS worker struggled to keep own grandchildren in safe environment Josh Holt appears in Regional Justice Center, 200 Lewis Avenue, on Wednesday, July 8, 2015. Josh Holt agreed to a class C felony while his mother Jody Holt, a former supervisor with the Department of Family Services, agreed to plead guilty to a gross misdemeanor. Jeff Scheid on Twitter [@jlscheid](#) (Jeff Scheid/Las Vegas Review-Journal) DFS worker struggled to keep own grandchildren in safe environment Josh Holt, right, and his mother Jody Holt, a former supervisor with the Department of Family Services, appear in Regional Justice Center, 200 Lewis Avenue, on Wednesday, July 8, 2015. Jody Holt agreed to plead guilty to a gross misdemeanor, and her son agreed to a class C felony. Jeff Scheid on Twitter [@jlscheid](#) (Jeff Scheid/Las Vegas Review-Journal) [image](#) By DAVID FERRARA LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL Jody Holt was overwhelmed and outnumbered, working overtime as a supervisor with the Department of Family Services to ensure her own grandchildren were safe, often arriving home to a mess. For more than a year, as her son Joshua Holt and his wife, Veronica, struggled with meth addiction, they raised their children in the elder Holt's home. She would throw out one bag of garbage only to quickly be inundated by more trash, her lawyer, Michael Smith, told the Review-Journal after a court hearing Wednesday. She washed so many clothes her washing machine broke, so she began doing laundry at a relative's house. Her grandchildren, ages 2 and 5, [wandered through the filth during the day](#), but slept in Jody Holt's bedroom -- the only clean spot in the entire house. She paid for her 27-year-old son and 25-year-old daughter-in-law to go to methadone clinics, but that did not seem to help. Jody Holt even mentioned her concerns about her home situation to co-workers, looking for answers. When she told her son she wanted to call the police, he threatened to take her grandchildren away, her lawyer said. They would live on the streets, and she would never see them again, Joshua Holt told his mother. "She was placed in a situation I don't think anybody wants to be placed in," Smith said. "That is: tolerate the mess or know that your grandchildren are living on the street. She's charged with a crime for loving her grandchildren. Jody's not a villain." But the children had no bruises or injuries and they were well-fed, Smith said. A Family and Youth Services manager visited the home in the 5600 block of North Riley Street in March, after Child Protective Services received a report of "environmental neglect," according to police. The 56-year-old former supervisor at Child Haven and long-time Clark County employee was charged two months later with two counts of child abuse, neglect or endangerment after authorities found her northwest valley home "a significant threat to the safety of the children." As an adult living in the home, she had a responsibility to make sure the children were safe. Police said that as a supervisor for the Department of Family Services, Holt was required by law to report child abuse or neglect, but did not do so. Under state law, mandatory reporters who suspect child abuse "in his or her professional or occupational capacity" must notify authorities. Holt simply did not want to risk losing her grandchildren, her lawyer said. "When you have a professional responsibility to contact somebody, the reason that duty to report exists is because third-party people have sort of an outside perspective," Smith said. "When it's your family, you have sort of clouded vision." Holt's last day as a county employee was March 19, according to county officials. She started as a county word processor on Feb. 18, 1981 and was promoted several times. On Dec. 15, 2007, she went to work as a child development supervisor. On Wednesday, she agreed to plead guilty to gross misdemeanor child abuse, neglect or endangerment, and her son agreed to the same charge as a class C felony. Prosecutors said they would not oppose probation for both. Last month, Veronica Holt [also pleaded guilty to felony child abuse](#), neglect or endangerment. When Child Protective Services received a report about the environment in her home, Jody Holt kicked the children's parents out. When she learned of the police investigation, Holt moved the children to an uncle's home, authorities said. The children are now in foster care, Smith said, and their grandmother visits them a couple times each month, which is acceptable, though perhaps not enough. "Everybody recognizes that Jody Holt is the anchor, the pillar, of her grandchildren's lives," Smith said. "It's what they know. They love their grandmother. Their grandmother loves them." Contact reporter David Ferrara at dferrara@reviewjournal.com or 702-380-1039. Find him on Twitter: [@randompoker](#) Source: <http://www.reviewjournal.com/news/las-vegas/dfs-worker-struggled-keep-own-grandchildren-safe-environment>

Feds punish state for failing foster care standards Feds say too many kids are re-entering the system. By [Brandon Stahl](#) Star Tribune July 10, 2015 — 11:36am Text size [comment41](#) share tweet [email](#) Print more Share on: Share on LinkedIn Share on Google+ Share on Pinterest Copy shortlink: Purchase: [Order](#)

[Reprint](#) More than 200 children have gone through Kate and Tyree Walton's foster home in Brooklyn Park in the past four years, but for them one child stands out. The girl was 5 in 2012, when the Waltons took her in. Over the next three years, the Waltons watched the girl treated like a yo-yo. Child protection workers sent the girl back to her drug-addicted father, only to pull her from the home and bring her back to the Waltons. Each time they've had her, the girl "is more withdrawn," Kate Walton said. "She's older, understands what's going on, and she's angry." What happened to the girl, considered foster care "re-entry," has happened to more than 8,000 Minnesota children since 2007. That's too many for the federal Children's Bureau. Last month, the agency told the state that it was withholding more than \$755,000 in child protection funding because Minnesota's re-entry rates are too high. Only four counties in the state had acceptable re-entry rates, according to records obtained by the Star Tribune through Minnesota's public records law. The national standard is no more than 10 percent of children re-entering foster care within a year, yet 58 counties had rates double the standard. Clearwater, Norman and Winona counties had rates at 40 percent or more, the highest in the state. Minnesota has failed to meet the re-entry standard since at least 2007, records show. In 2014, about one in every four foster kids returned to out-of-home care, often because of repeated abuse. Cases closed That cycle, said Traci LaLiberte, a University of Minnesota child welfare professor, can have devastating effects on children. One reason for the high re-entry rate, she said, is that child protection walks away after reuniting children with troubled families. "What is clear is that when kids get returned home, the agency should stay involved," said LaLiberte, the executive director for the school's Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) will recover costs from the federal penalty by taking the money from counties, basing their share on the number of children who were sent back to foster care. Hennepin and Ramsey counties will shoulder about \$280,000 of the penalty due to their high re-entry rates and larger share of foster children. Since 2001, the Children's Bureau has fined seven states and the District of Columbia for failing federal child protection standards. The federal children's agency is also punishing Minnesota for not making required monthly visits with foster care children. The standard is 90 percent, but the state hit that target only 78 percent of the time in 2014. The penalties come at a time when the number of children in foster care has grown to more than 11,000, and fewer families are signing on as foster parents. Compounding the problem is that for several years, the state has failed to meet several other federal standards that measure whether foster children are placed in safe, permanent homes, the Star Tribune has found. Thousands of foster children have been moved between several homes before they're reunited with their families or adopted. "We're not meeting the needs of the child," Jim Koppel, the assistant DHS commissioner for children and family services, said Thursday. "When we intervene in the best interests of the child ... we have to continue to serve that child in all the places, in all the settings that child is in." Koppel and DHS Inspector General Jerry Kerber will co-chair a foster care work group formed in June that will address the problems found by the federal government and the Star Tribune. "We are going to substantially change the way we do foster care," said Koppel, who was appointed to his post in December following the Star Tribune's reporting on child protection failures. "We need to make more of an effort to have the best homes for these children." For many kids, the lack of stability will result in years of trauma. Saprina Kennedy is trying to adopt one such child, her 12-year-old niece, who before age 4 had already been in foster care after suffering abuse. After she was returned home, in 2008, the then-5-year-old girl was found walking around an ice-covered parking lot without shoes or a coat. Kennedy said the girl was starving and looking for food. She went back to foster care. The girl has been through 24 foster homes in the past 10 years, Kennedy said. She is now in a Wisconsin facility, being treated for post-traumatic stress disorder and, as Kennedy put it, "rage." "She deserves better than what she's gone through," Kennedy said. Source: <http://www.startribune.com/feds-punish-state-for-failing-foster-care-standards/313088651/>

Teens missing from Roane County treatment facility On the Fourth of July, three teens ran away from "Roane Academy," near Rockwood. Officials found one in the Nashville area. Becca Habegger, 8:30 p.m. EDT July 10, 2015 Two teenagers are still missing after running away from a Roane County youth treatment facility last week (Photo: WBIR) 16 CONNECT [3 TWEETLINKEDINCOMMENTEMAILMORE](#) (WBIR - HARRIMAN) - Two teenagers are still missing after running away from a Roane County youth treatment facility last week. On the night of July 4, three teenagers ran away from Roane Academy, which is a relatively new residential treatment facility for juvenile males. The structure is located in a Roane County industrial park near Rockwood and Harriman. Officials found one of the teenagers, a 15-year-old, in the Nashville area on Tuesday. The other teens, 15 and 17 years old, remain missing. Roane Academy is owned and operated by Nashville-based **Omni Visions, Inc.** That's a regional agency for adoption, foster care and mental health, with facilities across Tennessee and several surrounding states. Omni Visions President and CEO Steve Norris said on the evening of July 4, one of the teenagers damaged a sprinkler in a restroom at the facility. That triggered the sprinkler system and fire alarm. Mark Akers is the facility's director and said, "when you pull the fire alarms, all the security doors, they open. They have to by law." As staff and residents exited the building, three teenagers ran away. The remaining 18 residents, Akers pointed out, did not run away. The incident is one of the several issues some neighboring business owners were concerned would come to fruition. In January 2014, Roane County commissioners approved a zoning change in the Roane County Industrial Park that allowed for the facility to operate. At the time, business owners Barry and Betty Kober retained an attorney and raised concerns about bringing the facility into the area. They own Precise Industrial Coatings, Inc., located less than a quarter of a mile down the road from Roane Academy. Source: <http://www.wbir.com/story/news/local/2015/07/10/teens-missing-from-roane-co-treatment-facility/29994989/>

Taken From Families, Indigenous Children Face Extreme Rates of State Violence in US Sunday, 12 July 2015 00:00 By [Britney Schultz](#), [Truthout](#) | Report font size [decrease font size](#) [increase font size](#) [Print](#) 365 Email In a photo taken around 1936, Aboriginal Canadians attend a school at Fort Resolution in the Northwest Territories. Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission has concluded that the country's former policy of removing Aboriginal children from families for schooling could be best described as "cultural genocide." In the US, Native children were subjected to similar policies for more than a century. (Photo: Library and Archives Canada) The plight of Indigenous children recently made headlines, as Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission released a [damning report](#) calling the country's long-held policy of removing Native children from their families by force and placing them in state-funded residential schools "cultural genocide." [According to the report](#), even before Canada was founded in 1867, churches were operating boarding schools for Indigenous children, and the last federally supported residential school didn't close until the late 1990s. In the US, Native children were subjected to similar policies for more than a century. [Article VII of the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868](#) stated, "In order to insure the civilization of the Indians entering into this treaty ... they, therefore, pledge themselves to compel their children, male and female, between the ages of six and sixteen years, to attend school." In response to the history of removing Native children from their families and cultures and forcing them into (often abusive) boarding schools, [the Indian Child Welfare Act \(ICWA\)](#) was passed in 1978. The law [established requirements](#) for public and private child welfare agencies and state courts to adhere to when working with tribal children and families. However, the current manifestation of Native child removal is the child welfare system, and the ICWA is theoretically supposed to prevent that system from becoming a vehicle of systematic removal of children. According to Assistant Attorney General for the Cherokee Nation Chrissi Nimmo, at its most basic level, "ICWA requires state courts and private agencies to always seek family reunification or family placement, involve tribes in decision-making of their children and protect parental rights - one of the most basic and fundamental rights in this country." However, due to continued violations and noncompliance with the ICWA, in February of 2015, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) [published new guidelines](#) to strengthen the law, which will be codified at the end of the year. Daniel Sheehan, chief counsel of the Lakota People's Law Office in Rapid City, South Dakota, believes there is currently no enforcement mechanism inherent in the ICWA, which makes it easier to violate. "No federal agency feels its place is to enforce the Indian Child Welfare Act, and the issue is under the radar because [the group it represents] is not a politically powerful constituency." Nimmo said that the proposed changes are to federal regulations that interpret ICWA, not changes to ICWA itself. "As the mother of Indian children and a tribal attorney, I personally and professionally fully support the proposed changes," she said. The most important aspects of the new regulations, according to Nimmo, are clarifications on notifying tribes of potential ICWA cases, a definition of "active efforts" to prevent the breakup of families and a definition of "good cause," which is a critical term in the ICWA. In spite of efforts to prevent it, the current generation of Indigenous children in the US is facing a double threat: being removed from their homes and tribes to be placed with (usually) white foster families and being forced into privately and publicly funded programs for "at-risk youth" - institutions that are often havens of neglect and abuse, and sometimes even have political conflicts of interest. These ongoing threats are the continuation of a long series of broad-scale attempts at forced assimilation. Indigenous activist, writer and prison abolitionist Kelly Hayes, who is also Truthout's Community Engagement Fellow, speaks to this firsthand. "As the child of a displaced Indigenous man [of the Menominee Nation], I see the removal of our people ... as part of the larger effort to diminish the number of Native people in the United States," Hayes said. "While anti-Blackness, as perpetrated by the American government, has often taken the form of persecuting anyone with any known Black heritage, regardless of appearance, anti-Native policies have involved a process of destruction that has, in the last hundred years, included concerted efforts at assimilation." Foster Care, "Children's Homes" and Profiting Off Native Loss In South Dakota, Indigenous

children make up 15 percent of the child population, but comprise more than half the children in foster care. Nearly 90 percent of the kids in family foster care are [placed in non-Native homes or group care](#). Daniel Sheehan works with tribal leaders in the state to end the epidemic of illegal seizures of Native children by the state of South Dakota. Sheehan said the biggest concern of the nine tribes he works with is their children being taken away and the parents being prosecuted for "neglect." This practice represents a pervasive bias against Native families - especially those living on reservations - the Lakota People's Law Office [asserts in a 2013 report to Congress](#). The South Dakota Department of Social Services equates economic poverty with neglect and fails to understand the tribes' kinship system of extended family - something the ICWA was actually designed to protect. "Under this bias," the report goes on to say, "South Dakota's rate of identifying 'neglect' is 18% higher than the national average." Chrissi Nimmo said the issues that disproportionately affect tribes and lead to the removal of children should be considered "correctable conditions," instead of accepted as the status quo. Currently, one typical state response to poverty seems to be to immediately and permanently remove children from their families. "There is, without a doubt, lasting trauma to children who are permanently removed from their birth families," she said. "[Native] women most often are the ones thrown under the bus," Sheehan said. "Hence the disproportionate rate of incarceration." Native Americans also report widespread discrimination by the police. According to a [2009 report](#) by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, Native women are criminally prosecuted at six times the rate of white women. The women often get charged with assault for resisting arrest, Sheehan said. "Lakota women don't accept being manhandled by white police, and these cops are being trained like military occupying forces, with military equipment like BearCat armored vehicles patrolling the reservations." When Native parents are arrested and their children are taken away, the parents have no means of contact with their children, and no information is communicated to them, Sheehan said. This makes it harder for families to reclaim their children, and easier for the state to perpetuate the cycle of forced removal of Indigenous children. Taking children away from their Native families is also profitable: According to a February 2015 report from IBISWorld, adoption and child welfare services in the United States rake in [\\$14 billion a year](#). And there are other indications of moneyed influence in child removal. Money Motives With its high dependence on federal financial support, Sheehan said, South Dakota receives \$79,000 per Native child per year under the adoption track of the state's foster care system. He said the kids are often dosed with pharmaceuticals because they are labeled as having "special needs," and [goes on](#): "We found out that when the state of South Dakota seizes a Lakota child, they were forced to take a mental health screening test. The screening test was drafted up by the Eli Lilly Corporation, which is a major manufacturer of psychotropic drugs. When they flunked the test, they were determined to be in need of one or more of these drugs." A [report](#) by South Dakota Indian Child Welfare Act directors found that, "South Dakota appears to have prescribed antipsychotic drugs to foster children prior to 2006, even though the FDA had not approved the use of these drugs by children at that time. And after 2006, South Dakota seems to have overprescribed these agents to children." The federal Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 includes a provision called the [Adoption Incentive Bonus](#), through which states earn federal bonuses when they increase adoptions of children who are in need of new permanent families. A designation of "special needs" is significant to note, because [Congress authorized a bonus payment](#) of \$4,000 for each foster child, with an additional \$2,000 for each "special needs" adoption above the baseline payment of the Adoption Incentives program. According to the [North American Council on Adoptable Children](#), families who finalize the adoption of a child with special needs in 2015 can claim a tax credit of \$13,400. Furthermore, for the decade since data has been collected on the status of "special needs" children in the foster care and adoption system, each year (from 2003/2004 to fiscal year 2013), South Dakota has claimed [100 percent of the children in its system as "special needs"](#). Some of these facilities, such as the Children's Home Society of South Dakota, have ties to politicians. Before he pivoted into politics full time and became the state's 32nd governor, then-Lieutenant Gov. Dennis Daugaard left his banking job in 1990 to become the development director of the Children's Home Foundation, the fundraising arm of the Children's Home Society of South Dakota. He held the position for 12 years before becoming the [executive director of the organization](#). According to an [NPR investigation](#), under Daugaard's leadership, the organization's finances grew sevenfold, adding two additional facilities and doubling the amount of money it received from the state. Children's Home then began to outsource its examination of potential foster homes and its training of foster care parents. Additionally, [the investigation noted](#), this conflict of interest was evidence of Daugaard using his power to grant contracts to the Children's Home, often not even considering other social service organizations. A [2013 report](#) endorsed by seven tribal governments concluded there is "a strong financial incentive for state officials to take high numbers of Native American foster children into custody. Anecdotal evidence and testimony confirm that this incentive motivates the state's actions." The Juvenile (In) Justice System and Native Youth According to [US Census Bureau data](#), in 2013, there were about 5.2 million Native Americans in the United States, representing approximately 2 percent of the total population. About 32 percent of Indigenous people in the US are [under the age of 18](#). Though they are only a small percentage of the country's demographic, Native youth "disproportionately suffer adverse effects at the stages of arrest, diversion, detention, petition, adjudication, probation and secure placement in the juvenile justice system," concludes a [February 2015 report](#) from the Lakota People's Law Project. Significant resources are funneled toward "services" that displace and confine Indigenous youth. From 2012-2013, the South Dakota Department of Social Services contracted with Youth Services International to provide services for juveniles placed through Corrections, Child Protection, and Tribal Court at the Chamberlain Academy, a youth detention and treatment facility in Chamberlain, South Dakota, at a rate of [\\$142.94 per child per day](#). Youth Services International describes its work as "serving at-risk youth ... rehabilitating juveniles through integrated programs, staff mentoring and environments to promote [learning and change](#)." However, the [Florida-based company](#) has a [history of abuse allegations](#). Until recently, one purveyor of these "services" was the Chamberlain Academy, which [closed in January 2014](#). In 2000, former residents of the academy brought an action against it in [Brown v. Youth Services Intern. of South Dakota](#). The plaintiffs said they had been sexually assaulted by a counselor. Following the 1999 death of a 14-year-old girl at a boot camp program at South Dakota's Juvenile Training School in Plankinton, South Dakota, an investigation [uncovered a widespread pattern of systemic abuse](#) by facility guards, including youth being held in isolation or chained to their beds and the use of pepper spray against young prisoners. After being closed for five years, the facility reopened under a new name, Aurora Plains Academy, and [new management](#). According to [Niche rankings and statistics](#), Native American children constitute 53 percent of the students at Aurora Plains Academy. Daniel Sheehan told Truthout that such abuses are not anomalies. "The children at these institutions are subjected to extreme discipline and punishment," he said. "They only get about two real hours of schooling per day in joint-age classrooms, and if they act up, they get points against them, with multiple violations of rules leading to the student being transferred to a juvenile facility." Lasting Impact Sheehan believes that state violence toward and oppression of Indigenous children is under-reported. "There aren't powerful groups lobbying on behalf of Natives to give them a voice, so nobody knows about the issues affecting them." Truthout's Kelly Hayes said Native children removed from their families and tribes are attempting to learn and thrive in a society that has not only inflicted historical traumas, but also one that imposes values that exist in opposition to the affirmation of their own self-worth. "Removal and assimilation - the dilution of identity through the unlikelihood that removed children would produce offspring with their own kind, while living in white society, and the destruction of culture by way of separation and cultural isolation, as well as the forced sterilization of women living on reservations, is not simply the transition from genocide to 'cultural genocide' - It is genocide, and requires no qualifiers," she said. "It is a continued effort to annihilate us, and wipe the Indigenous off the face of the continent." There are [566 federally recognized tribes](#) in the US, and as Truthout reported before, suicide rates for Native youth are at least [triple the national average](#). There is undoubtedly lasting trauma to children who are permanently removed from their birth families, said Chrissi Nimmo. "Each child literally holds the future of a tribe," she said. "If children are removed, tribes are at risk of becoming extinct - both because there literally may not be children to continue the tribe and because the cultural identity of the tribe cannot be passed to the next generation." Source: <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/31802-indigenous-children-face-extreme-rates-of-removal-and-state-violence#>

--> **'I want answers and justice for my daughter': Inquiry into closure of mental health facility after three troubled teens killed themselves within eight months of the vital service shutting down** Government closed Barrett Adolescent Centre in Brisbane in January 2014 Talieha Nebauer, 17, died three months later in an independent adult unit Will Fowell, 18, and Caitlin Wilkinson Whiticker, 18, both died by August Inquiry called into the closure after documents warned of potential deaths By [Leesa Smith for Daily Mail Australia](#) Published: 11:04 EST, 12 July 2015 | Updated: 11:10 EST, 12 July 2015 17shares [View comments](#) An inquiry into the government's decision to close a vital centre for high-risk adolescents tragically comes too late for three troubled teenagers. Talieha Nebauer 17, Will Fowell and Caitlin Wilkinson Whiticker, both 18, all took their own lives within eight months of the Queensland government shutting down the Barrett Adolescent Centre in Brisbane in January 2014. A \$9.5-million commission inquiry will be conducted into why the closure occurred despite government documents warning of potential deaths among some of the young patients at risk of suicide who resided at the mental health facility, [7.30](#) reported. SHARE PICTURE Copy link to paste in your message +4 Talieha Nebauer 17, took her own life three months after Barrett Adolescent Centre was closed Nichole Pryde has been fighting for the inquiry since the death of her daughter, Talieha, in April last year. The distraught mother said she wanted justice and answers for her daughter who had been struggling with mental illness since she was 14 year old. 'You go to bed of a night time and you don't want to fall asleep

because you don't know how your child is going to be, you're just always on edge waiting for the next thing to happen,' Ms Pryde said. 'I fought hard to get her to go (the Barrett Centre) because I thought that was the last chance of keeping her alive.' SHARE PICTURE Copy link to paste in your message +4 Caitlin Wilkinson Whiticker was dead by early August - eight months after the mental healthy facility closure After the centre closed, the 17-year-old moved into independent accommodation into an adult unit but died nine weeks later. Ms Pryde said the clinic director had told her it was the best 'out of a list bad options' for her mentally-ill daughter. 'She expressed concerns that there were plenty of places where she could ... harm herself,' she said. 'She'd been in hospital three years in 24/7 care — to go to a little unit on her own without anybody in her unit with her. 'They did promise me six weeks of the 24-hour care but that only lasted two weeks because she was doing really well.' By early August, Will and Caitlin had also died. SHARE PICTURE Copy link to paste in your message +4 Will Fowell, 18, had also passed away by early August following the long term residence for adolescents at high risk of suicide shutting down Queensland Health Minister Cameron Dick said the inquiry, which will be led by a retired judge, would focus on the 'full facts surrounding the decisions' to seek out the truth about the closure of the centre by the former Newman Government. Mr Dick said Opposition Leader, Lawrence Springborg, and Health minister at the time, who will face the witness stand, assured he wouldn't abandon patients. SHARE PICTURE Copy link to paste in your message +4 Justine Wilkinson said the Barrett Centre gave her 18 years with daughter Caitlin Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3158231/I-want-answers-justice-daughter-inquiry-closure-mental-health-facility-three-troubled-teens-killed-eight-months-vital-service-shutting-down.html#ixzz3gHxQqmxq> Follow us: @MailOnline on Twitter | DailyMail on Facebook

These Congress Members Want to Stop Conversion Therapy at 'Boot Camps' Reps. Adam Schiff and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen are demanding an end to the abusive, discredited practices seen at poorly regulated 'treatment centers' for so-called troubled teens. BY Sunnive Brydum July 14 2015 6:46 PM ET 23256 Rep. Adam Schiff speaks at the podium, while Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (in white) stands by. A bipartisan pair of Congress members introduced a bill today that would prohibit counselors at so-called boot camps from engaging in efforts to try to change a camper's sexual orientation or gender identity. ADVERTISING Rep. Adam Schiff, a California Democrat, and Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a Florida Republican, introduced a bill today modeled on the Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act, which had been introduced several times by former California Rep. George Miller and passed the U.S. House without making it through the Senate, notes [The Hill](http://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/268111-congress-wants-to-stop-conversion-therapy-at-boot-camps). The legislation would require residential treatment programs to abide by uniform standards, including a sweeping prohibition on child abuse of any kind, including starvation, denial of water or medical treatment, and efforts to change a young person's sexual orientation or gender identity, commonly known as "conversion therapy." The phrase "residential treatment programs" refers to a broad range of programs, generally aimed at modifying undesirable behavior in young people deemed "unruly." Such programs are sometimes referred to as "boot camps" where "troubled teens" are "scared straight." The lawmakers pointed to a troubling trend of parents sending their children to these facilities as a "last resort," then finding that the children have been abused or even tortured while attending "camp." "While many residential treatment and youth 'boot' camp programs help young people who are at risk, I am increasingly concerned about reports of malfeasance in some camps," said a statement from Ros-Lehtinen, one of the first Congressional Republicans to support marriage equality and who happens to have a transgender son. "Some practices, such as starvation, excessive physical restraints, and neglectful medical treatment, are intolerable in any setting. Additionally, although sexual orientation and gender identity are immutable characteristics, other programs seek to behaviorally modify LGBT youth. No one should undergo this physical or emotional abuse and Adam and I are proud to help take the first step in solving this important problem." "We cannot ignore reports that young people have died and thousands have suffered abuse at the hands of those who run and work at residential treatment programs under the guise of providing critical therapy and rehabilitation services," said Schiff. "That's why we are introducing legislation to hold all residential treatment programs accountable. The measure will also increase the transparency of these programs so that parents can make informed and safer choices for their children. Families that turn to these treatment programs for help, often as a last resort, must know that their kids are safe and in the care of professionals." While the legislation builds on the stalled efforts of former Rep. Miller, Ros-Lehtinen and Schiff's bill expands the scope of those efforts, according to a press release from Schiff's office. According to that release, the legislation introduced today will: "Hold all youth residential treatment programs accountable to a set of minimum federal standards including prohibiting all residential treatment programs that purport to provide youth with mental health and behavioral treatment from any form of child abuse and depriving children of water, food, or medical care; requiring that all children have reasonable access to their families and a hotline to report instances of abuse; and requiring all staff members to be properly trained to identify instances of child abuse." "Establish civil penalties for any violation of these standards and ensures private right of action so that victims and their families can seek civil damages as well." "Increase transparency of the "troubled teen" industry by requiring all residential treatment programs to publicly disclose any past record of child abuse and state licensing status." "Prohibit all residential treatment facilities from discriminating against youth with disabilities and LGBT youth, and requires all programs to employ safe and evidence-based treatment that protects children against harmful or fraudulent practices." "Require states to work with Health and Human Services (HHS) to report and investigate instances of child abuse at residential treatment programs, and further requires them to establish standards that are at least as strict as federal standards. Also requires states to develop policies that ensure every program in their state is properly licensed and in compliance with license requirements." Source: <http://www.advocate.com/youth/2015/07/14/these-congress-members-want-stop-conversion-therapy-boot-camps>

Mesa teenager's suicide tied to group home problem, custody battle Posted: Jul 10, 2015 9:05 PM PDT Updated: Jul 11, 2015 6:39 AM PDT By Adam Longo Email Connect adam.longo@mercedith.com SUPERIOR, AZ (KPHO/KTVK) - A local mother is pointing the finger at the state of Arizona. She says the system has failed her daughter, who tragically took her own life last month. MOREAdditional LinksPoll Pinal County mom Holly Mutchie had been fighting the court system, trying to regain custody of her 16-year-old daughter, Grace. Grace had essentially been kidnapped when she was 3 years old. "She loved taking pictures of everything," said Mutchie. "She had a very contagious laugh. Her laugh would get you laughing." Mutchie wasn't there for a big chunk of Grace's life. Her ex-husband took her and left the state when Grace was still a toddler. "No fault of my own at all. Never gave up parental rights. His family pretty much kept my girl from me," said Mutchie. Fast-forward 12 years to this past December. The ex-husband was gone and Grace was living with his parents who then gave her up to be a ward of the state. Grace was moved into a group home even though her mom desperately wanted her back. "If that parent hasn't done anything wrong, why does it have to take so long? That's what I don't understand," said Mutchie. For seven agonizing months, Holly went through the court process that involved background checks, drug tests and parenting classes. On June 17, two police officers arrived at her doorstep. "That's when they laid it on me," said Mutchie. "They told me she shot herself at the school." Grace had taken her own life on the campus where she was set to begin as a junior this summer, at Sun Valley High School in Mesa. Mutchie says Grace was bullied at the group home and was picked on and beat up in school. She was anxious to get home with her mom. "We're working on this. We're getting closer each day. And she says 'I can't wait to get out of there. I can't wait to get there with you,'" said Mutchie. "Every single day, I miss her so much." Mutchie and her family will host a memorial service for Grace on Sunday, July 26 at 3 p.m. at the Family Life Christian Center in Superior. Source: <http://www.azfamily.com/story/29524541/mesa-teenagers-suicide-tied-to-group-home-problem-custody-battle>

Coroner chastises 'shameful' conduct of agency that oversaw group home GUY MITCHELL Hamilton Spectator file photo Workers at the agency that placed Guy Mitchell in the care home where he was found dead testified about their concerns at an inquest Tuesday. [next play/pause pre 1/1 SIDEBAR Susan Clairmont](#) Susan Clairmont's commentary appears regularly in The Spectator. Email: sclairmont@thespec.com Twitter: [@susanclairmont](https://twitter.com/susanclairmont) See [more articles](#) by this author: "This guy died under your watch:" Interim director comes under fire at inquest Agency staff had concerns for months before Guy Mitchell died in a cistern Squalid home got passing grade days before Guy Mitchell's death Hamilton Spectator By Susan Clairmont SEE MOREArticles from this author The coroner is ticked off. So much so that he has threatened to revoke the standing of a key party at the inquest into the death of Guy Mitchell, a developmentally delayed man found dead in a cistern outside the care home where he lived. Fed up with the secrecy and disrespectful behaviour of Choices, the agency that was supposed to be overseeing Guy's care, Dr. Jack Stanborough berated the organization not just once — but twice — Friday. "I think Choices and its conduct is shameful," he said angrily in the morning to a courtroom full of lawyers while the jury was absent. "To hide material and produce it halfway through the inquest is shameful. "I don't understand the disrespect for Guy Mitchell, for his family, for society, for this process ... Am I upset? Darn right I'm upset." Guy died at the Ancaster property where he lived on April 29, 2012. The inquest Stanborough is presiding over is examining the circumstances of his death and the oversight of care given to developmentally delayed adults. The jury is invited to make recommendations at the end of the inquest to prevent similar deaths. Police who arrived to the drowning that night discovered the house Guy lived in was deplorable. There was no water or heat, toilets and tubs were full of

human waste and there was no food in the fridge. Besides Guy, another disabled adult named David and an 11-year-old with autism named Jennifer lived in the home. Police believe Guy had been ordered to draw water from the cistern and he fell in. Stanborough's anger was sparked by the recent surfacing of a 196-page report by Choices into Guy's death. Although this inquest process began three years ago, and the inquest itself began Monday, Choices just now gave the report to the coroner. It was written in 2012. "I don't know what the game is ... but Choices' conduct in this situation — to have this information requested from them at a case conference three years ago and have it produced for me 24 hours ago — is shameful," Stanborough railed. He added he has conducted more than 30 inquests and this is the first time he is considering revoking a party's standing, which allows them to have an official role at the inquest and be able to ask questions. "Can you imagine what it was like to be Guy Mitchell, who has the level of understanding of a five-year-old, and be in the water alone and dying?" Stanborough asked as Jeff Manishen, lawyer for Choices, stood before him. Manishen told the coroner he was unaware of the report until recently. During the lunch break it came to light that there are at least two Choices case file binders about Guy that have not been handed over to the inquest. And "communication books" that were to be passed between the Choices day program Guy attended, and the Santor family with whom he lived, are also missing. Furthermore, a notebook about the Santors kept by a Choices manager suddenly appeared at the lunch break — but 13 pages related to the time of Guy's death have been ripped out. Clearly trying to control his rage, Stanborough said — slowly and clearly: "To say that's troublesome is perhaps a bit of an understatement." This is not the first time Stanborough has been angry during the inquest. Earlier this week he learned a lawyer representing Choices' insurance firm was sitting next to Manishen at the counsel table. Stanborough made the lawyer pack up her things and move into the body of the court, reprimanding her for not being honest about who she was representing. The insurance firm does not have standing at the inquest and, therefore, should not have been at the table or privy to some of the documents that lawyer had received. Susan Clairmont's commentary appears regularly in The Spectator. <http://www.thespec.com/news-story/5728063-coroner-chastises-shameful-conduct-of-agency-that-oversaw-group-home/> Source: <http://www.thespec.com/news-story/5728063-coroner-chastises-shameful-conduct-of-agency-that-oversaw-group-home/>

Blount County Children's Home razed - The Daily Times: News Blount County Children's Home razed [Story Comments Image \(2\) Print Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) [Previous](#) [Next](#) Mark A. Large Blount County Children's Home This file photo from 2012 shows the now-demolished Blount County Children's Home in Maryville. Mark A. Large | The Daily Times Blount County Children's Home The site of where Blount County Children's Home once sat is shown. Posted: Sunday, July 12, 2015 12:00 am [Blount County Children's Home razed](#) By Joel Davis joeld@thedailytimes.com TheDailyTimes.com | [0 comments](#) Posted on Jul 12, 2015 by [Joel Davis](#) About 20 months after it ceased operation, the story of the Blount County Children's Home is over and done. The old facility at the former Blount County Children's Home property on McCammon Avenue has been demolished to make way for a new headquarters for the 5th Judicial Drug Task Force. County Commissioner Jamie Daly brought up the demolition at Tuesday's Blount County Agenda Committee meeting. In response, County Commissioner Mike Caylor, who works for the Maryville Fire Department, said the facility had been condemned because of structural deterioration. There are only two options for dealing with a condemned building, he said. "It's fixed, which in my opinion was not economically feasible, or it is removed." Former Children's Home Board of Directors Member Tom Eustis said the demolition was regretful but necessary by this point. The facility had not been properly maintained during its last years of operation. "If I was Blount County, I probably would have done the same thing," he said. "The problems came before that. It's a crying shame it went from almost completely refurbished to being torn down. I don't know what else you'd do with it." On Oct. 30, 2013, just three months and 15 days shy of its 120th anniversary, the Children's Home finally shut down after a troubled decade. A proposal to put the property back to use to serve children never came to fruition. The home had struggled financially since it stopped hosting children in 2003. After weather damage caused when a roof was being replaced, an insurance payout gave the Children's Home a much needed rehab: the roof was finished, new flooring was installed, the facility was painted and new furniture was bought. But, as the years passed, then came financial troubles. Maintenance fell by the wayside, and at least two groups that were allowed to lease space in the building damaged the interior. At some point, vagrants apparently moved in. "From there it all went downhill," Eustis said. By the time March 2014 rolled around, a county commissioner who toured the building described it as being in horrendous condition. In 2014, the Blount County Commission voted to allow the task force to use the property. The task force will pay for improvements to the site and facilities but would have to be reimbursed if it lost use of the property or it was sold. The task force has been looking for a location for a new headquarters in recent years. In February 2014, the County Commission tabled a request to spend \$300,000 to purchase four acres of property off Mustang Drive in Maryville on behalf of the agency. Reservations had been expressed about the property's appraisal of \$300,000 compared to its last assessment. The history of the Children's Home, in Maryville, dates back to 1885 when a group of women involved in the Women's Christian Temperance Union movement began discussing the need for a home for children and destitute mothers. The women went door-to-door across the county, asking each family to donate 10 cents to establish the home. It opened Feb. 15, 1894. In the aftermath of the Brian A. vs. Sundquist lawsuit settlement, the state moved away from the use of group homes in favor of foster care. The Children's Home last hosted children in 2003. The Children's Home had experienced financial difficulties in recent years. In 2012, it had to pay off \$10,697 in property taxes it owed to the county and city of Maryville due to administrative errors. From July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2012, the Children's Home lost \$164,526, according to an audit of its finances. Source: http://www.thedailytimes.com/news/blount-county-children-s-home-razed/article_333c3bcb-3fb8-5e59-b015-8cc82729a9f7.html

Spotlight on foster agency linked to missing boy found dead in lake 1 / 52 Body in lake believed to be missing autistic boy Omarion Humphrey, police said Davison Township Police Chief Rick Freeman confirms that 9-year-old Omarion "Mars" Humphrey's body was found on Friday in Lake Callis, during a press conference Saturday, July 11, 2015, at the Davison Township Office, 28 hours after the body was found. The preliminary autopsy showed no signs of foul play and that the body had been in the water the whole time, Freeman said. Danny Miller | MLive.com [Danny Miller | dmlle17@mlive.com](#) [Print Email](#) By [Ron Fonger | rfonger1@mlive.com](#) The Flint Journal on July 13, 2015 at 5:00 AM, updated July 13, 2015 at 9:50 PM [Reddit Email Missing 9-year-old boy](#) [All Stories](#) | [Watch police chief talk discovery of missing boy's body](#) Davison Twp Police Chief Rick Freeman confirmed the body found Friday is that of missing 9-year-old Omarion "Mars" Humphrey. He said preliminary autopsy results show no signs of trauma or foul play, and that the boy was likely in the water since he went missing. BURTON, MI -- The state is investigating the Burton agency that oversaw the foster home where Omarion Humphrey was placed, trying to determine if the 9-year-old autistic boy was properly cared for and supervised before his [disappearance at Lake Callis Recreation Complex](#) in Davison Township. [Omarion's body was found in the lake](#) Friday, July 10, after having been brought to the park by his foster mother, who lost track of the boy during the outing. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services wants to know whether Burton-based Alternatives for Children & Families did its job investigating the foster home where Omarion had been placed before he vanished Saturday, July 4, from Lake Callis. Investigators are also checking whether Alternatives followed licensing rules, including the development of training plans to help Omarion's foster family deal with Omarion's special needs, DHHS spokesman Bob Wheaton said. "We are conducting an investigation right now, and we can't comment on any ongoing investigation," Wheaton said of the case. "(When there is) an incident as serious as a child being missing, we would look into the licensing agency." The Flint Journal-MLive could not reach Alternatives for Children & Families Chief Executive Officer Yvonia Richardson for comment Thursday, July 9, or Friday, July 10, but state records show her agency has been no stranger to special investigations. Since 2008, the state has carried out 10 investigations of Alternatives, records show, including a 2014 case in which the agency was found to have placed a child with relatives for more than six months without completing a home study or documenting that the home was safe and an appropriate placement for the child. The agency's license as a child welfare agency is in good standing despite the investigations and a license renewal report in January that required a corrective action plan because of multiple violations, including no documentation that Alternatives made required unscheduled visits of foster parents or caregivers in three of 14 cases that were reviewed. Foster care workers must make an unannounced home visit to licensed homes every quarter, according to MDHHS rules. Alternatives, which state records show was incorporated in 1988, has been under some scrutiny since Humphrey was reported missing on Independence Day as thousands of police, volunteers and tracking groups have searched for the boy, last seen barefoot and wearing only swim trunks. Geneva Harvey, who represented Alternatives at an emergency court hearing last week, told an Oakland County Probate Court judge Tuesday, July 7, that police told her Humphrey's foster mother had been warned by park employees to keep a closer eye on him just hours before he vanished. Harvey also said the foster family where Humphrey was placed had been the subject of another complaint of improper supervision of another child in the past. Probate Judge Lisa Langton has ordered Alternatives to submit a report detailing what type of training members of the foster home where Humphrey was placed had for supervising autistic children by July 24. Attorneys for Humphrey's biological mother and father each questioned Harvey about the foster home at the same hearing. The Flint foster home has not been named in court or by police. Harvey said in response to questions in court that the Humphrey case is not the first time the same foster family has faced an allegation of improper supervision. Richard Taylor, an attorney for Humphrey's mother,

said someone has to answer for why Omarion wasn't properly supervised. "It baffles me that this family did not take more heed to watch him," Taylor said. The Journal could not reach Parnes or Taylor for additional comment. Source:

http://www.mlive.com/news/flint/index.ssf/2015/07/state_investigating_burton_age.html

Group homes not best option for kids or taxpayers Montgomery 10 p.m. CDT July 13, 2015 Children do best when raised in stable homes. But many who are removed from parental homes because of abuse or neglect end up in group-care facilities that are expensive for taxpayers and far from optimal for the child. Every Kid Needs a Family, a new report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, offers sound recommendations on getting more children back into nurturing homes. Drawing on 2013 data, the report says of the 402,407 children nationwide removed from their own families, 84 percent were placed with relatives or in foster homes, while 14 percent went to group settings. Alabama's numbers are a bit below the national average, with 79 percent of children in family or foster care and 18 percent in group placement. That's not horrible, but the state could do better, says Tracey Feild, director of the Casey Foundation's Child Welfare Strategy Group, and we agree. In fact, Alabama is doing a bit better, lowering group facility placements from 20 percent in 2009 to the more recent 18 percent. The state Department of Human Resources has also successfully used an intrastate border agreement to place some 70 Alabama children with nearby relatives in Georgia, and is developing a border agreement pilot program between Mobile County and Pascagoula, Miss., area counties. A similar arrangement with Tennessee may be in the works, great steps for keeping more children in family homes. Making more progress makes sense fiscally, as well as for children's well-being, according to the report. Keeping a child in a group setting costs seven to 10 times that of family or foster home placement. Therefore, states that strongly support Medicaid and other agencies that provide services to children in the community save dollars in the long run. Alabama lawmakers threatening harsh cuts to Medicaid providers, including pediatricians, because of the General Fund crisis should ponder that equation long and hard. Strong funding for DHR, which oversees child abuse and foster care programs, is also critical. Recruiting and retaining suitable relatives or foster parents to take children in can't be done on the cheap. Minus careful oversight, the potential for harm is too great. The study also calls on policymakers, state agency leaders and family court judges to prioritize family setting placements. That's particularly important for the youngest of children. Alabama requires special consent to put infants and toddlers in regular group facilities, but doesn't limit use of shelter care, which Feild says is no better than other forms of group placement. A number of other states either prohibit putting infants and toddlers in any group setting or require special consent to do so. Alabama lawmakers should enact similar restrictions. Source: <http://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/story/opinion/editorials/2015/07/13/group-homes-best-option-kids-taxpayers/3009680/>

Boarding School in Hastings starts selling wine despite students being too young to drink By [Western Daily Press](#) | Posted: July 11, 2015 Boarding School in Hastings starts selling wine despite students being too young to drink VIEW GALLERY Boarding School in Hastings starts selling wine despite students being too young... Share Tweet Share Pin It Email Copy link to paste in your message / SHARE PICTURE Copy link to paste in your message Boarding School in Hastings starts selling wine despite students being too young to drink SHARE PICTURE Copy link to paste in your message Boarding School in Hastings starts selling wine despite students being too young to drink A posh school has started selling its own wine despite most of its students not being old enough to drink. The exclusive boarding school has produced 750 bottles of dry white and sparkling wines which have been grown, harvested and fermented on campus. Buckswood School, in Hastings, East Sussex, planted their own vineyard five years ago and are just starting to see the fruits of their labour with their second harvest. Students at the school, from ages 11-18, have been involved in every step of the process - from planting to fermenting and bottling - but won't be involved in the drinking stage. The school are being supervised under the careful eye of expert locals Carr-Taylor Vineyards. Why This Boots Anti-Ageing Serum Is About To Sell Out Everywhere... Clinically proven to reduce wrinkles over time, it's time to meet the UK's hottest anti-ageing serum. Promoted by N°7 Headteacher Mark Redsell said: "The idea for the Buckswood Vineyard was born out of the combination of the excellent local grape growing conditions on our Sussex coastal estate and the desire to give all the Buckswood scholars yet another opportunity to experience the world hands-on, in science, business, art and geography. "Experience is the 'Buckswood Difference' and it is at the heart of everything we do. "Our sole aim is to produce young ladies and gentlemen that have an inner confidence and have a myriad of experiences that set them apart from their contemporaries. "There is a chance for every academic discipline at Buckswood to use the project as a resource." The bottles are being sold at school events and profits have been donated to various charities. Read more: <http://www.westerndailynews.co.uk/Boarding-School-Hastings-starts-selling-wine/story-26872032-detail/story.html#ixzz3giOv4sXG> Follow us: [@WesternDaily on Twitter](#) | [WesternDaily on Facebook](#)

Houseparent at Boarding School Arrested for Child Molestation 22,386 12 Hudson Hongo [Profile](#)[Follow](#)[Unfollow](#) Hudson Hongo Filed to: [crime pennsylvania](#) [child molestation boarding schools](#) 7/13/15 6:45pm [Edit](#) [Delete](#) [Invite manually](#) [Promote](#) [Dismiss](#)[Undismiss](#) [Block](#) for [gawker](#) [Hide](#) [Share to Kinja](#) [Go to permalink](#) A Pennsylvania man who worked as a houseparent at the Milton Hershey School was arrested for a number of sexual offenses this weekend after authorities say he molested an 8-year-old student, [PennLive.com reports](#). According to police, the girl told another houseparent on Saturday that 41-year-old Fernando Zagaceta had "touched her inappropriately." [From WPMT](#): The girl said she was sleeping in her bed when Zagaceta began touching her arm and pulled her blanket down. She said he then pulled her pants down and began to touch her. Police say Zagaceta admitted to being in the girl's room and touching her hand to see if she was sleeping. He said he was taught by another house parent to do that. "Zagaceta initially couldn't remember if he touched her legs or removed the blanket," police wrote in an affidavit of probable cause. [In a statement](#), the **Milton Hershey School** said it reported the incident to police immediately and has barred Zagaceta from returning to the campus. Advertisement "Such behavior is reprehensible and unacceptable, and we are taking this matter very seriously," said a school spokesperson. "The safety of the children in our care is our highest priority, and we are focused on providing all the care and support that this student needs right now." Zagaceta now faces charges of indecent assault, unlawful contact with a minor, corruption of a minor and endangering the welfare of a minor. Source: <http://gawker.com/houseparent-at-boarding-school-arrested-for-child-moles-1717596651>

Reducing Psychotropic Prescriptions Requires Systemic Reform By Marie K. Cohen, July 13, 2015 The over-reliance on psychotropic medication for children in foster care has been drawing a lot of attention both among policymakers and in the media. A recent study reports that in 2012, Pennsylvania's foster children were nearly three times as likely to be prescribed psychotropic drugs for behavior problems as other children on Medicaid. Proposals before Congress and various state legislatures attempt to address the excessive use of psychotropic drugs for foster children. But it is important to recognize that over-reliance on psychotropic medications is a symptom of larger problems. In my five years as a foster care social worker in the District of Columbia, I saw several young people who were given too many psychotropic medications. In every one of these cases, serious and general problems with the foster care system played a significant role. One such problem is the lack of involvement of many foster parents in the care provided to their charges. In my practice as a social worker, it was very rare for foster parents to take children to the psychiatrist. The foster parent was not there to tell the psychiatrist what the child's symptoms were, or how the child was responding to the medication already prescribed. Instead the social worker, with far less detailed information, was the liaison between the foster family and the psychiatrist. Most foster parents did not take their child to the psychiatrist because they worked full-time and expected the social worker to take their children to appointments. "Real parents" know they have to take off from work for this purpose. If more foster parents treated their foster children as their own, there would be less reliance on inappropriate psychotropic medications. Foster parents need to be part of a vigorous treatment team including the psychiatrist, therapist, social worker, Guardian ad Litem, and birth parent. Such a strong team, with the foster parent fully on board, is one way to prevent inappropriate medication. As I've argued before, in order to make sure foster parents are willing and able to do this for children with special needs, they need to be paid as professionals for whom parenting is a full-time job. A major investigative report of California's system found that of the 3,800 youths living in group homes, more than half were authorized to receive psychotropic drugs. One reason for this may be that group homes are serving the most troubled youth. But any group home relying on medication as a means of control rather than treatment clearly has serious problems. Poor mental health care for Medicaid recipients is another root cause of the overuse of psychotropic medications. Because Medicaid reimbursement rates are so low, the quality of psychiatric services delivered through it is notoriously poor. One Medicaid psychiatrist would write my client's prescriptions as we were walking into the office. She had no intention of talking to her patient before we left with the prescriptions, even though Medicaid was being billed for an office visit. Another psychiatrist insisted on prescribing medication to a patient even though she had been doing well without it. He expressed the fear that in the absence of medicine, the judge on the case would blame him for any misbehavior by the client. A reduction in the use of medication requires an increased reliance on therapy. President Obama's plan to reduce psychotropic medications supports state efforts to come up with alternative, evidence-based practices such as trauma-informed therapies. But in the absence of increased Medicaid reimbursement rates, these new therapies will be administered mainly by poorly-reimbursed providers. Because the poor quality of Medicaid therapists is widely recognized, the District of Columbia contracts with other providers to provide therapy to a small

number of clients, the most troubled ones. But most foster children have to rely on mediocre Medicaid therapists. In order to address the overuse of medication, we need to recognize the broader problems that contribute to it. It makes sense to monitor medication use among foster children and target group homes or psychiatrists who are out of line in their use of medication. But adding layers of review without addressing the root causes of the problem might just reduce the amount of medication children receive. It will do nothing to ensure they receive the appropriate treatment to meet their needs. Marie K. Cohen is a former child welfare caseworker for Washington, D.C. She previously worked as a policy analyst and researcher at the U.S. Government Accountability Office, the Welfare Information Network, the Center for Law and Social Policy and the University of Maryland Welfare Reform Academy. Want to share your opinion or analysis with colleagues in the youth services field? Join our one-of-a-kind Blogger Co-Op, and share in the benefits from your work! TAGS: Blogger Co-Op, child welfare, DC, drugs, foster care, Marie Cohen, mental health, prescription, psychiatrist, psychotropic, social worker, Therapy © 2012 The Chronicle of Social Change Source: <https://thchronicleofsocialchange.org/opinion/reducing-psychotropic-prescriptions-requires-systemic-reform/10660>

Who's watching your children? Criminals working in child care Our three-month I-Team exclusive [Jarrod Holbrook](#) 12:35 PM, Jul 13, 2015 11:33 PM, Jul 13, 2015 Our I-Team has uncovered dozens of local people with violent and questionable criminal histories working in day cares or becoming foster parents. WFTS WFTS Copyright 2012 Scripps Media, Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. Our I-Team has uncovered dozens of local people with violent and questionable criminal histories working in day cares or becoming foster parents. WFTS Our I-Team has uncovered dozens of local people with violent and questionable criminal histories working in day cares or becoming foster parents. The state is well aware of it. It's called an exemption for criminal disqualification. Some of the exemptions the I-Team found are raising serious concerns with parents. It gives a second chance to criminals who want to work with children. Basically, it's a waiver for those who fail a criminal background check and still want to become day care workers or foster parents. The I-Team found dozens in the greater Tampa Bay area have been granted these criminal exemptions by the state's Department of Children and Families. We sifted through DCF records and found the state granted exemptions for people with charges ranging from prostitution, aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer, federal bank robbery to several domestic assault and battery charges. This interactive map will show you the variety of charges for which people have received exemptions. In Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Pasco counties we found the state granted 35 criminal exemptions since 2012. "It does surprise me. These are not the things you would normally see," said Richard Filson, a child abuse attorney and a board member for Florida's Children First. In his 25 years of experience, he said he's seen plenty of cases where DCF placed children in dangerous homes. The I-Team was not able to get the names of the people granted exemptions or where they work. The state's DCF secretary Mike Carroll tells us that's not public record. You can view the state's exemptions for day care and foster care workers [here, https://www.scribd.com/collections/14354226/DCF-exemptions](https://www.scribd.com/collections/14354226/DCF-exemptions) Have a tip? Send it to I-Team Investigator Jarrod Holbrook and follow his reports on his [Facebook page](#). Copyright 2015 Scripps Media, Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. [Print this article](#) [Back to Top](#) Source: <http://www.abcactionnews.com/news/local-news/i-team-investigates/whos-watching-your-children-criminals-working-in-child-care>

Former teacher charged with secretly filming children at Bristol boarding school 1 / 1 Jonathan Thomson-Glover is accused of carrying out offences at Clifton College Clifton College Jonathan Thomson-Glover allegedly made images of more than 120 victims [Claire Hayhurst](#) Tuesday 14 July 2015 55 [Print](#) Note: We do not store your email address(es) but your IP address will be logged to prevent abuse of this feature. Please read our [Legal Terms & Policies](#) [A](#) [A](#) [Email](#) A former teacher has been charged with making indecent images of children through cameras at a boarding school and another property. Jonathan Thomson-Glover, 53, who taught at Clifton College in Bristol, has been charged with 36 counts of making, taking and possessing indecent images of children. It is understood today's charges relate to more than 120 victims who were allegedly filmed by cameras at Clifton College and an address in Cornwall over a 16 year period. Thomson-Glover, of Wadebridge, will appear before Taunton Magistrates' Court on July 20. Detective Inspector Andrea Kingdon, of Devon and Cornwall Police, said: "We've charged a 53-year-old man with 36 counts of making, taking and possessing indecent images. ADVERTISEMENT "Jonathan Thomson-Glover, from Wadebridge in Cornwall, has been charged following a joint investigation between Avon and Somerset Police and Devon and Cornwall Police. "He is a former teacher at Clifton College in Bristol. He has been released on bail to appear before Taunton Magistrates' Court on Monday July 20. Read more: [National plan launched to stop faith-based child abuse](#) [Call for new rules after teacher avoids jail for affair with pupil](#) [Teachers among suspected paedophiles charged in major operation](#) "Information was initially passed to Devon and Cornwall Police by the National Crime Agency relating to indecent images of children downloaded from the internet. "Following further inquiries, a team of officers from both forces investigated offences relating to the creation of indecent images committed at Clifton College and an address in Cornwall. "None of the charges relate to contact offences. We've been working closely with the College and our partner agencies throughout this investigation and we're grateful for their ongoing support." Anyone with information to help the investigation is asked to contact Avon and Somerset Police's Operation Initial team on 101. Those affected by the investigation should visit the force's website for details of independent support and advice, or call Victim Support on 0800 168 9111. Press Association Source: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/former-teacher-charged-with-secretly-filming-children-at-bristol-boarding-school-10388152.html>

Congressional bill seeks to essentially ban 'gay conversion' programs across the U.S. Adam Schiff Alex Brandon / Associated Press Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Burbank), pictured in May, said Tuesday: "We cannot ignore reports that young people have died and thousands have suffered abuse." Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Burbank), pictured in May, said Tuesday: "We cannot ignore reports that young people have died and thousands have suffered abuse." (Alex Brandon / Associated Press) By Mary Ann Toman-Miller [Mental Health Minority Groups](#) Adam B. Schiff Ricardo Lara Ileana Ros-Lehtinen Residential treatment programs for young people that engage in controversial "gay conversion" therapy would face comprehensive federal regulation under a bill introduced Tuesday on Capitol Hill. By prohibiting the facilities from discriminating against LGBT and disabled youths and allowing residents or their families to sue in federal court, the proposed legislation could essentially ban so-called gay conversion therapy nationwide. [L.A. legislator, activists say gay conversion therapy still exists](#) [Hailey Branson-Potts In an effort to halt reported abuse at programs claiming to help young people -- such as offering to "fix" gay children -- a state lawmaker and LGBT activists on Friday announced a campaign to regulate the so-called "troubled teen" industry. In an effort to halt reported abuse at programs claiming to help young people -- such as offering to "fix" gay children -- a state lawmaker and LGBT activists on Friday announced a campaign to regulate the so-called "troubled teen" industry. \(Hailey Branson-Potts \)](#) Many such programs – intended to rehabilitate children with mental health problems, behavioral or substance abuse issues – have been accused of instead starving their charges, restraining them physically and mentally abusing them. Some cases of neglect have led to death or suicide, state statistics have shown. "We cannot ignore reports that young people have died and thousands have suffered abuse at the hands of those who run and work at residential treatment programs under the guise of providing critical therapy and rehabilitation services," Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Burbank), one of the bill's cosponsors, said at a news conference Tuesday. [Related Nation Now](#) [White House backs banning gay conversion therapy for minors](#) [See all related](#) 8 An estimated 4,600 teenagers were enrolled in such programs in 2013, said Paul Gionfriddo, president and chief executive of Mental Health America. Families tend to turn to these residential "boot camp" programs as a last resort after unsuccessful experiences with traditional inpatient mental health services, he said. In some circumstances parents send their children to treatment programs in an effort to change their sexual orientation from gay, lesbian, transgender or bisexual to straight, known as "gay conversion" therapy. California banned the practice in 2012. [Supreme Court rejects challenge to law banning gay-conversion therapy](#) [Patrick McGreevy](#) The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday turned down a request to hear a challenge to a California law prohibiting mental health counseling aimed at converting minors from being gay to straight. The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday turned down a request to hear a challenge to a California law prohibiting mental health counseling aimed at converting minors from being gay to straight. (Patrick McGreevy) Some of the treatment facilities have subjected young people to practices such as "starvation, excessive physical restraints and neglectful medical treatment," said Republican Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida, the bill's other cosponsor. "No one should undergo this physical or emotional abuse." Similar versions of the bill passed in the House in 2011 and 2013, but died in the Senate. Schiff was optimistic about prospects for the new bill. "No child can be scared straight, and no one should have to endure attempts to change who they are," said Lorri L. Jean, chief executive of Los Angeles LGBT Center. "It's long past time for Congress to pass sensible legislation to regulate this rogue, multimillion-dollar industry that's profiting from the abuse of young people." [cComments](#) @cynicalretiree , Thanks for sharing your superior biblical knowledge. KING JAMES - 1 at 10:59 AM July 16, 2015 [Add a comment](#) [See all comments](#) 28 Jodi Hobbs of Fullerton, president of the Survivors of Institutional Abuse organization, described her own experiences in a private California therapeutic boarding school and said she's still grappling with them. The facility, she said, would attempt to "break the wills" of its young boarders by using techniques such as locking them in a punishment room for hours at a stretch. Schiff emphasized the need for federal regulation, noting that "programs are often shut down in one

state only to open in another under a different name." State Sen. Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens) introduced similar legislation in California this year to increase regulations and oversight on private residential programs, mandating licensure of such facilities. Critics questioned the need for federal regulation in states that already regulate residential care facilities. Megan Stokes, director of government and public relations at the National Assn. of Therapeutic Schools and Programs, an industry organization of treatment programs, said such states should be exempt from the bill. Several law professors agreed that Congress had the constitutional power to enact such legislation. "Such a federal law, which hopefully would eliminate gay conversation therapy, as California law has done, would be clearly constitutional," according to Erwin Chemerinsky, dean of UC Irvine Law School, who pointed to Congress' power to regulate interstate commerce. Adam Winkler, professor of law at UCLA, emphasized the need for truthful disclosure in these programs. "Lawmakers here are trying to stop [caregivers] from giving patients misleading, scientifically inaccurate information," Winkler said. Gionfriddo pointed to the greater transparency the bill would impose, requiring all residential treatment programs to publicly disclose any past record of child abuse and state licensing status. "Parents would have more information about the program, better contact with their children, and greater assurance that programs were evidence-based and not dangerous for their children," he said. In April, the White House announced its stance against conversion therapy programs for minors. Source: <http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-gay-conversion-programs-20150714-story.html>

Experiments in multigenerational foster care aim to increase stability and normalcy 1 / 11 Multigenerational foster care - 5 Superheroes adorn the walls of a common room in Susan Midland's Southeast Portland foster home for teenage boys. [Amy Wang | The Oregonian/OregonLive Print Email](#) By [Amy Wang | The Oregonian/OregonLive](#) The Oregonian Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#) on July 15, 2015 at 11:00 AM, updated July 15, 2015 at 11:05 AM 2 Reddit Email Now and then Amanda Midland tells one of her foster kids something and he'll reply, "What did your mom say?" That's because Midland's mother, Susan Midland, also is a certified foster parent in the same Southeast Portland home. So is Amanda Midland's fiancé, Sal Rico-Martin, who also lives there. The trio has been experimenting since last fall with multigenerational foster care, taking in teenage boys who are either in state custody or in the juvenile justice system on behalf of [Boys & Girls Aid](#), the Southwest Portland foster care and adoption agency. Across town, a similarly intergenerational approach to foster care is at the heart of [Bridge Meadows](#), a 4-year-old community of nine families and 30 elders in North Portland. To learn more To get involved with multigenerational foster care through Boys and Girls Aid: 503-542-2301 or boysandgirlsaid.org. To learn more about Bridge Meadows: 503-953-1100 or bridgemeadows.org. The two efforts aim to provide foster children the same benefits: broadening their access to adult mentors and role models and making it easier for them to achieve stability and normalcy. Stability matters because every move is a traumatic event that "breaks the trust cycle one more time," said Irene Clements, Texas-based executive director of the [National Foster Parent Association](#). And "normalcy for these kids is key, regardless of their ages." While it's too soon to assess outcomes for the foster youth who have stayed at the Midland home, they have benefited from "more structure, care, support and resources" as well as fewer transitions because the trio can relieve one another, Michelle Ottaviano, director of shelter and foster care for Boys & Girls Aid, said by email. And the youth take part in family activities and outings: going to the gym, checking out yard sales, cheering at Amanda Midland's older son's baseball games, visiting food carts and exploring Saturday Market and the Oregon Zoo. [Bridge Meadows bridges generations while providing foster care](#) Executive director Derenda Schubert explains the Portland nonprofit's mission. At Bridge Meadows, each foster family commits to creating a "forever family" by adopting at least three children – the number in a typical sibling group – over a five-year period. Elders who join the community provide everyday activities and connections by teaching art, walking kids to school, listening to how a child's day went and attending baseball games and dance recitals. The wealth of statistics on foster children doesn't extend to foster parents, so it's impossible to tell how common multigenerational fostering is. According to state figures, Oregon had 4,006 certified foster homes as of Sept. 30, 2014, the majority of which were two-person households, but the state doesn't record the relationship between the foster parents. Clements said she believes the Midlands' homegrown approach is more common nationwide when it comes to multigenerational fostering. Either way, she said, it's crucial for all involved parties to discuss which kids they want to serve and why, their expectations and whether they mesh, and to have compatible motivations for being foster parents. *** On a Monday morning in mid-June, the Boys & Girls Aid house looks like just another family home on summer break. Amanda Midland's elementary school-age sons wander in and out; squirt guns and other toys spill out of a basket on the front porch. Amanda, 31, a professional tattoo artist, relaxes in a short-sleeved top and shorts that reveal an abundance of ink. Rico-Martin, also 31, is between shifts as a Safeway clerk. In the kitchen, Susan Midland, 48, has a slow cooker preparing pulled pork for the evening meal. But upstairs, the bedroom doors are numbered and each bedroom is outfitted for double occupancy. Posters titled "House Rules" remind the occupants to "use your manners" and that bedtime is 10 p.m. on weeknights. Boys & Girls Aid once used the 2,585-square-foot house as a group home for girls but decided to move that program elsewhere, said Elizabeth Vrooman, the agency's recruitment coordinator. Meanwhile Susan Midland had been telling Vrooman, her supervisor, that she wished she could take in the kids whose cases she managed. "I kept hearing that and I kept agreeing because she has a lot of really great skills," Vrooman said. Now the three adults are nearly nine months in. So far, they said, their approach is working. "They're bound to have one of the three of us that they're more willing to connect with," Amanda Midland said. Her sons add a third generation to the mix, she said, giving the foster youth an incentive to talk and behave respectfully and appropriately. "A lot of times we hear them say, 'Oh man, maybe I should be a better role model for my sibling when I go home,'" Susan Midland said. *** In the beginning, Bridge Meadows was about the children. Four years later, said executive director Derenda Schubert, "we've seen this flourishing and this blossoming of every generation who lives here." The community has come a long way from its first year, which Schubert described as "everybody getting used to each other and the trauma flourishing." Now, she said, residents are "living a vital life, a very vibrant life." Bridge Meadows has been featured on PBS' "Newshour" (see video); won the 2014 [Eisner Prize](#) for intergenerational excellence, a \$100,000 award; and this month was one of six programs nationwide to be named a [Generations United](#) Program of Distinction, a three-year designation that makes Bridge Meadows a benchmark for intergenerational programs. "The outcomes that we've seen ... have been transformative," Schubert said. For example, she said, the foster children are now attending school regularly. "Their grades are improving. They're enjoying school. They're wanting to go to school." As for the elders, said Lani Faith, Bridge Meadows' resource development director, "it's really quite inspiring to watch them as 55- to 91-year-olds not just giving back" but healing and growing as well. The progress and the accolades have inspired plans for [a second site in Beaverton](#). Meanwhile, at the original Portsmouth site, the multigenerational mission is clear. Near the main entrance, a handwritten notice reminds residents of the weekly "Happiness Hour," when all three generations gather for a communal meal. Upstairs in the library, books for adults share space with Eric Carle picture books and "Limu The Blue Turtle." In one apartment, two elders work together on watercolors at the kitchen table while a boy lounges on the nearby sofa. The nonprofit, which operates with a four-person staff and a \$1 million annual budget drawn from rental income and fundraising, takes in children referred by the state Department of Human Services, along with their legal guardians. In most cases, the guardians are the children's biological kin – grandparents, aunts, cousins. Schubert said she and other Bridge Meadows staff didn't expect so many of the foster parents to be relatives. But the multigenerational model turned out to be "truly supportive of kin." Kin face challenges that nonrelatives don't when they become foster parents, such as family tensions, Schubert said. In addition, "when your grandma becomes your mom, you lose a grandma." The beauty of Bridge Meadows, she said, is that "here in this intentional community, you gain a lot of grandmas." -- Amy Wang Source: http://www.oregonlive.com/kiddo/index.ssf/2015/07/multigenerational_foster_care.html

8 Former Casa Isla Staffers Charged With Assaulting Troubled Teens In DYS Custody July 22, 2015 Updated July 22, 2015, 1:47 pm Casa Isla, which was run out of Boston's Long Island by Volunteers of America, Massachusetts, was shut down last year amid allegations that the workers mistreated clients. Here's the bridge to the island. (Jesse Costa/WBUR) By [Lisa Creamer](#) Updated July 22, 2015, 1:47 pm Story continues below BOSTON Eight former employees of a program serving troubled youths in state custody have been charged with assaulting male teens in their care as punishment for poor behavior, prosecutors said in court Wednesday. [As WBUR reported in April](#), the program, Casa Isla, which was run out of Boston's Long Island by [Volunteers of America, Massachusetts](#), was shut down last year amid allegations that the workers mistreated clients. The clients had been committed to the state's Department of Youth Services. The former staffers are accused of striking teens in the bare buttocks with an orange DYS sandal during a humiliating discipline ritual that came to be known as "orange chicken," prosecutors said at an arraignment Wednesday. Prosecutors are charging each of the ex-staffers with assault and battery with a dangerous weapon. Several face additional charges, including threats to commit a crime and witness intimidation. "We are deeply troubled by this incident," a spokeswoman for the Executive Office of Health and Human Services said. The agency oversees youth services. "DYS has increased its monitoring visits and program reviews to ensure that we are providing quality services, and that youth are being treated in a safe and respectful manner." Seven of the ex-staffers were released on personal recognizance after pleading not guilty at their arraignments Wednesday. The eighth individual is scheduled to be arraigned

Thursday. “We are cooperating with authorities in every way we can, including turning over 2,300 hours of security camera footage,” a Volunteers of America, Massachusetts spokeswoman Stephanie Paaue said in a statement. The ex-staffers are Joseph Cintolo, 26, of Quincy; Ainsley Laroche, 40, of Roxbury; Hermano Joseph, 24, of Taunton; Raymond Pizarro, 24, of Hyde Park; Wilkens Jeanty, 40, of Quincy; Emmanuel Fedna, 30, of Everett; Silvio Depina, 37, of Brockton; and Jalise Andrade, 34, of Brockton. Joseph, Andrade, Depina and Laroche each face threats and witness intimidation charges, with Joseph and Depina facing additional charges of assault and battery and indecent assault and battery over 14. “It is hard for us to imagine that this could have been occurring given the rigorous oversight by experienced and dedicated caregivers at Casa Isla,” Paaue added in the Volunteers of America, Massachusetts statement. “But it is our collective duty to find out what happened and we hope that every step will be taken to ascertain the truth in this matter.” The Casa Isla program began in 1991, housing about 100 adolescent teens — ages 14 to 19 — committed to DYS by juvenile courts each year. With reporting from The Associated Press, WBUR’s Zoe Sobel and the WBUR Newsroom Source: <http://www.wbur.org/2015/07/22/casa-isla-dys-staff-arraignments>

Three Tragedies 07.23.151:00 AM ET When Teen Detainees Died in Custody in Jeb Bush’s Florida One boy with appendicitis was told nothing was ‘wrong with his ass.’ Another was viciously beaten by guards. And none of those responsible got jail time. In 2003, 17-year-old Omar Paisley spent three days in a Florida jail cell moaning in agony. Prison staff said he was faking his illness and told him to suck it up. Then he died. This year and last, the deaths of numerous African Americans at the hands or in the custody of prison officials and police—including Michael Brown, Freddie Gray, Walter Scott, Tamir Rice, and, most recently, [Sandra Bland](#)—have drawn renewed (and belated) national media attention to the state of the criminal justice system. And that, in turn, has made candidates’ stances and records on criminal justice policy a factor in the 2016 presidential race. It’s a particularly sensitive topic for Jeb Bush, who as governor faced two situations that mirror the deaths of Gray and Bland, both of whom died while in police custody. When Bush was governor of Florida, two teenagers died preventable deaths while in juvenile detention centers. And Bush’s approach to their cases casts some light on how he might look at criminal justice issues if he becomes president. Paisley’s death could have been averted, and it took a long time. The African-American teenager was put in the 226-bed Miami-Dade Regional Juvenile Detention Center “for cutting another youth with a soda can,” [the AP](#) reported, and he filled out a form on June 7—one day after going to the jail—saying he was ill. “My stomach hurts really bad,” he wrote. “I don’t know what to do. I can’t [sic] sleep.” Some of the staff at the facility, according to [a Feb. 27, 2004, USA Today](#) story, didn’t take him seriously. “Ain’t nothing wrong with his ass,” said one nurse. And supervisor Jack Harrington told Paisley to “suck it up and walk around.” But you can’t suck up appendicitis. The paper reported that a guard later found the teen lying in his cell covered in feces and urine, sweating profusely and clutching his stomach. Nurse Dianne Demeritte refused to enter the cell, saying she didn’t “want to take his [mess] home to my kid.” ([The Palm Beach Post](#) noted that two of his cellmates had to change his sheets and clean up his vomit.) Demeritte made the sick teen, who could barely walk, walk out of his filthy cell and sit on a chair in the hallway. She concluded that there was “nothing wrong with his ass.” Then, according to USA Today, she filled out paperwork to have him moved to a hospital, left him sitting on the chair, and went on a break. Guards found him passed out and didn’t perform CPR because their first aid kit didn’t contain the necessary equipment. That’s how Omar Paisley died. Bush’s communications director, Jill Bratina, sent that USA Today story to the governor and others a few hours after it was published, according to emails made searchable by the [Florida Center for Investigative Reporting](#). Paisley’s death became national news, and, in one email, Bush promised a constituent it was just an isolated incident. Bill King of Pensacola emailed the governor to voice his outrage about Paisley’s roommates being forced to clean his vomit from their cell. “The lives of those kids are as much if not more important than any employee working there as they are not there by choice as the employees are, they are there by design and they have no say over their own lives,” King wrote. “All of these children are important and should not be placed into any dangerous or unhealthy situations,” he added. Bush concurred, and emailed King back to say so. “The interim Secretary [of Juvenile Justice] is cleaning up the mess,” the governor replied. “Thankfully, this is not a problem that is systemic statewide. I appreciate your writing.” And his assistant general counsel, Wendy Berger, emailed another concerned constituent, Lynda Morse, to promise the governor would do everything he could to ensure that no more incarcerated teens would have to suffer Paisley’s fate. “Like many throughout this State, Governor Bush was saddened and outraged over the death of this child,” Berger wrote. “Please know that those responsible will be held accountable. Governor Bush has full confidence in Interim Secretary [C. George] Denman’s ability to implement needed reforms. His hope is that the changes made in the Department will prevent anything like this from ever happening again.” Those hopes were misplaced. Some leaders at the Department of Juvenile Justice stepped down in the wake of Paisley’s death, and the department implemented a new policy allowing any staffer or volunteer to call 911 without first having to get permission. But there was scant accountability for the adults responsible for Paisley’s death. The two nurses were indicted on murder charges, according to [The Palm Beach Post](#), but neither got jail time. [Prison Legal News](#) reported that the prosecutors dropped charges against one of them and that the other nurse—the one who forced Paisley to leave his cell and then insisted that nothing was wrong with him—just gave up her nurse’s license and spent one year on probation. Several prison employees were fired, and Paisley’s mother got a \$1.45 million settlement from the Department of Juvenile Justice. In the meantime, nonviolent drug offenders in Florida faced stiff prison sentences. Source: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/07/23/when-teen-detainees-died-in-custody-in-jeb-bush-s-florida.html>

Youth workers charged in abuse 072215dysar01.jpg Photo by: Angela Rowlings Jalise Andrade [072215dysar03.jpg](#) Photo by: Angela Rowlings Hermano Joseph. [072215dysar04.jpg](#) Photo by: Angela Rowlings Raymond Pizarro. [072215DYS03.jpg](#) Photo by: Herald Pool “RITUALISTIC” PUNISHMENT: Silvio Depina, above, and six others, were charged with abusing teens in their care at the now-shuttered Casa Isla. [072215dysar08.jpg](#) Photo by: Angela Rowlings Joseph Cintolo [072215DYS07.jpg](#) Photo by: Herald Pool Ainsley Laroche [072215DYS04.jpg](#) Photo by: Herald Pool Wilkins Jeanty 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Thursday, July 23, 2015 [Print Email Comments](#) By: [Matt Stout](#), [Laurel J. Sweet](#) The now-shuttered facility where eight former youth workers are accused of the “ritualistic” abuse of troubled teens passed a state-ordered audit with flying colors just before it was shut down last year — even as the auditor noted there was the outstanding allegation of “sexually inappropriate behavior.” Seven of the eight workers from Casa Isla — a residential facility run by the nonprofit **Volunteers of America** under a contract with the **Department of Youth Services** — pleaded not guilty yesterday to charges including assault after allegations surfaced that they spanked teens with orange DYS-issued flip flops, sometimes on their bare buttocks, in a punishment dubbed “orange chicken.” Prosecutor Gloriann Moroney said the staffers engaged in “ritualistic instances of physical abuse,” beating youths for acting out, for returning to Casa Isla after they’d been discharged or before release “as a reminder not to return.” State officials said yesterday they moved “aggressively” to close the program in August 2014 after a complaint. But in a report released to the Herald, based on an Aug. 21 visit — a week before DYS closed the Long Island facility — an auditor found it met or exceeded every standard. “All (staff) presented as very knowledgeable about their jobs and highly dedicated to keeping youth safe,” stated the audit. It notes that there was “one allegation of sexually inappropriate behavior by staff during the past year,” and that the accused workers had been suspended pending the investigation. A DYS spokeswoman said that allegation is related to the charges. “We are deeply troubled by this incident,” said spokeswoman Rhonda Mann. “DYS conducts regular and unannounced visits to all of its programs to monitor the quality of the residential environment and the treatment of youth in our care.” A Volunteers of America statement said, “It is hard for us to imagine that this could have been occurring given the rigorous oversight by experienced and dedicated caregivers at Casa Isla.” Pleading not guilty yesterday were Jalise Andrade, 34 of Brockton; Joseph Cintolo, 26, of Quincy; Silvio Depina, 37, of Brockton; Wilkins Jeanty, 40, of Quincy; Hermano Joseph, 24, of Taunton; Ainsley Laroche, 40, of Roxbury; and Raymond Pizarro, 24, of Hyde Park. Emmanuel Fedna, 30, of Everett will be arraigned today on assault charges. Source: http://www.bostonherald.com/news_opinion/local_coverage/2015/07/youth_workers_charged_in_abuse

--> **Scarred by boarding school: We've all read of boys horribly abused, now meet the women who say emotional cruelty left them traumatised** It was supposed to be a luxury afforded only by privileged families But the adverse effects of boarding schools are now being revealed Experts say it can have severe effects on the mental health of children Judith Okely, late 60s, and Margaret Laughton, 78, share their experiences By [Tanith Carey for the Daily Mail](#) Published: 18:08 EST, 22 July 2015 | Updated: 03:16 EST, 23 July 2015 857shares [104 View comments](#) Sitting at the end of her iron bed, nine-year-old Judith Okely sobbed uncontrollably for the father she had lost. So isolated was the little girl at her remote Isle of Wight boarding school, she'd not even known that he was seriously ill, let alone dying of polio. It was less than an hour since her mother had broken the news. But now she was gone, bedtime in the sparse dormitory was approaching, and the matron was running out of patience. 'She came up to me and snapped: 'Your Daddy has died. I know that. But you are to stop crying at once. You know that you are not to make any noise after 7pm,' recalls Judith. Scroll down for video Even at 78, Margaret Laughton (pictured here third from left, third row from front, aged 10) is still haunted by the memory of her first day at a boarding school in the Midlands, which she declines to name 'I adored my father, so his death was the greatest loss of my life. Yet I was being ordered not to cry because it was inconvenient. After that, I never cried

in public again. I retreated inside myself.' Judith, a professor of anthropology, is in her late 60s now, but her voice still bristles with anger at the brutality she suffered during her nine years at the school. So far, concern about maltreatment of past generations of children at school has focused on the sex abuse which took place largely in boys' prep schools. But Judith is one of the growing number of ex-pupils who believe it's time that the long-term trauma suffered by both girls and boys who went to boarding schools - from which some never fully recover - is recognised. [RELATED ARTICLES Previous | Next Want a nanny as perfect as Kate's? Steal one from your best... Boarding schools told to introduce gender-neutral uniforms...](#) Share this article Share The irony is that many of these children inevitably come from ultra-privileged backgrounds - and the schools they attended boasted beautiful historic buildings amid manicured playing fields. But according to psychoanalyst Professor Joy Schaverien, author of new book *Boarding School Syndrome*, youngsters sent away to exclusive schools can suffer mentally just as much as those from deprived backgrounds who spent their childhoods in care. 'These schools were supposed to be the making of them, but they could also be the breaking of them,' says Professor Schaverien. 'It was a form of child neglect that became traditional in this country.' Until she started therapy in her 50s, Margaret says she found it difficult to trust anyone close to her. After 20 years working with and interviewing former boarders as part of her research, Professor Schaverien has identified a cluster of symptoms triggered by the trauma of being sent away. They include a tendency to depression, anger and anxiety, a failure to sustain relationships, a fear of abandonment and substance abuse. The younger the child was sent away, the more profound the damage. In the kitchen of her Oxford home, Professor Okely has a rather telling fridge magnet. It lists some of the rules of Alcatraz, the legendary high-security prison she visited in San Francisco. It says: 'Loud talking, shouting, singing or any other unnecessary noises are not permitted.' At Alcatraz, says Judith, inmates were entitled to food, clothing, shelter and medical attention - but anything else was a privilege. And that, she says, is very much how it was during the nine years she spent in the Fifties boarding at Upper Chine School for Girls. I realised what I had been deprived of - my parents, my friends, my room, my pets, my teddy bear. I stood there and cried the first tears I ever shed for myself 'Like Alcatraz, we were all captive on an island so there was no point trying to escape. Like jail, every waking moment was governed by rules, only the rules were stricter.' But unlike prison or Borstal, we were told we were there because our parents loved us.' And she adds: 'The dorms were like cells. We had metal beds and a tiny side table. You were allowed two ornaments, perhaps a picture from home, and maybe one toy. 'At dinner, when you weren't eating, your hands had to rest in your lap. If you were seen resting them on the table, you would get a quick slap. 'In the rest period after lunch, the matron forbade us from lying on our backs with our legs up because of what she saw as sexual overtones. But we didn't even know what sex was,' says Judith, whose school was later merged with a boys' school and renamed. 'Later my mother said: 'Why didn't you tell me how dreadful it was?' But as children, we didn't know any different. 'It wasn't even a good education. The only books I ever read were under the sheets with a torch. Girls back then were raised to go to finishing schools and marry the right man. When I said I wanted to go to university, I was told I couldn't.' Like most children sent to boarding school, Margaret (pictured here aged five) found the moment she was left at the school the most traumatic of all. 'I was left on the pavement crying as my mother drove off,' she recalls. For many boarding school pupils, says Professor Schaverien, the most traumatic moment was when they first realised their parents were leaving them there. Until the Eighties, when sending children away to school began to fall out of fashion, the most common age for starting prep school was only eight. Professor Schaverien says: 'Many remember being left on the doorstep and then realising that the wheels of their parents' cars were moving and they were being left behind. It's then that reality dawned on them - often with traumatic after-effects. 'Sending a child away at a young age is a huge rupture in its attachment to its parents. From then on, they have to live without love. They have to develop a false self that cannot show their emotions, in order to survive. They then carry that false self throughout life.' For former physiotherapist Margaret Laughton, the protective shell she developed to get through school led her to appear 'competent and confident' on the outside - even though she was enormously fragile underneath. Until she started therapy in her 50s, she found it difficult to trust anyone in close emotional relationships. 'I was 70 before I organised a birthday party for myself because, having been at boarding school, I didn't trust anyone to turn up,' she says. 'After all, if your own parents didn't want you, why would anyone else want to be around you?' Margaret says that going to a boarding school at the age of eight made her develop a protective shell. Margaret Laughton, 79, pictured here aged nine in 1946 during her first term at boarding school. Even at 78, Margaret is still haunted by the memory of her first day at a school in the Midlands, which she declines to name. She was nine years old. 'I was raised in India and a year after we got back, my mother took me for an entrance exam to the school and I was accepted on the spot. I was taken to the uniform shop and then delivered to a private boarding house as there was no room to sleep at the school. 'I was left on the pavement crying as my mother drove off.' It was when Margaret, from South London, had her own four children that she understood the lasting effects of the trauma. 'When my eldest daughter got to the age of nine, I went into her bedroom to kiss her goodnight. I saw her comfy bed, her hair spread across the pillow and her arms wrapped around her teddy bear. 'It hit me that this was exactly the age I had been sent away, but without toys, as I was told they might get lost. At that moment I realised what I had been deprived of - my parents, my friends, my room, my pets, my teddy bear. I stood there and cried the first tears I ever shed for myself.' The sexual abuse that many boys suffered at boarding schools is now widely recognised - but some claim it was simply part of a far wider pattern of emotional and physical cruelty. James Taylor was sent away to a school at eight because his father, an ex-boarder, assumed his son would get the best possible education. At 49, James says he still does not sleep well because, from the age of 11, he was fetched by a teacher from his bed at night to be 'disciplined' - in fact, abused. Margaret, 79, only realised how damaging her boarding school experience had been when she had children of her own. The absolute rule of silence after lights out meant when he was returned to the dormitory, he dared not breathe a word. 'We were too frightened to speak out,' says James, who does not want to name the school for legal reasons. 'And, in any case, in those days none of us thought we would be believed.' Yet casual cruelty by both teachers and boys was part of everyday life. 'I saw a boy who was sick in his rice pudding being forced to eat it,' says James. 'I saw boys who wet their beds, who were then made more miserable by other boys who attacked them for it. 'All this was seen as 'collateral damage', an unfortunate but necessary part of the process of turning boys into men who would one day rule the world. 'There are the winners in this system, like the Prime Minister David Cameron, who boarded at Eton, but one size does not fit all.' Margaret, pictured aged 10 in 1947, when she was sent home during the school holidays. Simon Partridge, 68, compares the school to which he was sent at seven with 'polite prison'. The beauty of the buildings at Boarzell Prep in Sussex belied the 'terrible emotional desert' inside. 'Going to school at that age was not presented as a choice. You were raised to be a brave little man and not to complain,' he says. 'It was an awful double tragedy. When I spoke to my mother about it in my 20s, she told me that when she got into the car to drive away, she burst into floods of tears.' For Simon, a widower, his days at boarding school came at a high personal cost. He was unable to settle on a career and had trouble forming lasting relationships. 'I never said 'I love you' in a heartfelt way.' For Simon, the turning point came in his mid 50s when his step-grandson, Josh, then three, turned to him one day in the car and told Simon he loved him. 'Tears were rolling down my cheeks. At that moment, I realised I couldn't do the stiff upper lip any more. It was time to tell Josh I loved him, too. 'It unblocked me. It struck me as terrible that children of seven could be sent away to a world where there was no physical contact, not even a hug when you felt ill.' Although the worst of this emotional brutality took place in the past, for some children boarding is still a trial to be endured. Margaret, centre, graduated from nursing school at the age of 19 in 1956. Margaret, pictured in 1954 at the age of 17, had just started nursing school in Birmingham. One in 200 children in the UK is a boarder - there are 70,000 in total - and for the first time after years of declining numbers, according to the Boarding Schools Association, the number of young children being sent away at the age of seven is rising. In a globalised economy, high-flying careers increasingly require parents to move overseas. Of course, there are children who do well out of boarding. Those who go at an older age, like 13, or who make the choice to go themselves, or find there is more stability at school than there is at home, are more likely to benefit, say Professor Schaverien. But, she insists, in most cases young children should be with their parents. 'Children need to be brought up in the company of people who love them,' she says. Simon Partridge is now training to be a youth counsellor. And he says: 'If you were devising a system to emotionally cripple people, sending children away at the age of seven would be it. 'I feel I have lost an awful lot of my life to this. The reality is that the trauma at the privileged end of society is not so different from the trauma at the more deprived end. 'The difference is that if you went to boarding school, you grew up believing you had no right to complain.' Advice about whether boarding school is right for your child. Tanith Carey is author of *Taming the Tiger Parent*, published by Constable at £8.99. *Boarding School Syndrome* by Professor Joy Schaverien is published by Routledge, at £27.99. Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-3171351/Scarred-boarding-school-ve-read-boys-horribly-abused-prep-school-meet-women-say-emotional-cruelty-left-traumatised.html#ixzz3gxDec6NC> Follow us: [@MailOnline on Twitter](#) | [DailyMail on Facebook](#)

State investigation: Hutto group home had numerous violations By [David Barer](#) Published: July 23, 2015, 4:23 pm Updated: July 23, 2015, 7:23 pm [5Click to share on Twitter \(Opens in new window\)](#) [5Click to share on Google+ \(Opens in new window\)](#) [Share on Facebook \(Opens in new window\)](#) [Click to share on Pinterest \(Opens in new window\)](#) Related Coverage [State shuts down Hutto group home](#) [Concern with group home after man pounds on doors in middle of night](#) HUTTO, Texas (KXAN) — A state investigation into a group home formerly operated by Hutto City Councilman Michael Smith shows the business was

"out of compliance" on numerous items before it closed. Investigators with the Texas Department of Aging and Disabilities found 16 new items of non-compliance at A Step Beyond LLC related to service delivery, quality assurance, restraint and rights of individuals, according to the review. KXAN obtained a copy of the investigation Thursday. Smith told KXAN he was away from the business from April to November of 2014, which is when nearly all of the violations noted in the review occurred. Smith also said he believes DADS made an example of his small business. "I 100 percent disagree with the violations. I disagree with the procedure in which this was conducted. We were not given a change to appeal," Smith said. "DADS refused to look at the evidence showing that a majority of these [problems] had been rectified or were in the process of being rectified." Hutto Mayor Pro-tem Michael Smith The state ended its contract with the group home in June, after it found multiple violations, DADS Spokeswoman Cecilia Cavuto said last month. Smith said A Step Beyond and its sister business Beyond the Limits have both closed, and he is not currently operating any similar businesses. According to the investigation, the group home was "out of compliance" on 16 different items including a discrepancy in client medication and inadequate supervision of a client. The investigation also found late reporting of "critical incident data" and missed medical appointments ordered by physicians. Most of those violations occurred during the timeframe Smith said he was absent from the business. The report also notes medication may not have been administered properly to a person called "consumer #1." That same person was "arrested Aug. 4, 2014, for stabbing a group home staff member," the review states. Smith said he couldn't comment on the stabbing because he was not working at the business during that time period. Hutto voters first elected Smith to the Hutto City Council in 2009. He is currently mayor pro tem of the city. In state tax reports that Smith filed, he reported himself as CEO of A Step Beyond Inc. for report years 2012, 2013 and 2014. Smith said that while he was away from A Step Beyond in 2014, Sanh Moss was the CEO. Hutto police arrested Moss for suspicion of driving while intoxicated and possession of a controlled substance—four grams of amphetamine pills—according to a police report filed in May. Police said Moss admitted to taking two Lorazepam pills she stole from consumers at the group home. Smith said Moss at first "falsified the extent to which the DWI had occurred." Once he collaborated with law enforcement and found out the extent of Sanh's DWI, "all ties were cut with her," he said Source: <http://kxan.com/2015/07/23/state-investigation-hutto-group-home-had-numerous-violations/>


Foster care failures can't continue Source: http://www.meridianstar.com/opinion/foster-care-failures-can-t-continue/article_2286a83e-30ea-11e5-808e-8baf31351a03.html Story Print Create a hardcopy of this page Font Size: Default font size Larger font size Posted: Thursday, July 23, 2015 4:00 am [Foster care failures can't continue](#) Eleven years ago, a child advocacy group filed a lawsuit against the state of Mississippi on behalf of eight children in the state's child foster care system. Among the plaintiffs was a girl identified in court documents only as Olivia Y. According to the website for the organization that filed the lawsuit, New York based Children's Rights, Olivia was removed from her home at the age of 3 and was so severely neglected that she only weighed 22 pounds. "During her first three months in custody, Olivia was moved between five placements, including one home where a convicted rapist was residing," the website states. According to the lawsuit, the state Division of Family and Children's Services failed to provide Olivia and the other children with necessary medical assessments and health care. Eleven years later, the state has yet to meet minimum requirements mandated under two court-ordered settlements that were a result of the lawsuit. The plaintiffs are now asking that the state work with consultants who will recommend changes, including the possibility of taking the state's child welfare unit out from under the wing of the Department of Human Services, the Associated Press reports. A progress report issued by a court monitor in 2014 found that foster care conditions had improved in some areas, but was still floundering in others. According to the report, the state failed to collect accurate data, showed little progress in some regions and in only 36 percent of the cases were investigations launched within 24 hours of an abuse allegation and completed with supervisory approval in 30 days. The court monitor found the system was plagued by staffing shortages and that in-home visits were not being conducted as often as required and that some children were not being put under licensed foster care.

New lawsuit addresses 'irreparable' harm in foster care system Brian Josephs | 7/23/2015, 10:19 a.m. Tish James Last Wednesday afternoon, Public Advocate Letitia James confirmed what many have been suspecting for years: Children are being abused and neglected in the New York City's foster care system. With hopes of combating the issue, James announced she's filing a class-action suit against the New York City Administration for Children's Services and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. James made the declaration in front of a small crowd of reporters, protesters and parents desperate to retrieve their children from the foster system's grasp. "These children do not vote. These children do not have high-paid lobbyists," James said. "They do not have high-paid lawyers. They're often left voiceless, defenseless against a bureaucracy that seems to have no will or incentive to help them." Although a concrete end goal was still nebulous by the end of the speech, what wasn't was the scope of the trappings of the foster care system, especially in New York. Conclusions drawn from the firsthand accounts of a foster care hotline showed that 56 percent of respondents noted that a child was emotionally or psychologically harmed while in foster care, and 31 percent reported physical harm. New York also ranks No. 46 of 48 jurisdictions in the to rate of abuse and neglect of children in foster care, according to a report released by the public advocate's office. ACS, which represents more than 11,000 children, refuted the report, saying that it relies on only 77 interviews—a fraction of a percent of the total number of children in the system—and that the agency is investing in improving child welfare practices. "The de Blasio administration is deeply invested in improving the lives of vulnerable children and working very closely with many partners to improve our foster care placement system," said ACS Press Secretary Christopher McKniff in a response statement. "We are committed to working with our partners throughout the system—the courts, attorneys, advocates, providers, parents and children—to ensure we continue to improve outcomes for families who are involved in the child welfare system." The synecdochical nature of the suit also extends to the plaintiffs: James is listed alongside 10 children who are listed under pseudonyms to protect their identities. Among them is Ana-Maria R., a 4-year-old who watched as her sister Olivia was sexually abused. Tyrone M. was separated from his mother when he was just 12 days old, and as a result of neglect, he's a 7-year-old who's forced to sleep in his clothes every night because he was never taught to change into his pajamas. A poster board listing some of the children stood beside James as she explained the stories. As if to bring a visceral resonance, the names and details were listed in red and white ink against a black background. "Children who're in foster care, all they know is foster care," James said. "And all they know is harm and pain." The case will, in all likelihood, take months to resolve, and other parents beyond the 10 have lost their children to ACS's practices. One of them is D.C. Levers, a journalist who's been trying to get her daughter Josee back for three years. The two were originally separated when Josee was 3 because of a "messy home" complaint. **New lawsuit addresses 'irreparable' harm in foster care system** Source: <http://amsterdammnews.com/news/2015/jul/23/new-lawsUIT-addresses-irreparable-harm-foster-care/>

WAREHOUSING OUR CHILDREN South Carolina laws hide child abuse inside group homes By [Lauren Sausser](#) on Jul 23, 2015 [Email @laurenmsausser](#) Paul Zoeller/Staff An untold number of foster children in South Carolina custody are neglected, drugged, beaten and molested in group homes and institutions where the state warehouses them for millions of dollars a year at taxpayer expense. Read the Series Part I: Warehousing our Children: How South Carolina laws hide child abuse inside group homes [Part II: Brother repeatedly rapes sister, blames DSS](#) [Part III: Group homes pull in millions every year from taxpayers](#) [Part IV: Eagle Harbor Ranch: A case study in confusion](#) [Part V: Advocates doubt plan to pull children out of institutions will work](#) [Part VI: Other states reduce dependence on group homes](#) What's more, South Carolina keeps the abuse these children suffer secret by using state laws that shield group homes from almost any scrutiny. Court records shed light on some of the worst cases, but this state-sanctioned secrecy makes it impossible for the public to weigh the difference between well-run group homes and those that resemble a Dickensian orphanage. Even parents who reluctantly send their children to these facilities for treatment can't figure out how to keep them safe behind closed doors. When Jessica Freeman placed her daughter in Springbrook Behavioral Health last year, she had no idea the state had investigated the Greenville County home 95 times since 2000 for possible abuse and neglect — more than almost any other residential treatment facility in South Carolina. That's because the state Department of Social Services doesn't make the few records that are public readily accessible. Freeman pulled her daughter from the facility last fall after a therapist told her that several Springbrook staff members had beaten an autistic child in an incident caught on a security camera. "That's ridiculous," Freeman said. "You can report a bad hamburger easier than you can report someone abusing your child." Springbrook administrator Mike Rowley would not discuss any specific case, but said most allegations made against the facility are cleared by the Department of Social Services. "If we have anything substantiated, those employees are immediately terminated," Rowley said. "We don't want them around other children." Charleston County School teacher Jeremy Wise teaches English literature to children at Windwood Farm. The group home for boys in Awendaw offers an on-site school for children in its care. Many of the children have been shuffled around several group homes and foster homes by the Department of Social Services. —Brad Nettles/Staff Two Springbrook employees have been fired for child abuse or neglect in the last three years, he said. Despite stories such as Freeman's, South Carolina continues to send its youngest foster children into group homes and institutions at a higher rate than any other state in the country, [federal data shows](#). This trend persists even though a growing body of evidence points out that children should grow up with their own

families or in foster homes. Related documents [Children's Rights Lawsuit](#) (PDF) [Legislative Audit - DSS](#) (PDF) [Citizen Review Panels Findings](#) (PDF) [Annie E. Casey Report](#) (PDF) That's why other states have reduced their reliance on group homes by expanding foster family programs or finding relatives for these children to live with. But South Carolina has largely resisted change, dumping tens of millions of dollars every year into privately-run group homes for no other reason than that's how this state has always done it, some experts say. "I can say, having done this work for 15 years nationally, that South Carolina is possibly the worst I've ever seen on that front," said Ira Lustbader, the litigation director for Children's Rights, a New York advocacy group. More than 100 group homes and institutions are scattered across the state, ranging from rural farms to sophisticated psychiatric compounds. At any given time, they house about a quarter of South Carolina's 4,000 foster children. While group-home supporters acknowledge that some problems persist within the industry, they insist these facilities provide desperately needed services for troubled children who aren't suited for normal homes and have nowhere else to live. But even Susan Alford, named the new Department of Social Services director late last year, finds South Carolina's numbers problematic. "Our rate is too high," Alford said. "We put too many children — especially in the 0 to 12 (age) range — we put too many of them in group homes. Our aim would be to try to decrease that number." Troubling findings South Carolina isn't the only state faced with these problems. Published reports across the country detail a litany of horror stories in which children and teenagers in group homes have been overmedicated for mild behavioral issues, [raped by their peers](#) and [lured into prostitution](#) while their temporary guardians aren't watching. But many other states are moving away from this model. Meanwhile, South Carolina continues shoveling hundreds of children a year into a system rife with complaints and concerns. The Post and Courier reviewed lawsuits, visited group homes, filed open records requests and interviewed dozens of state leaders, child welfare experts, parents and former foster children for this series. Among other things, the newspaper's investigation found: - Nearly a quarter of the children under 13 years old who entered the foster care system in 2013 were placed in group homes and institutions in South Carolina — by far the highest placement rate for this age group in the United States. By comparison, only 2 percent in Tennessee and 3 percent in North Carolina were placed in similar settings. The national average is 4 percent. - Some children live for months, even years, in group homes because South Carolina fails to recruit enough foster families and the state pays them so little to participate. Some foster parents are paid less than \$13 a day to raise a child. - The South Carolina Department of Social Services spent \$28.1 million in 2014 placing children in group homes — more than five times the amount the agency paid foster families. Group homes earn at least \$86 per child per night. Deborah McKelvey, the executive director for Windwood Farm, checks on a room where visiting families can spend time with children in the facility's care. She said group homes provide a measure of security that foster families often can't offer, especially for children who may have trouble bonding in a new home. —Brad Nettles/Staff - The Department of Social Services reviews hundreds of allegations of child abuse and neglect in group homes, institutions, foster homes and day care facilities every year, yet the agency's team of 10 investigators rarely finds enough evidence to support those claims. The state has investigated 484 allegations of abuse and neglect in group homes and institutions in the past five years, but has only been able to find evidence to prove 44 cases. - South Carolina makes it easier to know which restaurants are infested with cockroaches than to pinpoint where children have been neglected, or worse, physically and sexually abused. - Court records allege children who disclose that they've been abused in group care — by adults and each other — are often ignored because state caseworkers are so overloaded that they don't have time to weigh the allegations. 'Dangerous deficiencies' In January, Children's Rights and the South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center [filed a federal lawsuit against South Carolina](#) on behalf of 11 foster children who allegedly suffered from the Social Services agency's "dangerous deficiencies." The complaint contends children were abused, overmedicated, separated from their siblings, kept in solitary confinement, fed moldy bread — and the worst of it happened in group homes. One 16-year-old girl reported that children at the Jenkins Institute for Children in North Charleston hoarded food because they were "frequently deprived." The group home denied her medicine and feminine hygiene products, and she said a maintenance worker there asked her to take naked pictures of herself on a cellphone, according to the lawsuit. × Johanna Martin-Carrington, director of the Jenkins Institute for Children, said the allegations aren't true. "Children make those claims," she said. "But we know it didn't occur." The lawsuit also alleges that a teenager at Epworth Children's Home in Richland County was prescribed a "powerful psychotropic medication for the first time in his life." The drug is used to treat bipolar disorder, even though the child had never been diagnosed and hadn't received a mental health evaluation at the group home, the complaint contends. At Helping Hands, a group home in Aiken County, the lawsuit claims that a 9-year-old boy's toothbrush was smothered with feces. Epworth Children's Home and Helping Hands did not respond to messages about the lawsuit. The original complaint also contends that several unnamed group home employees and state caseworkers did nothing when some children tried to report the abuse. One caseworker allegedly told a child, "She had a lot of children on her caseload and so was limited in what she could do to help her," the lawsuit stated. Paula Fendley is the executive director for the Palmetto Association for Children and Families, an organization that represents many group homes in South Carolina. She said [similar cases filed by Children's Rights](#) in other states have been settled before trial. "You can allege anything in a lawsuit, but you have to be able to prove it," Fendley said. "If these things are, in fact, true, then I guess all of that will come out in the court." Windwood Farm, established in 1985, is a combined "Level 3" group home and psychiatric residential treatment facility for boys in Awendaw. It is one of more than 100 group homes and institutions across the state that accepts foster children from the Department of Social Services. A smaller number of children staying in the residential treatment facility here are called "private placements." Their own parents retain custody, but have decided they need intense, out-of-home care for behavioral health issues, such as autism or bipolar disorder. —Brad Nettles/Staff Alford and Gov. Nikki Haley, both named defendants in the lawsuit, agreed to participate in early court mediation, public records show. What are group homes, institutions? According to the South Carolina Department of Social Services, "group or congregate care is designed to meet the needs of children/youth who are unable to live at home or in a foster family and require temporary care in a group setting." Some of these facilities, often called "children's homes," are vestiges of old orphanages and they provide a variety of different services. For example, "Level 3" group homes offer behavioral health treatment for children, while "Level 1" group homes generally keep children without any mental health diagnoses. Most children in group homes in South Carolina have been placed there by the Department of Social Services as part of the foster system. Institutions, such as psychiatric residential treatment facilities, are designed to offer an even higher level of care for children with more severe behavioral health needs. Some children in group homes and institutions are considered "private placements." Their parents retain legal custody, but have decided to place them in these facilities for treatment. Haley's office directed questions about the lawsuit to the Department of Social Services. Alford would not discuss the pending litigation. "Those are things that I just can't talk about," she said. Funding foster families The federal lawsuit hinges on the widely-accepted premise that social services caseworkers in South Carolina are overwhelmed with work. They don't have time to keep track of all the children that they're charged to protect. A Legislative Audit Council [report published last year](#) shows more than 30 percent of caseworkers statewide were each assigned at least 50 children to monitor, and a few were assigned more than 75. The [Child Welfare League of America, a national advocacy group, recommends](#) each caseworker manage no more than 17 families per month. The Legislative Audit Council report and a string of child deaths prompted Statehouse hearings and calls to reform the child welfare agency. Former DSS Director Lillian Koller, who tried to scale back the number of foster children in group homes, resigned under pressure last year. Still, the General Assembly has failed to pass any sort of major legislation to reform the Department of Social Services. "It's not something that legislators get excited about because there's no glory in this," said Sen. Katrina Shealy, R-Lexington, a member of the Senate DSS Oversight Committee. "I know that everybody wants to talk about roads and jobs, and we do need to talk about those things and those are important, but if we don't save our children, we don't need our roads." Appleseed Legal Justice Center Director Sue Berkowitz said the Legislature needs to broaden its probe into the state agency because child deaths aren't the only problem it faces. "There's so much more going on," she said. "What hasn't been focused on is what's happening to our kids once they go into the system." Data provided by the Department of Social Services shows about a quarter of the 4,000 foster children in South Carolina lived in a group home, an emergency shelter or an institution on April 1. Experts, including the Department of Social Services director, say that's too many. "The goal in child welfare is for you, as much as possible, to keep kids in families," Alford said. "If you can't keep them with their biological family or put them in kinship care, then you're looking at foster care as the next best alternative. That should be your first priority." Susan Alford, the new Department of Social Services director, said she's focusing on foster children's safety and well-being. She also wants to find permanent living situations for them. She admitted that DSS places too many children under 13 years old in group homes. —Paul Zoeller/Staff A [national report](#) published by the Baltimore-based Annie E. Casey Foundation this year said group homes aren't designed to offer the "individualized nurturing" that children need. "In many cases, a child ends up living in a group placement simply because an agency has not found an appropriate facility," the report's authors wrote. On May 1, 2,310 foster homes were licensed to accept children in South Carolina — too few for the nearly 4,000 children in the system. But the child welfare agency can't recruit enough families, partly because they're paid so little to participate. Foster parents only make between \$12.77 and \$17.27 per child per night — no more than \$6,303 a year to clothe, feed and care for a child. In response to a public records request filed by The Post and Courier, the Department of Social Services said it spent \$28.1 million in the 2014 fiscal year to house children in group homes and

institutions, but only \$5.5 million on foster families. Critics argue it makes no sense that the state spends more than five times the amount of money to house less than a quarter of all foster children in group homes because many of them shouldn't be there in the first place. "It's bad for kids, but it's also a total waste of taxpayer money," said Lustbader, of New York's Children's Rights. "That's the part that doesn't get as much attention as it deserves." Some group facilities for children earn additional income from other agencies. The state Medicaid agency, for example, spent \$23 million during the 2015 fiscal year on South Carolina children in psychiatric residential treatment facilities, which offer the highest level of care. Most "Level 3" group homes — a step down from residential treatment facilities — pull in \$151 per child per night, or more than \$50,000 per child per year. "Level 1" and "Level 2" group homes largely accept children without any psychological problems and earn either \$86 or \$98 per child per night. Meanwhile, a [2012 national report](#) shows only five states paid foster families lower rates than South Carolina. Even some group-home advocates acknowledge these foster family payments aren't sufficient. "It's less than you would pay to board your dog," said Deborah McKelvey, the executive director of Windwood Farm, a combined "Level 3" group home and psychiatric residential treatment facility for boys in Awendaw. South Carolina needs more foster families, she argued, but some group homes offer children a measure of security that a traditional family can't provide. "I know the national picture says children under 12 shouldn't live in a group setting," she said. "I say children under 12 frequently are too afraid to bond with a family. They feel safer in a group setting where they know somebody is awake 24 hours a day watching their back." Children eat family-style meals together at Windwood Farm, she said. They go to the beach. Windwood almost resembles summer camp, complete with an obstacle course, ponds for swimming and fishing, and a fitness trail, she said. Rooms inside Windwood Farm in Awendaw look like a normal home. Staff at this group home for boys organize family meals. They take children on beach trips and to community events. They also remind them to brush, floss, wash and flush with these wall decals. —Brad Nettles/Staff Jody Tamsberg, chairman of the Windwood Farm board of directors, said that even though South Carolina agencies pay Windwood significantly more than foster families to care for children in state custody, those payments don't cover its bills. The nonprofit group home still must raise at least \$500,000 a year to break even, he said. "I love good foster families and there are lots of them, but even the good ones, they can't take a kid that's been abused, that's on eight medications, that's totally out of control," Tamsberg said. "There's got to be a place where they can come, stabilize, be safe and have skilled professionals — nurses and doctors — tend to them." Brendin and Faith Brendin Cecere and his mom, Faith Rice, moved out of their Summerville house right before Thanksgiving three years ago following a physical fight between Rice and her ex-husband. The ordeal was particularly traumatic for Brendin, who is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. "Brendin's whole world that he knew was done. Everything that was familiar — his routine, his home, his neighborhood — everything that he was familiar with, with the exception of school, was out of sorts for him," Rice said. "By January, he pretty much broke down." Brendin, now 13 years old, threatened his mom with a knife. He hurt the dogs. He threatened to hurt himself, too. "At that point, there wasn't anything more I could do but place him in a facility," Rice said. "As much as it killed me, there was nothing more I could do." Brendin spent nine months at Three Rivers Behavioral Health, a psychiatric residential treatment facility near Columbia, and more than a year at Willowglen Academy, a similar facility in Kingstree. Rice believes he was abused at both homes. At Three Rivers, Brendin's arms and chest were bruised, he told her, by a nurse who hit children with an open hand. At Willowglen Academy, Brendin said a staff member broke his arm. The Department of Social Services investigated Brendin's allegations at Willowglen Academy but determined his claims were not credible, Rice said. The group home told Rice that he fell out of a window and that children with behavioral issues or special needs like Brendin tend to embellish the truth. "I said, 'What about these other kids that can't defend themselves, who are not verbally expressive like my son?'" Rice said. She couldn't even get a copy of the official 11-page state investigation into Brendin's injury, she said. A Department of Social Services supervisor in Williamsburg County told her the document was protected by state law because the case was determined "unfounded." Three Rivers Behavioral Health and Willowglen Academy, both owned by out-of-state, for-profit corporations, did not respond to questions about Brendin. Children staying at Windwood Farm in Awendaw share rooms. The bigger rooms house up to four children at one time. Around-the-clock staff members monitor bedrooms at night to ensure that the boys are safe. —Brad Nettles/Staff The Department of Social Services opened 100 investigations into alleged abuse and neglect at multiple Willowglen Academy facilities and 97 investigations at Three Rivers since 2000, but the agency would not tell The Post and Courier how many of these allegations it could prove. Brendin left Willowglen Academy late last year to live with his grandparents in Simpsonville. Rice, who was recently diagnosed with cancer, didn't feel safe choosing another group home. She's still trying to figure out what really happened last fall. "I spoke to the SLED (State Law Enforcement Division) department. I spoke to Nikki Haley's office, who bounced me to Lindsey Graham's office," she said. "Both offices told me they are not able to handle cases like this." 'Looking for loopholes' The South Carolina Department of Social Services receives hundreds of reports alleging abuse and neglect in foster homes, institutions, group homes and day care centers every year. But 10 years of DSS data shows the department rarely finds sufficient evidence to prove that a child has been abused in one of these "out-of-home" settings. In 2010, for example, the department investigated 132 reports of abuse in group homes and institutions, but found enough evidence to prove only six cases. In theory, some cases were handed to local law enforcement agencies for investigation. But the Department of Social Services would not tell The Post and Courier how many abuse reports were handled by police or which agencies were involved. Four years ago, this prompted some child advocates in South Carolina to question if these reports were always properly investigated. They wanted to know why the number of "founded" cases was so low. The South Carolina Citizen Review Panels, three independent groups set up to evaluate child protective services, were particularly worried by a report that boys in a group home were sexually abusing each other as an initiation ritual. At the time, Social Services explained that the incident was not "indicated," or proven, by its Out-of-Home Abuse and Neglect division because child-on-child abuse is not specifically addressed in state law. "They were looking for loopholes so they don't have responsibility. That's just crazy," said Donna Xenakis, a former chairwoman of the Lowcountry Citizen Review Panel. Only 13 reports of abuse in group homes and institutions were determined "indicated" or "founded" last year. A team of 10 investigators at the Department of Social Services examined fewer than half of all reports filed in the 2014 fiscal year for out-of-home abuse and neglect. Some of the reports were "screened out," the agency explained, because they did not meet the "statutory criteria" to warrant an investigation. 'Never going to change' Jessica Freeman's adopted daughters Jaylin and Olivia were discovered bound together with a bungee-cord in their Tennessee home before they were taken into state custody more than 10 years ago. "Jaylin came to me at 5 years old. She weighed 22 pounds and had STDs," Freeman said. Charleston County School district educators teach some of the children staying at Windwood Farm in a red school house built on the Awendaw property. Other children who live at this group home attend regular, community schools. —Brad Nettles/Staff Olivia, 4 years old at the time, weighed 23 pounds and also was sexually abused. "They didn't talk," she said. "They weren't potty-trained." The girls, now teenagers, require out-of-home treatment in group facilities in North Carolina. "Both of my girls are going to need care like this for the rest of their life," Freeman said. "It's overwhelming, as a mom, because you want to protect them and you want to keep them safe and you reach a point when you can't do that anymore." Last year, Jaylin lived at Springbrook Behavioral Health in Upstate South Carolina until her therapist told Freeman that staff members beat an autistic child in front of other children in the gymnasium. "The reason why this stuff continues is because the children don't have a voice to speak up," Freeman said. "I think as long as people are quiet it's not going to get any better." Mike Rowley, the administrator for Springbrook, said the facility takes every allegation seriously and self-reports any suspected child abuse case to the South Carolina Department of Social Services. "I don't think there's anything we do that should be secretive," Rowley said. "It's a great place for kids." The Department of Social Services denied an open records request filed by The Post and Courier to review any "Out-of-Home" abuse reports, even reports that determined abuse allegations in the group homes were valid. State law exempts these documents from disclosure, the agency's lawyer said. "Confidentiality is such a big thing in child welfare," Alford said. "By statute, a lot of what we do is not considered to be public knowledge. That's one barrier. I think the department is trying to be a lot more transparent." Alford acknowledged that potential child abuse in these facilities keeps her up at night. "We have to be concerned with their safety all the time," Alford said. "We're legally responsible for that by statute. We're morally responsible for it. Of course it concerns me." Berkowitz, the Applesseed Legal Justice Center director, said the Department of Social Services needs to admit its problems before the agency can solve them. She doesn't trust the department's own data. "These are our poorest kids, our most vulnerable kids," Berkowitz said. "I have heard so many people over the years and seen so many reports. 'We're going to fix this. We're going to fix that.' And I just think unless there is some structure that will require this to happen it's never going to change." Reach Lauren Sausser at 937-5598. **WAREHOUSING OUR CHILDREN South Carolina laws hide child abuse inside group homes** Source: <http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20150723/PC16/150709453>

Other states reduce dependence on group homes [Lauren Sausser Email @laurenmsausser](#) Jul 23 2015 6:00 pm About twenty two percent of South Carolina's children in state custody live in a group setting — much higher than the national average of 14 percent. The bedrooms at Eagle Harbor Ranch, located in rural Berkeley County, house two clients to a room. Brad Nettles/Staff  Five years ago, some of the problems plaguing Connecticut's Department of Children and Families could have been ripped right from South Carolina's playbook. Children were dying. Caseworkers were overloaded. Foster families were in short

supply. The agency perpetually resisted change, despite a class action lawsuit settlement that required sweeping reform. **RELATED DOCUMENTS** [The Connecticut Turnaround](#) (PDF) [Tennessee Group Homes Report](#) (PDF) The Connecticut department's most "urgent focus" was the high number of children in group homes, according to a report published earlier this year by the Annie E. Casey Foundation called "The Connecticut Turnaround." Gov. Dan Malloy, a Democrat elected to Connecticut's highest office in 2010, wanted to decrease the number of children in group settings and increase family placements — and he appointed a new commissioner to the Department of Children and Families to make it happen. "From the get go, I remember them appearing on the local NPR station, speaking specifically, in a focused way, about those twin goals," said Gary Kleeblatt, a spokesman for the Connecticut Department of Children and Families. "That was at the top of their agenda." On Jan. 1, 2011, about a third of the 4,780 children in Connecticut's custody lived in group homes. In fact, more than 350 of those children lived in out-of-state group homes because Connecticut had run out of available beds. Four years later, those numbers have been cut in half. Now, fewer than 16 percent of children in state custody in Connecticut live in a group home. In South Carolina, about 22 percent of children in state custody live in a group setting — much higher than the national average of 14 percent. Federal data shows South Carolina places about a quarter of its youngest foster children — those below 13 years old — into group homes and institutions when they enter the system. The national average for this age group is only 4 percent. South Carolina's placement rate for these children is the highest in the country. "We know kids do better with families," said Kristina Stevens, administrator of clinical services for the Connecticut Department of Children and Families. "The research is abundantly clear." Making the change in Connecticut wasn't easy, she said. "You'd like to flip a switch and do it all at one time, but you can't." First, the department focused on reconnecting the youngest children in state custody with relatives or friends. More than 30 percent of children in state custody in Connecticut now live with relatives or close kin, compared to 21 percent four years ago. This shift automatically lowered the number of children in group homes and it also reduced the total number of children in state custody. Read the Series [Part I: Warehousing our children: How South Carolina laws hide child abuse inside group homes](#) [Part II: Brother repeatedly rapes sister, blames DSS](#) [Part III: Group homes pull in millions every year from taxpayers](#) [Part IV: Eagle Harbor Ranch: A case study in confusion](#) [Part V: Advocates doubt plan to pull children out of institutions will work](#) [Part VI: Other states reduce dependence on group homes](#) "These are two trends that go hand in hand," Stevens said. "I don't think you can stress enough how interrelated those things are." Also, by reducing the amount Connecticut spent on group homes, the state was able to reinvest some money into "community-based services" that allow children to live at home or with relatives. Those services include in-home or in-school therapy sessions. Kleeblatt said Connecticut will spend an estimated \$129 million on group homes during the 2015 fiscal year, about \$63 million less than the state spent four years ago. Connecticut isn't the only state that recently made progress on this front. Tennessee also drastically reduced the number of children living in group homes. In 2000, 28 percent of children entering the Tennessee foster care system were placed into one of these facilities. Now, more than 90 percent live in family settings. Children's Rights, a national advocacy group, forced the Tennessee and Connecticut child welfare systems to make these changes by filing separate class action lawsuits against the states. In January, Children's Rights filed a federal lawsuit against South Carolina on behalf of 11 foster care children. The South Carolina complaint cites federal data that shows South Carolina places its youngest foster children in group homes and institutions at a higher rate than any other state in the country. Ira Lustbader, the litigation director of Children's Rights, called both Tennessee and Connecticut success stories. "That takes a strong shift in priority to recognize that (group homes are) harming kids," Lustbader said. "South Carolina has just stubbornly not taken that on for whatever reason." Reach Lauren Sausser at 937-5598. **Other states reduce dependence on group homes** Source: <http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20150723/PC16/150709448/1177/other-states-reduce-dependence-on-group-homes>

Abuse allegations haunt lucrative group homes [Lauren Sausser Email @laurenmsausser](#) Jul 23 2015 6:00 pm Jul 24 11:17 am [Enlarge](#) John Roe, who said he was abused at Boys Home of the South in Belton, lives in Greenville now and filed a lawsuit against the group home and the Department of Social Services last year. Roe said he often visits Falls Park on the Reedy in downtown Greenville to fish and relax. Paul Zoeller/Staff John Roe, who said he was abused at Boys Home of the South in Belton, lives in Greenville now and filed a lawsuit against the group home and the Department of Social Services last year. Roe said he often visits Falls Park on the Reedy in downtown Greenville to fish and relax. × BELTON — The bucolic countryside surrounding Boys Home of the South belies the horror some children say they endured after state Social Services officials dumped them here. Even as state agencies gave the group home as much as \$1.5 million a year, the Department of Social Services investigated the facility three dozen times for abuse and neglect allegations since 2000. **RELATED DOCUMENTS** [John Roe Lawsuit](#) (PDF - Warning: This document contains graphic language) The state won't reveal the outcome of these investigations, but children who lived at Boys Home of the South say they were tortured and raped by employees and their peers. A high-profile child sex abuse lawsuit forced this group home to close last year — the campus has since reopened as a Christian campground. But that was too late for John Roe, who says he was repeatedly molested by a Boys Home of the South worker more than a decade ago. Roe, now 23, asked that The Post and Courier conceal his real name by using the pseudonym he chose for a lawsuit filed last year against the group home and the Department of Social Services. He said he reported the attacks to another staffer and his assigned Department of Social Services caseworker, but they did nothing about the abuse. "I felt worthless that nobody would actually listen, that it wasn't taken seriously," Roe said. "Eventually, I gave up trying." The lawsuit that finally shut down Boys Home of the South [made national news](#), but this was far from the only residential group home in South Carolina to profit handsomely off taxpayer dollars while the child welfare agency investigated the facility for maltreatment of children in its care. New Hope Carolinas, which operates a psychiatric treatment facility in Rock Hill, has been investigated for child abuse and neglect 119 times since 2000. Six other group homes and institutions have been investigated by Social Services at least 80 times in 15 years. All of them are still open, and the investigations remain sealed from the public. Meanwhile, tax records show that nonprofit group homes in South Carolina alone make more than \$70 million a year — largely from lucrative state contracts and private donations. [Enlarge](#) Boys Home of the South, a group home in Belton, closed last year and has since been renovated into a Christian campground. Between 2000 and 2014, the Department of Social Services investigated 36 allegations of abuse and neglect at the facility. Raymond McCrea Jones/The New York Times Boys Home of the South, a group home in Belton, closed last year and has since been renovated into a Christian campground. Between 2000 and 2014, the Department of Social Services investigated 36 allegations of abuse and neglect at the facility. × Some experts maintain that group homes provide a valuable community resource, offering services for many children, particularly those who have been diagnosed with severe behavioral health issues and have nowhere else to live. Others, however, contend that the state's dependence on these homes has allowed the industry to rake in revenue while dodging accountability for the harm done to children on its watch. Camden attorney Robert Butcher represents several former foster children allegedly abused in state custody, including Roe. Butcher said group home directors keep quiet about the kind of abuse Roe says he suffered because they worry the child welfare agency will stop sending them new children — their main source of revenue. "They're making a killing on these kids," Butcher said. "They don't want to rock that boat." Furthermore, he thinks some state caseworkers downplay allegations made by children because investigating potential abuse takes time that they don't have and Social Services has nowhere else to place them. "They're in the business of selling children," he said. "Basically, they don't do their damn jobs." State officials and group home supporters say these facilities aren't a perfect fit for every child, but it's unfair to paint them all with the same brush. "I think there are really good foster homes and there are really good group homes. And there's really bad of both," said Danny Gilbert, who owns Eagle Harbor Ranch, a group home for boys in Berkeley County. "There are some people who are just collecting a check." 'Incredibly powerful' industry More than 7,000 group homes and orphanages for children across the country pull in about \$8.8 billion a year and employ almost 130,000 people, according to an industry report published last year by IBISWorld, a national research firm. More than 67 percent of this money comes from government contributions and grants. [Enlarge](#) × In South Carolina, the Department of Social Services spent more than \$28 million in the 2014 fiscal year placing almost a quarter of all foster children in more than 90 group homes across the state. Before Boys Home of the South closed in 2014, the Department of Social Services paid the group home nearly \$3 million in five years, but other group homes typically make much more. The Connie Maxwell Children's Home in Greenwood made about \$11 million in 2013 from several revenue sources, according to public tax records. Epworth Children's Home in Columbia made \$6.8 million. Thornwell Home for Children in Clinton made \$8 million. This group home and its related organizations, affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), compensated its president \$196,000 in 2013 — \$90,000 more than Gov. Nikki Haley's salary. "There's a built-in source of waste that could be used to fund more supportive foster homes for these kids," said Ira Lustbader, the litigation director for Children's Rights, a national advocacy group. "Something is just way out of whack in South Carolina on this issue." Sue Berkowitz, executive director of the South Carolina Applesseed Legal Justice Center, said group homes make so much money because their interests are well represented by lobbyists and lawmakers. "It's no different than nursing homes. It's more humane and cheaper for us to have community, long-term care and to keep elderly and severely disabled people in their homes, yet the nursing home lobby is incredibly powerful," Berkowitz said. "Some of them have been just absolutely horrendous." Group homes are entitled to make money, she said, but children have been hurt and she doesn't think the state is doing enough to protect them. "We're not doing what we need to do up

front to figure out who needs to go where and how they should be placed,” she said. ‘Demonizing DSS’ Some state leaders, including former Department of Social Services Director Lillian Koller, tried to reduce the number of children sent to live in group homes with limited success. [Enlarge](#) The grounds at Boys Home of the South, a former group home in Belton, have recently changed to a Christian campground. The group home for children closed in 2014 following a high-profile, child sex abuse lawsuit. (Raymond McCrea Jones/The New York Times) The grounds at Boys Home of the South, a former group home in Belton, have recently changed to a Christian campground. The group home for children closed in 2014 following a high-profile, child sex abuse lawsuit. (Raymond McCrea Jones/The New York Times) × In 2009 and 2010, a handful of these group homes in South Carolina closed, and others were forced to scale back operations. These closures illustrated a national trend. Similar facilities in other states also shut their doors as the number of children in foster care dropped across the country and as federal funding and private donations dwindled. Best practices indicated children were better off living with families anyway. Koller supported this shift away from group homes. Deborah McKelvey, the executive director of Windwood Farm in Awendaw, remembered Koller and her deputy director addressing group home employees at an industry meeting in 2011. “They said, ‘We don’t value what you provide any more. We don’t need you.’” McKelvey estimated more than 500 group home “beds” in South Carolina were lost over a five-year period. “Probably a couple of years ago, they really started making the push that they didn’t want kids in residential placements,” she said. “They used words like ‘languish’ — like (group homes) were torture chambers. They’re not.” Koller resigned last year amid political uproar that the agency was grossly mismanaged and that children were dying on her watch. Since then, some group homes in South Carolina have bounced back. McKelvey said Windwood is running at full capacity these days. “Now, an influx of kids are coming in,” she said. “Our phone does not stop ringing all day long.” All 15 group home beds at Windwood are filled with children in state custody. [Enlarge](#) Boys Home of the South was located on several acres in rural Belton until it closed last year. The former group home for children has faced more than one child sex abuse lawsuit. John Roe, 23, says he was raped many times by a Boys Home of the South staff member more than a decade ago. He tried to report the abuse, but Roe said no one would listen. (Raymond McCrea Jones/The New York Times) Boys Home of the South was located on several acres in rural Belton until it closed last year. The former group home for children has faced more than one child sex abuse lawsuit. John Roe, 23, says he was raped many times by a Boys Home of the South staff member more than a decade ago. He tried to report the abuse, but Roe said no one would listen. (Raymond McCrea Jones/The New York Times) × “I hear and read enough horror stories to know that (group homes) are not all good,” McKelvey said. “But there’s certainly a place and a need for group homes, for residential care like we have here.” Paula Fendley, who represents many group homes in South Carolina as executive director of the Palmetto Association of Children and Families, said the whole Social Services agency needs reform. Group homes, which she estimates employ thousands of people in this state, aren’t the problem. “We need all kinds of levels of care,” Fendley said. “We need to stop demonizing DSS and stop demonizing providers and demonizing advocates and all figure out what we need to do, instead of just blaming everything on DSS.” ‘One size doesn’t fit all’ State lawmakers agreed with Fendley that the issue is nuanced. Sen. Tom Alexander, R-Walhalla, said South Carolina could use more foster families, but group homes should remain an important part of the mix. “I think what you’ve got to have is a variety of options for the Department (of Social Services),” said Alexander, a member of the state Senate committee that reviews Social Services funding every year. “One size doesn’t fit all.” The former Department of Social Services director didn’t see it that way, he said. “It was almost like we were trying to dismantle the (group) homes,” he said. “Obviously I’m a tremendous supporter of foster parents and foster homes, but in every situation that’s not what’s available.” A handful of small group homes in Alexander’s rural Upstate district make more than \$5 million a year, tax records show. Some of them opened their doors decades ago and employ dozens of people in a region hit hard by the recent recession. Unemployment around Walhalla topped 14 percent a few years back. “I know (group) homes that we have in our area, they’re very loving, they’re faith-based,” he said. “Ultimately, we’ve got to do what’s best for the children ... I’m not interested in numbers and statistics driving what’s in their best interest.” Sen. Katrina Shealy, R-Lexington, a member of the Senate DSS Oversight Committee, said she wants to evaluate how the child welfare agency spends its money and where foster children should be sent, but she said overhauling Social Services may take several years. “I think what we did several years ago, we eliminated some of our good group homes,” Shealy said. She doesn’t want to watch that happen again. “This is not something we can solve in one six-month session.” ‘Really sad’ When the Department of Social Services finally moved John Roe out of Boys Home of the South in 2005, his new foster mom noticed he needed help. Read the Series [Part I: Warehousing our children: How South Carolina laws hide child abuse inside group homes](#) [Part II: Brother repeatedly rapes sister, blames DSS](#) [Part III: Group homes pull in millions every year from taxpayers](#) [Part IV: Eagle Harbor Ranch: A case study in confusion](#) [Part V: Advocates doubt plan to pull children out of institutions will work](#) [Part VI: Other states reduce dependence on group homes](#) Roe wore diapers. He couldn’t control his bowel movements. A doctor wrote down in his medical record that the scars on his urethra suggested he had been sexually abused. Abbeville attorney Heather Hite Stone, who also represents Roe, said he will likely need medical care and therapy for the rest of his life. “He doesn’t want this to ever happen to any other kids and I don’t either,” Stone said. “It’s just really sad.” But some child advocates say South Carolina isn’t trying hard enough to change the status quo. They believe reducing the amount of money this state spends on group homes would immediately free up funds to recruit more foster families, some of whom now earn less than \$13 a day to raise children in state custody. Susan Alford, the new Department of Social Services director, said the agency needs to make it easier for potential foster families to sign up. She said internal data indicates for every 1,000 families who express interest in fostering children in South Carolina, only 300 of them make it through the months-long process. “One of the things we really want to do is get serious about foster care recruitment,” Alford said. “We do believe we need to have more foster homes for kids so they don’t have to go to group homes if we don’t think that’s the best treatment option for them.” Reach Lauren Sausser at 937-5598. Source: <http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20150723/PC16/150709450>

Man jailed 15 months for having sex with three girls from group home Waterloo Region Record By [Gordon Paul](#) KITCHENER — A Kitchener man was sent to jail for 15 months on Friday for having sexual intercourse with three underage girls who lived in a group home. Reinaldo Sepulveda, 22, had earlier pleaded guilty to three counts of sexual interference. Two of the girls were 13 years old; the other was 15. Sepulveda knew their ages. Although Sepulveda did not force himself on the girls, anyone younger than 16 can’t legally consent to sex. “They are group home members, they are young, they are vulnerable,” Crown prosecutor Cynthia Jennison said in asking for 18 to 21 months in jail. “Thirteen years of age is extremely young.” The offences happened at Sepulveda’s apartment — which Jennison called a “party house” — on Christmas Day in 2013, New Year’s Day in 2014 and Jan. 18, 2014. Jennison said the fact Sepulveda did not use condoms was “extremely aggravating.” Sepulveda was not “targeting” girls from the group home, defence lawyer Derek Johnson said. He said the girls sought out Sepulveda because he was a young man with an apartment. Johnson said it wasn’t a case of a “privileged” man exploiting disadvantaged girls. Sepulveda grew up in a Third World country and was raised without a father, he said. Sepulveda didn’t have to convince them to have sex, Johnson said. “They sought him out for that purpose.” The girls brought their own alcohol and marijuana, said Johnson, who asked for a 13-month sentence. “As sexual offences go ... there are not a lot of aggravating factors.” Justice John Lynch called it a difficult sentencing. He said the court must denounce the crime and deter others but noted that Sepulveda is a young man with no prior criminal record who holds down two full-time jobs to support his family. The judge noted that the girls pursued Sepulveda and he did not introduce them to sex. “These were not predatory circumstances,” Lynch said. “But the fact is they were children pursuing an adult. This was not consensual sex, nor could it be.” Lynch said Sepulveda tried to minimize his offences. “I hope he doesn’t see himself as the victim. Clearly they are and he is not.” The judge gave Sepulveda two years of probation, a 10-year weapons prohibition and banned him from working or volunteering in a position of trust with children under 16. He was also ordered to stay away from the victims and provide a sample for the national DNA database. Sepulveda’s mother broke into tears as her son was handcuffed and taken to jail. Source: <http://www.therecord.com/news-story/5750685-man-jailed-15-months-for-having-sex-with-three-girls-from-group-home/>

Foster Children Robbed of Identity July 25, 2015 Legislatively Speaking By Senator, Lena C. Taylor Lena C. Taylor Imagine turning 18 years-old; finally ready to take on your dreams as an independent young man or woman. At this age, you feel like you have reached a starting point in life’s journey and are bursting with potential. Now picture yourself as an 18 year-old aging out of foster care. Life has already dealt you a set of circumstances that have interrupted your childhood, separated you from your biological parents and in some cases, your entire natural family. You, alone, will now be responsible for your well being, housing, continued education, and economic future. But you are ready for the opportunity to create your own future. Then, once again, life throws you a curve and you are faced with a new challenge: identity fraud. WISN 12’s investigative reporter Colleen Henry reported on the story of two sisters, who were former foster children that discovered their identity had been stolen and personal credit ruined while in the state of Wisconsin’s care. The sisters would learn that while they were still minors and being cared for by foster parents, they already had a house, a car, credit cards, and a bankruptcy in listed in their name. In talking with a representative from the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, I was told the following: “Children and youth in a court ordered out-of-

home care (OHC) placement are particularly vulnerable to identity theft because their personal identifying information is frequently shared with multiple agencies and individuals, making it less protected and more readily accessible to identity thieves. Unfortunately, identity theft by parents, relatives and caregivers also occurs. The misuse of the child's identity may not be discovered until the youth exits the foster care system and applies for a cell phone, job, student loan or apartment. Long-term implications for youth include debt that was not created by them, credit score problems, difficulty obtaining credit, loans and apartment rental, as well as the potential for civil judgments against the youth for delinquent accounts." Identity theft impacts an estimated 15 million United States residents each year, with financial losses totaling upwards of \$50 billion annually. Our country's most vulnerable demographic, children, have become a popular target for identity thefts. One in 40 families with children under 18 had at least one child whose personal information was compromised, according to a 2012 survey by the Identity Theft Assistance Center and the Javelin Strategy & Research group. The survey revealed that identity thieves most often steal children's Social Security numbers, since young children seldom have the credit histories acquired by adults, such as credit cards, bank accounts, licenses and financial statements. Foster children are particularly at risk. So much so, that the White House's Administration for Children and Families have created federal laws aimed at protecting kids from falling victim to identity thieves. Under current Federal law state child welfare agencies—in order to become eligible for federal grants—ensure that youth in foster care who are 16 and older receive a free copy of any credit reports annually. The law also requires that the agencies ensure that these youth get assistance in interpreting and resolving any inaccuracies in the reports. Although it appears many states have no formalized process to address this situation, Wisconsin's Department of Children and Families has begun to address the concerns raised by Colleen Henry and my office. Going beyond the federal law, Wisconsin currently has agreements with two of the three credit reporting agencies and is working on the third. We request credit reports twice a year, for all kids, not just those that are aged 16 and up. Remediation of fraudulent credit is a joint responsibility between Department of Children and Families and the county child welfare agencies. However, for anyone that has ever been the victim of identity theft, you know that it can take years to clear your credit report of fraudulent accounts. There is no obligation under the federal law to continue to work with aged out youth on credit remediation. So, there are no laws that exist to protect these individuals beyond the age of 18. That means a young man or woman, in the final days before becoming independent, could have their information stolen, their credit abused, and never get the help they need to recover. Understanding that good credit is vital for a successful transition from foster care to adulthood, I am committed to addressing additional remedies for children who have been entrusted to our care and further harmed while on our watch. I am working on legislation to protect our young men and women, who have been taken advantage of as a result of their circumstances that would allow them to receive continued assistance, in correcting their credit information, after they leave foster care and refer violators for prosecution on identity theft laws. It is unacceptable that these children would leave our care worse than when we received them. Source: <http://milwaukeejournal.com/index.php/2015/07/25/foster-children-robbed-of-identity/>

Senske: Breaking cycle of child abuse requires effort from all Posted: July 25, 2015 - 12:11am **Photos** By **Kurt Senske** The narrative around foster care in Texas usually centers on overloaded caseworkers, traumatized children and a flawed, underfunded state system. However, few of us wonder what we can do to improve the lives of Texas children in foster care. I challenge you to think and act differently, starting now. Upbring, the largest nonprofit foster placement and adoption agency in Texas, believes we all share responsibility in helping to raise healthy children prepared to embrace successful lives. Lubbock has some wonderful stories of families stepping in to fill a great need. Patricia Moreno's family has fostered more than 100 children. While many stories stand out, 4-year-old Jessie's is unforgettable. The day he was placed, Patricia's husband asked if he'd eaten anything. "Yeah, I ate some chicken bones," he replied. While Jessie was not available for adoption, the Morenos treated him like one of their own. Their son, Eric, became very attached to Jessie, too. Then there's Carolyn Gilbert. She became a licensed foster parent in 1996, shepherding more than 60 children. When Julie first moved in 1999, they grew a bond. Her time with Carolyn greatly influenced her, and today Julie serves in the community as a nurse, owns her own car, and is in the process of buying her first home. Julie still makes time to visit — roses in hand — to express her gratitude to Carolyn. As locals have long known, Lubbock is home to many generous souls; another tireless volunteer was Lee Ruth Krieg, a faithful friend and Upbring colleague, who died Monday after a valiant battle with cancer. Lee Ruth joined the LSS/Upbring Board of Directors in January 2010. She was a dedicated volunteer with all of Upbring's programs in Lubbock, including Neighborhood House, Health for Friends Clinic, and on behalf of our Foster In Texas program. Her energy, tireless spirit and dedication to children will be sorely missed. We are privileged to work with numerous families throughout Texas like those of Patricia and Carolyn. We need more families like theirs as well as greater participation from every sector of our community. We're calling on you to help us improve the odds for children in need. Our mission is to break the cycle of child abuse by empowering children, families and communities. With more than 13 percent of U.S. children subject to abuse or neglect by a caregiver each year, maltreatment of children is a pervasive problem affecting kids of every age, gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic background. We know 30 percent of people who were abused as children become abusers themselves; nearly 70,000 Texas children were confirmed victims of child abuse and neglect last year, most for the first time; nearly 18,000 Texas children were removed from their homes in 2014. As the result of a recent study, we now know over their lifetimes, this abuse and neglect costs the Texas economy an estimated \$454 billion. To break the cycle of child abuse, we must be comprehensive in our strategy. Kids enter the child welfare system at different stages of their lives, and we must address the full spectrum of their needs. Upbring has established an innovative continuum of services and partnerships tracking progress in five key markers of: safety, life skills, education, health and vocation. Currently, there is surprisingly little long-term data on Texas foster children, or what strategies prove successful in serving them. In order to fill this void, Upbring is partnering with The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work on a first-of-its-kind-in-Texas study that will track the progress and wellbeing of foster children. We recognize we can't meet needs alone. Giving vulnerable children the support and opportunities each of them deserves is more than one organization or government can do. We need businesses willing to train and employ 18-year-olds as they exit the foster care system; medical institutions eager to partner with us to improve the health of children in foster care; legislators prepared to support the needs of foster children in a complex system; and volunteers passionate about lending their time and skills to a cause bigger than themselves. And of course, we need more Texans like Patricia Moreno and Carolyn Gilbert, whose love and devotion as foster parents has raised expectations for what a childhood can be. KURT SENSKÉ is president and CEO of Upbring, a faith-based nonprofit organization devoted to breaking the cycle of child abuse. Source: <http://lubbockonline.com/editorial-columnists/2015-07-25/senske-breaking-cycle-child-abuse-requires-effort-all#.VbVjDenbK1s>

Stop child abuse in group homes Jul 26 2015 12:01 am Susan Alford, the new DSS director, takes a break in-between meetings to eat lunch at her desk Tuesday, June 16, 2015 at the South Carolina DSS in Columbia. (Paul Zoeller/Staff) **Unthinkable** things can happen to children in group homes. They can be beaten, molested, drugged and neglected. But in South Carolina, information about such incidents is kept secret. That means parents are in the dark — and people who want to address the problems don't have the information they need to do so. The S.C. General Assembly needs to recognize that state law intended to protect children is actually putting them at risk. Last year, the Senate investigated the Department of Social Services after hearing allegations of mismanagement, unworkable caseloads and deaths of children under the agency's authority. Lillian Koller resigned as director under pressure from lawmakers who were exasperated by her refusal to provide data about social workers' staggering caseloads. Her replacement, Susan Alford, faces an uphill climb. The more forthcoming she is about the system's shortcomings, the more likely the Legislature will work to make beneficial changes, starting with changing the law. She also should realign the DSS budget so that more children can be taken care of in homes of relatives or foster parents, and fewer in group homes. Studies show that children do better in home settings than they do in group homes. That's reason enough. But an investigation by reporter Lauren Sausser revealed that group homes across the state have been the subject of multiple complaints. And while administrators say that most of the complaints are unfounded, the public has no way to find out if that's true. DSS, which is responsible for group home oversight, will say, for example, that New Hope in York County has been investigated for 119 allegations of abuse in the past 15 years. But it will not say how many allegations were unfounded or how serious the allegations were. That would be an easy fix — were it not for state law that calls for the information to be withheld. It should be changed. Certainly the state should protect children by keeping private their names and details of alleged abuse. But there is no reason not to have a place people can go to check out group homes before making decisions about placing children there. The database could contain the number of abuse allegations, their severity and their disposition. Many children in group homes are troubled. It stands to reason that some allegations will prove untrue. The public deserves to know that. And group homes that are protecting children should have the satisfaction of the public knowing they've been cleared of charges. Ironically, the state pays five times as much money keeping children in group homes than in foster homes, and the outcome is usually inferior. Particularly young children (those up to 13 years of age) are more apt to thrive in foster homes than in group homes. Unfortunately, South Carolina puts children in group homes and institutions at a rate higher than any other state in

the country. Hence the reallocation of money. DSS needs to recruit more foster parents and pay them better. Some receive as little as \$12 a day to feed, clothe and care for a child. Only five states pay less for foster care. By reducing the number of children in group homes significantly, DSS would save tens of millions of dollars that could be used to beef up foster care. The children under the care of DSS are among the state's most vulnerable. Many have been abused, yet they are being put in group homes where they risk further abuse. The likelihood of that abuse is classified information. DSS has a new director. And the Legislature has demonstrated a genuine concern for addressing DSS problems. It's time for dramatic changes that will protect children and spend tax dollars more effectively. Source: <http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20150726/PC1002/150729484/1022/stop-child-abuse-in-group-homes>

How UK Anti-Terror Guidance Could Violate Children's Human Rights Tuesday, 28 July 2015 09:32 By [Stephanie Petrie](#), [The Conversation](#) | News Analysis font size [decrease font size](#) [increase font size](#) [Print](#) 29 Email There are enormous dangers in the way child protection legislation in the UK intersects with Channel, the government's [anti-radicalization program](#). There are only a few legal steps between the suggested interventions set out in the [Channel guidance](#) and the possibility of a child being removed from their home because their family's political views are unacceptable and don't adhere to "British values." This runs the risk of violating the overriding principles of both domestic UK child protection law and children's rights set down in the 1989 [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#). It [has also been argued](#) that it breaches the [European Convention on Human Rights](#). This has happened in the recent past in countries such as [Hungary](#) and Argentina, also motivated by a desire to "save" children from harmful influences. Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, the Nobel laureate and human rights activist, [has pointed out](#) that both the Church and military in Argentina justified removing and placing children from political opponents for adoption as a necessary step to protect them from harmful influences. Alarm Bells Channel is part of the government's overall [Prevent strategy](#) issued in 2011. While the statute does not refer to children or young people, guidance for the panels focuses almost entirely on interventions relevant to young people with only cursory references to "vulnerable" adults. Section 2 of the guidance [states emphatically](#) that preventing "radicalization" is a "protection" issue that may require action by social workers: The way in which Channel will be delivered may often overlap with the implementation of the wider safeguarding duty, especially where vulnerabilities have been identified that require intervention from social services, or where the individual is already known to social services. It is precisely this overlap that rings alarm bells. Guidance does not clarify how the overlap with potential criminal prosecution will be managed. Nor does it set out how young people are to be protected from: "arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence ... (and) unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation" - article 16 of the [1989 UN Convention of the Rights of the Child](#) which the UK has ratified. The guidance recommends that if parental consent for the referral of a young person to a panel is not forthcoming and there are "vulnerabilities" in the home environment, it may be necessary for action by social workers under [section 17 of the Children Act 1989](#), with the potential for intervention in their family life or for the compulsory removal of their child [under section 47](#) of the same act. "Extremism" is defined in the guidance primarily as opposition to listed "fundamental" British values, as though the definitions of these values are undisputed and uncontested. To define unacceptable political views and expressions of dissent as child abuse is a dangerous step to take. Of course, removing children from their families to protect them from significant harm may sometimes be necessary. Enormous strides have been made in the detection and prevention of physical child abuse and recognition and understanding of child sexual abuse. There is now a [substantial body of knowledge](#) about the nature and causes of child abuse and how it may be prevented. None of this knowledge is evident in Channel guidance and it is misleading to imply that what is primarily a surveillance operation is intended to protect young people from harm. Extra Pressure on Social Workers As Channel guidance is not a statutory duty but advice which authorities must have "regard," it is hoped that social workers involved in using it will maintain the highest professional standards and integrity and ensure interventions are not instigated for political purposes. However, in the [Queen's speech](#), the new Conservative government revealed that the [Police and Criminal Justice Bill](#) will pave the way to make a criminal offence of wilful neglect for professionals who fail to act on child protection concerns. It's possible that this could mean social workers who resisted making a statutory intervention that was deemed necessary by a panel could be charged with wilful neglect. Channel guidance conflates the abuse of children and young people with prevention of terrorism initiatives in gravely misleading ways. It also undermines the paramount principles regarding the welfare of children in both domestic legislation and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In its framework for assessing a child's vulnerability, the Channel guidance identifies factors such as "a need for identity, meaning and belonging" and "a desire for political or moral change" as indicators of vulnerability to involvement in terrorism. Surely we want to educate our young people to strive for meaning and belonging, and surely political and moral change is a characteristic of human society. The Channel program will not protect young people from becoming drawn into terrorist violence but by failing to respect the desire for justice, it [runs the risk of alienating](#) them further. The program should be withdrawn. Source: <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/32086-how-uk-anti-terror-guidance-could-violate-children-s-human-rights>

Georgia Is Moving Children With Disabilities Into Schools Used During Jim Crow Thursday, 30 July 2015 00:00 By [Marian Wang](#), [ProPublica](#) | Report font size [decrease font size](#) [increase font size](#) [Print](#) 50 Email (Photo: [Empty Classroom](#) via Shutterstock; Edited LW / TO) Georgia has been illegally and unnecessarily segregating thousands of students with behavioral issues and disabilities, isolating them in run-down facilities and providing them with subpar education, according to an [investigation](#) by the US Department of Justice. Some of the students in the program were schooled in the [same inferior buildings that served black children in the days of Jim Crow](#). The investigation found that many of the buildings lack gyms, cafeterias, libraries, labs, playgrounds and other amenities. "It's a warehouse for kids the school system doesn't want or know how to deal with," a parent [told](#) the Justice Department of the program. The Justice Department detailed its findings in a letter earlier this month to Georgia's governor and attorney general. Federal law mandates that schools educate students with disabilities in the "[least restrictive environment](#)" in which they can learn and thrive. More broadly, public entities must serve people with disabilities in the "[most integrated setting](#)." But what the Justice Department found in Georgia is something that persists across the country: Schools continue to [inappropriately segregate](#) students with a range of behavioral needs and disabilities. Children are often placed in more restrictive settings because traditional public schools show little flexibility in working with students who may need more support. In Georgia, schools were quick to move children out of mainstream classrooms, the Justice Department noted. In some cases, students were recommended for placement after [a single incident or a string of minor incidents](#), such as using inappropriate language with a teacher. Parents reported feeling pressured into agreeing to the placements. In fact, many students who were placed in what's called the Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support, or GNETS, didn't actually need to be there, the Justice Department said. Most could have stayed in their neighborhood schools if they'd been given more behavioral or mental-health support. "Nearly all students in the GNETS Program could receive services in more integrated settings, but do not have the opportunity to do so," the letter said. What's more, because the state has set up a system that tilts toward providing services in segregated settings, the letter said, Georgia "[undermines the availability of these services in more integrated settings](#)." A spokeswoman for Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal referred questions to the Georgia Department of Education, whose spokesman referred questions to the Attorney General's Office. Daryl Robinson, counsel to the Georgia Attorney General, told ProPublica, "We don't have any comment at this time." This isn't the first time that the GNETS has drawn scrutiny. In 2010, a [state audit](#) found that the programs "are not held accountable for student performance" and questioned their cost effectiveness. Earlier, in 2004, a 13-year-old boy in the program [hanged himself](#) while held for hours isolated in a room. Advocates have [long](#) been critical of the quality of services offered by the network. "We have seen many, many clients whose behavior gets significantly worse in GNETS," said Leslie Lipson, an attorney with the Georgia Advocacy Office. "We've seen kids who are significantly behind their peers for no other reason than lack of instruction. We've seen students who are great football players or involved in student government or band who are sent to GNETS and have no opportunities to be part of their community." The Justice Department [threatened the state](#) with a lawsuit if the problems are not corrected. It called on the state to redirect services, training and resources to move students with behavioral challenges [back into general-education schools](#). In particular, it suggested [increasing access to mental health services](#) by locating mental health clinics "at or near schools" to provide services to students who would otherwise be at risk of being referred to more restrictive, segregated settings. Source: <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/32137-georgia-is-segregating-children-with-disabilities-in-schools-used-during-jim-crow>

Former Butte County foster parent arrested in child molestation inquiry By Staff Reports Posted: 07/17/15, 4:11 PM PDT | Updated: 1 week, 5 days ago [0 Comments](#) Oroville >> A former foster parent in the south Butte County area has been arrested on suspicion of multiple counts of child molestation. Eugene Charles Hastings Sr., 56, was arrested on suspicion of six counts of lewd or lascivious acts on a child under 14 years old, according to a press release issued Friday by the Butte County Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff's Office received a report in June alleging that Hastings had inappropriately touched a foster child in his care in 2014, according to the release. The child was not in Hastings' care at the time of the allegation. Investigators with the Sheriff's Office Special Victims Unit, Butte County Children's Services Division and California Community Care Licensing Division subsequently investigated the allegations,

including talking to former foster children who had filed similar allegations against Hastings over the years, according to the release. Hastings was arrested by sheriff's detectives following questioning, according to the release. He was booked into the Butte County Jail with bail set at \$300,000. Anyone with additional information regarding the case or Hastings' alleged actions is urged to contact the Sheriff's Office Special Victims Unit at 538-7544. Source: <http://www.chicoer.com/general-news/20150717/former-butte-county-foster-parent-arrested-in-child-molestation-inquiry>

LGBT "Treatment" Programs Are Often Child Abuse | Lorri L. Jean LGBT "Treatment" Programs Are Often Child Abuse Posted: 07/17/2015 3:22 pm EDT Updated: 07/17/2015 3:59 pm EDT [Share 152](#) [Tweet 46](#) [Email](#) [0](#) Comment 19 [stumble](#) [reddit](#) On Tuesday, July 14, I spoke in front of the U.S. Capitol Building to call for federal regulation of the residential treatment programs that claim to help troubled teens. I was proud to be joined by Reps. [Adam Schiff](#) (D-CA) and [Ileana Ros-Lehtinen](#) (R-FL) who introduced the "Stop Child Abuse in Residential Treatment Programs for Teens Act" that would regulate this multi-million dollar industry known for its abuse of youth. I was also joined by Jodi Hobbs, president of [Survivors of Institutional Abuse](#) and Paul Gionfriddo, president of [Mental Health America](#). The following are my remarks: The voices of young people aren't often heard at the Capitol. And if you're a teenager sent to a boot camp, so-called "therapeutic" boarding school or behavior modification program, it's certain your voice won't be heard because you'll be cut off from all contact with your family and the outside world. So we are here today for those youth whose voices have been silenced. We're here today for the parents who have been duped into believing these programs would really help their children. And we're here to demand action on behalf of the hundreds of young people who have actually died—as well as the thousands who suffer long-term trauma—because of the abuse they endured while in unregulated institutions that masquerade as legitimate treatment programs. It isn't "treatment" to withhold food and water from a youth. It isn't treatment to beat a teenager. And nothing should ever be considered treatment that involves denial of medical care, solitary confinement, electric shocks or public humiliation. That's not therapeutic. That's child abuse. And yet that is exactly what's happening throughout the country because residential programs that claim to help troubled teens are operating without necessary and appropriate oversight. This is not just a claim by our campaign coalition, it's a fact documented by the U.S. Government Accountability Office. LGBT kids are particularly vulnerable. Even in states like California that have outlawed the dangerous and discredited practice of gay conversion therapy, there are residential programs that consider LGBT kids to be troubled—and in need of "fixing"—simply because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. In addition to enduring the same horrible abuses as other youth, LGBT kids face additional levels of abuse that don't stop until staff believe they're no longer LGBT. No child can be "scared straight" and none should suffer damaging and sometimes fatal attempts to change who they are. It's long past time for Congress to pass sensible legislation to regulate this rogue, multi-million dollar industry that's profiting from the abuse of young people. If you're on a plane that's stuck on the tarmac for more than two hours, federal regulations require the airline to give you food and water. But if you're a kid sent to a residential treatment program, there's no regulation that protects you from being deprived of food and water for weeks. Our youth can't wait any longer. We need to fix this now. That's why I applaud the leadership of Representatives Schiff and Ros-Lehtinen for crossing the aisle to promote the Stop Child Abuse in Residential Treatment Programs for Teens Act—a law that would protect kids from unsafe programs. They understand that the health and well-being of young people is not a partisan issue. It isn't a partisan issue in California, where today our state Assembly is considering similar legislation that received nearly unanimous bipartisan support from our state senate. And it certainly shouldn't be a partisan issue in our nation's capitol. I urge the rest of the House to take action to pass the Act and stop this abuse before it's too late for any other youth. Please sign the Protect Youth from Institutional Abuse campaign [petition](#) at [PYIA.org](#). We'll contact petition signers when it's time to urge legislators to support the bills. [Webmaster Note: HR 3060 will NOT protect children from institutionalized abuse as currently written (July, 2015). Learn more by reading HEAL's recommendations to improve the legislation available at www.heal-online.org/HR3060problems.pdf.] Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lorri-l-jean/lgbt-treatment-programs_b_7814860.html

Denver, Parker group homes violating city codes Community Recovery program under fire for way facilities opened [By Carlos Illescas The Denver Post](#) Posted: 07/19/2015 12:01:00 AM MDT [Add a Comment](#) Updated: 07/22/2015 02:21:44 PM MDT Thomas Stockman and his fiancée Diane Holden sip on drinks and relax on their deck on Thursday, July 16, 2015 at their home in Parker. Stockman and Holden are upset that the house next door has been transformed into a community drug and alcohol rehabilitation center. (Callaghan O'Hare, The Denver Post) Jul 22: [Parker approves Community Recovery sober living home](#) One house sits in a tranquil Parker neighborhood that backs up to an open space. The other is a historic row home that dates to the late-1880s on the outskirts of downtown Denver. At first glance, the homes seem to fit into their locales just fine — except both are drug and alcohol treatment facilities that never secured permits to open. They are run by Community Recovery, a company based in Southern California. Neighbors complain the homes have become nuisances. Officials in Parker and Denver say the company never sought proper permits to open in those cities. In Parker, the home rented by [Community Recovery](#) on Parliament Way in the Rowley Downs neighborhood has had several calls to police since it opened less than a year ago, some for "suspicious occurrences." At one point last winter, a giant Dumpster was placed on the front lawn, which also became a makeshift parking area for the residents of the group home. People came and went at all hours of the day, neighbors say. "Their track history at this location is terrible. They made the place just a slum the first three months they were there," said Tom Stockman, who lives next door to the Parliament Way home with his fiancée. "Diane and I found our Parker dream home a little over a year ago, and six months later it turned into a Parker nightmare." Advertisement Community Recovery officials did not return phone calls for comment. Neither did the Parker homeowner who is renting to Community Recovery. In Denver, Community Recovery purchased the home in the 2500 block of Arapahoe Street for nearly \$2 million. The Fair Housing Act [protects treatment programs in residential areas](#) and requires local governments to have flexibility in zoning. Because group homes tend to be in residential areas, the permits in most cities to open a facility require more scrutiny than normal businesses, such as having no more than eight people who are not related living under the same roof. It was only after neighbors complained that Parker and Denver officials became aware of the homes. Parker issued a cease-and-desist order to Community Recovery, and the company started becoming a better neighbor, removing the large trash bin. On Monday, Community Recovery goes before the Parker Town Council to seek a permit to be there going forward. Denver is in the final stages of its investigation of the Arapahoe Street house, and the next step would be to also issue a cease-and-desist order, said Andrea Burns of Denver's Community Planning and Development department. Burns said the Denver location is housing 16 people — double the number for small group-home facilities. "We've had a case open for a while on this one," Burns said. "Our neighborhood inspectors are looking into what looks like a zoning violation. They appear to be operating this business without a zoning use permit." If Community Recovery's strategy is to open a facility secretly with more people living there than is allowed legally, it might be a good one financially — as some residents claimed in Parker this month when the planning and zoning commission approved its application. According to its website, Community Recovery charges people who are looking to participate in "sober living" treatment centers up to \$19,500 for 90 days, such as the ones in Denver and Parker, and higher at some of its facilities in California. The Parker home is supposed to be for women only, while the Denver home is an all-male facility. Joel Noble, president of [Curtis Park Neighbors](#) in Denver, said the group home on Arapahoe Street hasn't seen as many issues compared with the one in Parker, but parking has become more difficult. He said the home previously was being used as a place for people who came to town and wanted to stay somewhere away from temptations such as drugs and alcohol. Then, it got along with the people who live in the area just fine. He and others fear the new facility is being used to treat those who are addicted on site. "We had a good neighbor agreement with their predecessors," Noble said. "We think Community Recovery is very different; they're actively giving treatment to folks." The worry in Parker is that if Community Recovery is approved on Monday by the Town Council, the group could go back to its old ways of doing business. "We don't like it. But if they're on their best behavior and stay there, that's what the Fair Housing Act covers," Stockman said. "But we're really afraid they're not going to do that." Source: http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_28505718/denver-parker-group-homes-violating-city-codes

Former boarding school teacher charged with taking indecent photos of children Jonathan Thomson-Glover, who taught at Clifton College in Bristol, is charged with 36 counts of making, taking and possessing indecent images of children Clifton College in Bristol — a former teacher has been charged with making indecent images of children at the boarding school and another property. Photograph: Tim Ireland/PA [Steven Morris](#) and agency Monday 20 July 2015 08:16 EDT Last modified on Monday 20 July 2015 08:32 EDT [Share on Facebook](#) [Share on Twitter](#) [Share via Email](#) [Share on Pinterest](#) [Share on LinkedIn](#) [Share on Google+](#) [Share on WhatsApp](#) Shares 74 74 A former teacher at an independent boarding school has appeared in court charged with making indecent images of children. Jonathan Thomson-Glover, 53, who taught at Clifton College in Bristol, faced magistrates in Somerset accused of 36 counts of making, taking and possessing indecent images of children. Thomson-Glover spoke only to give his date of birth and confirm he was of no fixed address during a brief hearing at Taunton magistrates court. He is accused of 27 charges of taking an indecent photograph, seven charges of making an indecent photograph and two charges of possessing an indecent photograph. The charges relate to victims who were allegedly filmed at Clifton College and an address in Cornwall over a

16-year period. He was charged following a joint investigation between Avon and Somerset police and Devon and Cornwall police. The grey-haired defendant, who wore an open-neck white shirt, light coloured trousers and a dark blazer, did not enter pleas to the 36 charges. Howard Phillips, prosecuting, asked magistrates to commit the case to Taunton crown court. Eileen Westwood, chair of the bench, told Thomson-Glover: "You have heard your case is going to be dealt with at Taunton crown court and the matter is adjourned until 17 August at Taunton crown court. You will be on conditional bail." Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/jul/20/former-boarding-school-teacher-charged-taking-indecen-photos-children>

Grand jury: Close troubled Highlands juvenile facility Kendra Conlon, WTSP 12:07 a.m. EDT July 21, 2015 Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd and State Attorney Jerry Hill call the facility at Highlands Youth Academy near Avon Park a "total disgrace." (Photo: WTSP) 101 CONNECT [1](#) [TWEETLINKEDIN](#) [COMMENTEMAILMORE](#) A scathing grand jury report calls for the closure of a Highlands juvenile justice facility that's been plagued with problems from a riot to several recent escapes. Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd and State Attorney Jerry Hill call the facility at Highlands Youth Academy near Avon Park a "total disgrace." A teen's recent escape from the complex launched a massive investigation that raises serious concerns about the facility's security and living conditions. The grand jury faults failures at the privately-run, yet state-funded juvenile justice facility. The state attorney insists the company is profiting off taxpayer money, but not protecting the public, or the kids inside. Report calls for closing youth detention center WTSP "They've got plywood on the walls. They don't have paint. They don't have infrastructure, and you're trying to tell me we're teaching kids the right way? Come on man," says Judd. Judd says an investigation into Highlands Youth Academy revealed rundown 60-year-old buildings, some repairs still haven't been made from a riot 2 years ago. "You get \$5 million a year and you're housing 50 kids or less a day, is this the best we can do?" says Hill. Hill believes there are even bigger problems with untrained staff and security. Video shows 5 workers attempting to break up a fight. One teen sees the chance to escape and flees. "The doors and windows don't have the capability of being secured. It's a miserable failure down there," says Judd. G4S is the company that runs the facility and is paid by the Department of Juvenile Justice. A 5-year, \$40 million deal just for this facility. "They make a profit, while our kids who need this program suffer," says Judd. Other G4S operated facilities in the Bay area have seen riots too this year. At Highlands, the company insists it is working on renovations and follow DJJ's direction on security. "The way juvenile justice is done in the state of Florida needs to undergo radical change," Hill says. "I think they will definitely take note. I think people are trying to implement changes that takes time," says neighbor Dave Lambdin. [Click here to read the 13-page response from G4S](#) The Department of Juvenile Justice released the following statement: "The Department of Juvenile Justice works to ensure that all youth in our care, our employees and Florida communities are kept safe. Juvenile arrests in Florida are at the lowest level in 30 years with a 36 percent decline over the last five years. "In order to promote our mission of safety, the Department has taken various steps over the last two years since the Avon Park Youth Academy disturbance took place: "DJJ has installed surveillance cameras throughout the facility; We have decreased the program's size from 144 beds to 80; Increased staff to youth ratio to 1 to 3 during daytime hours; The agency has allocated almost \$2 million in facility improvements including dormitory renovations and roof replacement. "DJJ continues to closely monitor this program, and all of our programs, to ensure that our high standards of accountability and transparency are met in all we do." Source: <http://www.wtsp.com/story/news/local/2015/07/20/grand-jury-shut-down-troubled-juvenile-facility/30448407/>

Over-medication of people with learning disabilities infringes human rights Medicine should not be used to make people easier to care for – we need to discuss alternatives and how to spread best practice Medicines can be transformative, but using them to calm people down amounts to chemical restraint. Photograph: Alamy Dominic Slowie National clinical director for learning disabilities, NHS England Tuesday 21 July 2015 03.20 EDT Last modified on Tuesday 21 July 2015 04.31 EDT [Share on Facebook](#) [Share on Twitter](#) [Share via Email](#) [Share on Pinterest](#) [Share on LinkedIn](#) [Share on Google+](#) [Share on WhatsApp](#) [Shares 777 777 Comments 3](#) The chief pharmacist, Keith Ridge, and I have written to professionals and patients [highlighting grave concerns about the inappropriate and prolonged prescribing of psychotropic drugs](#) to people with learning disabilities. These concerns were based on the findings of three reports commissioned by NHS England – from [Public Health England](#), the [Care Quality Commission](#) and [NHS Improving Quality](#) – following the Winterbourne View scandal. Combined, the three reports found that up to 35,000 people with learning disabilities are being treated with medicines intended for severe mental illness with no clear clinical justification, often for many years without adequate review or challenge, and without them or their loved ones and carers being told why, or the serious and lasting side effects. Learning disability: positive behaviour support offers an alternative to antipsychotics Jonathan Beebe Challenging behaviours can be traumatic, but sedation is not the answer. Positive behaviour support can help people express themselves in different ways Read more Over-medication, and then lack of review, is a historic problem highlighted previously by the [Challenging Behaviour Foundation](#) and other groups, and for which [guidance](#) was first published in 2006. Nonetheless, it is a problem that nobody knew the true scale of, which is why we worked with patients, carers and professionals to commission these reports, to get to the bottom of the issues once and for all and to take robust action. What we have found is unacceptable, and we understand the outrage that many people will feel; this is a serious patient safety issue and calls into question the extent to which [GMC guidelines on consent to treatment](#) are being followed. These medicines can be transformative, but only when used to treat the illnesses and diseases they were designed to treat, when risks and benefits have been fully weighed up, where the patient, carers and families are all informed and agree on the treatments, and where there is commitment for the treatment to be regularly reviewed, and stopped if the proposed benefits are not evident or if the side effects are unacceptable. This is basic good practice. These medicines should not be used to simply calm people down or to make them easier to care for. To do so amounts to chemical restraint and risks missing the real reasons behind the behavioural problems being identified. Incorrect prescribing in this manner amounts to an infringement of human rights. We are determined to take action to tackle over-medication for this group of patients, but doing so is going to be about more than central edicts, and it requires the will of more than just [NHS England](#); it needs to be about changing attitudes, cultures and practices right across the country and across the health and social care system. We have already set out plans to increase the presence of pharmacists in GP surgeries to support them to review and challenge prescriptions that may be inappropriate. Building on that, we led a summit of key stakeholders to fully explore the problem, and to agree next steps and responsibilities as part of a call to action. A call to action isn't about issuing new policies or rules from the centre; it's an invitation to be part of shaping meaningful and lasting system change, enabling professionals across disciplines and agencies to solve common problems and achieve common goals. The results such an approach can achieve tell their own story; the [Right Prescription project](#) on decreasing the inappropriate use of antipsychotic drugs for people with dementia led to a marked increase in reviews, and a reduction in inappropriate prescribing by more than half over its 18-month timeframe. We need to replicate that kind of quick success for patients with learning disabilities. And while Ridge and I can help provide leadership and impetus, we need others to share the desire for change and the responsibility for driving it. We have been greatly encouraged by the support of the Royal College of Nursing, the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society so far, not to mention those in the voluntary sector, such as Mencap, who have been campaigning on this issue for so long. We hope that the summit will galvanise the will and catalyse the action of many more. After Winterbourne View I'm being forced to discharge patients too soon Anonymous Simplistic targets created in the wake of scandalous abuse are not what patients with learning disabilities need or want Read more In particular, participants must agree on the need for change, and what the priorities, roles and responsibilities are for each of the organisations that attended. We also discussed the legitimate alternatives to medication, as detailed in the recently published Nice guidelines, how best practice can be spread across the country (including a patient safety alert if necessary), and how success can be measured and demonstrated. But above all, and fundamental to the success of any call to action, we need to achieve a shared vision and goal: that each and every individual with a learning disability in England should receive the best quality and most appropriate care that we can provide for them, wherever and from whomever they receive it. The summit was a big step towards that, but we're clear that the hard work has only just started. [Join our network](#) to read more pieces like this. And follow us on Twitter ([@GdnHealthcare](#)) to keep up with the latest healthcare news and views. Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/healthcare-network/2015/jul/21/over-medication-learning-disabilities-infringes-human-rights>

Group home employee had sex with juvenile inmate, deputies say Cornelia McDaniel faces multiple charges [NEXT STORY](#) Officials: [One person flown from scene of crash](#) Text Size: [ASmall Text](#) [AMedium Text](#) [ALarge Text](#) Show Transcript Hide Transcript warrants and the Greenville county sheriff's office, this GREENVILLE COUNTY, S.C. — A woman who worked at a group home is accused of having sex with a juvenile inmate, according to Greenville County deputies. Investigators said Cornelia McDaniel had oral sex and intercourse with a 15-year-old. Authorities said McDaniel was 22 when the sexual encounters started two years ago. The teen was being held by the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice at Avalonia Group Home where McDaniel worked. Authorities said several of the incidents happened between June and September 2014, including at the group home and at McDaniel's home. She faces multiple charges including several counts of sexual conduct with a minor and one count of sexual misconduct with a minor. McDaniel did not answer the door when our

crew tried to contact her. The director of a group home under the same umbrella as the Avalonia Group Home would not comment on McDaniel's employment status or the situation and asked our crew to leave the premises. McDaniel was released on \$50,000 bond. Source: <http://www.wyff4.com/news/woman-accused-of-having-sexual-relations-with-underage-inmate/34292524>

Lawmakers call for audit of Kansas' foster care system There are about 6,500 children in the foster care system, according to the Department for Children and Families' website. Jaime Green File photo i There are about 6,500 children in the foster care system, according to the Department for Children and Families' website. Jaime Green File photo By Bryan Lowry Eagle Topeka bureau [LinkedIn](#) [Google+](#) [Pinterest](#) [Reddit](#) [Print Order Reprint of this Story](#) Editor's note: Earlier versions of this story contained a quote inaccurately stating the number of children killed in the foster care system this year. Two Democratic lawmakers from south-central Kansas are calling for an audit of the state's foster care system. "Kansans place great importance on taking care of children in need," said Rep. Ed Trimmer, D-Winfield. "This audit would help to ensure we are engaging our best effort to protect children who have been sexually, physically, and emotionally abused." About 6,500 children are in the foster care system, according to the Department for Children and Families' website. Theresa Freed, spokeswoman for DCF, which oversees the foster care system, said in an e-mail that the agency was aware of the request for an audit and that it welcomes input on how to "better protect children in our state." "Every child death is a tragedy that weighs heavy on our hearts. It is always our goal to keep families together when that is a safe option. When it is not, we seek safe and loving foster families to provide temporary placement for children who are removed from their homes," Freed said. "Our mission is to protect families. Kansas consistently surpasses national safety measure averages with regard to child safety, both in and out of foster care." The request comes as the DCF reviews its foster care licensing requirements to ensure the "greater safety and well-being of children." Trimmer said four children in the broader DCF system had died in the past two years. Freed said that DCF was aware of only one death of a child in foster care this year being caused by maltreatment, the first such incident since 2006. The audit request comes the same month that a federal judge ordered the DCF to release documents related to the death of a Hiawatha boy in 2013 while under the care of a private foster care company that contracts with the DCF. Trimmer and Ward will submit the request for an audit at Wednesday's meeting of the Legislative Post Audit Committee. Rep. John Barker, R-Abilene, who chairs the committee, said it will be the first item of business on the committee's agenda. Sen. Michael O'Donnell, R-Wichita, who serves as vice chair, said he would support an audit, provided it is not politically motivated. "I just want to make sure it's not politically driven ... because we do see that a lot," O'Donnell said. "But we can absolutely find common ground, because I've talked to families that have gone through nightmares with the DCF program in my district, so I know that there have been legitimate problems." Read more here: <http://www.kansas.com/news/politics-government/article29115088.html#storylink=cpy>

DHS cites staff at area group home for emotional abuse [Kevin Allenspach](#), kallenspach@stcloudtimes.com 10:33 a.m. CDT July 28, 2015 Department of Human Services(Photo: DHS) 76 CONNECT [2 TWEETLINKEDIN](#) 1 COMMENTEMAILMORE SAUK RAPIDS – Staff members at a pair of group homes for vulnerable adults in Sauk Rapids have been cited for three instances of emotional abuse to residents and the license holder for the facilities has been fined \$400. The Minnesota Department of Human Services on Tuesday released documents detailing the allegations, subsequent investigation and the fine. The incidents involved adjacent facilities at 1852 and 1856 Eastern Star Loop and occurred prior to May 26, according to a DHS investigative memorandum. The allegations included that a facility administrative staff person "screamed" at a vulnerable adult and other clients and called them inappropriate names and racial slurs. The same staff member also allegedly made the same vulnerable adult sit in an office for more than an hour writing "positive statements" about the staff member. Further it was alleged the staff member "bear hugged" a different vulnerable adult, took them to the floor and another staff member pulled the vulnerable adult's pants down, uncovering the genital area and buttocks. The two staff members involved were related family members, according to DHS documents. A DHS investigator made site visits in June and interviewed more than a dozen people. The investigator substantiated the allegations. The facility trained staff on employee conduct and reporting such incidents. The two staff members no longer work at the facilities, according to documents. The license holder for the facilities, Rule 36 Limited Partnership of Duluth V, was ordered to pay \$400 for failure to report the maltreatment at the two facilities. The fine is subject to appeal. Follow Kevin Allenspach on Twitter @KevinAllenspach. Call him at 255-8745. Source: <http://www.stcloudtimes.com/story/news/local/2015/07/28/dhs-cites-staff-area-group-home-emotional-abuse/30777523/>

GOP legislators block audit of Kansas foster care system, despite recent child deaths Photo by [Peter Hancock](#), [Enlarge photo](#). Rep. Jim Ward, D-Wichita, asks the Kansas Legislative Post Audit Committee for an audit of Kansas foster care system, Wednesday, July 29, 2015, at the Statehouse in Topeka. [Email](#) [Print Facebook Tweet Comments \(4\)](#) By [Peter Hancock](#) — Lawrence Journal-World July 29, 2015, 11:50 a.m. Updated July 29, 2015, 3:57 p.m. Advertisement Topeka — On a party-line vote, the Kansas Legislative Post Audit Committee on Wednesday declined to order an audit of the Kansas foster care system, despite the recent deaths of children who were either in state custody or in troubled homes. But the panel did agree to put the audit request on a waiting list, which means it could be authorized later this year or sometime after lawmakers reconvene in January for the 2016 session. The decision came at a time when the Department of Children and Families, which manages the foster care program, is coming under increased public scrutiny because of the near-record number of children currently in the system and because of continuing reports that the agency is preparing for major policy changes that could include barring gay and unwed couples from becoming foster parents. The request for an audit of the program came from two south-central Kansas legislators, Reps. Jim Ward of Wichita and Ed Trimmer of Winfield, both Democrats. They represent regions where two high-profile cases of children dying while in foster care have occurred. "In the last couple of years, I've been getting more and more and more concerns presented to me about supervision not being done, placements being changed fairly radically quickly, and care plans not being followed through with," Ward told the committee. "Not just by people whose children are involved in these cases, where you always have a high level of complaint," he said, "but by providers and people who have worked the system, both inside the agency and outside the agency that have a lot of interaction with the cases, with the children, with the families." One of the recent deaths occurred in July 2014: A 10-month-old girl in El Dorado died when her foster father left her in a hot car while he was smoking marijuana in the home of his drug dealer. He later pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter. And in December, a 10-year-old boy in Wellington was stabbed to death by his mother, a woman who reportedly had struggled with bipolar disorder. Trimmer said he believed that was a case in which child welfare officials should have known about potential danger to the boy's welfare. "These are the most vulnerable, the weakest, and they have (been) victims," Ward told the committee. "Remember, these children have already gone through crisis in their family. They've been physically abused, sexually abused, emotionally abused, or grossly neglected, or we wouldn't be talking about them being in foster care." Ward and Trimmer asked for an audit to look into two questions: whether DCF's removal and reunification processes are adequate to ensure children's safety and whether foster care contractors have sufficient capacity to provide necessary care. Governmental auditing in Kansas is done by the Legislative Division of Post Audit, an agency within the legislative branch of government. It works under the direction of the Post Audit Committee and has no independent authority to conduct audits unless they are approved by the committee. Republicans on the panel voted against launching an audit immediately, in part, they said, because the Department of Children and Families is already conducting its own review of the foster care system, including the qualifications it requires of foster parents. They also noted that an interim legislative committee will hold hearings this fall to review the foster care system and the qualifications it requires of foster parents. Sen. Julia Lynn, R-Olathe, said DCF should not be the target of investigation because decisions about placing children in state custody are made by judges. "I am not quite sure that we're at the point where this particular scope statement is ready to go forward because there are extraneous issues involved that are bigger than DCF," she said. Rep. Peggy Mast, R-Shawnee, said there have been numerous audits in the past of the state foster care system, and none has resulted in significant changes. "It would be a lesson in futility," she said. "I don't know what the answer is, but I don't think this is going to reveal anything that's going to be substantive enough (to justify putting it ahead of other scheduled audits)." Trimmer said after the meeting that he was disappointed the committee did not approve the audit. He said he would try again in December when the Post Audit Committee meets again to set a schedule for audits next year. "I think there was reluctance by Republicans on the committee to look at any agencies in the current administration," Trimmer said. Earlier this month, Douglas County District Judge Peggy Carr Kittel wrote to DCF, expressing concern about rumors she has heard that the agency is planning to change its policies so that only married couples can be licensed as foster parents, a move that could exclude single individuals or cohabiting couples. Others have suggested the agency is considering barring gay couples from being foster parents. DCF spokeswoman Theresa Freed said the agency is reviewing all of its foster care policies to determine if they are sufficient to ensure the safety of children. But she has not said whether the agency is considering a change to limit the program only to married couples. Source: <http://www.2jworld.com/news/2015/jul/29/gop-legislators-block-audit-kansas-foster-care-sys/>

Chelfham Mill: Two Devon pupils placed in foster care as school closes over physical abuse claims By [NDJosephW](#) | Posted: July 30, 2015 By Joseph Wilkes, digital reporter SHARE PICTURE Copy link to paste in your message Devon County Council, left, has been criticised by a councillor over the "scandal" at Chelfham Mill, right Chelfham Mill: Two Devon pupils placed in foster care as school closes over... Share Tweet Share Pin It Email Copy link to paste in your message / SHARE PICTURE Copy link to paste in your message Devon County Council, left, has been criticised by a councillor over the "scandal" at Chelfham Mill, right [Police investigate physical abuse claims at North Devon... 1 Councillor raised issues about Chelfham Mill a year before... 2 UPDATE: Man whose life-savings were stolen appeals for help... 1](#) TWO Devon pupils have been placed with foster parents following the temporary closure of Chelfham Mill school near Barnstaple over physical abuse claims. Devon County Council (DCC) has responded to [claims and questions by a councillor, published on The Journal's website yesterday](#), which called into question the authority's inspection regime and demanded to know how Devon children had been affected. Alistair Dewhurst, DCC councillor for Teignbridge South, said he raised issues about the welfare of children at Chelfham Mill School almost a year before [it was closed yesterday](#), but was told it had "improved its practices". Spokesman for DCC David Hutchings said: "Two Devon children with residential placements at Chelfham Mill are currently affected by the closure and they have been placed with foster parents. Day pupils are on their summer holidays. Related content [Police investigate physical abuse claims at North Devon school Councillor raised issues about Chelfham Mill a year before "Dickensian scandal" of abuse claims UPDATE: Man whose life-savings were stolen appeals for help from the public Police reveal how Barnstaple armed robber Benjamin Barton was caught Pink pigeons pictured in the South West baffle residents Man accused of Amal Abdi murder due to appear in court today](#) "Private schools are registered and regulated by Ofsted. We have worked with Chelfham Mill in the past to [help](#) them make improvements following Ofsted inspections. "Senior officers are preparing a reply to Mr Dewhurst's questions." Mr Dewhurst called into question the robustness as well as the "transparency and efficacy" of Devon County Council's (DCC) inspection regime. SHARE PICTURE Copy link to paste in your message He contacted The Journal about what he called the "Dickensian scandal" surrounding the North Devon school for boys with emotional and behavioural problems. He had asked for a report into how many Devon children are affected and that they are in a safe location. The school, four miles to the north east of Barnstaple in Chelfham, [is being investigated by police while its registration to operate has been suspended by Ofsted](#). Mr Dewhurst said he raised issues about safeguarding on August 1, 2014, with DCC [chief executive](#) Phil Norrey. He is a member of the DCC Peoples Scrutiny Committee and is part of the Regulation 44 Inspection team at the Atkinson Secure Children's Home in Devon. Read more: <http://www.northdevonjournal.co.uk/Chelfham-Devon-pupils-placed-foster-care-school/story-27514126-detail/story.html#ixzz3hW33BZRK> Follow us: [@NDJournal on Twitter](#) | [NDJournal on Facebook](#)

Pushing Foster Care Into National Consciousness Posted: 07/31/2015 1:14 pm EDT Updated: 07/31/2015 1:59 pm EDT [Share 4](#) [Tweet 11](#) [Email 0](#) Comment 1 [tumblr reddit](#) Everyday, we hear about issues -- ranging from fights over dresses to fights overseas. Yet, lacking are the tales of America's downtrodden -- those most vulnerable. At the forefront of that group are children and young adults, namely foster and former foster youth. While we hear of their stories, they have not yet entered our everyday conversation or concern. Usually, the stories of foster care at the front page of the newspaper are reactionary. The stories are reactions to the latest group home tragedy, the foster parent who abused a child, and so on. While they all add to the conversation, they do nothing to continue it. The knowledge of foster care shown by mass-media is piecemeal, giving us glimpses into the lives of these youth, while hardly ever providing a base to continue the conversation. Some issues, like gay marriage or abortion, we hear about and discuss regularly, yet these young people, who are often living in America's most tragic circumstances, remain unheard. Often, people have no understanding of what foster care is -- even those most educated. While almost everyone knows the term and have some idea of what they think it means -- likely related to orphanages -- most have no idea of who foster youth really are. Currently, foster youth face abysmal statistics across a multitude of areas, including incarceration rates, educational outcomes, income levels, homelessness rates, etc. Most people are unaware that only around 2% of foster youth obtain a college degree, that at least a quarter experience homelessness sometime after aging out of "the system" or that less than half have sustainable employment by the time they're 24. Everyday, another youth ages out to no home, no family and no support system. Yet, we don't know because the sustained conversation needed for awareness is sorely lacking. Often, people ask what needs to be done for the system to be changed. While no one has all of the answers, it's obvious that, before any real change can be made, these issues must be brought to the forefront of our everyday discussions. Without increased conversation, understanding and awareness, there will never be transformative action. Follow Matt Hartman on Twitter: www.twitter.com/mattbhartman Source: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/matt-hartman/pushing-foster-care-into-b-7908382.html>

Houston woman who operated foster care, child placement agency accused of adoption fraud THE ASSOCIATED PRESS Published: 7/31/15 2:57 pm EDT - Updated: 7/31/15 3:02 pm EDT [AAA](#) HOUSTON — A Houston woman who operated a foster care and child placement agency has been accused of adoption fraud. Simone Swenson was arrested Friday after being indicted by a federal grand jury in Houston. Prosecutors say Swenson owned Sans Pareil Center for Children and Family Services LLC. Prosecutors say Sans Pareil defrauded couples seeking to adopt by promising the same baby to multiple families. The agency's license was revoked in 2012 after regulators discovered money intended for foster families was used for mortgage payments and for visits to a nail salon. Swenson faces mail fraud counts and remains in custody pending an initial court appearance Monday. No working publicly listed phone number for the agency could immediately be located Friday. Authorities didn't immediately provide attorney information for Swenson. Source: <http://www.therepublic.com/view/story/40ff427e203344199ae70668edc984ef/TX--Texas-Adoption-Fraud>

Ontario names panelists to probe youth group homes Panel reviewing Ontario's child and youth residential system to report by the end of the year. Share on Facebook A A Comments 9 [Republish](#) Report an Error Share via Email Print Jim Rankin / Toronto Star file photo Irwin Elman, Ontario's Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, said he hoped the panel would "put children at the centre" of a review that is "open and transparent." By: [Laurie Monsebraaten](#) Social justice reporter, Published on Fri Jul 31 2015 A child abuse expert, the head of a university program that trains child and youth workers, and a former provincial deputy minister will review Ontario's group home and residential care system. The announcement Friday comes in the wake of a [Star investigation into serious occurrences](#) in Toronto group homes that found more than one third of children and youths were physically or chemically restrained and about 40 per cent of cases resulted in calls to police. "We have heard from people with lived experience, stakeholders and service providers that there are ways to improve the experience and outcomes for children and youth in residential services," said Tracy MacCharles, Ontario minister of children and youth services in a statement. "The panel will build on this feedback, as well as the foundational work of previous reviews and reports, to advise the ministry on how to make this system better for the young people in it." NDP children's critic Monique Taylor, who [has argued that the province needs an all-party committee](#) to address the issue, was skeptical about the announcement. "We've been clear that we need an open and transparent public review, not another government panel," she said. "New Democrats believe open public review is the only way to ensure that children are heard, that we address the problems in the child protection system, and that we can deliver real change." The panel members include Nico Trocmé, director of the McGill School of Social Work, Kiaras Gharabaghi, director of Ryerson University's School of Child and Youth Care and Deborah Newman, a former deputy minister of corrections and assistant deputy minister of youth justice. They are expected to report to the government with recommendations by the end of the year. The panel will not hold public consultations, but will "consult with stakeholders including associations, service providers and individuals with lived experience of child and youth residential services," the ministry said. The public are being encouraged to participate through [email](#)END. Ontario's Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Irwin Elman said he hoped the panel would "put children at the centre" of a review that is "open and transparent." "The panel can't do its work without looking at how these children and youth entered the system in the first place and how the province can better support families and protect children," he said. "This barn door is open now," Elman warned. And there's an opportunity . . . to make this fundamental change happen." A 2013 report by the government-appointed Youth Leaving Care working group, which included young people who grew up in children's aid, recommended a review of residential services. Last winter's province-wide review of the Child and Family Services Act also recommended a probe. Ontario's Residential Service System for Children and Youth There are 3,300 children and youth in 484 group homes and children's mental health settings and another 400 in 60 youth justice open and closed custody facilities. Ontario spends \$1 billion on care and treatment services in residential settings for children and youth and \$152.4 million for youth justice custody and detention. Across the province, group homes, along with foster parents and children's aid societies, generate almost 20,000 serious occurrence reports every year. Source: <http://www.thestar.com/news/queenspark/2015/07/31/ontario-names-panelists-to-probe-youth-group-homes.html>

Time for state to get serious about foster care reform Jimmie E. Gates, The Clarion-Ledger 5:05 p.m. CDT July 31, 2015 It defies the odds that the state is still wrangling with reforms to protect children in state care. I have been writing about the Olivia Y case since the original federal lawsuit was filed in 2004.

Jimmie E. Gates (Photo: The Clarion-Ledger) 38 CONNECT [6 TWEETLINKEDIN](#) 1 COMMENTEMAILMORE It's disheartening that the state is still wrangling with implementing reforms to protect children in state custody. I have been writing about the Olivia Y case since the original federal lawsuit was filed in 2004 on behalf of children in the state's foster care system. The original complaint detailed physical and psychological harm suffered by the children while known to, or in the custody of, the Department of Human Services Division of Family and Children's Services. Citing the state's own reports, the lawsuit alleged incidents of sexual abuse, unqualified employees, backlogged cases, shortages of safe foster homes and fiscal mismanagement, among other problems. In 2008, the state entered into a federal settlement agreement, saying DHS would do, among other things: Hire more social workers and increase the number of visits the workers make to each foster child; increase its offerings of educational and therapeutic services for foster parents and children; better monitor children's physical and mental health when they enter foster care; and establish a 24-hour hotline so people could report abuse, and increase reimbursement rates for foster parents. The state has never been in compliance with the settlement agreement. Last week, the state admitted it. Children in the foster care system often have been abused, neglected and victimized. Certainly, no one would want them to be further victimized by a system that is supposed to protect them. It appears with last week's admission by the state, and Gov. Phil Bryant's vow to improve the foster care system, that the state is finally getting serious about the issue. Let's hope that is the case. Bryant has agreed to hire an executive director of the Department of Family and Children's Services and waive state salary parameters for the director and for members of a senior management team. The state has also agreed to hire a national child welfare consulting group, the Public Catalyst Group, to conduct an organizational analysis of the state's foster care system and recommend whether it should be a free-standing agency, how it should be structured and what the state needs to do to remedy all of its violations of the court-ordered reform plan. The group will also recommend qualified applicants from which the governor will select the agency's director. The governor has also agreed to call a special session of the Legislature, if necessary, to support the reorganization of the child welfare system and provide additional appropriations to act on the expert group's recommendations, if the state agrees to adopt them, according to the updated agreement approved last week. Bryant was right when he said the state can do better to protect children in the foster care system. Contact Jimmie E. Gates at (601) 961-7212 or jgates@jackson.gannett.com. Follow [@jgatesnews](#) on Twitter. Source: <http://www.clarionledger.com/story/opinion/columnists/2015/07/31/time-state-get-serious-foster-care-reform/30962113/>

Shocking Dog And Child Abuse: Abandoned Kids Of Divorced Parents Found Living In Dog Cage, Raised By Grandfather In Breeding Facility [Brad Ryder](#) 8/1/2015 1:53pm EDT Share Google Tweet Pin it Comment It's being described as one of most shocking cases of abuse involving children and animals. Reportedly, two children, a brother, 6, and sister, 4, were discovered recently living with dogs in cages reserved for animal breeding. Sources with the [Mirror](#) say a divorced couple abandoned the adolescents, left them in the care of the kids' grandfather, and fled their home. Both parents have since remarried and live in separate cities. The siblings were found in cages with dogs in the city of Nanjing, capital of China's eastern Jiangsu Province. The conditions were deplorable, arguably, not even fit for caged dogs. Jun Teng, unknown relationship to the abused children, said on several attempts, neighbors tried convincing the children's grandfather, who breeds dogs for a living, to provide better care. Their advice was to turn the children over to a rescue shelter specifically for homeless children. "The stench is intolerable, the entire area is covered by rubbish, and excrement from the dogs. Flies and mosquitoes are everywhere and when they get any food they have to fight with it for the dogs. "It's not unusual to see them drinking wastewater that puddles on the ground after rainfall." Witnesses said the stubborn man refused any intervention and continued raising and housing the children in the dog cage. Although locals donated food and other provisions for the sister and brother, they could not rescue them from the horrid conditions without the law on their side. For a time, local authorities did nothing. However, after pressure from the public and efforts by the media to follow the story continued, officials caved and began the process of removing the children from the breeding cages. There is no mention if the dog breeder-caretaker will be brought up on child and animal abuse charges. Source: <http://www.starpulse.com/news/index.php/2015/08/01/shocking-dog-and-child-abuse-abandoned>

Jesse Hagopian and Pedro Noguera Take on the Testocracy in Nationally Televised Debate: "Is public education in the U.S. broken beyond repair?" By [I AM AN EDUCATOR](#) On August 6, 2015 Last Thursday I flew to New York City to take on Peter Cunningham, the former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education (under Secretary Arne Duncan, during President Obama's first term), in a [debate hosted by Al Jazeera America's program The Third Rail](#). We debated the question, "Is public education in the U.S. broken beyond repair?" I have to say, those 45 minutes in the green room before we went on to do the show seemed like they would never pass. First I had to settle my nerves. I knew my years of experience teaching and seeing the misery of high-stakes testing was causing in our schools was going to be hard to dispute. But this was the former Assistant Secretary of Education and surely he would have slick responses and cherry picked data to try to mask the truth? But it wasn't the coming debate that was troubling me most. Try to imagine just how awkward a situation it was. Mr. Cunningham now [runs a website](#) devoted to shutting down the "education spring" uprising against corporate education reform; I'm a teacher trying my best to help that movement bloom. I am used to challenging the rich and powerful, but here I was sharing coffee and chitchat with one of the primary spokespeople for the privatization of our schools and the reduction of education to merely a "testucation." When we finally entered the TV studio, I was relieved for the conversation to turn from the weather to the mighty storm of resistance that parents, students, and teachers are building in opposition to the "testocracy." We tussled over many major questions relating to the corporate model of education reform. Mr. Cunningham argued in favor of charter schools. I pointed out that of course he supported charters because [he received \\$12 million](#) from Billionaires Eli Broad and the Walton's (the Wal-Mart family) who support the privatization of education. I went on to explain, "My problem with charter schools is that they're anti-democratic. They're not under the control of a democratically elected school board...[and the charter system] siphons off public funds to private schools...[Creating] a profit model from public education." Mr. Cunningham argued in favor of the use of high-stakes testing in education. I argued, "High-stakes testing has pushed out everything that matters in education." I cited how recess and the arts are vanishing in schools as they become test-prep centers, rather than incubators of creativity. And I noted that while they push these standards and tests on our children, "It's amazing that Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, Bill Gates, the President himself, send their kids to schools that don't use the common core." At one point Mr. Cunningham inexplicably defended Arne Duncan's comments that the opt out movement is just [white suburban moms](#)—a comment that Duncan himself had to apologize for. I explained the reality that every family has the right to protect their child from being reduced to a test score and that this [opt out movement is actually growing rapidly in communities of color](#)—including the many hundreds of Latino students who walked out of the PARCC test in New Mexico last year, the Black students in Baltimore who occupied the school board meeting in opposition to the labeling of their schools failing so as to close them down, and the Seattle NAACP chapter calling for opt out as part of the Black Lives Matter struggle. One of the overriding themes that I tired to express (in the limited format of a few minuet debate program) was the idea that the superrich have hoarded the wealth at the expense of our children. Today, [over half](#) of the students who attend public school live in poverty. Then these billionaires—such as Mr. Cunningham's sponsors—claim that the reason why youngsters don't have a better quality of life is due to unaccountable teachers. The best part of this The Third Rail debate was when they brought in the great Pedro Noguera, Professor of education at New York University, who powerfully and succinctly expressed the primary issue with education reform today: The problem I see is the we've developed an accountability system that holds those with the most power the least accountable. We all cordially shook hands at the conclusion of the debate and conversed on the finer points that we hadn't had time to cover while on stage. The lingering education disputes soon turned back to small talk, but this time I no longer felt awkward because I had a great image in my mind: The Walton's huddled around the TV scowling as they decided whether to cancel Mr. Cunningham's funding for his inability to defeat the logic and experience of lowly educators. Source: <http://iamaneducator.com/2015/08/06/jesse-hagopian-and-pedro-noguera-take-on-the-testocracy-in-nationally-televised-debate-is-public-education-in-the-u-s-broken-beyond-repair/>

State to keep outsourcing at troubled teen detention center Daly By Andy Reid Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Secretary Christina Daly (center) met with Palm Beach County officials Wednesday to address concerns about the state's privately run Palm Beach Juvenile Correctional Facility, near West Palm Beach. Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Secretary Christina Daly (center) met with Palm Beach County officials Wednesday to address concerns about the state's privately run Palm Beach Juvenile Correctional Facility, near West Palm Beach. (By Andy Reid) By [Andy Reid](#) Sun Sentinel [contact the reporter Juvenile Delinquency](#) State leaders pledge improvements, but not new operators, at a teen detention center near West Palm Beach. Palm Beach County officials have concerns about mistreatment at a local state juvenile detention center. Concerns about injured teens, stolen medicine and tattered clothes are not enough to oust the operator of a troubled detention center near West Palm Beach, according to the state's top juvenile justice official. Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Secretary Christina Daly met with local officials Wednesday to address problems at the state's privately run Palm Beach Juvenile Correctional Facility, located next to the South Florida Fairgrounds north of Southern Boulevard. [Investigation targets state juvenile center in Palm Beach County](#) [Andy](#)

[Reid State officials are investigating allegations of misconduct and mismanagement by those in charge of watching over troubled teenagers at a privately-operated juvenile correctional facility near West Palm Beach. State officials are investigating allegations of misconduct and mismanagement by those in charge of watching over troubled teenagers at a privately-operated juvenile correctional facility near West Palm Beach. \(Andy Reid \)](#) Daly said a new director of operations is already making improvements and that state investigations will continue into concerns about the facility, run by Youth Services International, Inc. "I recognize that we have had some significant challenges," Daly said. "Culture change takes time. ... They have made some progress." But that's not good enough for County Mayor Shelley Vana, who Wednesday presented Daly a letter calling for the state to remove Youth Services International, Inc. as the facility operator. Vana, who has been making surprise visits to the center to investigate complaints of mistreatment, said claims Wednesday of improvements at the facility are "fairy tales." Vana said Youth Services International can't be trusted to run the detention center. Last month, state officials released a report saying three employees at the facility used excessive force against one of the boys housed there, with one worker repeatedly punching the boy in the head. Insufficient staffing, injuries sending boys to the hospital, worn out socks and shoes, missing medicine, and reports of contraband cellphones and money smuggled into the facility are among the concerns reported by local officials. "It's not really getting any better," Vana said. "I just want the kids to be safe." [cComments](#) Vana wants to make sure that the employees are members of a public sector union. Ralph Bowman at 8:43 PM August 05, 2015 [Add a comment](#) [See all comments](#) 1 There are up to 118 boys 13 to 18 from across the state kept at the detention and treatment center for "high risk" youth offenders. Teenagers held there continue their schooling and can also receive vocational training while participating in mental health and substance abuse programs. There are now 73 teens receiving treatment for mental health issues and 45 teens in the substance abuse program, officials said Wednesday. Typically, about 10 of the teenagers housed there are from [Palm Beach County](#). While local officials can raise concerns, state officials control who runs the facility. Manny Alvarez in January was brought in as program administrator for the facility. On Wednesday, he told the [Palm Beach County](#) Corrections Task Force, meeting in West Palm Beach, that he is taking steps to address what he called "operational shortcomings." Hiring better guards and other staff, increasing the accessibility of mental health workers and even painting rooms and ordering better furniture are among the improvements Alvarez cited. Alvarez said there has been a 50 percent decrease in "use of force" incidents involving guards and teens during the past seven months. But Vana and other local officials Wednesday said the improvements haven't gone far enough and that concerns remain. The severity of injuries suffered by those kept at the facility seems to be getting worse, County Commissioner Melissa McKinlay said. "I do have grave concerns," McKinlay said. [Palm Beach County](#) Public Defender Carey Haughwout said there has been "noticeable improvement" since Alvarez took over, but that "there is still work to be done." "There are challenges with the facility and the program," Haughwout said. If the state sticks with the same operator for the correctional facility, Vana said her next step could be taking safety concerns to judges and calling for them to stop sending boys there. "It can't be them," Vana said about Youth Services International, Inc. "We are not letting this go." Daly said she takes the local concerns "very seriously," but questions whether removing the company running the facility is the right answer. "I really do feel that we are making great strides," said Daly, who said the priority is to "ensure that we are keeping these kids safe." abreid@sunsentinel.com, 561-228-5504 or [Twitter@abreidnews](https://twitter.com/abreidnews) Source: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/palm-beach/fl-teen-detention-center-problems-20150805-story.html>

4 California Cops Arrested Over Claims They Brutally Beat 13 Children at Bootcamp for At-Risk Youth OSHARE [Reprint](#) [9 Comments](#) [subscribe](#) By Maria Coder 08/06/2015 AT 12:00 PM EDT Four California police officers have been arrested over claims that they turned a tough-love bootcamp for at-risk youth into a brutal, abusive hell. Thirteen children, age 12 to 17, were allegedly slapped, kicked, stomped and beaten bloody by the officers, who worked a drill instructors at the camp, the Associated Press reports. One teen one suffered a broken hand, according to the AP. Leadership, Empowerment and Discipline Camp is a one-week program at Camp San Luis Obispo, a California Army National Guard Military post. It is designed to foster leadership and help with discipline, with the goal of reducing family conflict at home, according to organizers. The alleged victims attended the camp May 17 to 24. The San Luis Obispo Sheriff's Office investigated the camp and the officers for more than two months after the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services contacted authorities on May 28 with abuse claims. Initially [seven children](#) came forward to report that they were abused, according to Greg Owen, a lawyer for the children and their families. Owen [claims](#) his clients were given towels to wipe blood off themselves after beatings. He also said they were told they'd be away from their families for three months, not one week, and that their parents didn't want or love them. Huntington Park officers Marissa Larios, 36, and Patrick Nijland, 47, and South Gate officers Carlos Gomez-Marquez, 31, and Edgar Gomez, 35, were arrested on Tuesday and Wednesday, according to the [San Luis Obispo Sheriff's Office](#). The release notes 13 victims – boys and girls – all ranging between 12 and 17 years in age; there were close to 40 children enrolled. A phone call to the sheriff's office was not immediately returned on Thursday. The four suspects posted bond and were released. It's unclear if they've obtained lawyers. "We really take no pleasure in arresting members of the law enforcement profession. But at the end of the day, we realize that no one is above the law," sheriff's spokesman Tony Cipolla, told the AP. [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Email](#) The South Gate officers have been placed on administrative leave, according to a police department [statement](#) posted online on Wednesday. All charges will be filed with the San Luis Obispo County District Attorney's Office. Source: <http://www.people.com/article/4-california-cops-arrested-cruelly-abusing-children-bootcamp>

Children in boot camp abuse investigation suffer lasting damage, lawyer says Huntington Park, South Gate officers arrested for allegedly abusing children at police-sponsored boot camp Four local law enforcement officers were arrested this week in connection with an investigation into claims by several children that they were physically and verbally abused during a boot camp sponsored by Huntington Park and South Gate police departments at a location in San Luis Obispo County, authorities announced Wednesday. Four local law enforcement officers were arrested this week in connection with an investigation into claims by several children that they were physically and verbally abused during a boot camp sponsored by Huntington Park and South Gate police departments at a location in San Luis Obispo County, authorities announced Wednesday. By [Matt Hamilton](#), [Sarah Parvini](#) and [Corina Knoll](#) [contact the reporters](#) [Crime Law Enforcement Army National Guard](#) The brochure struck a note with some parents: Are you overwhelmed with frustration or fear over your teen's defiant behavior? Have you run out of ideas or strategies to get your teen on the right track? Have you tried it all and nothing seems to work? The solution, it declared, could be a police-sponsored boot camp for southeast Los Angeles County youth held at a military base in the mountains of San Luis Obispo. There, children would be inculcated with the three pillars of the LEAD program: Leadership, Empowerment and Discipline. [See the most-read stories this hour >>Read the story](#) Instead, authorities contend that the camp became a breeding ground for vicious assaults and physical and emotional abuse. A two-month investigation that included searching the cellphones, computers, vehicles, photos and belongings of camp leaders [led to the arrest of four officers](#) from the South Gate and Huntington Park police departments earlier this week. "When it involves a law enforcement agency, it gets a little awkward," said San Luis Obispo County Sheriff Ian Parkinson, whose agency spearheaded the investigation. "The reality is that they're no different from anybody else. If they did it, they need to be held accountable." [Interested in the stories shaping California? Sign up for the free Essential California newsletter >>](#) The investigation's findings buttress earlier allegations by parents who say their children were kicked, slapped, beaten and handcuffed during the \$400 boot camp held in May. A lawyer for 11 of the 15 victims identified by investigators said one boy suffered broken fingers when an officer stomped on his hand while he was doing push-ups. Another had bruises on his throat. Some of the attendees were ushered into a dark room to be beaten, then handed towels to swab off the blood, the lawyer said. "They just started hitting me," said one male camper who spoke Thursday to The Times on condition of anonymity out of fear of retaliation. He said he was beaten in a closed room by two instructors on two separate occasions. "Once I got out, it was smirks on their face," he said. Attorney Greg Owen, who first spoke of the abuse allegations in June, said the children remain scared. "This sort of thing undoubtedly will affect these children forever." The children, ages 12 to 17, at first kept quiet after attending the weeklong camp 200 miles away. But then one mother whose 13-year-old boy suffered bruises to his windpipe took him to the emergency room. The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services was called and the boy spoke about his ordeal, Owen said. When it involves a law enforcement agency, it gets a little awkward. The reality is that they're no different from anybody else. If they did it, they need to be held accountable.- San Luis Obispo County Sheriff Ian Parkinson Officials said that led to an investigation that involved interviewing three dozen participants and identifying 15 male and female victims who attended the program at Camp San Luis Obispo, an Army National Guard military base that serves as a training ground for local, state and federal agencies. Authorities found it took time to build trust with the children, whose faith in law enforcement had been violated in part by their experiences at the camp, Parkinson said. The search warrants were sealed to protect the identities of the children. FBI investigators were also involved, but a spokeswoman for the agency declined to elaborate. Brothers Edgar Gomez and Carlos Gomez-Marquez, both of South Gate's police force, were arrested on suspicion of cruelty to a child, criminal threats, misdemeanor battery and abuse under the color of authority. [cComments](#) Kids are such wimps nowadays. Always whining. It's all about me, me, me. That said, that boot camp experience must have really damaged their sense of self esteem. No Buey Jose

at 7:52 AM August 08, 2015 [Add a comment](#) [See all comments](#) 37 Marissa Larios of the Huntington Park Police Department was arrested on suspicion of cruelty to a child, criminal conspiracy, misdemeanor battery and abuse under the color of authority. Patrick Nijland, also of the Huntington Park agency, was arrested on suspicion of cruelty to a child, criminal battery and abuse under the color of authority. All four have been released on \$20,000 bond and are now on paid administrative leave. The district attorney is reviewing the sheriff's investigation to determine whether to file criminal charges. According to his attorney, Gomez, a former Marine who has worked in South Gate for eight years, had "an abiding concern for trying to help kids." He, along with the three other suspects, had worked at the camp for several years. "They all have very good track records in their department," said Michael D. Schwartz, an attorney for Larios. "The accusations are highly out of character." Schwartz said parents had actually begged for their children to be accepted into the program. "These aren't kids who refuse to clean up their rooms once or twice," he said. "You got kids with behavioral issues, some being drugged, some being violent. All of them have no respect for authority, not their parents, not others in their lives, or officers in the camp." But some parents who convened Thursday at a hotel in Commerce told a different story. Bridgit Salazar, 34, of Long Beach said she suspected her divorce had put a strain on her 13-year-old son, the eldest of three. She enrolled him in the camp, hoping he would gain the same "learning experience" she received as a child at a Navy Sea Cadet boot camp. She said during one parent class held before the boot camp, a South Gate police officer whose name she couldn't recall introduced himself: "I'm going to be the one your kids will fear." Salazar said she wished she had listened to her gut then. When her son returned from the camp, she sensed a disconnect. "I knew from the moment I saw him, something was wrong." Now, she says, her son is not himself and often exhibits anger. Police officials who run the camp have temporarily suspended the program. Previously known as JAR, or Juveniles At Risk, the camp that began in 1998 was specifically for teen residents of cities in southeast Los Angeles County. Some officers volunteered their time, others were paid. In addition to the boot camp, the program included classroom lectures, community service and field trips on the weekends. Parents were also required to attend parenting classes once a week. On the application, parents checked off descriptors such as "disrespectful," "runs away," "drug use," "gang," and "bad grades" to describe their child's behavior. Photos on the Huntington Park Police Department's Facebook page showed last year's participants sitting in a classroom and lining up to do drills. One woman posted her support: "My son went to this program and he says nothing like [the alleged abuse] ever happened. It was educational and he has changed for the better." Both police departments released statements on the recent allegations. "We pride ourselves in the success of this program for the past 18 years and the many young lives it has had a positive effect on," said Huntington Park Police Chief Cosme Lozano in a statement. "We also respect and honor the due process of the justice system," the statement added. Correctional boot camps are not uncommon for frustrated parents. But there's a hard line officials shouldn't cross, says Jorja Leap, an adjunct professor with the UCLA Department of Social Welfare who has worked with juvenile probation camps. "There's no physical laying on of hands that can be reformatory," Leap said, adding that there's little oversight of such camps, some of which can effectively run for months. "Where boot camps break down is where you have the wrong kinds of personalities implementing them," she said. matt.hamilton@latimes.com, sarah.parvini@latimes.com, corina.knoll@latimes.com Source: <http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-boot-camp-arrests-20150807-story.html#page=2>

Tensions boil over at troubled school [Save](#) Sunday, 02 August 2015 [Email](#)[Facebook](#)[Twitter](#)[Google+](#) [The New Zealand Herald](#) [Email](#) [Facebook](#)[Twitter](#)[Google+](#) Hato Petera College in Northcote, Auckland. Photo / Nick Reed By Kirsty Johnston Tensions at Auckland's troubled Maori boarding school have spilled over, with the principal suspended and three managers handing in their resignations. Principal at Northcote's Hato Petera College, John Matthews, was suspended from his role as chief executive of the school's hostel, Radio New Zealand reported. He remains principal of the 100-pupil school. Hostel trustee Rudy Taylor confirmed the suspension, and said three managers had quit their positions at the hostel as a result. One of those was the school's operations manager Shanan Halbert. The school has separate boards to run the school and the hostel, but until now management positions have been largely shared. The resignations were reportedly over a lack of progress at the hostel- some trustees want to renew the hostel's dilapidated buildings but the project is yet to go ahead. Mr Taylor said there were too many personalities involved. "There is not a day without argument," he said. Part of the issue was the involvement of the Catholic Church, who owns the land and is responsible for the upkeep of the buildings, and the fact it had only offered the school a five-year lease. The Bishop has several representatives on the boards, including Kaitia GP Dr Lance O'Sullivan, who last month attempted to oust the hostel board chair due to safety concerns. He was unsuccessful, however, and Tame Te Rangi remains chair. Contacted for comment, Mr Te Rangi said he was not interested as he thought the Herald had not reported the issues fairly. "Stuff you and stuff your paper," he said. At the time, Dr O'Sullivan said a boy had been allegedly assaulted at the hostel and it was not investigated properly. The school and the ministry said it had been dealt with, however. The result of a police complaint is yet unknown. The story so far The Herald first reported in April about issues at the school, including the roll falling below 100, dilapidated buildings, bullying, infighting and a lack of confidence from its owner, the Catholic Church. Two other incidents in the last 12 months - including one where a child had been hit with a stick - had also been referred to police. At that time, the Herald asked the school for copies of incident reports. It refused, instead calling a meeting where three lawyers were present. Hato Petera, whose former pupils include All Black Walter Little and the late artist Ralph Hotere, is the sole remaining Maori boarding school in Auckland and one of only six in the country. Two other such schools, St Stephen's and Queen Victoria, were closed in the early 2000s. There have been ongoing issues at the school between the board, the school, the ministry of education and the church in terms of who will pay for the upkeep of the hostel buildings. Many at the school believe the church wants to shut the school and sell the land at a large profit. A treaty of Waitangi claim made against the church and Crown by members of the wider school community have led to further tension. Source: http://m.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11490835

Riverside psychiatrist pleads not guilty in Medicare scheme - Houston Chronicle Riverside psychiatrist pleads not guilty in Medicare scheme Woman indicted separately in Riverside scheme By [Cindy George](#) Updated 8:08 pm, Sunday, August 2, 2015 [print](#) [article](#)[article-6420311|article-share-redesign/7|comments_jumplarticle-6420311|article-share-redesign/1_email_sharearticle-6420311|article-share-redesign/1_facebook_sharearticle-6420311|article-share-redesign/2_twitter_sharearticle-6420311|article-share-redesign/3_pinterest_sharearticle-6420311|article-share-redesign/4_reddit_sharearticle-6420311|article-share-redesign/5_google_sharearticle-6420311|article-share-redesign/6](#) A Houston psychiatrist who was indicted separately in the Riverside General Hospital \$160 million Medicare billing fraud scheme pleaded not guilty on Friday and intends to stand trial in August. Dr. Sharon Iglehart is accused of one federal conspiracy count, two health care fraud charges and a pair of allegations that she made false statements to investigators. At a pretrial conference before U.S. District Judge Ewing Werlein, her lawyers - which include high-powered defense attorney Rusty Hardin - said she is ready to face a jury. Iglehart originally was arrested in December 2013, but the allegations have been amended twice since then - growing from nine to 12 pages in the most recent indictment secured from a federal grand jury and filed on July 21. Iglehart pleaded not guilty to the amended five counts and retained her freedom on \$50,000 bail. Former Riverside CEO and president Earnest Gibson III was convicted as the ringleader in three conspiracies involving Medicare billings for Riverside's psychiatric treatment programs from 2005 to 2012 in which patients were ineligible for treatment or were warehoused but did not receive the reported care. The government alleged that \$31 million in fraudulent reimbursement requests were paid. His son, former group home owner Earnest Gibson IV was also convicted at trial and sentenced to 20 years. Active medical license The elder Gibson received the heaviest punishment so far: 45 years. His second-in-command, Mohammad Khan, received a 40-year sentence. They received some of the nation's longest sentences for health care fraud - particularly, stealing from the Medicare or Medicaid programs, which is one of the top criminal prosecutorial priorities for the U.S. Justice Department. Through her Iglehart Wellness Center, the psychiatrist allegedly participated in the scheme by submitting claims that falsely indicated she provided intensive outpatient services for severe mental illness through Riverside's treatment program. Iglehart retains an active medical license in Texas. She was reprimanded by the Texas Medical Board in 2009 for "recreating medical records for psychiatric patients significantly later than the time she had provided examination, diagnosis and treatment to the patients," according to the agency's website. Her disciplinary status was cleared in 2011. Jury selection in Iglehart's case is set for Aug. 31. If convicted, the doctor faces up to 10 years in prison on each count. Regina Askew, who rose from a case worker to become an auditor, will spend 12 years in prison. Crippling scam In July, Sharonda Holmes, who was involved in paying and receiving kickbacks, was sentenced to 3½ years and Waddie McDuffie became the sixth person to receive prison time in the scam that crippled Riverside. The historic Third Ward institution began as Houston's first hospital for black patients and became one of the state's largest providers of substance abuse and mental health treatment. McDuffie pleaded guilty to delivering kickback money to group home owners in exchange for them sending patients for mental health treatment at the hospital. He received a five-year term of probation and six months of home confinement. Those who have pleaded guilty or were convicted at trial are among the dozen defendants who are jointly responsible for \$46 million in

restitution. All of the Riverside cases are being prosecuted by Washington-based lawyers assigned to the Justice Department's criminal fraud division. Source: <http://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Riverside-psychiatrist-pleads-not-guilty-in-6420311.php>

Cromwell leaders call for state guidelines for group homes Cromwell Mayor Enzo Faienza File By [Jeff Mill](#), The Middletown Press Posted: 08/02/15, 1:37 PM EDT | Updated: 5 days ago [2 Comments](#) CROMWELL >> The state must take the lead in clarifying what constitutes a group home and in working with towns which are increasingly being asked to shoulder responsibility for a proliferating number of group homes, Mayor Enzo Faienza said. Cromwell already has a number of group homes. But the problem is complicated by the fact that some homes are licensed (if they have a nurse on duty at the home) while others are not. Either way, Faienza said, "It's left to each town to sort out the differences." Advertisement That, he said, is not fair to the towns, residents and clients of the group homes. "We need our legislators to really sit down and and to come up with some comprehensive fixes for the issue of licensed and unlicensed group homes," Faienza said. In Cromwell, the [issue has come to a head over a group home](#) that opened this spring in the Reiman Drive neighborhood. The debate over that home, which is operated by Gilead Community Services, took on added weight recently when a [client of the home walked away](#). The man was later found safe in Hartford. But Faienza says he is also concerned because Gilead is now applying for an exemption from local property taxes for the house. "We have to take care of them in terms of providing police and fire service, and we understand that," Faienza said. "But, we get no reimbursement." "There needs to be more accountability to the municipalities," Acting Town Manager Anthony J. Salvatore said, "especially to the point of informing us that a residence is going in." "As it is, the usual way we learn about a facility opening in town now is when we get a call for service for either the police or the town's emergency medical services," salvatore said. "There definitely have to be controls on licensing," Faienza said. "And the [proximity of group homes to schools](#) should be taken into account in that licensing process," the mayor said. As he has in the past, Faienza said he supports the group home idea. "I believe in the right of everyone to try and better themselves," he said. But at the same time, Faienza also reaffirmed his belief that Reiman Drive "is just not the right place for this type of facility." "Our first responsibility is, and has to be, the safety of the residents of both Reiman Drive and the town of Cromwell," Faienza said. "We as a town continue to do what we can. But, frankly, we're in uncharted territory here," Faienza said. Source: <http://www.middletownpress.com/government-and-politics/20150802/cromwell-leaders-call-for-state-guidelines-for-group-homes>

Kenya: Ban All Boarding Schools - Parents By Ernest Cornel All boardings schools should be banned, Kenya National Association of Parents secretary general Musau Ndunda has said. "We can't have a school like Alliance with 100 acres, Nairobi School with 98 acres, and we are still confining 4,000 students there," he said. Ndunda spoke at Sheikh Zayed Children Welfare Centre in Mombasa during the ongoing Kepsha delegates conference. "If we want to increase access to education then the government must urgently abolish boarding schools," he said. The Knap boss said many boarding schools have been damaged by fire. Source: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201508050132.html>

G4S paid author of 'independent' youth prison report as consultant Former prisons chief Sir Martin Narey said firm's Rainsbrook unit, which inspectors condemned months earlier, treated children 'overwhelmingly well' Martin Narey has been a paid consultant for G4S for three years and in 2014 was paid more than £10,000. Photograph: Martin Argles for the Guardian [Eric Allison](#) and [Simon Hattenstone](#) Wednesday 5 August 2015 07.15 EDT Last modified on Wednesday 5 August 2015 19.00 EDT [Share on Facebook](#) [Share on Twitter](#) [Share via Email](#) [Share on Pinterest](#) [Share on LinkedIn](#) [Share on Google+](#) [Share on WhatsApp](#) Shares 924 924 A former prisons chief who wrote a glowing "independent" report about a controversial youth offender unit run by G4S had previously been paid thousands of pounds as a consultant for the private security firm, the Guardian has learned. Sir Martin Narey, former director general of the prison service, [published a report in July on Rainsbrook secure training centre](#) in which he wrote that "very challenging children" were treated "overwhelmingly well". He concluded: "My test in visiting places of custody for over 30 years is to reflect about how I'd feel if my son or daughter were incarcerated there. In Rainsbrook's case, I would consider him or she to be safe and to be generally well treated." Narey's verdict was delivered months after a joint report by [Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission and the chief inspector of prisons](#) in May into the centre condemned it for a series of failings. It pointed to the dismissal of six members of staff after a series of incidents of gross misconduct, staff who were on drugs on duty, and others who had behaved "extremely inappropriately" with young people, causing distress and humiliation. Ofsted inspectors, who visited Rainsbrook in February, also revealed that a child who suffered a fracture, possibly as a result of being restrained, did not receive treatment for 15 hours because senior staff overruled clear clinical advice that he needed treatment. The Ofsted report rated Rainsbrook "inadequate" – the lowest grading, prompting Frances Crook, the chief executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform, to call it the "the worst report on a prison I have ever seen" and the Association of Youth Offending Team Managers to demand that the Youth Justice Board (YJB) cease placing children there. [Narey's subsequent report](#), which appeared to show significant improvement at the unit, was referred to as an "independent report" on the YJB website despite Narey's admission within the background notes that: "Since 2012, I have offered occasional advice to G4S on their care and custody of children." Advertisement In fact, he has been a paid consultant for G4S for three years and in 2014 was paid more than £10,000 by the company. Narey was also paid to advise G4S on bidding for renewal of its contract to run Rainsbrook in 2016. When approached by the Guardian, Narey confirmed he had been employed by G4S as a consultant until the end of the last financial year and that he agreed to offer an independent view of Rainsbrook as a one-off piece of work. "My past financial relationship with G4S is made explicit in my report," Narey said. "G4S will pay for that review although my report was written primarily for the YJB and the secretary of state." Asked if he had been part of the G4S bid team to run Rainsbrook for another seven years – a contract that is worth £92m – Narey said he advised the team on how their plans for Rainsbrook might be more child-friendly and how access to, and success in, education might be increased. "I realised I would be criticised for defending G4S, as people have suggested my reputation is damaged," Narey told the Guardian. "Life would have been easier if I had not agreed to do this report," he said, but, he added, he saw a centre that "was not all perfect, but very good, very caring in fact" and that if he had found Rainsbrook to be unsafe, he would have said so "very loudly". He also criticised the earlier Ofsted report into Rainsbrook, saying: "Ofsted are independent but not omniscient and their conclusions are misconceived." Narey's history with G4S has at times been discordant. In 2011 Narey firmly rejected G4S's approach to operate Cedars, an immigration detention centre for families in Sussex, though his successor, Anne Marie Carrie, overturned that decision. When he ran the prison service from 1993 to 2008, Narey re-nationalised three prisons from the private sector including one, Buckley Hall, from G4S. Advertisement But his impartiality has been called into question following his report on Rainsbrook. Labour MP Tom Watson told the Guardian: "If Narey is a paid consultant to G4S and advising that company on their bid for a new contract, the integrity of that bid must be in doubt. The justice secretary [Michael Gove] must intervene immediately to freeze the bid process until G4S has explained why it appointed a member of its bid team to carry out an 'independent' report into its own conduct at Rainsbrook." "Gove has either misled me, or been misled himself. I condemn the deplorable conduct of G4S, who seem more concerned with protecting their reputation than dealing with the record of abuse at Rainsbrook," he told the Guardian. Watson had previously expressed grave concerns about Rainsbrook as a result of Ofsted's report and wrote to Gove in June about them. In his reply to Watson, Gove said the YJB had improved its monitoring process at Rainsbrook and that he intended visit the centre with Narey who, he said, had "conducted his own independent assessment of Rainsbrook". Watson also expressed concern about the re-appointment of John Parker as director at Rainsbrook following the Ofsted report. Parker was in charge at Rainsbrook in 2004 when 15-year-old Gareth Myatt died of asphyxiation after being restrained by three custody officers. Gove did not respond to Watson's concerns about Parker. G4S declined to comment on allegations that Narey's report was not independent. A spokesperson for the YJB said it considered the views Narey expressed in the report were his own, not those of any other party and it was common practice for consultants to be paid by those who commissioned them. The Guardian asked the Ministry of Justice if the justice secretary had authorised Narey's visit to Rainsbrook. A spokesman said the MoJ was "aware and content" with his inspection of the STC. Ofsted told the Guardian: "We, the HM Inspectorate of Prisons and the Care Quality Commission fully stand by the findings and recommendations of our joint team of seven inspectors following the inspection of Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre over a 10-day period in February this year." Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/aug/05/g4s-paid-martin-narey-independent-youth-prison-report-consultant>

MURRIETA: Treatment center criminal case revelation triggers stock plunge The criminal case involving the corporate owners and employees in a 2010 patient death has attracted investor attention BY GAIL WESSON / STAFF WRITER Published: Aug. 5, 2015 Updated: Aug. 6, 2015 3:40 p.m. MURRIETA: Treatment center criminal case revelation triggers stock plunge [Print Photo](#) [Share on moreShare](#) [Pin It](#) [More Galleries](#) ADVERTISEMENT [Related article >](#) Stock for the corporate parent of a chain of alcohol-drug rehab homes plunged this week in the wake of a criminal indictment against American Addiction Centers (ACC) Holdings and employees. The company has ties to a Murrieta rehab house that faces allegations of dependent adult abuse and murder in the death of a client in July 2010. A Wall Street Journal blog post credits a college student, posting on a blog and on his Bleecker Street Research

website, with revealing details of allegations that “shook investors’ confidence.” Tennessee-based AAC’s stock plunged 39 percent in the stock value on Tuesday, Aug. 4, the biggest decline since the company disclosed the criminal case July 29, according to an online Bloomberg Business report. AAC stocks closed Wednesday at \$20.75, a 4.3 percent boost over the previous day’s closing of \$19.89. The Bleeker website posting claims the company has failed to report other patient deaths at facilities. Meanwhile, a private Atlanta law firm announced it was investigating whether AAC “complied with federal securities laws.” The law firm, Holzer & Holzer called on investors who suffered a loss from an investment on AAC stock to contact them. Holzer & Holzer specializes in shareholder litigation, including class action lawsuits. AAC acknowledged in a Securities & Exchange Commission filing that Jerrod Menz, founder of the company’s ABTTC Inc. unit, and other current and former employees were charged July 21 with murder and dependent adult abuse, in the death of 53-year-old patient, Gary Benefield. The company has denied wrongdoing on its own and on behalf of workers. In an earlier news release, it asserted Benefield died of natural causes the morning after he checked into one of the Murrieta facilities. The company settled a civil lawsuit filed by Benefield’s widow last year, with no admission of liability and without disclosing terms of the settlement. A Forbes online website report states that court documents in civil litigation suggest that company lawyers and Menz knew about the criminal investigation in 2013 but did not disclose the existence of the probe at that time to investors in Securities & Exchange Commission filings. Forbes reported the company said in a securities filing made Monday, Aug. 3, that the criminal case “was a risk factor to its business” and that outcomes of the case and any lawsuits could have a “material adverse effect on our business.” A Riverside County grand jury returned a sealed criminal indictment July 21 that was unsealed last week. Kristofer Michael McCausland, James Andrew Fent, Mignon Hernandez Dean and Jerrod Nathan Menz have each been charged with one count of murder and one count of dependent adult abuse, and Tami Dawn Scarcella was charged with abuse of a dependent adult, according to court records. Arraignments for all are scheduled Oct. 1 in Riverside County Superior Court. The indictment also charges ABBTTC, doing business as A Better Tomorrow Treatment Centers, Forterus Inc. and Forterus Health Care Services Inc. with dependent adult abuse and murder. Menz, had been the company’s president and member of the board of directors, but an AAC news release issued July 29 said he “voluntarily stepped down from those roles to address these charges.” Dean is operations director of the company’s residential treatment facility in San Diego. The three other individuals named in the case were employees in 2010 but no longer work there. Forterus operates 14 residential homes in Murrieta, and offers drug and alcohol programs, according to the company’s website. Benefield had battled pneumonia just prior to his death and was suffering from congestive heart failure when he was admitted to the rehab for alcohol detox, according to the now-settled civil lawsuit filed by Benefield’s widow. He was dependent on supplemental oxygen. The lawsuit alleged he was admitted to the facility without his prescription medications and necessary oxygen. Staff writer Richard K. DeAtley contributed to this report. Contact the writer: 951-368-9075 or gweeson@pe.com Source: <http://www.pe.com/articles/company-776076-dependent-criminal.html>

Child Welfare Ideas from the Experts, #5: Better Reporting Options for Maltreatment in Foster Care by [John Kelly](#) August 7, 2015 The Chronicle of Social Change is highlighting each of the policy recommendations made this summer by the participants of the Foster Youth Internship Program (FYI), a group of 12 former foster youths who completed congressional internships. The program is overseen each summer by the [Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute](#), with support from the [Sara Start Fund](#). Each of the FYI participants crafted a carefully researched policy recommendation during their time in Washington. Today we highlight the recommendation of Ashley Williams, 25, a graduate of the University of California, Los Angeles. The Proposal Improve the ability of foster youths to report maltreatment in care by mandating autonomous state ombudsmen offices, requiring that foster youths be notified of any hotline available in their area, and standardizing federal data reporting on abuse and neglect. Williams also calls for mandatory, age-appropriate sex education for any youth entering foster care. The Argument Hotlines, investigators and mandated reports serve as the backbone of an elaborate American system set up to discover and intervene when children are sexually abused. The number of children reporting such victimization has plummeted in recent years but the number of child sexual abuse reports made by adults has increased. It is a sad irony that kids in foster care — who have by definition already experienced maltreatment — are at high risk of having further sexual abuse go unreported. Their likeliest abusers, foster family members or group home staff, are obviously not going to report it. And as Williams points out, “The people that are supposed to protect foster youth, such as caseworkers, foster parents or residential staff, sometimes intimidate foster youth from reporting abuse.” Williams believes that requiring lanes of reporting outside the system housing the alleged abuser, and making those options clear to foster youths, will improve the prospects of sexual abuse in care getting reported. And mandated education sessions, she argues, will give “children the tools they need to understand what abuse is and how to protect themselves.” In Her Own Words Ashley Williams “After I entered care, I believed I would be in a safe environment. This was not the case. I was sexually abused by various foster family members. When I reported the abuse to my caseworker, I was accused of wearing clothing that provoked my abusers to behave that way. During my eight years in foster care, I bounced between 36 different homes and I was molested throughout my time in care. The system designed to protect me from sexual abuse failed to provide me with ways to report the further sexual abuse in foster care.” The Chronicle’s Take Read her proposal, and you’ll see that Williams certainly makes her case that states vary widely in the way they facilitate. Some have strong hotlines, others have none at all. Some have an ombudsman’s office; few have one that is autonomous from the system that, in this instance, has perhaps produced the sexual abuse. The challenge comes in connecting new requirements to money; that is the only hope of standardizing the collection of data on this issue in the most straightforward way, because that could be done through a reauthorization of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). That reauthorization process might be the best place to insert a requirement about autonomous ombudsmen offices. We have no idea what the cost of that would be; if it’s pricey, CAPTA won’t work, because it’s a pretty small amount of money. We were genuinely surprised that only “a handful” of states operate a 24/7 hotline that foster youth can use to report sexual abuse. That seems like a no-brainer at this point, given how cheap communication is. The education aspect reminded us of a proposal from Kellie Henderson of last year’s FYI class. Henderson called for states to [create “comfort and inform curriculum”](#) to help prepare youths for the foster care system. Adding classes or sessions aimed at empowering youths to speak up about abuse while in care makes sense. [Click here](#) to read Williams’ entire proposal and those of her fellow FYI participants. Source: <https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/analysis/child-welfare-ideas-from-the-experts-5-better-reporting-options-for-maltreatment-in-foster-care/11520>

Licensing rules stymie treatment centers By MARK HAYWARD New Hampshire Union Leader Three New Hampshire residential drug treatment centers are being forced to get health care facility licenses, an expensive endeavor that involves upgrading old buildings to meet hundreds of regulations, everything from elevator installation to bedroom size. Heads of two organizations said they face the prospect of spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to meet the requirements. If they don’t or can’t, they won’t be able to tap private insurers and Medicaid to pay for treatment services. “It’s bureaucracy at its finest,” said Heidi Moran, clinical administrator of Southeastern New Hampshire Services in Dover, the only residential drug treatment center in the Seacoast. In the middle of a statewide heroin epidemic, Southeastern has already reduced the number of treatment beds in order to meet the standards. Serenity Place in Manchester would have to spend \$1 million if it wanted to retrofit its Manchester Street facility to meet the licensing requirements, said Executive Director Sharon Drake. Rather, it hopes to move to a new location. The third organization is Headrest in Lebanon, which last week applied for a waiver because a 155-square foot bedroom is 5-feet short of the standard. Also on the checklist: a \$3,000 fire suppression system for a \$100 stove. “It’s been crazy,” said Headrest Executive Director Suzanne Thistle. “People have been stumbling over themselves trying to do what we’ve got to do.” Not a surprise All face a deadline of June 30, 2016, to have licenses in hand. Joe Harding, the director of Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services for the state of New Hampshire, said the treatment centers have known for two years that the regulations were coming. Harding acknowledged that organizations skirted the regulations for years. Private insurers had stopped paying for residential substance abuse treatment, and organizations relied on whatever they could — state funds, private donations and other sources — to keep their programs going. Now, the Obamacare law requires Medicaid and private insurers to pay for substance abuse services. “With the increased resources come increased requirements,” Harding said. “These services need to be in the mainstream of health care.” Harding said many of the requirements are for health and safety codes. He said anyone who goes to a doctor or hospital expects the building and patient rooms will meet certain standards. And he noted that Farnum Center in Manchester and Keystone Hall in Nashua have recently moved to facilities that meet the licensing standards. In Manchester, Serenity Place would have to spend \$1 million and still end up with fewer beds, Drake said. Earlier this year, the organization tried to move to vacant space that had been used as a school for troubled teenagers. But the effort was thwarted when the city rejected the move because of neighborhood opposition. Serenity Place has made an offer on a second location, Drake said. But whether it moves or decides to stay and upgrade, it has less than a year to meet licensing standards. At risk is \$760,000 it receives for 30 beds of transitional living. “The loss of that state funding will close us,” Drake said. Moran said her agency will have to spend \$500,000 to meet the standards. She hopes to get a loan or grant for \$300,000, the other \$200,000 will come out of cash flow. She’s said she’s been working on

the licensing standards for two years. She finds a requirement for bedrooms aggravating. Two-person bedrooms must be 160 square feet, a standard that Moran said was developed with nursing homes in mind. Southeastern's bedrooms are 122 square feet, and the state has rejected her request for a waiver. "In a nursing home, grandma might live in her room (and need the space)," Moran said. "My clients sleep in their room, that's it. When you're recovering, it's not healthy to be alone in your own head." Without a waiver, Southeastern reduced the beds in its 28-day treatment program from 14 to 10. The beds in its transitional program went from 19 to 15. At Headrest, Thistle had to turn two two-person bedrooms into single-person bedrooms because they fell short of the standard. Meanwhile, another bedroom is 155 square feet because the space where a dresser stands can't be counted as room space. She requested a waiver last week. "We're in the middle of an opiate epidemic. The clients are positively comfortable in there, and the rules say I have to get a waiver because we have a bureau in there," Thistle said. Drake said Serenity Place would have lost half of its beds to the regulations, which is why the organization wants to move. For years, she said, the state funded Serenity Place and never made a peep about licenses. "The state never should have given us money for the last 30 years," she said. "We never needed or were told we had to have a license with DHHS because we weren't billing insurance companies," Moran said. Under the current system, the Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services pays \$100 per person per day for residential treatment, Thistle said. She said payments under the expanded Medicaid program will amount to [\\$128.mhayward@unionleader.com](mailto:$128.mhayward@unionleader.com). Source: <http://www.unionleader.com/article/20150809/NEWS12/150809327>

Improving the Outcomes of Students in Foster Care – Georgetown University Law Center On May 27, NCYL co-hosted and participated in a convening, "Improving the Outcomes of Students in Foster Care: Spreading Promising Policies and Practices," at Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, D.C. The event – co-hosted by the Legal Center for Foster Care & Education, Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality, and the Children's Defense Fund – considered how federal policies can help spread promising practices that are being implemented at the state and local levels, and complemented work that NCYL has been involved in around reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The convening included three panels. The first, which featured FosterEd Director Jesse Hahnel as a speaker, focused on promising practices and continuing challenges in working at the state and local levels to improve the educational outcomes of students in foster care. Hahnel and his co-panelists – who represented the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, the Texas Supreme Court Children's Commission Education Committee, Los Angeles Unified School District, and the Legal Center for Foster Care and Education – emphasized the importance of interagency collaboration and strong leadership. They outlined a number of promising practices being undertaken by states, counties, and school districts across the country, and agreed that more must be done to incentivize state and local agencies to prioritize this work. These practices include, among other things: ensuring that foster youth are immediately enrolled in school; ensuring that their educational records are transferred between schools in a timely manner; ensuring that foster youth are able remain in their school of origin whenever in their best interest; providing access to transportation; hiring district-based education liaisons to support educational success; allocating resources to train teachers and school staff on trauma-informed practices; sharing data regarding foster youth amongst state and local child welfare and education agencies; and disaggregating educational outcomes, such as attendance, test scores, and GPA, based on foster youth status. The second panel featured several federal officials and focused on policy levers that can be utilized to this end. Speakers included representatives of the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance, the U.S. Department of Education Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, and the Children's Defense Fund. They acknowledged the important role that federal policy and federal officials can play in advancing this issue, and discussed several mechanisms for spreading best practices, including legislation, regulation, and discretionary grants. The final panel explored the effects of trauma on the educational outcomes of girls in foster care. It spotlighted the work of a psychotherapist and a youth development coach, both from UCAN Counseling and Youth Development Services. They highlighted the unique challenges that girls in care face related to sexual and relationship abuse, pregnancy, and parenting, and emphasized the importance of trauma-informed school systems in serving these students. Recommendations that emerged from the convening included the following: meaningfully include foster youth in the reauthorization of the ESEA; meaningfully include foster youth in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act; use targeted discretionary federal grants to incentivize state and local agencies to collaborate to improve the educational outcomes of foster youth; convene partners from multiple states to share strategies and lessons learned; provide technical assistance to help states implement promising practices; and issue administrative guidance to clarify and reinforce the scope of collaboration and accountability among education and child welfare agencies. A video of the convening is available at <https://vimeo.com/129088273>. - See more at: <http://youthlaw.org/publication/improving-the-outcomes-of-students-in-foster-care-georgetown-university-law-center/#sthash.09K7tlh8.dpuf>

CR Spreads Message on Overuse of Psychotropics for Kids in Foster Care By CR Staff Sara Bartosz, lead counsel at national advocacy organization Children's Rights, shed light on the failure of many states to properly oversee the administration of psychotropic medications to kids in foster care during the recent American Bar Association (ABA) Annual Meeting in Chicago. Bartosz was a panelist on "I Feel Like a Zombie: Legal Ethics and Overuse of Psychotropic Drug Use among Children in State Custody." The session served to educate lawyers on how the issue affects thousands of young people in foster care across the United States and what attorneys can do to be watchdogs for kids. Children in foster care often exhibit behaviors related to the trauma they have endured. Rather than receiving therapeutic counseling to treat underlying issues, kids are too frequently given powerful psychotropic drugs to control their behavior. The drugs can have side effects like drowsiness, tremors and weight gain. And many states lack oversight mechanisms to monitor crucial details like how many drugs are being prescribed to each child and the collective impact. "Too many of these kids experience multiple moves between foster homes and changes in caseworkers, and consequently don't have one consistent person in their lives who knows their history and can watch out for their well-being," Bartosz said. "We need to work together to change this." Bartosz told attendees that they can help children by acting as watchdogs to ensure state agencies: maintain comprehensive and up-to-date medical records on each child; consistently provide mandated mental health screenings and follow-up treatments; ensure appropriate informed consent processes occur before children are prescribed medication; and establish red flags – such as multiple drugs and dosages above recommendations – that would trigger further review. Other panelists included Judge Ernest S. Gray, Orleans Parish Juvenile Court of New Orleans and Dr. Michael Naylor, a child psychiatrist with the Institute for Juvenile Research at the University of Illinois at Chicago. The discussion was moderated by Chicago Tribune reporter David Jackson, who has conducted investigations on disadvantaged youth. The panelists noted that while many children may benefit from medications, states must assure the availability of quality mental health care and therapeutic treatments for childhood trauma in order to combat the over-reliance on powerful drugs. Source: <http://www.childrensrights.org/cr-spreads-message-on-overuse-of-psychotropics-for-kids-in-foster-care/>

'Sex-crazed' teacher preyed on troubled teens: prosecutor By Lia Eustachewich View author archive Get author RSS feed Name(required) Email(required) Comment(required) August 12, 2015 | 6:04pm [Modal Trigger](#) Teacher Sean Shayak seen in costume in a 2013 yearbook photo (left) and cuffed into Brooklyn Supreme Court. Photo: Left: J.C. Rice; right: Byron Smith F The Brooklyn Tech HS teacher accused of sexually abusing students "preyed" on his seven vulnerable teenaged victims, even researching them online before making his move, prosecutors said Wednesday. Sean Shaynak texted "Is this the first you saw a d—k?" to a 15-year-old girl, whom he allegedly exposed himself to while on a beach trip, Assistant District Attorney Janet Gleeson said in Brooklyn Supreme Court. "He preyed on girls who had issues, who had problems. He jumped on that like white on rice," she said. The 45-year-old math and physics teacher was indicted last September on 36 counts, including criminal sex acts, rape and kidnapping for [encounters between 2011 and 2014](#). Shaynak's lawyer Kimberly Summers slammed Gleeson for "grossly exaggerating" the facts and painted one of the victims, complainant No. 3, as seeking him out for sex – not the other way around. "She talks regularly of her love of older men, how she tries to sleep with older teachers," said Summers. "Her goal was to sleep with Mr. Shaynak." The girl even texted him at one point to dump him, Summers said. "I didn't plan on hanging out with you forever. It was only for school. It's not fun anymore," she allegedly wrote. The new details were gleaned from three terabytes' worth of text messages and emails between Shaynak and his alleged victims. Summers argued to reduce Shaynak's bail from \$1 million to \$400,000 with electronic monitoring, which was denied. Brooklyn Tech students are trying to raise money to get him sprung from jail and one has even visited him multiple times on Rikers Island, Gleeson said. Source: <http://nypost.com/2015/08/12/sex-crazed-teacher-preyed-on-vulnerable-girls-prosecutor-says/>

With Lax Supervision at State-Contracted Group Homes, Teen Prostitution and Drug Use Are Rampant A [Facebook](#) 69 [Twitter](#) 33 [More shares](#) [recommend reddit email](#) 1 By [Kyle Swenson](#) Tuesday, August 11, 2015 | 5 days ago There were raised voices and broken glass and the high-voltage emotions that pinball between a wild teen and her worried mom. In their Davie home, Bonnie had installed new locks on the windows to keep her 16-year-old daughter, Cathy, from sneaking out again. The fight ended with Cathy waving around a kitchen knife. She left in handcuffs. Hours later at the Broward County Courthouse, Cathy — a skin-and-bones blonde with the kind of sand-smooth face you see on girls in fashion magazines — was arraigned on a charge of assault

with a deadly weapon. Bonnie, a 50-year-old marketing professional, sat watching her daughter, the legal jargon boxing her ears like white noise. (New Times is not publishing their real names.) The judge reviewed the teen's file, then asked Bonnie if she wanted to take her daughter home. It wasn't an easy choice. Cathy was the middle child of Bonnie's three daughters. The oldest, then 17, had set the example: sneaking out, using drugs, running with older, rougher guys. Cathy was careening along the same wayward trajectory. Her parents couldn't pinpoint why. Bonnie had walked her kids to school every day when they were young. A loving nanny had helped raise the girls for 11 years. Bonnie and her husband, Ed, a manager at a scrap-metal company, divorced in 2001 — but amicably, and both were active in raising the girls. Still, Cathy, like her older sister, was wild. Once, when she was 13 and drinking with a group of older boys, the incident ended in a sexual assault. She'd since been held back twice. Now still technically an eighth-grader at the Hallandale Adult Learning Center, she was sneaking out "four out of seven nights a week," Bonnie says. The mother was worried her youngest daughter would copy Cathy's antics. Bonnie told the judge no. "This is sad to say about your own kid," Bonnie says today, the words slipping around tears. "I thought she was safer being detained. At least we would know where she was. We would know she wasn't running. Perhaps a little harsh, but she'd be safe." Bonnie was hoping for a scared-straight scenario, hoping that the tough-love embrace of the state would even her out. Instagram showed "pictures of her mostly naked." In captions, the teen talked about being "higher than the clouds." The judge's pen went into action. Because Bonnie was a victim, the court placed a no-contact order between mother and daughter, a typical precaution in cases of domestic violence. The judge then issued a court order placing Cathy with the state. The teenager was handed over to ChildNet, a nonprofit group that contracts with the state Department of Children and Families to handle child welfare services in Broward and Palm Beach counties. Cathy was assigned a child advocate, or a point-person for managing her care and, in turn, placed in the New Lighthouse Group Home, a three-bedroom split-level house in Chula Vista, a residential neighborhood in Fort Lauderdale. The facility houses six girls between the ages of 13 and 17 who are facing juvenile criminal charges. Although barred from contacting her daughter, Bonnie felt relieved that Cathy would be in a controlled environment — until she pulled up Cathy's Instagram feed over the next couple of weeks. On it: shots from raves and parties at the Hard Rock Casino. "Pictures of her mostly naked," Bonnie says. In the captions, the teen talked about being "higher than the clouds." Bonnie was stunned. She thought her daughter was being closely supervised. Instead she was out partying — on a weeknight? "I'm just wondering, has she been reported missing? Does the group home even know?" Bonnie says. "A hundred questions pop into your head." Bonnie says the state's care of Cathy couldn't have backfired more. Cases like hers are not isolated. Lawyers at the Broward Public Defender's Office have repeatedly heard from their juvenile clients that because of lax supervision, shocking behaviors like drug-dealing and prostitution routinely take place at group homes. Police reports and court records obtained by New Times likewise describe incidents of prostitution and gang activity at several homes, and an audit conducted by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) itself concedes that several agencies, including ChildNet, do not adequately supervise the facilities. Little is being done to remedy the problem, but administrators insist they are doing the best they can with the resources they have for some of the state's most troubled and tough-to-manage kids. "The biggest thing I took away was that these children all seemed like they were in a collective state of depression," says Gordon Weekes, an attorney in charge of juvenile cases at the Broward Public Defender's Office. "It seems contagious in the houses. All the children have serious levels of trauma — that was not addressed. The children seem to be recoiling into their own depression." Unfortunately for Bonnie, her daughter's situation would only get worse. Illustration by Joseph Laney Although Cathy was not allowed to contact Bonnie, Ed sometimes stopped by New Lighthouse to visit his daughter. He recalls that there was inconsistency in the check-in process. Sometimes a staff member would ask Ed for his ID and to sign in. Other times, the staff member wouldn't even get off the couch or acknowledge Ed's presence, he says. "No ID, no anything," Ed recalls. "I thought, 'Wow. I could have been her boyfriend, whoever.'" Cathy told him that, inside, "everybody wanted to fight everybody," Ed says. "None of the girls got along. She said it was a terrible situation." Cathy's older sister reported that Cathy had gotten into a brawl with a fellow resident, resulting in bite marks on her sister's shoulder. Cathy got arrested again, this time for shoplifting at a Macy's. Later, Bonnie learned her daughter had run away from the group home for three days — no one alerted Bonnie or Ed, the mother and father say. The girls were known as "group home hoes." Online, Bonnie also continued to see pictures of her daughter out partying, she says. When she logged onto the school system's parent portal to see how Cathy was faring in class, she learned her daughter wasn't showing up. Bonnie pushed for ChildNet to arrange transportation. When she emailed Cathy's ChildNet child advocate asking why she was truant, Bonnie got back a curt response. "Your daughter has a school bus," an email shows the employee replied. "Whether she gets on it or not is unknown." At Christmastime, Cathy had been in the group home nearly two months but was able to celebrate with her dad and sisters. When Bonnie saw pictures from their get-together, she noticed Cathy had expensive-looking manicured nails, hair extensions, and costly Tory Burch sandals. Cathy's sisters reported that she'd had a \$100 bill in her purse. "Where did that come from?" Bonnie wondered. The mother's mind raced with worst-case scenarios. "Human trafficking? Prostitution?" When she tried to get answers, staff at the home would not return calls or would say they were not allowed to give out information, Bonnie claims. Florida's child-care system is a textbook example of outsource economics. Children facing criminal charges can be sent to either youth offender facilities run by the Department of Juvenile Justice (what insiders call "the delinquency system") or, if they have been abandoned or abused, to facilities that fall under the Department of Children and Families ("the dependency system"); the two groups usually overlap. With the dependency system, children enter a giant bureaucracy that has several layers of subcontractors. In some counties, the DCF manages foster care and group homes directly. But in 20 counties, the DCF uses contractors — called Community-Based Care Lead Agencies (or CBCs) — as middlemen, which then subcontract with and oversee independently run group homes. ChildNet is the CBC serving both Broward and Palm Beach counties. It subcontracts with 51 agencies in the two counties. The Broward branch serves 3,124 children with a staff of 404 and a \$75 million budget; Palm Beach works with 2,557 kids, 109 staffers, and \$48 million, according to state figures. (In Miami, a CBC called Our Kids of Miami-Dade/Monroe oversees group homes.) Regulations laid out by the DCF specify that rooms must be a certain square footage, that a bathroom is required for "every six residents," and that at least three meals a day be provided. The site must be staffed at all times. "Facility operators" — the main person in charge of the facility — are required to have "at least 90 credit hours of accredited college level coursework" or a high school degree and three years of experience working with children. Staffers need a high school diploma or equivalent and must pass a local law enforcement screening. "The facility shall take all reasonable precautions to assure that no client is exposed to, or instigates, such behaviors as might be physically or emotionally injurious to him/herself or to another person," the regulations state. In the event of a runaway, the DCF is clear: "Beyond one hour after determining that a child... is missing, staff shall immediately call local law enforcement and report the missing resident." The guidelines also require group home staff to report all "critical incidents" to the DCF within an hour of the incident. But the guidelines do not lay out specifics regarding curfews, check-in or check-out policy, or security measures. Related Stories [Full Statement From ChildNet Regarding Supervision at Broward Group Homes](#) It falls to each CBC to establish standards for subcontractors and make sure they are complying with regulations. CBCs are also supposed to create a monitoring plan for each group home. Each is supposed to be visited by a contract manager quarterly and reviewed by a monitoring team every one to three years, depending on whether it's classified as low-, medium-, or high-risk. The review involves a prearranged onsite inspection where ChildNet staffers comb through a random sample of client and personnel files and interview staff and residents. If problems are uncovered, the provider must come up with a Performance Improvement Plan within 30 days. New Lighthouse, the group home Cathy was sent to, is run by Fountain of Life Community Development Center, a faith-based nonprofit. The home's tax records show that it is also known as Project Touch Inc. It received \$380,429 in public support in 2013. According to documents provided by ChildNet, New Lighthouse's latest monitoring took place in January 2013. The facility was found to be 100 percent in compliance, although the document noted, "In some instances, if the child has run away from the group home, the provider did not follow the procedures in the ChildNet policy." The agency's CEO, Dr. Sherron Parrish, did not return calls for comment for this article. On tax records, Parrish's salary is listed at \$48,000, and she reports an additional \$27,000 compensation from "related organizations." On her website, the "pastor, entrepreneur, speaker, financial coach, [and] community leader" states that in "1986 she became licensed as a prophetess" and has a certificate and associate's degree from International Seminary in Plymouth, Florida, and bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from Friends International Christian University in Merced, California. (Neither organization holds an accreditation recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.) New Lighthouse's website states that residents would learn "Life preparation skills" and get "therapeutic training to improve behavior." The mission statement also says, "The ability to curb their instinct to run away is of paramount importance," though it's a "continuous process." Bonnie and Ed say they doubt their daughter got any "therapeutic training" while at New Lighthouse. But by the time her stay was over, she would definitely need it. Illustration by Joseph Laney Cathy's story is not isolated. Broward's public defenders see troubling cases every day. For Lauren Robinette, a young attorney tasked with defending juvenile offenders, it wasn't one story but a string of reports that made her concerned about the management — or lack of it — at group homes. Robinette's clients told her about violence and lack of supervision, even whispers about prostitution and sex trafficking. "I felt like they were just being warehoused there," Robinette says today. "When you would go there, there's no rules, no restrictions." Robinette enlisted help from her boss, Weekes, the chief

assistant public defender in the juvenile division. Together, the two attorneys began making unannounced visits to clients living at group homes across Broward. "Although they had a shelter over their heads, there really was no level of parental supervision that you would expect for girls who are 15, 16, or 17 years of age," Weekes says. "They could come and go as they please. They were basically governing themselves. These teenagers were placed in the environment because they had been previously abused or neglected, so it seemed contrary to [conditions that] should be provided for these girls." No one was going to school. The attorneys say they would arrive at 10 a.m. on a weekday and find kids still in bed. No one was going to school. "They are not forced to go," Robinette points out. "If you have a parent who doesn't get a child to school, they can be charged criminally. But the State of Florida doesn't have any consequences for not getting these children to school." "This exposes the failing of privatization," Weekes says. "Privatization allows the state to alleviate itself of responsibility." Florida administrative code states that individual facilities must provide transportation for appointments and that "Each facility must provide the level of supervision necessary to ensure that residents are protected from harm and that a safe and healthy living environment is created and maintained." Beyond that, the public defenders say standards seemed nonexistent or at least poorly enforced. For instance, teens reported that although the group homes had stated curfews, they knew that police wouldn't be called until hours later, so they exploited the system and stayed out late. By last September, Weekes had seen enough to pool his concerns into a strongly worded letter to DCF Interim Secretary Mike Carroll. "It is extremely disturbing that foster care children who have often already endured significant trauma resulting from abuse, abandonment, or neglect are also being subjected to equally abusive environments while in the care, custody, and supposed protection of the State of Florida," Weekes wrote. "Foster girls that reside at the... group homes are fearful and do not feel safe or protected in these state-funded environments." Specifically, Weekes' letter focused on three Broward group homes. The ARRIS (which stands for "Accountability Respect Responsibility Integrity Self-Esteem") and AESHA ("Acts Emergency Shelter Home for Adolescents") girls' homes are a pair of properties located next to each other on a residential street north of Sunrise Boulevard near Warfield Park in Fort Lauderdale. Together, the two buildings house 19 girls between the ages of 12 and 17. The homes are owned by the Agency for Community Treatment Services Inc. (ACTS), a Tampa-based nonprofit that provides substance-abuse treatment, housing, and juvenile justice services to more than 6,000 youths across the state with a \$15 million annual budget. The Crescent boys' home is an emergency shelter located ten blocks west of the ARRIS/AESHA site and houses 22 boys aged 12 to 17, all with "elevated risk factors" such as chronic runaway issues and substance abuse. The property is owned by Chrysalis Health Inc., a for-profit Broward-based health-care provider. (Chrysalis Health did not return calls for comment for this article.) One ARRIS resident had told her public defender she'd been sexually assaulted while sleeping in September 2014. Another complained of being attacked and battered by three other residents in May 2014. The attorneys heard of regular prostitution at the homes, and bad behavior seemed contagious. "At Crescent, I would have boys there, they would have zero criminal cases going in," Robinette explains. "After staying at Crescent, they would have five, six, seven cases." Because of restrictions on public access to records involving juvenile offenders, New Times could not verify the specific claims in Weekes' letter. But police records show that between January 2012 and October 2014, Fort Lauderdale Police made 71 visits to AESHA, 111 to ARRIS, and 229 to Crescent. A sampling of incident reports seems to back up the public defenders' concerns. Drug use was noted at the homes. In November 2012, a girl staying at ARRIS told Fort Lauderdale Police that "she occasionally sold marijuana and crack cocaine and that she smokes weed every day." In January 2013, patrol cars responded to reports that young men had been seen jumping over the fence at Crescent. When officers arrived, they found a still-hot marijuana pipe in the backyard. Calls regarding violence were even more common. In September 2012, police responded to Crescent when three boys locked a staff member in a dark room after she refused to let them use the phone. In March 2013, Crescent staff called police when two residents began fighting and one pulled a knife. That same month, a random search found a "Taser inside a Bible" hidden by a resident at Crescent. That April, a resident angrily flashed a three-inch knife at a staff member; later, another staff member was struck in the head. Gangland drama even spilled into the group homes. In June 2013, a youth staying at Crescent told police he'd been walking the street when a group of Crips gang members attacked, robbed, and tasered him. In July 2012, a teenage male Blood gang member who'd been arrested for homicide by the Broward Sheriff's Office had made a death threat to his girlfriend, who he believed had ratted him out for the murder. The girl, a "Ruby," or female Blood member, was staying at AESHA. Police noted in their report that the girl was rumored to "frequently facilitate meetings between girls from the [AESHA and ARRIS] houses and adults (men and women). These meetings involve the girls having sex with the adults and then being paid \$15.00." Police also responded — along with child protective investigators — to reports of prostitution and sex trafficking. In May 2013, police investigated a report that a juvenile girl had run from ARRIS for Tampa, where the girl had "performed sex for money, so that she could get back to Ft. Lauderdale." Two months later, an ARRIS resident told police a man in a blue car regularly drove up and "asks the girls to come with him and exchange currency for sexual acts." She said the girls were known as "group home hoes" and admitted she "had been arrested for prostitution before and she lists herself in 'backpages'" — a reference to the escort site backpage.com. The girl told police she longed to land a real job so she could "stop selling her vagina." Two other girls at the home, however, denied the stories about prostitution. A staff member also denied prostitution was happening but conceded that "girls are always hanging out with boys in the area." A year later, an employee "stated she only heard rumors but cannot say for sure" that one resident engaged in prostitution. The girl herself admitted she used to prostitute herself but stopped. In May 2014, when police responded to a runaway call at AESHA, an employee stated "that the facility's policy is to report the children missing if they do not return before 4 a.m." — apparently in violation of DCF regulations. Illustration by Joseph Laney On a Wednesday morning this January, Bonnie was hustling to get to the courthouse for a hearing in Cathy's criminal case. While filling her gas tank, a text message from her oldest daughter flashed on her cell. "I just saw the words 'raped' and 'punched in the face,'" she remembers today. As Cathy would later explain to an investigator from the BSO, she was walking around Sawgrass Mills Mall by herself "when she was approached by a black male and black female," the detective wrote in the report. The man introduced himself as a representative from a modeling agency and said the woman was his girlfriend. He invited Cathy to dinner to discuss how she could become a model. She got into a white four-door pickup with the couple, the report says. Cathy noted that they got off the highway in Pompano Beach. They arrived at a small gray house. But then the man's girlfriend quickly left for work, leaving the 16-year-old alone inside with the strange man. Cathy told police he "punched her in the face and ripped her pants as he pulled them down, then raped her." After the assault, the attacker dropped Cathy off at her sister's boyfriend's house but warned her to keep quiet or he'd kill her or her sister, "since he now knew where she lived." Cathy's sister took her to Westside Memorial Hospital. Staff there reported the rape to police. But when investigators tried to flesh out more details of the attack, the teen clammed up, saying, "I don't want to get involved." As such, the case has led to no arrests. For Bonnie, the worst-case scenario had now come true. She left the gas station and continued on to the courthouse, where she demanded the custody of her child back, the no-contact order be damned. Mother and daughter were reunited hours later in the courthouse hallway. The girl limped over to hug her mom, tears wetting both their faces. Cathy told Bonnie she was still bleeding from the attack. Some group-home operators say they are doing the best they can. Richard E. Brown, the CEO of the nonprofit that manages ARRIS and AESHA (his salary: \$164,874, according to 2013 tax records), has a tired sag in his voice when he describes the issues outlined in the Broward Public Defender's letter. From his point of view, ACTS is stuck in a tough position, providing housing and meals as required but with little authority to control residents. "If somebody wants to walk away, there is not any authority on our part to prevent that from happening." Brown says ACTS staffers will always try to dissuade a resident from leaving, but "we can't restrain them against their will. It's basically a hands-off system," Brown tells New Times. "If somebody wants to walk away, there is not any authority on our part to prevent that from happening. That's built into the system. That's not necessarily our preference." He says the residents are "supervised 24/7," but unfortunately, the children bunking at ARRIS and AESHA come with baggage, including connections to the sex work. "We're the deep end of the system," he says. "A lot of the girls come there with that experience already in their lifestyle. It's a dynamic that we are wanting to deal with. It's not that we can choose who we admit. We have to take what comes to us and have to work to provide a safe and secure environment as best we can." When contacted with questions about Cathy's case and the facility's policies, New Lighthouse provided only the following statement: "Our group home is in compliance and has policies in place to ensure adequate supervision for our clients. Our staff are also well-trained and have been following the proper protocols and procedures." ChildNet CEO Emilio Benitez (his salary: \$254,300, according to 2012 tax records) [responded to questions with the following statements](#): "Children in group homes are there to learn independent living skills and experience normalcy. All children and adolescents are monitored and carefully supervised, but residential care facilities are not juvenile detention facilities, and these children are not under lock and key." Benitez continued: "While we are prohibited by law from discussing any particular case, client, or incident, it's important to know that we are taking the time to reassess the residential model and determine the best path forward." Following Weekes' letter last September, the DCF's Carroll responded with a review of the allegations, one by one. He said that the September 2014 ARRIS sexual assault was investigated but that "the alleged victim as well as alleged witness denied anything occurred." Crimes that occurred off the property were out of ChildNet's control. In terms of human trafficking, the group homes stated they continued to work with local law enforcement. Problems at Crescent were attributed to "a recent escalation in behaviors

from one particular young man that had created a challenging situation." The follow-up report noted that all the facilities mentioned in Weekes' letter were visited by ChildNet monitors in September. No concerns were noted. According to documents from ChildNet, ARRIS and AESHA were both subject to monitoring in March 2012. ARRIS scored a 97 percent on its compliance, with the only issue falling on the number of residents who had gone to the dentist. AESHA scored a 95 percent. Still, "staff should show more concern for the children's education," a child advocate noted to monitors. "Don't just allow them to sit around the house and not attend school." Another child advocate responded that the home "needs to have activities both recreational and therapeutic for the client and not allow them to come and go as they want. This is very important for the younger girls and those involved in human trafficking due to the area the program is located in." ARRIS was also reviewed in March 2014. The facility passed with a 97 percent compliance score. But the monitors noted that only "three of seven applicable girls had demonstrated improvement or maintained passing grades (GPA of 1.0 or above) while in the program." "Due to the population they serve, the Provider struggles with girls running away and missing their scheduled appointments," the report notes. "It's hard to reach some of the girls who have no direction," a staff told the monitoring team. Chrysalis Health's centers — including Crescent — were last monitored in June 2012. The review found the site 100 percent compliant with the contract. After Weekes' letter, the DCF called for a monthly meeting of ChildNet supervisors and subcontractors to discuss group home issues. Kim Gorsuch, DCF's community development administrator for Broward, who organized the meetings, says that around the same time Weekes' letter was received, "we had experienced a significant increase in the numbers of children coming into care, and that is putting stress on the entire system in terms of capacity." But the group hasn't met since June. Gorsuch explains that everyone is anticipating a "considerable conversation about group care" in the next legislative session. Between January 2014 and February 2015, the DCF performed an audit and inspected six of Florida's 17 CBCs, ChildNet's Palm Beach operation among them. Auditors found that, in some cases, ChildNet had failed to create monitoring plans — a violation of ChildNet's own policy. Confronted, the organization said that such plans were "not useful for planning purposes" but that they were "currently redeveloping" the process to incorporate the required process. The audit concluded in March 2015 found that while CBCs were failing to keep an eye on subcontractors, the DCF was also failing to watch the CBCs. Across the state, the audit concluded, "The CBCs' subcontractor monitoring efforts need improvements. The Department did not always adequately conduct, document, review, and report the results of CBC monitoring." The assault charge against Cathy is still pending. A month after she was raped, 12 adults, most armed with legal degrees — including her public defender, her guardian ad litem, her guardian ad litem's attorney, her ChildNet case manager, the manager's supervisor, a ChildNet attorney, and the prosecutor — gathered in a hearing to decide whether Cathy should stay at home or enter another program. Cathy, the lone child in the room, looked puzzled, as though she were struggling to understand the legalese. The hearing stretched for four hours with no decision made. Another hearing was slotted into the calendar weeks down the line. "Such," Bonnie said bitterly later, "an ineffective system." Cathy was discharged from New Lighthouse and returned home with Bonnie. In the following months, she began booking from the house at night. Eventually, she was gone for two months. When the girl returned, she was taken to SafePlace, a ChildNet-run emergency shelter. It became a pattern: running away on her own, turning up at SafePlace, running again. "This is going to sound odd, but I'm almost comforted that she is not in the care of ChildNet, that she is bouncing around all these other places — which is sad," Bonnie said recently, choking down a bout of tears. "I don't feel comfortable about who is looking out for her. Because nobody is." Source: <http://www.browardpalmbeach.com/news/with-lax-supervision-at-state-contracted-group-homes-teen-prostitution-and-drug-use-are-rampant-7173727>

Ten Ways to Promote Permanence for Foster Youths by Jim Kenny August 11, 2015 There are only two truly permanent outcomes for children in temporary care: reunification or adoption. For many reasons, the child suffers in limbo while we allegedly try "to get it right." By accepting delays as long as two to three years, we are certainly getting it wrong. Little, however, is likely to change by lecture or by fiat. Systems need to be modified. Here are ten recommendations that may help improve outcomes. Preserve the birth family. Improve reunification outcomes by beginning immediately upon removal with an early case plan and insisting on a commitment to specific remedies from the birth parents. Train caseworkers and foster parents together. Learn to understand the similarities and differences in roles. Change the financial incentives for agencies by rewarding them with some form of bonus for adoption so that long-term foster care can no longer be perceived as a financial loss. Encourage foster/adopt parents to apply for and accept the maximum subsidies available. The subsidy money is for the child. Improve professional staff with a focus on permanency outcomes. Reward case managers who monitor weekly and achieve successful outcomes. Encourage education about attachment and bonding in psychology and social work programs. Focus on attachment issues with caseworkers. Encourage law schools to develop courses and programs about foster and adoption policies and laws. Work primarily with and through the parents in therapy rather than the child. Healing of attachment disorders takes place in the home, not in a therapist's office. Consider cooperative adoption. Fear of losing her child may be the only factor holding back a birth mother's voluntary consent to termination. Involve the foster teen in planning his or her own future. Consider the approach of [You Gotta Believe](#) and Pat O'Brien. Include the voice of foster parents in court. Support legislation and policy strategies to provide a significant voice in conferences and courts for foster parents. They have the most day-to-day knowledge and may care the most and yet they are the only party involved that lacks legal standing. According to the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), the child's needs and rights are paramount. And every child has need for, and right to, a permanent home. Jim Kenny is a retired psychologist with over 50 years of clinical experience. The author of 13 books on family and child care, Dr. Kenny's recent books are *Attachment and Bonding in the Foster and Adopted Child* and *What Foster Parents Need to Know*. Source: <https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/blogger-co-op/ten-ways-to-promote-permanence-for-foster-youths/11933>

We Can Do Better Than This: The Foster Care Bill of Rights | Danielle Gletow We Can Do Better Than This: The Foster Care Bill of Rights Posted: 08/11/2015 4:13 pm EDT Updated: 08/11/2015 4:59 pm EDT [Share 128](#) [Tweet 50](#) [Email](#) 0 Comment 5 [tumblr reddit](#) On Wednesday, August 5, 2015 I watched Governor Jack Markell of Delaware sign into law [HB46](#), the state's Foster Care Bill of Rights. As Governor Markell signed the bill surrounded by current and former foster youth, I began to read through the copy given to me when I arrived. Though I was certainly thrilled to see this happening and moved by the genuine care Markell expressed for the young people around him, I was a bit stunned when I got to the details. "To be told why I am in foster care." "To live in a safe place without abuse or neglect." "To receive food, water, shelter and clothing to meet my own individual needs." As I continued to read I couldn't help thinking: "Aren't these just basic human rights? Is this not already guaranteed?" The fact that the state of Delaware, or any state for that matter, needs to have a formal law carefully outlining such basic definitions of quality care concerned me greatly. It concerned me, but unfortunately I can't say it surprised me. For the past eight years I have seen nearly everything negative that there is to see in the foster care system. I have welcomed children into my home with little more than the ill-fitting clothing on their backs and a bag of dirty belongings. I have met hundreds of children across the country that are legally free for adoption yet still moving from foster home to group home without finding a permanent place to call home. I have worked with children who have aged out of the system who have received little to no preparation for life beyond care - and I've watched them struggle and struggle significantly. After returning to New Jersey I began to do more research around the rights of children in foster care in the United States and the documentation of those rights. I found several outdated documents that address the need for a Bill of Rights as well as reference to a bill ratified in Philadelphia in 1973. I also found a project from the National Council of State Legislatures that notes that only 15 US states have a Foster Care Bill of Rights. In reading through them I noticed not all were as clearly defined and understandable as Delaware's HB46. What has truly been weighing so heavily on me since I watched that bill signing is not just that it appears that there is no standard, detailed and easy to read Foster Care Bill of Rights but that this information is not that easy to find. It makes me wonder how many youth entering and living in the foster care system are being given this information, and maybe more importantly, being given information on what to do and where to go if they feel their rights are being violated. We have a long way to go in reforming a system that is riddled with inadequacies. I appreciate that in a system with so many exceptions, it is hard to make rules but as more time passes the more we will be subjecting kids who did not ask to be in this situation to less than stellar care. This after they are removed from their homes with the promise of better care and a better environment than the one they came from. I write this piece with three goals in mind: 1. I hope that it will encourage more people to become involved in supporting our young people in the foster care system as there are so many ways to do so; many of which do not involve a huge commitment of time and resources. [This list](#) is a great place to start. 2. I hope to [hear](#) from young people in foster care and from other advocates about what information is available regarding children's rights in foster care. I'd like to use this to compile a more complete resource page to be posted on One Simple Wish's website for our social service agency partners and foster parents and children. 3. I hope to encourage every state not only to enact a Foster Care Bill of Rights but to have a clear plan to implement it, distribute it and make it publicly accessible. I must end on a positive note. I mentioned above that in eight years I have seen most of the negatives within the foster care system. But I want to be sure I mention that I have also seen most of the positives. I have worked with passionate leaders who are working tirelessly to create programs that will improve lives and

outcomes for our kids. I have met with amazingly dedicated foster parents who have opened their homes to dozens of children in the course of their lives. I have had the pleasure of seeing countless smiles from children who have received granted wishes from [One Simple Wish](#) thanks to the kindness of thousands of strangers. There is hope. And with this I know there will continue to be progress. I hope that more people will join me in this mission to not just promise a better life for children in foster care, but to deliver it. As always, I'd love to hear your thoughts and feedback. Email me anytime [here](#). Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/danielle-gletow/we-can-do-better-than-thi_3_b_7967762.html

Ayotte calls on federal health officials to ease licensing requirements that N.H. drug treatment facilities must meet in order to bill insurance under expanded Medicaid By Allie Morris Concord Monitor Wednesday, August 12, 2015 (Published in print: Wednesday, August 12, 2015) [Share on email](#)[Email](#)[Print](#)[Share on facebook](#)[Share on twitter](#)[Share on gmail](#)[More Sharing Services](#) 3 U.S. Sen. Kelly Ayotte is calling on federal health officials to ease licensing requirements that New Hampshire drug treatment facilities must meet in order to bill insurance under the state's expanded Medicaid program. Officials say increasing treatment options is key in dealing with the state's substance abuse issue. While more than 100,000 people in New Hampshire meet the criteria for a substance use disorder, the publicly funded sector currently has the capacity to treat roughly 5,000 people, according to officials. As the calls for action grow, some treatment centers are struggling to meet the [costly requirements](#) of a new health care facility license they need to enroll as Medicaid providers. The license wasn't necessary when the facilities relied primarily on state funding. The license calls for facilities to have specific furniture or room sizes and also requires them to meet certain life safety codes including fire protection and electrical standards, said New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services spokesman Jake Leon. Three treatment centers are already in compliance, and four others are going through the licensing process now. Treatment centers have until June 30 to comply with the rules necessary to get a health care facility license, according to Ayotte's letter. "At a time when access to treatment is already lacking, burdensome and costly regulations should not further hinder the ability of individuals struggling with addiction to get the help they need," the Republican wrote to U.S. HHS Secretary Sylvia Burwell on Tuesday, urging the department to work with New Hampshire on the regulations. "Surely, we can achieve a situation where residential treatment centers offer safe places where individuals can receive treatment without facilities having to cut the number of beds and therefore the number of people they are able to treat." At Serenity Place in Manchester, few of the facility's 26 beds meet the new licensing standard, which requires each client to have 80 square feet of personal space, along with a desk, a lamp, a closet and a chair, CEO Sharon Drake told the Monitor in June. Drake did not return a request for comment Tuesday. At a time when the waitlist for the center's transitional living services spans roughly 10 weeks, Drake said, administrators are deciding whether to reduce the number of beds in order to comply with the requirement. Some facilities have already begun or completed the licensing process, and see Medicaid expansion as a critical way to add beds and treatment services. But many are holding off on those investments until the future of the state's Medicaid expansion program is certain. It is set to expire in 2016, unless lawmakers vote to reauthorize it. They have yet to do so, but Republican leadership promises a debate in January. The Friendship House in Bethlehem is already licensed and the only state-funded residential treatment center in the North Country. Officials there are waiting to invest in costly projects to increase treatment capacity at the 18-bed facility until lawmakers determine the fate of the health care program. Licensing nine additional beds in the Friendship House that are already set up, but not permitted for use, would cost several hundred thousand dollars, Michael Coughlin, CEO of Tri-County Cap, which oversees the Friendship House, told the Monitor earlier this year. Leon said HHS has been working over the past two years with treatment providers to help them come into compliance with license requirements. While the state may consider a waiver when it comes to the size of a room, the department "can't agree with loosening regulations when it comes to fire protection, electrical standards and basic life safety issues," Leon said. "We feel like the department has worked very hard to help and support these efforts, recognizing the need for more providers," he said. Source: <http://www.vnews.com/news/18144537-95/ayotte-calls-on-federal-health-officials-to-ease-licensing-requirements-that-nh-drug-treatment#>

The Shortcomings Of The Foster Care System [Comments \(1\)](#) | [child welfare](#), [foster care agencies](#), [foster care system](#), [foster youth](#), [government officials](#), [L.A. County](#), [Lucci quadruplets](#), [Media](#), [mental abuse](#), [Opinion](#), [physical abuse](#), [poverty](#), [Sexual Abuse](#), [Subsidies](#), [substance addiction](#), [taxpayer dollars](#), [United States](#) [Marina Peña](#) | 1439328913 August 11, 2015 | 2:35 p.m. PDT PDT story Columnist [Tweet](#) [View image](#) | [gettyimages.com](#) Every child deserves a safe place to call home. Sadly, not every parent is capable of providing their child a stable home environment. Due to a number of reasons ranging from physical or sexual abuse to substance addiction and poverty, [close to 400,000 children](#) in the United States find themselves in the foster care system. If they are lucky and work hard to overcome the obstacles thrown their way, they end up like [Bianca, Madison, Tiffany, and Paris Lucci](#), who have been in the system since the age of 11. The quadruplets entered the foster care system one Christmas Eve after suffering from abuse and abandonment. For the next few years, the girls were in and out of foster homes and group homes. Nonetheless, in 2011, they were reunited in Rancho Palos Verdes, where they all graduated from high school back in June. With plans to continue their education, Madison, Tiffany and Paris Lucci will be headed to Long Beach City College. Meanwhile, Bianca Lucci will be headed to Humboldt State University in hopes of earning a degree in criminal justice. Unfortunately, in many ways, the story of the Lucci quadruplets is an anomaly. In Los Angeles County alone, [less than half](#) of foster-care youth graduate from high school and [even fewer](#) graduate from college. Additionally, conservative studies of the U.S. show that [one in five children](#) in foster care will become homeless after the age of 18, when they "age out" of the system. Less than three percent will earn a college degree, only half will be employed at 24. Among young women, 71 percent will be pregnant by 21. One in four children will have suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, at twice the rate of war veterans. It is safe to say that the foster care system is failing many of our children. Intentionally designed to serve as a temporary haven for those who are abused and neglected, foster care is instead leading them to situations fraught with further uncertainty. A 2004 [study](#) of foster homes in New Mexico, Oklahoma and Oregon revealed that the average foster-care provider's length of service was less than eight months. Moreover, a [2010 Casey Family study](#) also found that 65 percent of all foster children have attended seven or more schools. The fact that many foster children have had to endure this level of instability is astonishing and frankly unacceptable. Children are not suitcases that we can drag around from place to place and expect them to turn out just fine. No. Not in the slightest bit. They are human beings. And just like any other person, they require a reliable and hospitable place to call home. Not only that, they also need safety in their homes, free from mental or physical abuse. However, statistics show that the number of children abused while in foster care is far too great. A 2010 study of adults in Washington and Oregon who have been emancipated from the foster-care system revealed that a third of former foster children reported being abused by an adult in their foster homes. After taking a closer look at these statistics, it's no wonder why roughly [22 percent](#) of the child population decides to flee the system. If they're bound to face similar circumstances in foster care as they did in the homes they came from, then why not just run away? No matter what the case may be, escaping the system should not be a realistic solution for foster children. To confront the shortcomings of the foster care system, however, we must first discuss the structural issues that lead them to enter it in the first place. In the words of author and foster care expert, [Cris Beam](#), the children in the system are "not just a meter of how child welfare is failing or succeeding, they're a meter of how we are failing or succeeding as a society." Some children are rescued by child welfare workers from their homes of origin, where they are being beaten or sexually violated. Yet the reality is that most children enter the foster care system due to poverty, not abuse. An estimated [16 million children](#) in the U.S. were living below the poverty line in 2012. With that said, one way to improve the state of the foster care system is to make it less indispensable in our society. Providing larger subsidies to parents who are too impoverished to take care of their children would be a great start. After all, children who are placed in foster care are [proven](#) to face lifelong challenges more so than those that remain with their own families. Nonetheless, we cannot forget about the thousands of children who already find themselves in foster care. Instead of [paying millions to troubled foster care agencies](#), elected officials with decision-making powers and discretion over taxpayer dollars should find innovative ways to provide foster children with more secure, stable and loving homes. But first, the problems concerning the nation's foster care system must enter our everyday conversations. The media does an impressive job at featuring exceptional cases like that of the Lucci quadruplets beating the odds or dreadful ones about parents abandoning their children. Yet an ongoing conversation about foster care remains absent. If change is to be expected, more people will need to become informed about the issues troubling the system. Only then can we begin to improve the lives of the most vulnerable - children. Reach Columnist Marina Peña [here](#), or follow her on [Twitter](#). Source: <http://www.neontommy.com/news/2015/08/shortcomings-foster-care-system>

More parents come forward with sex abuse allegations against... | [www.wpxi.com](#) More parents come forward with sex abuse allegations against home for troubled children 4 68 9 184 Related [View Larger](#) [Glade Run Lutheran Services in Zelenople](#) [Zelenople facility under investigation for alleged sexual abuse among children](#) Sponsored Links ZELIENOPLE, Pa. — Since [Channel 11's Renee Kaminski's](#) report on Monday about an investigation into a Zelenople residential facility for troubled children, more parents have contacted the news station with allegations that their children were also sexually abused

while being treated at the Glade Run Lutheran Services center. [Zelienople facility under investigation for alleged sexual abuse among children](#) "I was livid. I got so stressed out. I got sick and was in the hospital afterwards. It's too much to take in," one Somerset County mother, who did not want to be identified, said. Kaminski confirmed last week that the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and Zelienople police are investigating the 95-bed residential treatment facility. [FREE APPS](#) | [NOW](#) | [FACEBOOK](#) | [TWITTER](#) Stories of the day... [Kind stranger pays parking ticket, leaves heartwarming note for mother of sick baby](#) [Miss Pennsylvania U.S. International winner accused of lying about battling cancer](#) [Parents drive 2 hours before realizing they left toddler at rest stop](#) [Fayette Co. man accused of abducting, raping teen](#) A spokesperson for the DHS issued the following statement about the investigation to Channel 11 News last Monday: "DHS' Bureau of Human Services Licensing received a report of sexual mistreatment from ChildLine on July 31, 2015. The reporter alleged that nine male children, ages 8-12 years old, were involved in ongoing sexual interactions at the facility from March 2015 through July 2015. "Because the children involved do not meet the definition of a perpetrator as per the Child Protective Services Law, BHSI conducted child interviews on August 6 and 7, 2015. Investigation is ongoing and in coordination with law enforcement." Among the negative comments about the facility on social media were some positive ones. "My son went to St. Stephen's part of Glade Run. I just want people to know the school had and does do positive things," one parent wrote on WPXI's Facebook page. However, for the mother Kaminski spoke with on Monday, she said she now realizes others endured what happened to her 11-year-old daughter. "As soon as I saw that, it was like this is not an isolated incident. It hit home that (she) wasn't the only one," the mother said. According to the Somerset County woman, her daughter spent 2012 in treatment at Glade Run, where she was molested by a group of girls in her cottage. "She was very open and told us because she had been previously sexually abused when she was younger, so she knew that was wrong," the mother said. The Somerset County woman said she reported the incident to officials at Glade Run and removed her daughter immediately. She said she also contacted the Department of Public Welfare. "They investigated the child safety and found evidence of a violation," she said. The DPW's website, where state licensing officials said inspection information of the alleged violation and evidence of compliance would be found, had no record of the investigation or violation. "I don't believe any changes were made," the Somerset County mother said. Glade Run officials told Kaminski last week that they're conducting an internal investigation and are considering adding additional security and cameras. Source: <http://www.wpxi.com/news/news/local/more-parents-come-forward-sex-abuse-allegations-ag/nmJM8/>

Staff mishandled violent outbursts Thursday, August 13, 2015 - 06:00 [print comments](#) Be the first one to rate this article! [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) By Mike Ford Staff Writer
ORANGE PARK – A Department of Children and Families investigation that forced BASCA Inc. to close one of its four group homes last week is detailed in a 13-page report from the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. The APD report details neglect in handling violent behavior, preventing authorities from learning of violent incidents and an attempt to interfere in the investigation on the part of BASCA's executive director, John Cone. According to the agency's emergency license suspension order, BASCA tried to control a group home resident's violent behavior by having staff lock themselves in an office and by having residents run to their bedrooms. The order also declares incident reports to have been altered or omitted altogether with staff directed to from page 1 not call 911, but to contact Cone instead. "Since the DCF investigator has been involved, Mr. Cone has been interfering with staff and having staff call to recant their stories," states the order from APD. Cone said he can't go in to detail at this time, but said Aug. 11, he denies the allegation. "That's incorrect – I can't go in to detail yet, but I was misquoted. I did not say that," he said. Cone said his legal representatives have been in communication with APD and were hoping to meet late this week. Cone expressed his desire for the public to suspend judgment on BASCA because they are waiting to meet with APD before publicly telling their side of the story. According to the order, there were two residents at the Pine Forest Group Home who displayed violent outbursts, but the order only details two incidents by one of the residents, identified as Resident I and some persons' names have been redacted. "Staff were directed to report suspected abuse to Mr. Cone in lieu of contacting the abuse hotline when they suspected that residents might be at risk due to Resident I's behaviors. Because Resident I's behaviors are so frequent and other human rights violations may occur to other residents as a result of trying to control Resident I's behaviors via means other than those described in an APD-approved behavior plan, it is unclear for how long and to what extent the possible abuse and neglect has gone on and may continue," the report reads. The first incident the order details is tied to a "non-critical incident report" filed on or about June 13. The order says Resident I went into a rage after requesting tea. The report says he grabbed his direct care staff member by the wrist and attempted to pull her wrist toward himself to bite her and moved toward her while growling and biting her hand. The order states she braced herself and was eventually able to get free. Another staff member took Resident I outside in order to protect the other residents and the staff member who had been attacked. Resident I remained outside in an agitated state for approximately an hour, according to the order. The report states law enforcement drove by and spotted Resident I. Staff informed law enforcement of the incident and the officer informed Resident I that if he attacked staff again, he would be removed from the home. The injured staff member was taken to a hospital and given a wrist brace to wear until the injury healed. Later in the document, the order reads that "human rights violations have occurred due to 'unofficial' restrictions for [Resident I] against residents in the home and were ongoing and no changes were enacted by the organization to redress the issues." It goes on to say BASCA was fined for not providing a behavior plan and that, "though it was noted in a current unapproved behavior plan that [Resident I] has injured staff and resident, it took (sic) organization over a year to locate a behavior analyst almost a year prior to current plan but organization chose not to engage leaving [Resident I] without an effective safety plan, putting residents, Resident I and staff at risk for harm and reported incidents verbally or on logs indicate that residents and staff were harmed in the interim." The agency found there to be a high safety risk and issued the emergency order to close the group home on Aug. 5. It also decided to remove BASCA from its Medicaid waiver program with a 90-day period for residents of BASCA's other group homes to find another place to live. Because BASCA funds the group homes with Medicaid money attached to each resident, those funds will be lost and the group homes effectively closed unless taken over by another organization licensed to do so. The order says on or about June 18, Resident I physically attacked his one-on-one staff while being transported back to the group home after a day at the adult day training facility. Law enforcement was contacted and he was taken to a location that was redacted from the APD report. The order says "when Resident I was released, he was very agitated and verbalized that he needed to be locked up, as he was not safe and could hurt someone." The order goes on to say on or about June 23, the DCF abuse hotline received a complaint about supervision in the group home and that Resident I had bitten himself or hit other residents. The only mention in the order of the second resident displaying violent behavior indicates the DCF abuse report was closed July 31 with respect to Resident II with a high overall safety risk "for the same reasons as mentioned for Resident I. Resident II's waiver support coordinator said she did not have all incident reports and received only those incident reports where Resident II was the aggressor." The order states there was credible evidence to support the allegation of inadequate supervision in the group home. It also declares that "collateral sources" stated that the home is a "problem" and staff appeared to be uncomfortable speaking with state officials in the home due to cameras. Staff members, the order states, said incidents have not been reported to state officials or to residents' families. Staff members stated that they "feared for family members who receive BASCA services if they speak openly" and that staff were not trained to keep Resident I or other residents safe when Resident I lashed out. Staff members also stated they have been threatened with law enforcement involvement by Cone for not writing an incident report, but had not been trained to write incident reports and that staff were directed to not call 911, but to contact Cone. The order also details an incident connected to a "non-critical incident report" filed on or about Aug. 2 involving Resident I, a 911 call and injury to Cone. The Agency for Persons with Disabilities found the situation to be pervasive, ongoing and serious in nature to the point that the agency's actions against BASCA were "appropriate and necessary under the circumstances," according to the order. It also declares that "emergency suspension of the group home's license is the least-restrictive means of addressing the immediate threat to the health and safety of the residents who are developmentally disabled." BASCA's Pine Forest Group Home was ordered to be closed last week by the Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities. Source: http://www.claytodayonline.com/ee/claytoday/en/component/fullstory/20150813_001_art_2/staff-mishandled-violent-outbursts

Corinth man charged with sexual abuse of patient at group home Posted: Aug 13, 2015 8:51 AM PDT Updated: Aug 13, 2015 8:51 AM PDT Posted by Mary Grace Eppes Email Connect meppes@wibt.com [Share on facebook](#) [Share on twitter](#) [Share on email](#) Source: AG's office ALCORN COUNTY, MS - A Corinth man has been arrested for sexual battery of a vulnerable person. 48-year-old Danny Ray Triplett was arrested Wednesday by investigators with the Attorney General's Office Medicaid Fraud Control Unit with assistance from the Alcorn County Sheriff's Department. He is charged with one count of sexual battery of a vulnerable person. Triplett admitted to sexually penetrating the victim while at the Group Home and is charged with "willfully, unlawfully and feloniously engaging in sexual penetration with a vulnerable person." The victim is an adult man who has been diagnosed with profound mental disabilities.

Triplett was booked into Alcorn County Jail and bond was set at \$10,000. He could face a maximum of 30 years in jail and \$10,000 in fines. Source: <http://www.msnewsnow.com/story/29779730/corinth-man-charged-with-sexual-abuse-of-patient-at-group-home>

Federal lawsuit challenging New York's 'dangerous' foster care program is near settlement BY [Jennifer Fermino](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
Wednesday, August 12, 2015, 10:19 PM A A A 61 Facebook 20 Twitter Reddit Email Comments 79 Share Print Share this URL Richard Harbus/(Richard Harbus for New York Dai Public Advocate Letitia James filed the lawsuit along with advocates on behalf of 10 kids. A [federal civil rights lawsuit](#) that claims the city and the state have for years condemned kids to "one of the most dangerous foster-care systems in the country" is close to settling, the Daily News has learned. The state, in a letter submitted to the court on Wednesday, said that an "amicable solution" is possible, and that it is "close to reaching an agreement" that would satisfy all parties. [Public Advocate Letitia James](#) — who filed the suit along with advocates on behalf of 10 kids — said she was grateful the state was moving quickly. The lawsuit was filed last month in Manhattan Federal Court. The city declined to comment. Source: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/lawsuit-fix-ny-foster-care-program-settlement-article-1.2323920>

Liberty County Maternity Group Home Denied By [Ian Margol](#) Published: August 13, 2015, 10:22 pm Updated: August 13, 2015, 11:08 pm [2Click to share on Twitter \(Opens in new window\)](#) [2 Click to share on Google+ \(Opens in new window\)](#) [23Share on Facebook \(Opens in new window\)](#) [23 Click to share on Pinterest \(Opens in new window\)](#) If you drove by the blue, single-story Walthourville house, you'd likely never notice it and you certainly wouldn't be able to tell it's at the center of a heated debate. The non-profit, Emanuel Loving Arms Residential Child Care Inc., is trying to turn the three-bedroom home into a maternity group home for pregnant teenage girls with nowhere else to go. But neighbors like Cricket Moser, who lives next door to the proposed site, are worried it's going to bring a lot of issues. "Baby daddies, parents, you can't keep them from communicating with their families," said Moser. "Every house has drama and no matter if it's that or if it's a [regular] home you're going to have drama and you can't avoid that." If approved, the home would provide healthcare, housing and even educational support to several pregnant teenagers hand chosen by the government for the first eight weeks of their pregnancies. While E.L.A. has already gotten approval from Liberty County for conditional use of the house, the Walthourville City Council voted not to approve the project, citing complaints from neighbors. But the non-profit's COO Mary McCray doesn't think they fully grasp what benefits it would could provide and tells News 3 that E.L.A. is appealing the city's decision. "If somebody cared enough to give them a chance, don't you think that would change their attitude? Change their way of life?" said McCray. Because of the ongoing appeal, the Walthourville city council was unable to comment, but the city attorney said they will be holding another public meeting in September or early October and will then re-vote. Source: <http://wsav.com/2015/08/13/liberty-county-maternity-group-home-denied/>

Iowa residents sentenced in Va. to long prison terms in sex-trafficking case marked by torture Published August 14, 2015 [Associated Press Facebook](#) [24 Twitter](#) [9 Email Print](#) RICHMOND, Va. — Two Iowa residents were sentenced to decades in prison Friday for forcing a young woman into prostitution and torturing her, leaving her with physical and psychological scars that a judge said might never heal. U.S. District Judge Henry Hudson sentenced Aldair Hodza to almost 42 years in prison. He sentenced Laura Sorensen to 40 years. ADVERTISEMENT Defense attorneys and prosecutors had recommended prison terms of 35 years — 11 more than the top end of the federal sentencing guideline range for their guilty pleas to transporting a person across state lines for prostitution. Hudson said that after looking at photographs of the victim's wounds, he decided even that was not enough. "She may never be able to have a normal relationship because of the unusual and rare level of depravity in this case," Hudson said. According to court papers, the defendants from Clive, Iowa, lured the victim into a recreational vehicle last December by saying they would take her to see a friend. Prosecutor Angela Miller said the sign posted over the entrance to Dante's Inferno — "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here" — would have been appropriate over the door of that RV. For the next 18 days, the 20-year-old victim was sexually assaulted and forced to have sex with men who answered online ads. Hodza, 41, and Sorensen, 31, burned her with keys and scissors heated over the RV's stove and extinguished cigarettes on her body. The drove nails into her feet, poured bleach into her wounds, and dragged her by a dog leash down a gravel path. Hodza's 8-year-old daughter witnessed some of the abuse and was in the vehicle during some of the sex acts. The victim feared for her life after Hodza slit a dog's throat in the RV and threatened to kill her by slowly cutting out her organs if she did not cooperate, the prosecutor said. The torture finally ended when a trucker at a New Kent County truck stop called police after spotting through the RV window a woman who appeared frightened and malnourished. Sorensen trembled as Miller recited details of the abuse. The victim, surrounded by family and friends, listened but did not testify. Miller said she has been unable to talk about the ordeal even to her doctors. Both defendants apologized before being sentenced. "This is monstrous, horrible, senseless, inexplicable, inexcusable," Hodza said. "I offer sincere apologies. I know that doesn't mean much because I can't take back what happened." Sorensen said she is "very sorry" and added: "I made a bad choice. However, I am not a bad person." The judge said he believes Sorensen is dangerous and that Hodza has "a dangerously dark side." "Some of the things you did to this young lady are so horrifying you cannot capture it in words," Hudson told Hodza. Defense attorneys said both defendants were abused as children. They agreed to lengthy sentences to avoid charges of kidnapping, which is punishable by up to life in prison. Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2015/08/14/iowa-residents-sentenced-in-va-to-long-prison-terms-in-sex-trafficking-case/>

Wheeling man accused of sexually abusing a foster child in his care Updated: Friday, August 14 2015, 05:40 PM EDT WHEELING, W.Va. — A Wheeling man has been accused of sexually abusing a foster child in his care. West Virginia State Police say the girl was from another area of the state and living in Ohio County. The alleged abuse was reported when she returned home. Lance Jackson allegedly gave a 17-year-old girl in his care drugs and then sexually abused her. Now he's in jail facing a lengthy prison stay. Jackson is from Wheeling, and according to reports, he and his wife cared for several foster children. West Virginia State Police Sgt. Matthew Adams with the Crimes Against Children Task Force says he believes Jackson also has a drug problem that he shared with at least one foster child. "The victim in the crime had disclosed that there were incidents when the defendant, when Mr. Jackson, would purchase heroin prior to and after the alleged acts took place," Adams said. The alleged victim has been taken out of the Jackson family's care. The wife has not been charged with any crime. Lance Jackson is charged with sexual abuse. He faces 10-20 years in prison and his bond is set at \$125,000. He is in the Northern Regional Jail. Source: http://www.wtov9.com/shared/news/features/top-stories/stories/wtov_wheeling-man-accused-sexually-abusing-foster-child-his-care-9912.shtml

Illegal group home in Belton tied to Austin location 37 mins ago JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — AUSTIN (KXAN) — The Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services had to find emergency housing for 22 people found living in an illegal assisted living facility where residents experienced various medical issues. Around 3:15 p.m. Friday, Austin-Travis County EMS responded to the home in the 1800 block of Wildrose Drive for multiple welfare calls. Four patients were transported, 17 more were assisted on scene and one person left with family members. According to ATCEMS, the home is a 1,400 square foot building with no air conditioning. Cecilia Cavuto from DADS told KXAN they found out about the Wildrose Drive location on Friday after investigating another unlicensed assisted living facility operated by the same owner, 45-year-old Renee Segura, in Belton, Texas. On Aug. 5, DADS received a tip regarding a facility called 'God's Blessings' in Belton. When investigators went into the facility, they found 30 people living inside in poor conditions. "Some of the residents were dirty, emaciated and had a strong body odor," according to information included in court documents. Check the licensing of an assisted living facility [here](#). According to court documents, there were also registered sex offenders in the building and staff reported that there was a male resident "having sexual relations with most of the female residents and most of these women are not capable of making the decision to consent." God's Blessing in Belton While the conditions were reported as unsafe and an "immediate threat," Cavuto said DADS had to wait for a temporary restraining order (TRO)—since the facility wasn't licensed—before they were able to shut down the facility and keep Segura from operating group homes anywhere in Texas. The TRO was issued on Aug. 13 but when DADS investigators showed up to the Belton location on Aug. 14, the facility was empty. The agency quickly worked to track down the operator and came up with a location in Austin. "We found that [Wildrose] place while investigating addresses associated with Ms. Segura after we found the Belton facility empty," explained Cavuto. Cavuto believes Segura took the people from the Belton home to the Austin home sometime earlier this week. Austin police say they arrested Segura on Friday because she was interfering with investigators at the scene. She posted bond on Saturday afternoon. DADS said operating an unlicensed group home could come with monetary penalties as well as criminal prosecution. Families recount experience with God's Blessing Rowland Andrade says his mother was in the home for over a year. This past April, he laid her to rest. "I should've checked in. That is something that I have to live with for the rest of my life. I should've done that," Andrade remembers. Andrade says he travels a lot for work and it stopped him from being able to check in on his mom on a regular basis. The last time he checked in was when he got this call from God's Blessing in March when they told him his mom was in the intensive care unit. "And she is getting ready to die. So you should probably call Renee or St. David's ICU. Just thought you should know, click," Andrade

recounts the conversation. Since then Andrade has opened up his own personal investigation as to whether or not being at God's Blessings expedited his mother's death. He says she died of colon cancer. For Luther Meredith he claims his mother is still supposed to be in the Owens' care. At least that is what he thought until he saw KXAN's story Friday night. "I am very pissed off about the whole thing. I wanna know where the hell my mama is at," Luther Meredith says. Meredith says his mother checked into God's Blessings this year. Just a few weeks ago communication dropped off and now he has no clue where his mother is. "It's pretty scary not to know where your family is when they are supposed to be at said place," Meredith says. But Rowland says these are warning signs that could be deadly. So he advises family members like Meredith, to pay attention. "If she starts to sound different that is a red flag you need to go over there. If you lose direct communication with her where you have to go through them, that is another red flag," Andrade warns. Source: <http://kxan.com/2015/08/14/dads-illegal-group-home-with-no-a-c-prompts-emergency/>

Boot camps for troubled youth need oversight Transparency of programs for troubled youths is long overdue By The Tribune
 letters@thetribunenews.com August 16, 2015 2015-08-16T11:53:26Z The Tribune The Tribune Facebook Twitter [Google Plus](#) More [Linkedin](#) [Reddit](#) [YouTube](#) [E-mail](#) [Print](#) [Order a reprint of this story](#) Camp San Luis Obispo JOE JOHNSTON — jjohnston@thetribunenews.com [Today's Deal \\$7 for \\$14 worth of sandwiches and drinks at Piemonte's Italian Delicatessen in SLO \\$7.00 Buy Now!](#) Recent Headlines [Firefighters and volunteers deserve praise and relaxation after battling Cuesta Fire](#) [Cuesta Fire another reminder that these devastating blazes can be prevented](#) [Boot camps for troubled youth need oversight](#) [SLO City Council to get scoop on dredging Laguna Lake](#) [FEMA shouldn't punish Atascadero for taking its advice](#) Related Stories: [4 police officers could be charged in alleged abuse of teens at boot camp](#) [Sheriff investigates report of child abuse at Camp San Luis Obispo](#) At least every year or two, we hear horror stories about alleged mistreatment of children sent to "therapeutic" boot camps to correct problem behaviors, such as defiance, drug and alcohol abuse, truancy and failing grades. Serious injuries and even deaths have occurred at "troubled teen" camps. Each time, there's a public outcry, yet the reports continue. This month, allegations of beatings and other physical abuse of Los Angeles County youths attending a boot camp at Camp San Luis Obispo resulted in charges against four Southern California police officers. (No San Luis Obispo County youths or law enforcement officials were involved.) Despite the outrage over such incidents, licensing requirements and monitoring of camps remains minimal or nonexistent in many states, including California. Two bills — one state and one federal — would change that. The California bill, SB 524, would require operators of boot camps and similar residential programs to be licensed by the state Department of Social Services. It also would give camp participants basic rights, including the right "to be accorded dignity in his or her personal relationships with staff, residents, and other persons." Who can argue with that? Other rights spelled out in the proposed legislation include: • No corporal punishment. • No restraints. • Access to adequate medical care. • Adequate and healthy food. • Frequent contact with parents or guardians, "including scheduled and unscheduled telephone conversations, unrestricted written correspondence, and electronic communications." The federal legislation, HR 3060, includes similar protections for youths, and would prohibit gay "conversion therapy." (Conversion therapy is already legally prohibited in California.) Our take: We recognize there are several well-run boot camps, wilderness camps and similar programs that have helped teenagers get their lives back on track. Those programs have nothing to hide, and we see no reason why they would object to increased transparency and oversight. If anything, they should welcome it, as publicity about abusive programs reflects poorly on the industry. But it's obvious that not enough is being done to safeguard children. While it's impossible to say how often abuse occurs at boot camps and similar facilities, an often-quoted U.S. Government Accountability Office report from 2007 documented that 34 states had reported over 1,500 staff members involved in incidents of abuse in 2005 alone. The count could be even higher. Because youngsters in boot camps and wilderness programs often are prohibited from contacting their families and parents are advised not to communicate with their children, it's far too easy for abuse to go undetected and unreported. For example, allegations about the program at Camp San Luis Obispo may not have come to light had one child not been taken to the emergency room after he returned home with bruises on his windpipe. As a result, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services was contacted, and that prompted an investigation by the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Office. Keep in mind, the local case is far from decided; it will be up to the justice system to determine the guilt or innocence of the parties charged. Regardless of the outcome of this one case, though, better oversight is needed. California lawmakers recognize that; SB 524 passed the Senate on a vote of 35-1; it goes to the Assembly later this year. Without tighter control of boot camps and wilderness programs, there are too many opportunities for children to come to harm. These children may be defiant, but they also are vulnerable. They are cut off from family; taken out of the neighborhoods they know, often to places that are extremely remote; and placed in military-style settings where — customized as we are to the Hollywood version of the sadistic drill sergeant — they may accept abusive behavior as normal. While children are the primary victims in such situations, we can only imagine how painful it must be when parents realize their attempts to rescue their children actually put them in harm's way. Passage of state and federal legislation providing minimal protection for youths enrolled in therapeutic boot camps, wilderness adventures and similar programs is long overdue. The Tribune strongly urges lawmakers in Sacramento and Washington, D.C., to adopt it without delay. Read more here: http://www.sanluisobispo.com/2015/08/16/3764450_boot-camps-for-troubled-youth.html?rh=1#storylink=cpy (As currently written HR 3060 does NOT prohibit conversion therapy and it does not specifically require faith-based programs be regulated and does not overturn the faith-based initiative exempting faith-based programs from regulation that has been supported by both Bush and Obama administrations.)

Cooked to Death': Inside South Dakota's Juvenile Justice Reign of Terror [Christina Rose](#) 8/17/15 The following is the second part of a three part series taking a look at the past, present and future of the juvenile justice system within South Dakota and how it pertains to Native youth. In this part of the series we take a look at the history of the judicial system and treatment of Native youth as a whole. Natives in state-run juvenile detention homes face a cultural crisis everywhere, but from 1996 until 2001, South Dakota Governor Bill Janklow's juvenile justice system was reportedly a reign of terror, and [Native youth suffered the most](#). Today, tribal youth on reservations have better options. Pine Ridge has its own program for youth offenders. The Rosebud Sioux Tribe's Youth Wellness and Renew Center, also known as Wanbli Wiconi Tipi, utilizes restorative justice rather than punishment and alienation from family and community. Restorative justice brings the youth back into the community and allows them to repair relationships by making amends. In Sisseton, young Native first offenders face a teen court of their peers rather than a judge in a courtroom. If they do end up in a detention center, they have the new Young Ambassadors Leadership Program to help re-integrate them into their families and communities. RELATED: ['Terrible Racial Disparities' Not Fixed With SD Juvenile Justice Reform](#) Things have even improved in state-run facilities, but the horrors youth suffered under Governor Janklow cannot be forgotten. His military-minded boot camps and youth prisons gave South Dakota's Department of Corrections a lot to recover from. History of Juvenile Justice in South Dakota Janklow, who died January 12, 2012, was often described as having been the kind of teen who could have found himself in South Dakota's juvenile detention programs, and had he been sent to one back then, he might have found a model program, well-known for its wilderness program and job skills training. But when Janklow, [then a 16-year-old high school dropout](#), got into trouble, a judge recommended he join the Marines. Later, as governor, Janklow brought a more discipline-oriented, military mindset to the state's detention homes. He opened his first boot camp, Custer Youth Correctional Center, for boys in 1996, and in 1998, he opened a juvenile detention facility for girls known as the State Training School in Plankinton, South Dakota. Those who ended up in Custer or Plankinton faced a first day induction routine designed to overwhelm "the students with stress and anxiety," Don Jones, a former counselor at Plankinton, said. After he viewed a videotape showing five meek teenage girls standing at attention in the Plankinton gym, staff members screaming within inches of their faces, Jones told Mother Jones. "I saw one induction, and that was enough, I thought it was barbaric." Mother Jones says the public began to pay attention to the harsh treatment of youth in the detention homes after Gina Score, an overweight 14-year-old, died within a week of her arrival at Plankinton. Forced to make a two-mile run with the other girls, she fell to the ground and the staff refused to let the other girls help or offer her shade. Score was left lying on the ground long after the group had returned to the camp, and by the time medical staff sent an ambulance, she had turned blue and was frothing at the mouth. Score died with a body temperature of 108 degrees, and authorities said she had cooked to death. When State Rep. Pat Haley, a former Democratic chairman of the state's Corrections Commission began receiving complaints about boys being molested at the Custer facility, he investigated the situation, and said, "I couldn't believe what was going on." Haley spoke with youth and staff, and even saw videotapes of youth shackled by their wrists and ankles — called four-pointing — to beds or concrete floors for as long as 24 hours a day. At Plankinton, girls who were four-pointed had their clothes cut off of them by male guards. Naked youth were pepper sprayed in their cells, and male guards were routinely present in the girls' showers. Some youth were put into isolation in cells as small as 5' x 10', with a concrete bed and no mattress for as long as two weeks, according to Mother Jones and a [story](#) in the Washington Post. Many boys and girls reacted violently to the treatment. Some responded by rioting, slashing themselves, and trying repeatedly to commit suicide. "Kids and staff were at war with each other," says Marc Schindler, an attorney with the Youth Law Center in Washington, D.C. "They pushed and pushed the kids until all they wanted to do was resist." Rep.

Haley was clear about where the fault for these failings and abuses lay. "The culture of violence in South Dakota's juvenile facilities was not created by the kids," he said, "but by Bill Janklow." In a Rapid City Journal [story](#), Score's parents said forgiveness was hard. Viola Score told the paper, "After listening to what other parents say what their kids have gone through there, I looked at my lawyer and at David [her husband] and said, 'You know what? I'm glad she died. At least I know she didn't have to go through that mental stress afterwards.'" Plankinton was closed in 2001 by the state following the acquittal of two state employees in Score's death, but that was not the end of the juvenile justice nightmare in South Dakota. In March 2002, a bill introduced in the state legislature sought to institute performance-based standards and assessments that would moderate and hold juvenile detention facilities accountable for their treatment of the youth, but Janklow vetoed the bill. In a Rapid City Journal [article](#), Janklow said "it would be 'illogical' to require the Corrections Department to follow Performance-Based Standards when county detention centers, private group homes and out-of-state facilities that serve South Dakota children are not required to do the same." In articles in Mother Jones and Rapid City Journal, Janklow reportedly called the youth in detention homes "scum." Medication as a chemical restraint and rape were reported to Jennifer Ring, director of the American Civil Liberties Union of the Dakotas. In Winner, South Dakota schools, railroading the children into detention homes became an unofficial policy. Correspondent Ruth Steinberger wrote in a Lakota Journal article, June 14-21, 2002, that Native children were picked up from school for minor offenses such as pushing in line. In an ACLU complaint, which was the basis for the 2006 ACLU lawsuit, *Antoine v. Winner*, students were told by their principal they had to sign an affidavit stating what they had done, but were not allowed to explain why. In many cases, Native youth were reacting to a white child who had hit, tormented, teased, or called him a litany of racist names. The white students were never punished, but very often the Lakota youth were either given probation or sentences in detention homes. One Lakota boy was sent to a detention home for laughing when a teacher used profanity. White students also laughed but were not punished. "Calling for the arrest of Indian children for minor misconduct is such a matter of fact part of the way white educators in Winner 'educate' Indian children that a 12 year old child was arrested at the request of the school principal for 'refusing to sit where he was told,' and for 'making noises,'" according to Steinberger in the Lakota Journal. A website entitled "[South Dakota Hall of Shame](#)" details the efforts of politicians and businesses that sought to reopen the Plankinton facility in 2003 and 2004, but those efforts were not successful. Finally, the ACLU won the lawsuit, [Antoine v. Winner School](#). In December of 2007, the federal court decreed that the school enact policies to assure that Native children were treated equitably and that their rights were not violated. It took more than five years before Winner Schools began to cooperate with the judge's decree, but today, a new school superintendent (Bruce Carrier since the 2011-2012 school year) has brought a strong change in attitude and an improvement in race relations -- one of the first steps was eliminating police referrals. RELATED: [Taking Racism Out of South Dakota Schools, Part 2](#) In October of 2002, performance-based standards were introduced in two girls detention programs in South Dakota, and today all of the state's facilities are assessed by The [Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators](#) (CJCA). Things are much better now, especially for the non-Native youth. For Native youth? Not enough. While treatment of the youth in South Dakota's detention homes has improved in general, Native youth arrested off the reservations are still incarcerated at greater numbers than whites, find themselves placed in detention centers too far from home for family visits, in a punitive rather than restorative system, and in a place that does not value their spirituality and cultural lifestyles. Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/08/17/cooked-death-inside-south-dakotas-juvenile-justice-reign-terror-161370>

--> **Couple who were 'house parents' at Christian ranch for troubled youth 'played sexual Truth or Dare with teenage girls in their care'** Michael and Jennifer Nicole Magill who were 'house parents' at Christian Children's Ranch in In Idaho are accused of child sex abuse Jennifer allegedly encouraged a 17-year-old to perform a sex act on her husband during Truth or Dare The couple is also accused of abusing a 14-year-old girl who came forward with the abuse on August 11 The Magills have two children of their own who have been placed in the custody of the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare By [Alexandra Klausner For Dailymail.com](#) Published: 14:14 EST, 19 August 2015 | Updated: 21:48 EST, 19 August 2015 30shares [3 View comments](#) A married couple who work at a home for troubled and homeless youth are accused of playing sexual 'Truth or Dare' games with a girl as young as 14. Michael and Jennifer Nicole Magill who were 'house parents' at Christian Children's Ranch in In Idaho have been charged with sexual battery and sexual abuse. The Magills, who appeared in court on Monday, allegedly inappropriately touched two teenage girls-17 and 14- multiple times over the summer. Charged: Jennifer Nicole Magill and her husband Michael, former house parents at Christian Children's Ranch for troubled youth, are accused of sexually abusing a 14-year-old and 17-year-old girl The couple have two children of their own who witnessed the alleged sexual encounters at least once, reports [KTVB](#). Jennifer Nicole Magill is accused of encouraging the 17-year-old teenager to perform a sex act on her husband Michael. The 14-year-old girl told someone at the ranch that she was being abused on August 11. The inappropriate behavior was then reported to officials at the church ranch who called the Ada County Sheriff's office. RELATED ARTICLES [Previous](#) | [Next](#) 'The younger the better': Subway Jared agrees to plead...Italian real-life 'Christian Grey' millionaire property...Florida cop will not face murder charges after investigation... Make a career out of your hobby? Share this article Share 30 shares Authorities are investigating whether or not the couple has any other additional victims. The Magills have worked with youths as a youth group leader and camp counselor. The Magills lost their job at the ranch and asked Judge Terry McDaniel to appoint a lawyer since they are no longer receiving income. Deputy Prosecutor Lucy Juarez recommended the bond be set at \$500,000 for each of the defendants. She said the facts of the case were 'pretty appalling.' According to the ranch's requirements for house parents the couple must be happily married, have no criminal history, and dedicated to the healthy development of the child The defense attorney called for lower charges because his clients have no criminal history. The bond was ultimately set at 500,000 due to the judge's concern for minors in the community. The couple's children have been placed in custody with the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. According to the ranch's requirements for house parents the couple must be happily married, have no criminal history, and dedicated to the healthy development of the child. According to a [Facebook](#) post on the ranch's page, they do full FBI background checks on their employees. The ranch accepts children from a variety of incomes and parents are asked to pay only what they can. Much of the ranch's funds come from donations. SHARE PICTURE Copy link to paste in your message +2 Response: According to a Facebook post on the ranch's page, they do full FBI background checks on their employees Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3203867/Couple-house-parents-Christian-ranch-troubled-youth-played-sexual-Truth-Dare-teenage-girls-care.html#ixzz3jasOlxyu> Follow us: [@MailOnline on Twitter](#) | [DailyMail on Facebook](#)

Investigators scour Auburn home after foster care child dies and another is hospitalized 1 / 10 Auburn Pheasant Court The 2-year-old child who died while in the care of an Auburn foster family has been identified as Avalana Conway-Coxon. She, along with a second child, was transported to the UMass Medical Center in Worcester Saturday after they were found unresponsive. Authorities say the second child is in "extremely critical condition." (Photo from mother's Facebook page) [Scott J. Croteau | scroteau@masslive.com](#) [Print Email](#) By [Scott J. Croteau | scroteau@masslive.com](#) The Republican Email the author | AUBURN – Investigators scoured a Pheasant Court home for evidence Sunday one day a foster care child living there died and a second remained hospitalized. No new details were released on what happened or if anyone was being criminally charged with the death of the young child and the hospitalization of the second foster care child. The state Department of Children and Families released the following statement about the investigation. "The Department is actively working with law enforcement and medical personnel to determine the cause of death of one child and hospitalization of another child today," state DCF spokesman Andrea Grossman said. "Both children lived in a foster home and were foster children. The Department is conducting its own investigation and collaborating with law enforcement on its investigation." A spokesman for Worcester County District Attorney Joseph Early Jr. said there was no information available as of Sunday afternoon. Auburn Police Chief Andrew Sluckis Jr. referred all questions to the district attorney's office. One neighbor, who lived next to the home, shook her head in the doorway Sunday afternoon as police continued to investigate. "I'm sad because of the babies," she said, covering the tears in her eyes. The neighbor saw the two children being brought out of the home and to the ambulance Saturday afternoon. Detectives from the district attorney's office and Auburn Police Department were seen taking boxes of items from the 2 Pheasant Court home Sunday. A sport-utility-vehicle that neighbors said is owned by the mother living at the home was towed from the scene after investigators searched it. [The Worcester Telegram & Gazette](#) reported that two children, both around 2-years-old, were taken from the home by ambulance Saturday afternoon. One woman told the newspaper that she heard the foster mother yelling that her babies were unresponsive. The Telegram & Gazette said six children lived in the home and three are biological children of the foster mother. There is one adopted child with the remaining two children being foster children. A memorial was set-up across the street with candles and stuffed animals. Neighbors said they wanted answers as to what happened in the home. The crime scene tape was removed from the home Sunday afternoon after investigators left. Source: http://www.masslive.com/news/worcester/index.ssf/2015/08/investigators_scour_auburn_hom.html

Baby's death in Anchorage foster home leads to state payout [Lisa Demer](#) August 16, 2015 Email [Print](#) Text Size-[A](#) [+A](#) BETHEL -- Two years ago, a sickly baby from Bethel was placed in an Anchorage foster home. One day, just as the foster family was preparing for his return to Bethel, the baby was laid face

down on a pillow-top mattress. There, according to a wrongful death lawsuit, he suffocated. This summer, the state paid \$500,000 to the family of the child, identified only as J.K. in the lawsuit. Related: [Alaskans can join hands to care for our foster kids](#) The civil lawsuit and its resolution come just as the state is putting renewed attention on the disturbing -- and preventable -- [problem of infant sleep deaths](#). In the case of J.K., the Office of Children's Services placed a fragile baby with a foster mother who, according to the events described in the suit, failed to follow well-established public health protocols. A national "Back to Sleep" campaign began in 1994 to urge parents to put babies to sleep on their backs, to prevent sudden infant death syndrome. Public health officials have been refining that message for years. The state foster care handbook includes that message. The state wasn't named as a defendant in the suit against foster mother Patricia Abell, but has a responsibility to defend foster parents, according to Cori Mills, an assistant attorney general and spokesperson for the Department of Law. Efforts to reach Abell were unsuccessful. The attorney general's office, which represented her, passed along a message to her from a reporter. She didn't respond. A lawyer for the baby's family said the state is responsible when foster parents make mistakes. A fragile baby J.K. was born healthy in January 2013. As a newborn, he caught a cold that developed into respiratory distress, the family's attorney, Myron Angstman of Bethel, said. He was hospitalized at the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corp., the Native-run hospital in Bethel, then released to his parents, according to the suit filed in 2014 by Angstman. But the baby's conditioned worsened. He ended up in the Bethel emergency room, then was flown to Alaska Native Medical Center in Anchorage for more advanced care, the suit said. He was intubated and placed on a ventilator, Angstman said. For about three weeks in early 2013, the little boy was hospitalized in Anchorage. Days after he was admitted, his parents were told he was in critical condition, the lawyer said. Then he improved. On March 11 of that year, he was discharged. He needed close monitoring as an outpatient, the suit said. The Office of Children's Services took custody of him. The reasons are unexplained in the lawsuit. Angstman, one of the attorneys for the child's parents, brother and grandmother, said he wasn't at liberty to discuss any troubles in the home. The lawsuit did not concern whether it was necessary for OCS to take custody, he said. Patricia and Chad Abell were state-licensed foster parents responsible for providing emergency care for the baby, the suit said. They first became approved for foster care in September 2010, according to Travis Erickson, operations manager for the Office of Children's Services. On April 1, 2013, J.K. was supposed to return to Bethel. Early that morning, Chad fed him a bottle and Patricia burped him. Then the foster mother put J.K. on his stomach, on her bed, the suit said. "Patricia's mattress had a pillow-top, making this a very soft surface," the document said. She left the baby alone while she did other things. When she returned to the room, the suit said she found him "still face down on the mattress, but unresponsive." She put him on the floor and started CPR. At 8:08 a.m., someone called 911. Medics arrived seven minutes later and kept up efforts to save the baby while rushing him to Providence Alaska Medical Center. About 40 minutes after the 911 call, J.K. was declared dead at the Anchorage hospital. "The medical examiner determined from the scene investigation, autopsy, and a doll reenactment that the cause of death was suffocation and the manner of death was accidental," the suit said. In Bethel at the Office of Children's Services, the parents were told of their baby's death. They asked to go to Anchorage to see him, but the suit said they were told there wasn't public money for that. Later, the child's body was returned to Bethel. Duty to provide care The foster mother "owed a duty of reasonable care" to J.K.'s family, the lawsuit said. Abell either lacked skill or knowledge, or otherwise failed to exercise that care, said the complaint. In July, the state paid \$500,000 on behalf of the foster mother to settle the lawsuit over J.K.'s death, Mills said in an email. Abell didn't admit any liability, nor did the state, which wasn't a defendant, she said. The suit was dismissed earlier this month. The baby's family was represented by Angstman and Anchorage attorney John Cashion. Public health experts say it is well established that babies should be put to sleep on their backs -- a message officials have been pushing in Alaska for years. Almost all sleep-related baby deaths are preventable, researchers have found. Sometimes the baby dies while sleeping with an adult. Sometimes the adult is intoxicated, or sleeping heavily because of medication. And sometimes, the sleeping space is just wrong. The Abells had a crib, which is required for foster parents who take in infants, Erickson of OCS said on Friday. Licensing workers go over the requirements when someone first becomes a foster parent, he said. The foster parent handbook includes some information, including that babies need to be in cribs or bassinets, without soft pillows. It says pediatricians now advise that babies be placed on their backs for sleeping to minimize the risk of sudden infant death syndrome. Still, the latest public education campaign on safe sleeping for babies was not yet fully in place at the time of J.K.'s death in early 2013. In addition, foster parent core training then did not specifically cover how to put an infant to sleep, Erickson said. At some point in 2013, the state Division of Public Health began distributing brochures and posters to hospitals that said babies are safest when they sleep alone, on their backs, in a crib -- the "A-B-C" message. Babies need a firm surface, the materials said. "When baby is sleeping someplace other than a safety-approved crib, remember to give them lots of room to breathe!" the brochure said. A troubling spike in Alaska on average, two babies die a month "in a sleep environment," on their belly or their side, in soft bedding, in a shared sleeping space or in an otherwise risky setting, according to state epidemiologists. Then in July 2014, seven Alaska babies died in sleep-related circumstances -- a serious spike. That triggered an in-depth investigation of infant sleep-related deaths that occurred from 2012 to 2014 and [new attention](#) to the problem. State child protection and licensing workers for the past year have been handing out brochures on safe sleeping to families and foster homes, Erickson said. Before that, handouts on sleeping were available, but not systematically distributed. "This information has been out there. We are just trying to elevate it," he said. This June, the Division of Public Health published a [bulletin about the deaths](#) that urged health providers to reinforce a safe sleep message with families. On Friday, Erickson found out the core foster parent training didn't specifically address safe sleeping and said he directed it be added. "They haven't been getting it in core, in the past. And they will, starting immediately," he said. The Abells no longer are Alaska foster parents, he said. The Bethel family didn't want to talk about the loss of the baby in a place that was supposed to keep him safe. "They have had their troubles," Angstman said. "There are family issues that are being addressed." Maybe, he said, the settlement will help them do that. Source: <https://www.adn.com/article/20150816/babys-death-anchorage-foster-home-leads-lawsuit-state-payout>

DSHS failures are rarely punished | State News | yakimaherald.com DSHS failures are rarely punished By Will Drabold, Seattle Times Updated Aug 15, 2015 [Comments](#) Mike Siegel Cheryl Schaefer, abused as a foster kid living with a family in Colville Wash., sits on a bench along a street in downtown Colville. Schaefer was abused by her foster father who served time in the county jail. prev next The state of Washington's largest department is tasked with caring for the state's most vulnerable residents — abused children, foster kids, mentally handicapped adults. But time and again, it has failed. Over the past eight years, the Washington state Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) has been hit with scores of lawsuits, ultimately paying \$166.4 million for personal-injury claims. Many of the most severely injured were children who were tortured, starved or raped. Some died. DSHS employees behind these failures rarely are punished. The Seattle Times has found. From those scores of lawsuits, the newspaper selected one dozen of the high-cost, child-welfare cases for which records were readily accessible. Many of these cases made headlines and resulted in verdicts or settlements ranging from \$750,000 to \$11 million, some \$75 million in all. Using court records, public records and interviews, the newspaper identified 48 DSHS staffers involved in the failures in these 12 cases. None of the 48 was fired or suspended. None was demoted or lost pay. That is according to DSHS, which ran the 48 names through its human-resources databases at the newspaper's request. (The database only shows records that affect compensation.) Whether any of the 48 staffers were given lesser forms of discipline, such as reprimand letters, is unclear. DSHS in May said it would take several months to provide answers. (Recently, the agency said one staffer had been given a letter of reprimand. It hasn't completed its research.) Slightly less than half the 48 still work for DSHS; some have retired. The review of the 12 cases — as well as several dozen interviews with current and former DSHS employees, state employee-union officials, personal-injury lawyers, children's advocates and others — turned up some common failings: overlooked complaints of abuse; delayed or inept investigations; placement of children in unsafe homes. DSHS' lack of focus on personal accountability is a significant problem, said Tim Tesh, a personal-injury lawyer who has sued DSHS many times. Policymakers can suggest reforms, he said, but "often, it's that the worker didn't follow procedures that are already in place. What good does reform do you when the worker just doesn't follow them?" DSHS said paying a victim does not mean an employee made a mistake. Jennifer Strus since 2013 has been head of the Children's Administration, the division responsible for payouts of \$141.4 million. She would not comment on how her predecessors handled employees who may have made mistakes years earlier. Any failures must be well-documented before the agency can take action, she noted. DSHS in recent years has improved training and how it tracks complaints of abuse and also reviews the performance of employees implicated in claims against the agency. Being a social worker is the "toughest job in state government," Strus said. A combination of large case-loads, employee turnover and budget cuts makes it "pretty hard to do great work," she said. Cheryl Schaefer, 28, isn't comforted by these words. She and three siblings suffered years of abuse in a foster home under DSHS supervision in northeastern Washington. Up until 2001, court records show, they were beaten, forced to overeat, throw up and eat their own vomit, and suffered sexual abuse. According to court records, Schaefer and her siblings said the caseworker repeatedly ignored their cries for help. A 2012 lawsuit, filed by Tesh against DSHS, was settled for \$5.3 million. "I can't do my job" Complaints about how DSHS handled foster kids and reports of child abuse have tagged the agency for years. In 1998, lawyers for 13 foster kids filed a class-action lawsuit against the state, saying foster children were being harmed across the board by

inadequate care. The state Supreme Court, in the landmark 2003 Braam decision (named after one of the plaintiffs), upheld a lower court and put Washington's child-welfare system under judicial oversight. The Braam case led to several improvements, including sharply cutting back on children bouncing from one foster home to another. The court oversight continues, in part because a key court-ordered mandate remains unfulfilled: foster-child caseloads of 18 or fewer for 90 percent of social workers. Besides the court, state lawmakers recently required DSHS to be more accountable for mistakes. DSHS was required to do automatic reviews of botched child-welfare cases only when someone died in state care, a "fatality review." As of July 24, under "Aiden's Law," DSHS must review worker actions if a child experiences a "near fatality" within one year of a previous incident of abuse. State Sen. Steve O'Ban, R-University Place, who sponsored the legislation, called it an improvement. That lawmakers had to force DSHS to review such cases "speaks volumes," he said. Most of the multimillion-dollar settlements come from the DSHS Children's Administration division. There more than 1,800 social workers oversee nearly 10,000 children in foster care and last year looked into 90,000 reports of child neglect or abuse. Turnover is high — about one in six staffers leaves each year. Starting pay can be as low as \$32,688. Joyce Murphy, a social worker in Vancouver who's worked for a decade at the agency, said she has failed to see children once a month, as required by DSHS policy. She blames it on her caseload, which she says over the past four years has averaged about 25 children — well above the national standard of 15 and the DSHS average of 19. "I can't do my job," she said. She worries each night that one of her clients will die on her watch. No one died in the case of two young Snohomish County boys, ages 3 and 6, who were being starved and beaten by their father and his girlfriend in 2006, but it does illuminate the tragic results when workers utterly fail to do their jobs. The case is one of many that reveals the personal consequences for such failures can be slight. Between May and July 2006, a neighbor filed four complaints with DSHS, saying two young boys were being starved and beaten by their parents. She would later say that no one at DSHS ever followed up with her, court records show. The father, Danny Abegg, and his girlfriend, Marilea Mitchell, kept a padlock on the refrigerator and withheld food to punish the boys. A social worker, Aubrey Kilgore, in one visit reported that the house "had plenty of food in it." He went back a second time after a sheriff's deputy, shopping at Wal-Mart, saw bruises on the face of the 3-year-old, and alerted DSHS. This time, Kilgore required the parents to see a family therapist, documents show. The child-welfare case was transferred that fall to another social worker, Deanna Neff. Among her failures, she gave Abegg eight-days notice she would be visiting the home, giving him time to hide evidence of abuse. Nor did she speak to the more severely abused younger brother, Shayne, records show. A few months later, Ada Sharp, who had no experience or training investigating child abuse, was given the case, court records show. Other warning signs surfaced, records show, but Cherokee Screechowl, the area supervisor, ended the investigation in February 2007. A month later, someone alerted authorities that a little boy was being "starved." Paramedics rushed Shayne, now 4, to the hospital where he was found in urine-soaked clothes, emaciated, with a body temperature of 87 degrees. After being given food at the hospital, the boy told doctors not to let his parents know that he had eaten. A veteran paramedic later said he had not seen "a worse case of neglect or malnourishment." After Abegg and Mitchell were charged with first-degree criminal mistreatment, the case, with its sickening details and claims of DSHS failures, exploded in the news. Gov. Chris Gregoire asked for a special review, and DSHS said its employees failed to protect the two boys. At the time, a DSHS spokesman said two employees linked to the case had resigned. DSHS recently said one of the four did receive a letter of reprimand. Kilgore and Sharp still work at DSHS. Neff resigned from the agency. Screechowl resigned in 2007, came back in 2011 and then re-retired. Screechowl could not be located; the others did not return calls for comment. Shayne Abegg received \$5 million from the state in 2009 after a judge compared him to a concentration-camp survivor. His older brother received \$2.85 million two years later. "It is a war zone" If the high-profile Snohomish starvation case didn't result in someone being punished, what sort of case would? "This story has been going on for 30 years," said Dennis Braddock, DSHS secretary from 2000 to 2005. He once described DSHS' culture as "bunkerlike" and said he tried to hold staffers to account but faced an uphill battle. "Republicans don't like administration," he recently said. "Democrats all side with the union. So management gets the short end of the stick in (employee) disputes." It's a proven formula: To effectively serve children and families, social workers need a reasonable number of cases to manage, a finding backed by decades of state and national studies. The average caseload for child-protective-services (CPS) workers — Children's Administration employees who investigate reports of child neglect — is 16, well above the national standard of no more than 12. Also, it takes on average two years for a CPS investigator "to become proficient," DSHS said. Greg Devereux, executive director of the Washington Federation of State Employees, which represents unionized DSHS staff, describes social-worker caseloads, burnout and turnover in dire terms: "It is a war zone." Some former DSHS officials and child advocates point to his union when noting that individual discipline doesn't always occur. DSHS is required to have substantial documentation to punish negligent employees, they assert, and the arbitration process can be time consuming. "That's ridiculous," Devereux said. The union makes sure DSHS "fairly holds people accountable." In the past eight years, the union went to arbitration on only two cases of Children's Administration social workers who were terminated, he said. One firing was upheld; the other employee was reinstated. "I don't think anyone in the field can credibly deny that there's a scary connection between overburdened workers and risk of harm to kids," said Ira Lustbader, litigation director of Children's Rights, a national organization that advocates and files lawsuits to bring accountability to child-welfare systems. Lustbader's organization has filed lawsuits in other states arguing high caseloads are a civil-rights violation for children because it puts them in harm's way. "These kids don't vote. They're poor. They're disproportionately of color. They're not a legislative priority," he said. Not held accountable Even so, heavy caseloads cannot always explain away mistakes or why they go unpunished. According to interviews with 10 plaintiff attorneys who have brought personal-injury cases against DSHS, none of them has heard of a social worker being disciplined for failing to protect someone. David Moody is a Seattle lawyer who has brought lawsuits against DSHS that resulted in \$86 million in verdicts or settlements since 2000. "There's a constellation of warnings and a corresponding constellation of failures by DSHS to heed those warnings," said Moody, lawyer for the Abegg children. "No one is held accountable." DSHS Secretary Kevin Quigley declined to be interviewed. In an email, he wrote that the agency has an improved performance-evaluation system and is more aggressive about dismissing subpar workers during their probation period. "I understand the solution for some is to blame the caseworker every time a mistake is made, but when we are some 30 percent above a reasonable caseload, that can be like sending the Seahawks to play the Super Bowl with two-thirds of a team then firing them when they lose," Quigley wrote. Some officials note that the state does have another tool to hold DSHS accountable: The Office of Family and Children's Ombuds. Director Patrick Dowd says the office plays a neutral role when it intervenes in cases in which DSHS failed to act or was unreasonable. However, he said, his office's "focus is on the actions of the agency and not the specific caseworker." Source: http://www.yakimaherald.com/news/state_news/dshs-failures-are-rarely-punished/article_cc9fc484-43e3-11e5-bc10-d38e9f193843.html

Operator of illegal group home in East Austin arrested | www.mystatesman.com Operator of illegal group home in East Austin arrested Posted: 3:38 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 15, 2015 Email Facebook 1Twitter 1ShareThis EmailFacebookTwitterShareThis By James Barragan and Samantha Matsumoto - American-Statesman Staff A seemingly routine welfare check by authorities on Friday resulted in the [discovery of an illegally operated group home for older adults](#), the treatment of seven patients from the home in East Austin and at least one arrest, officials said. Rene Segura, who is suspected of operating the home, was arrested Friday on a charge of interference with public duty in connection to the discovery of the home. Segura, 45, remained in custody Saturday evening, according to jail records. Her bail was set at \$5,000. Source: <http://www.mystatesman.com/news/news/operator-of-illegal-group-home-in-east-austin-arre/nKzq/>

[Elite Boarding School Student Accused of Rape Says Seniors Had Annual Sex Competition](#) 137,239 30 Gabrielle Bluestone Filed to: [senior salute rape st. paul's](#) 8/17/15 1:40pm Edit Delete Invite manually Promote DismissUndismiss Block for gawker Hide Share to Kinja Go to permalink 1 Are you sure this isn't just the stock photo you get when you search for "entitled yuppie rapist from 80's movie"? gilbertkittens [View discussion >> 2](#) St. Paul's School for the Prominently Be-chinned Medieval Knievel [View discussion >>](#) The man accused of raping an underclassman at John Kerry's alma mater allegedly told detectives it was all a misunderstanding tied to a annual tradition known as the "Senior Salute," wherein seniors publicly competed to sleep with the most underclassmen throughout the school year. Owen Labrie, a 19-year-old former prefect at St. Paul's school in New Hampshire, was charged with repeatedly raping a 15-year-old girl on the roof of a campus building last summer. He's denied having intercourse with her but allegedly [told detectives it was "tradition" for seniors to keep a rolling list of sexual conquests](#) published for all students to see—initially on a laundry room wall, and later on the internet. Labrie, of Tunbridge, Vermont, talked openly about the tradition when he was interviewed by Concord police. On a campus where upperclassmen studiously avoid their younger peers in most settings, Labrie told a detective some students "take great pride" in having sex with younger students before they leave school. Labrie also told the detective of a contest where boys compete to "score" with the most girls, keeping a running tally written in indelible marker on a wall behind washing machines. The school kept painting over the scoreboard so it eventually was moved online. He acknowledged to the detective he was "trying to be

number one,” the detective wrote. Labrie—an aspiring divinity student whose acceptance to Harvard was rescinded after the rape charges—allegedly told detectives he was planning on having sex with the alleged victim, and even put on a condom, but stopped “in a moment of divine inspiration.” When asked why she might lie about the encounter, he allegedly claimed it was “a ‘great source of pride for younger students’ to have sex with seniors.” Advertisement Labrie, whose rape trial began Monday, [is hardly the first St. Paul’s graduate to make headlines](#). According to the AP, the elite prep school has also produced senators, congressmen, ambassadors, Pulitzer Prize winners, Fortune 500 CEOs and several adult Kennedys—and that’s in addition to the current secretary of state, a former FBI director, and a Nobel laureate. Nor is it the first bad press the school’s had in recent years—there have been allegations of hazing and the mysterious 2004 death of a star swimmer who drowned in the school’s \$25 million athletic center even as two lifeguards were on duty. And in 2003, two grown billionaires were [observed fighting on a Park Avenue street corner](#) over alleged financial mismanagement that eventually led to a faculty vote of no-confidence against a popular rector. The school’s current rector, Michael Hirschfeld, declined to comment on the Senior Salute, telling the AP—apparently without irony—that “St. Paul’s School has policies in place to ensure that our students are safe, secure, and treated equitably.” Source: <http://gawker.com/elite-boarding-school-student-accused-of-rape-says-seni-1724547400>

Oregon’s foster care system needs reform Oregon newspapers 9:08 p.m. PDT August 16, 2015 Sen. Ron Wyden answers questions, Friday, May 1, 2015, during a Statesman Journal Editorial Board meeting. (Photo: BRENT DRINKUT/Statesman Journal) 10 CONNECT [5](#) [TWEETLINKEDIN](#) [COMMENTEMAILMORE](#) It’s usually not good news when a state’s child welfare system is a topic of a committee hearing in the U.S. Senate. But that wasn’t the case Wednesday when Charles Nyby, a program analyst for the Oregon Department of Human Services, testified before the Senate Finance Committee. Nyby described how the state’s system increasingly is working to keep families united and is using foster care as a last resort. “I’ve seen significant impact on things in child welfare I truly never thought possible,” he said in a hearing on a bill sponsored by Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon, the ranking Democrat on the committee. Wyden’s bill would expand a multi-billion dollar federal entitlement program that currently funds only foster care services. The Family Stability and Kinship Care Act would give states the flexibility to use federal funding to make investments in preventive services that have been shown to be effective in stabilizing families and keeping kids out of foster care and either safe at home or placed with relatives. That’s a smart and necessary move if state child welfare systems in Oregon and other states are going to continue moving away from a foster-care model that for too long has been a source of heartbreak and tragedy. Current federal law provides states with a federal matching funds for children only after they have been placed in foster care. That restriction on the more than \$4 billion that is distributed annually to states serves as a perverse incentive for the unnecessary removal of youths from homes that are troubled — but in many cases, families can be kept intact through well-planned services. An early draft of Wyden’s bill previewed earlier this year would provide reimbursements for up to a full year of family services. Those services would include counseling, family-skills training and other assistance intended to stabilize a family in crisis and prevent a child’s entry into foster care — or, in some cases, to allow youngsters to safely leave foster care for family placements. Wyden’s bill has the support of the American Academy of Pediatrics, which praises it for proposing expanded assistance to states and emphasizing “the important role of prevention, including parenting skills training and mental health services.” Nyby was on target this week in testifying that Oregon’s foster care program has improved over the past decade. Thanks to a federal waiver, Oregon has been able to spend some funds previously restricted for foster care on preventive services for parents and children who are in crisis because of poverty, substance abuse and homelessness. As a result, the state is serving fewer foster children — and keeping more families together. Oregon’s emphasis on preventive services is similar to the approach that Wyden’s bill would extend nationwide. But Oregon’s system remains a work in progress. Erinn Kelly-Siel, who in 2008 took the job of leading the state’s troubled child welfare system, recently hammered home that point in a letter announcing her departure as director of the state’s Department of Human Services. She noted that Oregon’s child-welfare system still falls short of federal and internal benchmarks. The state continues to struggle to fix problems with a new computer and data-tracking system that is essential to gauging how well foster children are being served and how they are faring in the system. The state also has been hit with several lawsuits in recent years alleging that its child welfare system failed to intervene in cases that resulted in serious injuries, sexual abuse or even death. Some of those lawsuits have resulted in judgments that have cost the state millions of dollars. If Oregon and others states are to do a better job at protecting kids and helping families remain intact, they need more federal funding and greater flexibility in using it. Wyden’s proposal would accomplish both, and deserves enthusiastic bipartisan support in Congress. — The Register-Guard, Eugene, Aug. 7 Educating Oregonians about health-care costs One hope of health care reform is that it will create smart, empowered consumers. They will have the data they need to make good choices about care. And that, in turn, creates incentives for providers and insurers to move to a better health care system. There’s nothing wrong with that idealized premise, except it has proven very difficult to make it a reality. Health care reform has created new databases of information. And more and more of that information is being made available to consumers. Oregon is going to launch a website in the fall of 2016 that will show health care costs by tracking almost all health care billing in the state, as Bulletin reporter Tara Bannow wrote in Wednesday’s paper. It could be a powerful tool for professional analysis. These so-called all-payer, all-claims databases are appearing across the country. Researchers have already been using them. An inquiry into similar data by the Dartmouth Atlas Project raised serious questions about the variations in Medicare spending across the country. More spending didn’t correlate with better health care outcomes. That can help inform decisions about how Medicare should be delivered. It’s, of course, a good thing in theory that consumers will be able to access Oregon’s data. But will it be easy to understand what it means? Will it actually be useful? Most consumers are bound by guard rails in their health care decisions — time, cost, what their health plan covers and their location — to name a few. Will it have unintended consequences that aren’t smart? Remember the recent release of the data of surgical complication rates by ProPublica? It’s a sort of like a surgeon report card, but imperfect and loaded with limitations. Making a decision about a surgeon based on that alone would not be smart. Maybe, over the long haul, the new Oregon database or ProPublica’s report card will be refined and improved and better understood by consumers. But for now they don’t create the smart, empowered consumers of health care reform dreams. — The Bulletin, Bend, Aug. 6 Source: <http://www.statesmanjournal.com/story/opinion/editorials/2015/08/17/oregons-foster-care-system-needs-reform/31804681/>

Foster parent accused of killing 11-month old pleads guilty By: [Nick Rothschild](#) - [Email](#) Updated: Mon 9:58 PM, Aug 17, 2015 By: [Nick Rothschild](#) - [Email](#) [Home](#) / [Headlines List](#) / Article GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. Sydney White pleaded guilty on Monday to child abuse resulting in death and tampering with physical evidence; however, the charge of murder in the first degree was dropped as a part of the deal. White was initially charged with first degree murder and child abuse resulting in death in the case of 11-month old Angel Place. Place was in White's care at the time of her death, and a police affidavit says White admitted to dropping the baby on her head, and later shaking her while holding her by the neck. The deal comes after months of negotiations with the DA's office, and White is now scheduled to be sentenced in November. The District Attorney's office says White could face a range of 16 to 51 years in prison depending upon her sentencing. Until then, she will be held without bond. Source: <http://www.nbc11news.com/home/headlines/Foster-parent-accused-of-killing-11-month-old-pleads-guilty-322063781.html>

Unemployed young people will be sent to work boot camp, says minister Matt Hancock says plan for jobseekers between 18 and 21 to be placed on intensive activity programme is not a form of punishment Matt Hancock, minister for the Cabinet Office, says new proposals to tackle unemployment among 18 to 21-year-olds will give young people more intensive support to help them find work [Rowena Mason](#) and [Frances Perraudin](#) Monday 17 August 2015 04.36 EDT Last modified on Monday 17 August 2015 19.01 EDT [Share on Facebook](#) [Share on Twitter](#) [Share via Email](#) [Share on Pinterest](#) [Share on LinkedIn](#) [Share on Google+](#) [Share on WhatsApp](#) Shares 9,872 9872 [Comments 3,760](#) [Save for later](#) [Article saved](#) Cabinet Office minister Matt Hancock has denied that a government plan to send young unemployed people to boot camps to prepare them for work was a form of punishment. “We are penalising nobody because nobody who does the right thing and plays by the rules will lose their benefits,” he told BBC Radio 4’s Today programme on Monday. “In fact this is about giving more support to young people.” The senior Conservative, who heads David Cameron’s earn or learn taskforce, will set out plans for jobseekers aged between 18 and 21 to be placed on an intensive activity programme within the first three weeks of submitting a claim. They will get an initial three-week intensive course of practising job applications and interviews, which will then be regularly reviewed by a dedicated job coach. The new requirements, outlined on Monday, will be in place by April 2017 as part of a wider policy, first announced by Cameron before the election, that jobless 18- to 21-year-olds would be required to do work experience as well as looking for jobs or [face losing their benefits](#). Children’s charity Barnardo’s [criticised the plans](#), saying that young people needed to feel supported, not punished. In a challenge to [Labour](#), Hancock has now written to all four leadership candidates urging them to get behind the government’s plans. Who should I vote for in the Labour leadership election? Ballots go out on Friday 14 August for the election of Labour’s new leader, and the electorate has until noon on 10 September to vote. Are you a member or registered supporter? Our guide to the candidates sets out their policies on a

range of key issues Read more Labour had a slightly different policy before the election, which promised a paid starter job to every young person out of work for more than 12 months, but still threatened they would lose benefits if this was not taken up. The party's future position will be a matter for the new Labour leader, but the candidates are unlikely to endorse a government scheme involving rhetoric that suggests some young people are workshy and making excuses not to get jobs. Advertisement The subject of benefits is also particularly sensitive since a row over the decision of acting leader, Harriet Harman, [to abstain](#) on the government's welfare bill in July. Since then, the leftwing frontrunner Jeremy Corbyn has explicitly said he would oppose the government's move to take housing benefit away from 18- to 21-year-olds, while Andy Burnham has also been critical of the policy. Responding to the announcement, a spokesman for the Corbyn campaign said: "This is another punitive turn by this Conservative government that is failing young people. They have cut further education places, driven a punitive welfare regime that has failed to reduce youth unemployment, and are raising university fees and taking away grants. "As it takes away opportunities for young people to earn or learn, this government is blaming young people rather than addressing the real problems. It proposes more free labour from the young with fewer rights, and will be resisted by young people and Labour MPs." Yvette Cooper and Liz Kendall have said welfare cuts need to be approached in a fairer, more Labour way. Setting out his plans, Hancock suggested some young people were part of a "welfare culture that is embedded in some of Britain's most vulnerable communities". He said: "By working across government to make sure that every young person is in work or training, by opening up three million more apprenticeships, expanding traineeships, and making sure that a life on benefits is simply not an option, we want to end rolling welfare dependency for good, so welfare dependency is no longer passed down the generations. "We are absolutely committed to ending long-term youth unemployment and building a country for workers, where nobody is defined by birth and everyone can achieve their potential." The idea of boot camps for young people without jobs is not a new one. The Conservative party previously suggested it in 2008, when the then [shadow welfare spokesman Chris Grayling](#) announced that the party wanted to "abolish benefit payments for any able-bodied person under 21 who is out of work for more than three months". Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/aug/17/unemployed-young-people-work-boot-camp-tory-minister>

Executives at second L.A. County youth home are accused of embezzlement 173460 foster-vicki JLC Jay L. Clendenin / Los Angeles Times Philip Browning is director of the L.A. County Department of Children and Family Services. Philip Browning is director of the L.A. County Department of Children and Family Services. (Jay L. Clendenin / Los Angeles Times) By Benjamin Oreskes and [Garrett Therolf contact the reporter](#) Prosecutors have charged two executives of a Los Angeles County group home for youth in the juvenile delinquency system and foster care with misuse of public funds, embezzlement and filing false tax returns. The charges against Gary O'Neil Batchelor and Steven Bryan Smith, the financial officer and executive director, respectively, of Moore's Cottage, mark the second time in a year that the district attorney's office has alleged criminal wrongdoing within the multimillion dollar industry that county officials entrust with the care of some of Southern California's most vulnerable youth. It's my fault that we didn't know more about it.- Philip Browning, DCFS director As in the district attorney's [recent case](#) against leaders of the Little People's World group home, the alleged wrongdoing at Moore's Cottage may have festered for years as county officials ignored signs of financial mismanagement, records show. "It's my fault that we didn't know more about it," said Philip Browning, director of the Department of Children and Family Services. The activities alleged in the lawsuit occurred before 2013, and Browning said they might have been prevented by an improved monitoring system the department put in place about a year ago. Prosecutors filed the criminal charges against Batchelor and Smith in April with no public announcement. The district attorney's office declined to comment. The two men, who pleaded not guilty and are free on bail, declined to respond to requests for comment. They are accused of embezzling more than \$100,000 from the charity and damaging or destroying property in excess of \$65,000. The lawsuit also accuses them of filing false personal tax returns in 2011, 2012 and 2013 — the same period in which they failed to file tax forms for Moore's Cottage. In total, Moore's Cottage owed \$460,000 in delinquent federal payroll taxes as of September 2013. A court petition for a search warrant filed this year by the district attorney's office says that "Batchelor had no intention of paying payroll taxes with the money he withdrew. His sole purpose was to split the withdrawn money with Smith for personal gain." The charity's failure to file returns had cost it its tax-exempt status by 2013, and the county severed ties and removed children from its care last year. The charity had operated a six-bed facility for boys ages 13 to 17 in Pomona, as well as a six-bed home in Altadena for boys ages 11 to 17. [Supervisor calls for changes at foster youth center after attack on guards Abby Sewell and Garrett Therolf A recent attack on security guards by youths staying at a transitional center for older foster children with nowhere else to go prompted a call Friday for beefed up security at the facility. A recent attack on security guards by youths staying at a transitional center for older foster children with nowhere else to go prompted a call Friday for beefed up security at the facility. \(Abby Sewell and Garrett Therolf \)](#) County officials have designed contracts intended to ensure that charities like Moore's Cottage properly spend the public money they receive. Their books are open to regulators who scrutinize expenditures. Such reviews have repeatedly unearthed scandal. In some cases, contractors spent taxpayer money on vacations, luxury cars, fine china and salaries for employees who didn't exist. The Times has reported. More than \$11 million of county funds were allegedly misappropriated by foster care nonprofits between 2000 and 2010, county audits found, and only a small fraction was ever recovered. County auditors have not made public any financial audits of Moore's Cottage since 2008, when a review of 2006 records showed the charity collecting \$563,733 in taxpayer money — or \$53,748 for each child per year. [cComments](#) "Meet ya after work" has a new meaning to government social workers. They're as abusive as the cops, killing people for no front license plate. They kill families and get autistic kids raped for money. Every one of you in the greedy industry of child welfare. Camel Flatmouth at 9:27 PM August 17, 2015 [Add a comment](#) [See all comments](#) [12](#) The audit of 2006 records also reported that Moore's Cottage had failed to pay \$23,000 in payroll taxes, and officials at the Department of Children and Family Services were told to follow up and make sure the money was paid. Instead, the sum of unpaid payroll taxes grew to more than \$200,000, according to the district attorney's court petition. The search warrant request notes that auditors later initiated another audit for 2011 and 2012 records, which showed "questionable accounting practices" by Smith, the executive director, who "withdrew large sums of money." "Smith stated this money was given to Moore's Cottage board member and chief financial officer Gary Batchelor," the request says. [See the most-read stories this hour >>>Read the story](#) A 2009 visit to the group homes by county auditors found the children sleeping on old, sagging mattresses, according to a group home program monitoring report. Some youth, the report noted, also received powerful psychiatric medications without the required court approval — a key safeguard meant to ensure that youth are not drugged unnecessarily to make them more docile. Reports on 2010 visits by Department of Children and Family Services officials and a review of five children's case files uncovered more problems. All of the children were being deprived of their weekly allowance, and many also were not receiving their clothing allowance. A majority of the children interviewed "reported that they did not feel they were treated with respect and dignity," the auditors wrote. "It is concerning that Moore's Cottage Group Home was out of compliance in seven of nine areas reviewed," they said. From 2012 to 2014, state regulators from the Department of Social Services responded to complaints of general neglect and physical abuse by staff at Moore's Cottage, according to licensing records. Youth in the homes told auditors that the staff members were inattentive and that many young people ran away because they didn't like the environment, state regulators reported last year. Another boy told regulators that a fellow resident openly "masturbated day and night and staff was aware of it but nothing was done about it," a Department of Social Services report said. In a 2013 report, state regulators found that a staffer pushed a boy "really hard against a desk — causing a bump in the head." Browning, the DCFS director, said "the criminal investigation of Moore's Cottage is still ongoing, but if the allegations prove true, I think it is totally inappropriate what happened here." Source: <http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-foster-embezzle-20150817-story.html>

SNP outrage at plans to send young jobseekers to boot camp Hannah Bardell contrasted the plan with the inflated salaries earned by executives in the City PA:Press Association [Post a comment](#) [Print](#) Share via [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Google+](#) 1 of 1 Hannah Bardell contrasted the plan with the inflated salaries earned by executives in the City PA:Press Association [Lindsay McIntosh](#) Scottish Political Editor Last updated at 12:01AM, August 18 2015 Scottish Nationalists have attacked the UK government's plans to send unemployed youngsters to three-week "boot camps". The Conservatives have announced a policy of compulsory intensive programmes which will put 18 to 21-year-olds "through their paces" to find work or training. They will have to attend the schemes when they are unemployed and will be expected to find a job, apprenticeship or study place within six months or lose their benefits. Yesterday the SNP accused the Tories of using "the language of threats and intimidation on the young". Source: <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/scotland/article4530441.ece>

S. Senate Bill Could Seriously Impact Federal Funding for Florida Group Homes A A [Facebook](#) 16 [Twitter](#) 6 [More shares](#) [recommend reddit email](#) By [Kyle Swenson](#) Tuesday, August 18, 2015 | 5 days ago Illustration by Joseph Laney As we showed you in a recent New Times cover story, [Florida's group homes are in serious need of an overall](#). Due to the privatization of the state's channels for placing and caring for trouble kids, there's a serious lack of oversight among the ground floor service providers who are supposed to be watching these kids — leading to sex, drugs, and violence at the group homes. There are many voices rising up over the need to somehow improve the system. Among them: a bipartisan band of U.S. Senators who are proposing rerouting the federal

funding options going to states. Instead of pushing that money toward foster care, the proposal would urge states to place it with front-end services that would hopefully keep kids out of group and foster care in the first place. Orrin Hatch, longtime Republican senator from Utah, vented his feelings in a Senate Finance Committee hearing last May (honestly, you could have used Hatch's comments as a blurb for our investigation — they are spot on). Related Stories [With Lax Supervision at State-Contracted Group Homes, Teen Prostitution and Drug Use Are Rampant](#) "Groups home, sometimes referred to as 'congregate care,' are literally breeding grounds for the sexual exploitation of children and youth," [Hatch told the committee](#). "As the committee heard during a hearing on domestic sex trafficking of children and youth in foster care, traffickers know where these group homes are and target the children placed in them for exploitation." Hatch went on to propose some kind of legislation that "would refocus federal priorities on connecting vulnerable youth with caring, permanent families." This would be accomplished by eliminating the federal match to group homes for very young children and, after a defined period of time, for older youth." He finished: "I know that some might have concerns about limiting federal funds for any type of placement. Here's how I look at it: No one would support allowing states to use federal taxpayer dollars to buy cigarettes for foster youth. In my view, continuing to use these scarce taxpayer dollars to fund long terms placements in groups homes is ultimately just as destructive." The result of that May conversation is [the Family Stability and Kinship Care Act](#), which was dropped on the committee earlier this month. The legislation is sponsored by Senator Ron Wyden, a Democrat from Oregon. Under the fine print of the bill, states would have more flexibility, and in fact be encourage, to distribute federal match funding made available under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act — money that now pretty much only goes to foster care. "The current child welfare funding system provides two choices: put kids in foster care or do nothing," [Wyden said in a statement following the release of the bill](#). "There must be a better option for families who need just a little bit of extra help and this bill will give the system flexibility to respond to real-life situations of families in need." [According to a summary for the bill](#), instead of foster care, state's would be encouraged to make "modest front-end investments in family services and kinship placement in order to reduce costly and traumatic stays in foster care." This means anything from family skills training or counseling to goods and services — basically, whatever is necessary to pre-empt a situation where kids would end up in foster care or group homes. We'll keep following this as it goes through Congress. But the implications of such a shake-up in federal funding streams feeding Florida's foster care system could have serious implications — and piss off a serious number of people involved. Remember, with Broward's system privatized, you have a lot of independent actors involved, pulling funding and salaries from that funding stream. Source: <http://www.browardpalmbeach.com/news/us-senate-bill-could-seriously-impact-federal-funding-for-florida-group-homes-7189969>

Reports against shuttered group homes included sexual abuse Posted: 6:01 p.m. Monday, Aug. 17, 2015 Email 2Facebook 19Twitter 2ShareThis 26 EmailFacebookTwitterShareThis By [Philip Jankowski](#) - American-Statesman Staff Court documents that shut down the operations of group homes operating illegally in Austin and Belton revealed reports of sexual abuse, filthy conditions and malnourished residents. The court documents came to light after first responders on Friday found 22 people kept in a 1,400-square-foot home in East Austin who were emaciated and kept in rooms with no air conditioning. Seven people were hospitalized. The others have been relocated to other facilities. Source: <http://www.mystatesman.com/news/news/crime-law/reports-against-shuttered-group-homes-included-sex/nl.sj/>

Five Questions Every Presidential Candidate Needs to Answer About Education Sunday, 23 August 2015 00:00 By [Paul Thomas](#), [AlterNet](#) | Op-Ed font size [decrease font size](#) [increase font size](#) [Print](#) 19 Email Standards-based teaching, high-stakes testing and value-added methods of teacher evaluation haven't worked. What do the presidential candidates plan to do about it? (Image: [Student test](#) via Shutterstock) [Want to challenge injustice and make real change happen? That's Truthout's goal - support our work with a donation today!](#) Since the early 1980s, education platforms have been essential to political campaigns for governorships and the presidency, with education policy increasingly defining elected officials' political legacies. With the passing of [No Child Left Behind](#) in 2001, education legislation shifted even further to national prominence, as NCLB came to represent the "power" of bi-partisan commitments to education reform. In the 2016 presidential election, education may once again emerge as a major point of debate, in part because of Jeb Bush's [legacy in Florida](#) and in part because of the [lingering political controversies](#) around Common Core. Yet in addressing education issues candidates are likely to remain trapped inside the [failed accountability mindset](#) for reforming schools - one that privileges "standards" and "tests" as the central means of closing the infamous achievement gap. But there are better ways to approach what plagues us. Instead of focusing merely on "accountability," presidential candidates should be challenged first to confront and then address the tremendous social and educational inequities that plague our public schools. Here, then, are five questions about education reform every candidate should have to answer, and a few words about why these questions matter. Question #1: Since public schools often reflect the [racial and class inequities](#) of the communities they serve, how will you work to ensure that the U.S. puts an end to the two-tiered educational system currently available to children - one preferred educational experience for privileged children and another worse educational experience for disadvantaged children? Although some presidential candidates have raised concerns about [two Americas](#), we have yet to confront our two education systems. Notably, as we have passed the [60th anniversary](#) of Brown v. Board, both U.S. public schools and charter schools represent a return to segregated education. Although NCLB linked accountability to closing the achievement gap, black, brown, and high-poverty students along with English language learners and special needs students are often segregated, and as a result receive [reduced educations](#) targeting significantly and even exclusively test-prep. Question #2: While state and national leaders in education have repeatedly noted the importance of teacher quality - while also misrepresenting that [importance](#) - increasing standards-based teaching, high-stakes testing and value-added methods of teacher evaluation, along with the dismantling unions, have de-professionalized teaching and discouraged young people from entering the field. How will you work to return professionalism and autonomy to teachers? The [teacher quality debate](#) is the latest phase of accountability linked to test scores that started with school and student accountability in the 1980s and '90s. While everyone can agree that teacher quality is important, the real issues are how we measure that impact and how we separate teacher and even school quality effects from the much larger and more powerful impact of out-of-school factors - that account for about [60% to 86%](#) of measurable student learning. The misguided focus on teacher quality - linking evaluations significantly to test scores - has begun to have a negative impact on teacher quality, precisely because such measures de-professionalize educators. Teachers typically want autonomy, administrative and parental support, and conditions (such as appropriate materials and smaller class sizes) that increase their professionalism and effectiveness - not raises. Question #3: Discipline policies are also inequitable for some students, particularly black and Latino kids. How will you ensure fair and humane disciplinary policies in schools for all children? Under the Obama administration, the Office of Civil Rights [has exposed](#) significant inequities of discipline outcomes for black and brown students. In many ways, schools are beginning the [school-to-prison pipeline](#) through expulsions and suspensions, beginning as early as [pre-kindergarten](#). For example, according to the [report](#) from the Office of Civil Rights, black students are 18% of the school population, but "35% of students suspended once, 46% of those suspended more than once, and 39% of students expelled." Over 70% of students arrested or moved into the legal system are Hispanic or black. Question #4: Since the era of high-stakes accountability initiated in the early 1980s has not, in fact, closed the [achievement gap](#), can you commit to ending accountability-based education reform, including a [significant reduction](#) in high-stakes testing, and then detail reform based on equity of opportunities for all students? Andre Perry, former founding dean of urban education at Davenport University, has noted that [accountability](#) has failed educational equity because "having the ability to compare performances among groups hasn't brought educational justice to black and brown students." More useful models do exist. The National Education Policy Center has called for identifying and recognizing school reform that addresses equity for all students through their [Schools of Opportunity](#) project. This model shifts the focus on reform away from narrow measures, test data and punitive policies and toward creating the opportunities that affluent students tend to have but poor and racial minorities are denied, including access to experienced and certified [teachers](#), rich and diverse courses, small class sizes, and [well-funded](#) safe schools. Question #5: While the discourse of education reform has claimed that [ZIP code](#) is not destiny, the coincidence of any child's birth is actually a powerful indicator or her future. How will you address the many social inequities due to race, class and gender that inhibit children from succeeding in school and in life? The [evidence](#) is overwhelming that educational attainment is not the [game-changer](#) political leaders claim. While greater educational attainment helps gain advantages for [people](#) within their race, great inequities still exist among races. For example, blacks with some college have about the same employment [opportunities](#) as white high school dropouts, and women of color have the [lowest wages](#) at all education levels. Without addressing social inequities, our educational reform attempts are doomed to fail, and the promise of education as the great equalizer will continue to be a [great lie](#). The five questions above pose two important challenges for candidates. First, they require the candidates either to acknowledge the evidence or face the real danger of simply ignoring the truth. Second, they challenge candidates to step outside the comfort of the old but failed ways of reforming education, in order to rethink how and what schools should be, and what we can do to bring those kinds of educational environments into existence. Currently, the U.S. has a growing gap between the impoverished and the wealthy - [especially along racial](#)

[lines](#) - and most fail to recognize that over 80% of people living in poverty are from [vulnerable populations](#): children, the elderly, the disabled, students, and the working poor. When then-candidate Barack Obama offered his message of hope and change, advocates for social justice and public education, I believe, had those vulnerable populations in their minds and hearts. Yet President Obama's [education agenda](#) has turned out to be indistinguishable from George W. Bush's in both its commitments and its negative consequences. As the 2016 election approaches, the larger question may be: Is there a political leader with the courage to face reality and [stand up](#) for our vulnerable populations, in defense of our public institutions? Source: <http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/32472-five-questions-every-presidential-candidate-needs-to-answer-about-education>

Sparkling Curiosity for Truth in the Classroom: An Appreciation of "Between the World and Me" Sunday, 23 August 2015 00:00 By [William Ayers](#), Truthout | Book Review font size [decrease font size](#) [increase font size](#) [Print](#) 14 Email Ta-Nehisi Coates, the Atlantic correspondent and author of *Between the World and Me*. Last year my students - Chicago teachers and teachers-to-be, educators from a range of backgrounds and experiences and orientations - all read *The Beautiful Struggle* by Ta-Nehisi Coates. I'd put this memoir on the list of required readings because I thought it was a fitting and important educational book, a useful text for city teachers to explore and interrogate. Some students agreed; several did not. "What's this got to do with teaching?" I chose it because it moved me, frankly, and I thought it might move some of them as well. I chose it because in the details of this one life - the challenges and the obstacles, but especially the elements he assembled to build an architecture of survival - I saw human themes of love and beauty and the universal struggle to grow more fully into the light. I chose it because it took readers inside the life of one Black kid, this singular unruly spark of meaning-making energy negotiating and then mapping the territory between his home and the streets and the schools: necessary reading for city teachers, I thought. There was a lot to dig into, much to wrangle about, and a lot to send us off to other readings and further research. Soon students were diving into Crystal Laura's *Being Bad: My Baby Brother* and the *School to Prison Pipeline*, Jesmyn Ward's *The Men We Reap*, Claudia Rankine's *Citizen*, and Rachel DeWoskin's *Big Girl Small*. The book was doing work, as I'd hoped it would. My students have all chosen to become teachers against a backdrop of corporate-driven school reform accompanied by unprecedented disrespect and hostility toward teachers and teaching. They know that teaching is devalued; they know they won't earn either a lot of money or a fair share of respect; they've been told by family and friends that they could do much, much better. And still they come to teaching, most saying they want to make a difference in children's lives. Some are motivated by memories of a wonderful teacher who'd reached and changed them, others by bitter experiences they hope to correct. They are mostly idealistic, and I admire them for that. They bring to class a vague hope that they will do great things in spite of a system that they know to be corrupt and dysfunctional. But this knowledge is not yet deep enough, for they also accept - some with greater skepticism and some with hardly any doubts at all - the predatory system's self-serving propaganda: test scores, achievement gaps, accountability, personal responsibility. Into this contradiction steps Ta-Nehisi Coates with an assertion that shaped and marked the course: No matter what the professional talkers tell you, Coates wrote, I never met a black boy who wanted to fail. That simple observation - or was it an argument, a polemic, or an indictment? - led to hot debate on the evening we first opened the book, and those 18 words were still roiling the seminar as the term came to an end. Coates never lets up, and he returns again and again: Fuck what you have heard or what you have seen in your son. He may lie about homework and laugh when the teacher calls home. He may curse his teacher, propose arson for the whole public system. But inside is the same sense that was in me. None of us ever want to fail. None of us want to be unworthy, to not measure up. Some claimed to have evidence to the contrary, while others answered that those contentions skated glibly on the surface of things and failed to go deep enough in search of root causes, accepting as fact the propaganda that locates failure everywhere but in the intentional design of the system itself. Some rejected the idea that they were agents of the state, bit players in a white colonial space, while others argued that teaching could never be even partially useful - let alone reach toward transcendence - until teachers fully faced the friction and gaping contradictions inherent in their teacher-roles. Truth and reconciliation, they argued, system-disruption and radical reconstruction; remediating the students is a ridiculous misdirection. Ta-Nehisi Coates' new book, *Between the World and Me*, takes us deeper into life in schools, and especially what the experience means to its captives. I was a curious boy, Coates writes, but the schools were not concerned with curiosity. They were concerned with compliance. That nails it: The obsessions that characterize American classrooms today - especially urban classrooms and schools attended by the poor, recent immigrants from impoverished countries, First Nations peoples, and the descendants of formerly enslaved people - are simple: The goal is obedience and conformity, the watchword, control. These schools are characterized by passivity and fatalism and infused with anti-intellectualism, dishonesty and irrelevance. They turn on the little technologies of constraint, the elaborate schemes for managing the fearsome, potentially unruly mob, the knotted system of rules, the exhaustive machinery of schedules and clocks and surveillance, the laborious programs of regulating, indoctrinating, inspecting and punishing, disciplining, censoring, correcting, counting, appraising, assessing and judging, testing and grading. The corporate reformers offer no relief and simply create charter or alternative schools that enact this whole agenda on steroids. They are not concerned with curiosity or imagination, initiative or courage because their purpose is elsewhere: Everyone more or less submissively accepting their proper place in the hierarchy of winners and losers. It doesn't take perceptive young people anytime at all to sniff out the duplicity and the dirty-dealing in the nothing-but-the-facts agenda and to conclude that all schools lie. One night I opened the seminar by telling the class that less than two miles from where we were meeting, almost 10,000 Jewish women were housed in cages. It was an electrifying and terrifying image, and the class rose up, some convinced I was joking (though I wasn't smiling), others that I was lying, all insisting that it couldn't be true. I eventually relented - you're right, I said, it's not true. The truth is that 10,000 poor, mostly very young Black and Latino men are living in those cages. Everything calmed down; the normal world returned. And we returned to Coates: the streets and the schools [were] arms of the same beast. One enjoyed the official power of the state [but] fear and violence were the weaponry of both. We had worked earlier to name the system, a system built on theft and lies and plundering Black bodies, Coates said. It was surely a predatory system, a racist system, and we looked hard at that word: racism. In one common context it meant ignorance and prejudice, the off-hand comments of Cliven Bundy or Donald Sterling, but there was more: There was the system itself, the plunder, the laws and structures, the schools. Donald Sterling's filthy mind and mouth is one thing; that he became rich as a swindling slumlord something else. "I'm no Donald Sterling," people say, meaning I don't utter the hateful words. But Coates won't let anyone off the hook: the people who believe themselves to be white are obsessed with the politics of personal exoneration. Their privileges are earned - they are good and true folks all - or come from thin air; their comfortable lives as normal as noon coming around every 24 hours. Decades ago, James Baldwin accused his country and his countrymen of a monstrous crime against humanity and added a further dimension to the indictment: It is not permissible that the authors of devastation should also be innocent. It is the innocence which constitutes the crime. Coates names the schools as central to the system: If the streets shackled my left leg, the schools shackled my right. The shackles were fear and violence, and also lies and denial. Everywhere you look and in spite of it all, youth are making their wobbly ways toward enlightenment and liberation, the twin pillars of an education of purpose. In 2006, Florida passed a law stipulating that "American history shall be viewed as factual, not as constructed, shall be viewed as knowable, teachable, and testable." The law called for an emphasis on the "teaching of facts." Facts and only facts, without frivolous and messy interpretation, would be permitted by the legislators to guide instruction, for example, about the "period of discovery." I read that and did a neck-wrenching double take: Huh? Whose facts, exactly, I wondered? The facts of a Genoan adventurer in the pay of Spanish royalty; the facts of the First Nations residents overwhelmed, murdered, and enslaved; or possibly a range of other facts and angles-of-regard altogether? I'll guess that the Florida lawmakers went with the first choice, legislating in effect a pep rally for Christopher Columbus - yes, their own particular constructed explanation and analysis of events and circumstances passing as Fact. In 2008, a group in the Arizona legislature passed a law stating that schools whose curriculum and teaching "encourage dissent" from "American values" risked losing their state funding. American history is bursting with stories of dissent from the first revolutionaries onward: Abolitionists, Suffragettes, anarchists and labor pioneers, civil rights and Black Power warriors, peace and environmental activists, feminists, heroes and sheroes and queeroes, Wounded Knee, Occupy, Black Lives Matter! Wherever you look and whatever period you examine, dissent is as American as cherry pie, an apple-core American value and the very engine of hope or possibility - except to the lawmakers of Arizona. A history teacher in a Southside Chicago school was teaching a standard lesson on the legendary 1954 Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education*. *Brown* reversed *Plessy v. Ferguson* and ended racial segregation in US schools, and the lesson was pointedly directed toward illustrating our great upward path as a nation. A student who had appeared to be paying no attention at all spoke up suddenly, challenging the teacher: "So you're saying this class here is against the law? We're breaking the law here? Can I call the cops?" Everyone cracked up, but the disruptive student was highlighting the obvious: Here was a segregated classroom in a segregated school in a country that had outlawed school segregation decades ago. It doesn't take perceptive young people anytime at all to sniff out the duplicity and the dirty-dealing in the nothing-but-the-facts agenda, and to conclude that all schools lie. Teachers lie. Parents lie. In fact the whole edifice of adult society is a complete phony, a tangled and fiddly fraud sailing smoothly along on an enforced sea of silence. Some students submit to the empire of deception, concluding that the price of the ticket includes winking at the massive hoax and promising to keep quiet and go along - they'll hopefully get

rewarded by-and-by. Many other students go in the opposite direction: Their insights lead them to insurgent actions and gestures and styles, all matter-of-fact performances of self-affirmation as well as hard-nosed refusals of complicity and rejections of a world that is determinedly disinterested in their aspirations and perceptions and insights. There's a genre of jokes that all end with the same punch line: In one version, a man comes unannounced and unexpectedly upon his partner in the intimate embrace of another and explodes in accusation. The accused looks up indignantly and says: "Who are you going to believe? Me, or your own lying eyes?" Kids get it viscerally: Schools are asking them to ignore their immediate experiences and their direct interpretations - their own lying eyes. Who you going to believe? In The Golden Notebook, Doris Lessing offers a compelling statement about modern education as a dominion of deception: It may be that there is no other way of educating people. Possibly, but I don't believe it. In the meantime it would be a help at least to describe things properly, to call things by their right names. Ideally, what should be said to every child, repeatedly, throughout his or her school life is something like this: "You are in the process of being indoctrinated ... What you are being taught here is an amalgam of current prejudice and the choices of this particular culture ... You are being taught by people who have been able to accommodate themselves to a regime of thought laid down by their predecessors. It is a self-perpetuating system ... you ... [must] find ways of educating yourself - educating your own judgment..." Schools chug along on the rails of indoctrination and propaganda: Everywhere you look and in every direction lies the hype of the curriculum and the disingenuous spin about young people. Students are routinely subjected to an alphabet soup of sticky, inaccurate labels, mistrusted and controlled, and defined as lacking the essential qualities that make one fully human. On a daily basis and as part of the normal routine, schools engage in the toxic habit of labeling students by their presumed deficits, and officially endorse failure - especially for children of the least powerful - in the name of responsibility and objectivity and consequences. And everywhere you look and in spite of it all, youth are making their wobbly ways toward enlightenment and liberation, the twin pillars of an education of purpose. From Youth Speaks in Oakland to the Baltimore Algebra Project and the Chicago Freedom School, they are having their say and forging their unique pathways. And right next to them are wondrous teachers in countless spaces and places organizing small insurgencies and underground railroads, bursts of purpose and power growing through the cracks in the concrete. These are teachers whose faith in the young calls them to dive into the contradictions, to find ways through the mechanisms of control, to tell the truth when it must be told, and to take the side of the child. Between the World and Me will be required reading for those teachers, and it will be on my syllabus in the fall. Get ready. Source: <http://www.truth-out.org/progressivepicks/item/32443-sparking-curiosity-for-truth-in-the-classroom-an-appreciation-of-ta-nehisi-coates-between-the-world-and-me>

Rosie O'Donnell Bad Parent: "Rosie O'Donnell stole my baby, but I don't want her money. I just want my daughter back." Deanna claimed in the interview that she and Chelsea have been in contact through Facebook and text. It was during these exchanges that Chelsea allegedly revealed she is having problems with her adoptive mother. 'Chelsea has told me she had issues with Rosie,' said Deanna. 'I believe Rosie has abandoned her. Since about the age of 12, Rosie basically shipped off Chelsea to different boarding schools.'" Source: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3202514/Rosie-O-Donnell-s-daughter-Chelsea-17-reported-MISSING-need-medical-attention-seen-one-week-ago-not-taking-medication.html>

Mass. governor says police logs deserve consideration in foster care process [Comment](#) 2 By Andy Metzger State House News Service telegram.com By Andy Metzger State House News Service Posted Aug. 18, 2015 at 7:19 PM By Andy Metzger State House News Service Posted Aug. 18, 2015 at 7:19 PM » RELATED CONTENT • [Investigators return to Auburn foster home of 2-year-old who died...](#) By Andy Metzger State House News Service Posted Aug. 18, 2015 at 7:19 PM BOSTON - The death of a foster child in Auburn has raised the question of whether the number of police calls to an address should be part of the foster program's background check process, Gov. Charlie Baker said Tuesday. The Baker administration has learned that the Auburn foster mother was visited by police on several occasions before she was licensed as a foster parent. The licensing process involves significant background checks, Baker said. "One of the questions that's been raised coming on the heels of what happened here was: Do we believe that as part of the process going forward associated with applying to be a foster parent we should check the 911 data?" Baker said. He said, "I think that's a really good question." Baker also said that many of the 911 calls were made by the mother about vandalism or other problems in the neighborhood. "I kind of think we shouldn't be punishing people for doing that," Baker said. While state officials wrestle with what happened at the home in Auburn, what happened in a child-neglect case in Hardwick, and how to protect children in state custody, the office charged with overseeing the state's care of children is soon to be vacant. The Boston Herald reported Tuesday that Child Advocate Gail Garinger plans to step down on Sept. 11. Garinger told the News Service she alerted the incoming administration shortly before they took office in January that she wanted to step down by June. "I really want to cut back a bit and not work full time," said Garinger, who hoped she would be able to accomplish some remaining tasks and keep the office moving forward through the first half of the year. The departure date has been moved up to Sept. 11. "I had hoped that we would have a permanent successor by the time of my departure," Garinger said. A Baker administration official said the Office of the Child Advocate informed Baker's chief of staff, Steve Kadish, of plans to step down in late March. On Tuesday, Baker said he was not exactly sure why Garinger is resigning. "I don't know what the reason is," Baker told reporters. Baker said the nominating committee has "about six or seven candidates they're talking to. We'll see where it goes." The child advocate serves at the pleasure of the governor and without any oversight from the Department of Children and Families where she provides an oversight role. Garinger also provides oversight to the juvenile justice system and other areas of state government that provide service to children. The office was first established by former Gov. Deval Patrick under an executive order and was later granted subpoena power by the Legislature. A former juvenile court judge who served as general counsel to Children's Hospital in the 1970s, Garinger was Patrick's pick to be the first child advocate in 2008. State law lays out a process in which the nominating committee gives the governor three candidates for the post. Baker contrasted the July case of a 7-year-old Hardwick boy under DCF supervision who slipped into a coma and last weekend's death of a 2-year-old foster child in Auburn with the Fitchburg case that galvanized calls for reform of the child welfare agency in 2013 and 2014. In 2013, Jeremiah Oliver had been missing for months without any officials knowing about it even though he was purportedly under the watch of state social workers. The boy's body was found along a highway in Sterling in 2014. "We have exactly the opposite issue here, which is in both these cases there was a lot of oversight, a lot of visits, a lot of eyes on kids, which is one of the things we talked to the commissioner and the secretary about right out of the gate and yet here we are," Baker said. "Clearly we have to do better." After the Oliver case, the former commissioner of the Department of Children and Families resigned and state government provided the agency with a funding boost and technology upgrades. Source: <http://www.telegram.com/article/20150818/NEWS/150819204>

Jackson group home still closed after student's death By - Associated Press - Wednesday, August 19, 2015 JACKSON HOLE, Wyo. (AP) - Operations at a Jackson group home are still suspended nearly two months after a student died at the facility. The Jackson Hole News and Guide reports (<http://bit.ly/1foVYg1>) representatives of the Wyoming Department of Family Services confirmed this week that an ongoing investigation has stalled most services at Van Vleck House. The department began reviewing operations at Van Vleck House, a long-term residential placement for at-risk youth, following the student's death June 25. Initial police reports indicated the death was the result of either self-harm or an accident. Students have been pulled from the Van Vleck House and relocated to other crisis shelters in the state. A Teton Youth and Family Services spokeswoman says they have been cooperating with officials during the state's investigation and are hoping to resume services soon. Source: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/aug/19/jackson-group-home-closed-after-students-death/>

The government's 'boot camp' idea is built on myths [Fiona Twycross](#) 19 August, 2015 (4 days ago) [320 78 14 Good Society](#) Most young people want to work, there just aren't enough jobs for them. If the government wishes to create a 'no excuses' culture to youth unemployment then its first step has to be creating the jobs and apprenticeships young people are crying out for. It ought to go without saying that we should do everything we possibly can to arm young people with all the skills, knowledge and confidence they will need to be as employable as possible. On that basis Monday's [announcement](#) that young people will be placed on 'activity programmes' should be welcome. What is less welcome is the misleading rhetoric the policies are wrapped up in. Listen to the government and you'd be forgiven for believing all young people sit on the dole in need of army style 'bootcamps' and the threat of benefit removal to motivate them. In reality most young people want to work and get on, and are some of our most entrepreneurial and creative citizens. Some of their best skills can often fall outside of the traditional career routes - think apps developed in bedrooms by creative teenagers. Whilst not everyone will turn out to be the next Bill Gates it is government's job to educate and prepare young people for the working world and then, through fair and balanced stewardship of the economy, do everything possible to ensure the jobs are there for them when that education comes to an end. The truth is that too often our young people are ready, willing and eager to work but the jobs are just not there. Many have been badly let down by the decisions made by the current government and by the recent coalition. Some groups of young people find it harder to find work - for example since 2010 [there has been](#) a 49 per cent rise in the number of young BME people

unemployed for a year or more. The decision to provide jobless young people with employability training to develop soft skills and CV writing is positive. But you have to wonder if we'd need this announcement if the last government hadn't scrapped the Connexions service which provided exactly this type of training in schools, and instead implemented a disastrous reform of careers guidance. The result was to leave in its place a gaping hole in the preparedness of pupils for the world of work. Giving responsibility to schools to provide careers guidance was a move which Ofsted found led to unequal and poor access to impartial careers advice, which includes skills such as CV writing and interview techniques. Young people should not leave school at the age of 18 without the ability to write a CV and apply for jobs, or the social skills to navigate an interview, but it seems that this is often the case. By adding a punitive element to the deal, withdrawing job seekers allowance for those who refuse to take the course, the government seems to imply it is young 'job seekers' themselves that are the problem – obviously not wanting to improve their own chances of getting a job. In a very small minority of cases this may carry some truth, but it's more down to a lack appropriate jobs to apply for, not an untidy CV. That can only be solved by government and its time they took responsibility for that. The other obvious question is why this kind of scheme should only apply to young people; surely everyone who wants it should be offered the skills to make them more employable. As is often the case at the start of a parliament, there are things to be welcomed in this announcement – but we will have to wait to see if they are borne out by results. For example, the promise of three million new apprenticeships would make a significant difference – if they are truly high quality and targeted at young people. Apprenticeship performance in recent years teaches us to be cautious. In 2012 for example, Boris Johnson pledged 250,000 new apprenticeships by 2016. With less than a year to go we're not even half way. Add to that the fact that [almost half \(44 per cent\)](#) (p.21) of the 96,500 apprenticeships started in London between 2012 and 2014 went to people aged over 25 with many of them more akin to subsidised in-work training than entry level roles. The popularity of apprenticeships actually illustrates my wider point. The latest figures show that in London there are 17 people chasing each apprenticeship. Far from the work-shy myth perpetuated by some, young people are clearly eager to get into work, willing even to tolerate the pitiful minimum wage of £2.73 per hour which uniquely applies to apprentices. Giving unemployed young people a work-skills 'bootcamp' might be useful in some cases (and sounds tough) but it doesn't magic up the jobs they want and need. Nor does it solve the underlying skills problem and explain why government is cutting investment in soft skills and careers guidance at school. What this new scheme looks like in practice will tell a lot about the government's intentions. Are we talking high quality training or simply a tough-sounding tick box? One breeds results, the other a throwaway headline. By implying it is young people's fault rather than a failure of government when they can't get the job, the Conservatives are building up excuses in advance for their failure to deliver for the young unemployed. This is neither helpful or acceptable. Source: <http://leftfootforward.org/2015/08/the-governments-boot-camp-idea-is-built-on-myths/>

Family questions arrest of woman who's spoken out about Native Americans in foster care By DIRK LAMMERS Associated Press August 19, 2015 — 4:30pm Text size [comment0](#) [share0](#) [tweet0](#) [email](#) Print more Share on: [Share on LinkedIn](#) [Share on Google+](#) [Share on Pinterest](#) Copy shortlink: Purchase: [Order Reprint](#) SIOUX FALLS, S.D. — Family members of a Crow Creek Sioux Tribe woman who has spoken out against South Dakota's handling of Native American children in foster care are questioning whether her arrest on a 13-year-old charge was politically motivated. But Sara Rabern, spokeswoman for the South Dakota Attorney General's Office, said Wednesday that the arrest of 54-year-old Janice Howe, of Harrold, is simply a case of authorities finally catching up with someone who has been able to evade an old warrant. "There's nothing politically motivated here," she said. Howe pleaded guilty Tuesday to one felony count of perjury related to petition signatures she gathered in 1999 for a proposed constitutional amendment. In exchange for prosecutors dropping several similar charges, Howe acknowledged improperly vouching in a notarized document that she witnessed signatures on the petition. She was released from the Hughes County jail Wednesday afternoon pending an Oct. 6 sentencing. Howe's husband, Louis Adrian, told the Pierre Capital Journal that the couple was returning from Fort Thompson to their home on the Crow Creek reservation on July 13 when they drove into a checkpoint arrest involving tribal police, U.S. marshals and Hughes County deputies. Adrian said he believes South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley pursued the arrest because of Howe's outspokenness against the state. Rabern said Jackley wasn't South Dakota's attorney general when the case was initiated and the prosecutor on the case has since moved on to private practice. Howe, a former public health nurse, was featured in a 2011 National Public Radio investigation that reported that state officials removed hundreds of Native American children each year, sometimes in questionable circumstances, while failing to place the children with their relatives or tribes. State officials at the time said that they were doing everything they could to keep families together. Howe took on the issue while fighting to have two granddaughters returned to the family. The Indian Child Welfare Act gives preference to American Indian families in adoptions of Indian children. Congress passed the act in 1978 after finding a high number of Indian children were removed from their homes and placed with non-Indian caretakers. Howe's attorney, Bradley Schreiber, did not immediately return a call Wednesday seeking comment on her arrest. Adrian said he learned that tribal officials gave permission to law enforcement agencies to make the arrest. Roxanne Sazue, chairwoman of the Crow Creek Tribe, said she didn't have any information on the case. The ballot initiative in question was sponsored by a libertarian group called Justice Unlimited. It would have allowed people accused of crimes to argue that certain laws have no merit and should be ignored by juries. The group pulled Howe's petitions from its filing amid doubts about their legitimacy. The measure failed. During Tuesday's court hearing in Pierre, Howe also pleaded guilty to one count of forgery related to a 2001 check-cashing case, according to the Hughes County State's Attorney's Office. Source: <http://www.startribune.com/critic-of-south-dakota-foster-care-arrested-on-old-charge/322329971/>

State pulls teen inmates from fire line after shooting By KARA KOSTANICH, KOMO 4 NEWS Published 9:32 pm, Monday, August 24, 2015 SEATTLE -- A team of juvenile inmates helping the firefight in eastern Washington was pulled from the fire line Monday after one of the troubled teens escaped and tried to take his own life. A team of 20 juvenile inmates from the Nesalle Youth Camp had been part of a program working alongside the Department of Natural Resources, helping bring Washington's relentless fires under control. "One of the things Naselle does effectively is help give them good skills to help them be successful once they get back to the community," said David Griffith with Washington's Juvenile Justice Rehab Administration, which oversees Naselle. But on Thursday, a 16-year-old inmate helping in the fire fight allegedly assaulted a female guard and then escaped. When deputies found him Saturday, he pulled out a hand gun they say he stole from a car and tried to take his own life. "This young man had some issues and was troubled, and hopefully we'll help him sort that out and we'll get him back on the right track," Griffith said. Griffith said 20 juvenile inmates volunteered and went through 40 hours of training to be part of a team that prepared food and helped mop up the fire. The program doesn't require parental approval, but parents are part of the treatment plan and are aware of what the teens are doing, Griffith said. "This is a rare incident," Griffith said. "You can't take this one incident and generalize it to all the work we've been doing." The Juvenile Justice Rehab Administration says the program has been highly successful for more than 50 years with only a few serious incidents. Until last week there had never been a situation where an inmate stole a gun or tried to harm himself. The state is reviewing exactly how last week's incident happened and will make improvements based on the outcome. In the meantime the teen, who is in stable condition at Harborview Medical Center, is facing serious charges. Source: <http://www.seattlepi.com/local/komo/article/State-pulls-teen-inmates-from-fire-line-after-6463389.php> (HEAL Note: Stop enslaving kids and maybe they won't be suicidal.)

People Don't Like Current Education Policies, So Why Do Policy Leaders? The big annual poll on how Americans view public schools and education policy is out, and people who are eager to don the mantle of "education reform" might want to rethink their wardrobe. As education journalist [Valerie Strauss](#) reports the news from her blog at The Washington Post, "The 47th annual PDK-Gallup poll, the longest continuously running survey of American attitudes toward public education ... finds that a majority of Americans, as well as a majority of American public school parents, object to some of the key tenets of modern school reform." What is particularly jarring about the findings of this year's PDK-Gallup poll is how much those results contrast to the pronouncements of current policy leaders from the Democratic Party and Republicans who are vying for their party's presidential nomination. Recent policy pronouncements in the halls of Congress, from the White House, and from political speeches betray a staunch adherence to education policies that are completely not in favor, or are becoming less favorable, among the populace. Look at what the survey tells us. Test And Punish Falls From Favor One of the "tenets" Strauss refers to is what's become known as the ["test and punish"](#) approach to education reform. This approach uses standardized tests to determine whether public schools and educators are being "accountable" with taxpayer money targeted to educating the nation's students. Policy leaders view scores on these assessments as the most authentic measures of student achievement, school performance, and teacher quality view. When test scores inch up, people at the top of the pay scale say this is proof that education reform is ["working."](#) When students don't ["hit the mark"](#) on these exams, there's hell to pay down the line – usually, for rank and file teachers – not because there's something wrong with the policies, but because [those on the frontlines have failed at "implementation."](#) As Strauss points out, of those who answered the PDK-Gallup survey "64 percent say there is too much emphasis on standardized testing" in public schools, and only 7 percent say there isn't enough. A deeper look into the [polling data](#) finds the distaste for testing is overwhelmingly true for blacks, whites, and Hispanics, and among

Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. Also, according to the PDK-Gallup poll, people aren't so keen on using test results to evaluate teachers, as 55 percent of the public, and 63 percent of public school parents, oppose this idea. Here again, the survey responses align across the board, regardless of political party. Common Core Takes A Dive; Are Charters Next? Another tenet of modern school reform, Common Core Standards that have been adopted by 43 states and the District of Columbia, has also fallen out of favor with most of the public. Now that the standards are being rolled out, and people are finally seeing the consequences, a majority, 54 percent, now oppose the standards, with Republicans and Independents mostly opposed and Democrats roughly split. This is a remarkable outcome given that two years ago, PDK-Gallup found that two-thirds of Americans had never heard of the standards. However, in this year's polling, only 12 percent said they had either heard nothing about the Common Core or "didn't know." What do they say about [familiarity](#)? Only one tenet of modern school reform remains: school choice. When asked, "Do you favor or oppose allowing students and their parents to choose which public schools in the community the students attend regardless of where they live?" 64 percent of Americans and 67 percent of public school parents give a favorable response. Also, charter schools get about the same levels of support. However, the standing of school choice in the public's eye may be more precarious than these results indicate. First, allowing parents to use school vouchers to choose a private school to attend at public expense is favored by only 31 percent of Americans. Second, a glance back at [last year's PDK-Gallup survey](#) finds that most do not understand what charter schools are. Currently, only about 6 percent of American public school students have opted to attend a charter, and there are vast sections of the country that have very few to none of these schools. So it's not wild speculation to suggest that charter schools could easily be the next Common Core and become more unpopular as people become more informed about them. What Policy Leaders Don't Get Despite clear signals coming from the public that current "test and punish" policies are off base, policy leaders in the nation's capital continue to press for an extension of that approach. As [Education Week](#) recently reported, in current deliberations focused on rewriting the federal No Child Left Behind act that has set the direction of federal education policy for 13 years, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and US Senators from the Democratic Party recently came down squarely on the side of the status quo in supporting an amendment "that would have required states to establish measurable state-designed goals for all students and separately for each subgroup of students, and to intervene if they didn't meet those goals. It also would have required states to intervene in their lowest-performing 5 percent of schools and those that graduated less than 67 percent of their students." The amendment did not pass, "Fortunately," according to education historian Diane Ravitch, who said, "It would have revived or worsened the punishments of NCLB." Republicans have taken their turns at reinforcing the "test and punish" approach to education policy too, most prominently at a recent summit for Republican presidential candidates hosted by American Federation for Children and The 74, a news venture recently launched by former CNN anchor-turned-education activist Campbell Brown. According to [Salon's Elias Isquith](#), Ohio Governor John Kasich set the tone for the event by [remarking](#), "If I were not president, but if I were King of America, I would abolish all teacher's lounges, where they sit together and worry about 'woe is us.'" Other candidates eagerly matched the negative tone Kasich set, according to Isquith, voicing their disapprovals of teachers and their unions. For instance, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie stated a desire to "punch the teachers' union in the face," repeating a comment he had made previous to the event. Bloggers at [Education Week](#) noticed the Republican candidates generally reinforced arguments for standards and accountability although they differed in their support for Common Core and the role the federal government has in enforcing tests and standards. Motoko Rich, reporting for [The New York Times](#), reported, "The candidates performed a balancing act as they tried to embrace high standards for schoolchildren while shying away from the Common Core." But none of the candidates was bold enough to suggest that the whole drive for standards, testing, and accountability might be flawed. "School choice," continued to be a unifying theme among Republicans, with former Florida Governor Jeb Bush declaring his intention to "allow total voucherization," according to [CBS News](#). Classroom teacher and popular blogger [Peter Greene](#) summarized the Republicans' education positions as "wanting to have it both ways." Teachers deserve some praise, "Except for the many, many, many, many terrible ones." Choice is good except for communities that don't want to take that approach. "Red tape" is a burden, but schools need to be held more accountable. And standards are important as long as they are not Common Core. What Do People Want Instead? Results from the PDK-Gallup poll clearly rubbed those in the education policy establishment the wrong way, prompting [some of them](#) to point to a different survey published just prior. [That poll](#), conducted by a conservative think tank, found "the public backs testing," according to the think tanks' [news release](#), and "only 35 percent of the public expressing opposition" to Common Core standards. Certainly, much of this discrepancy between the two surveys is the result in differences between [the ways questions were worded](#). And no doubt, any evidence of how the general population feels about education policy should be interpreted with [nuance](#). But while the survey from conservatives takes the status quo of tests, standards, and accountability as more or less a given, the PDK-Gallup effort goes further to ask more open-ended questions about what people would prefer instead. And in the responses to these questions do we see even starker contrasts between the public's views and what policy leaders and politicians are saying. First, based on the survey results, Americans overwhelmingly like and support their local schools, with 51 percent giving schools in their own community a grade of either A or B and only 4 percent giving those schools a failing grade. Although there is a great disparity in how Americans view their local schools than they do schools nationwide – with survey respondents grading the nation's schools much more harshly – much of that difference can be attributed to current policy leaders and political candidates who openly bash public schools. Also, when queried about alternatives to tests for measuring the effectiveness of public schools, "A strong majority (about eight in 10) of Americans believe how engaged students are with their classwork and their level of hope for the future are very important for. Fewer rated the percentage of graduates attending college and getting a job right after high school as very important. Testing came in last as a measure of effectiveness with just 14 percent." Further, when PDK-Gallup asked Americans what were the biggest problems facing their local schools, survey respondents overwhelmingly replied "lack of financial support." Democrats and Independents were about equally assured that money for schools was lacking, while Republicans were split between the need for funding versus the need for standards and "quality." So the schools American families participate in are generally doing their jobs, but we need better, more qualitative ways of assessing their work, and what schools mostly need is more funding and support. Why don't we ever hear policy makers and political leaders talk about that? The reason we don't is that in our current political climate, the "test and punish" reform policy is the easier path to travel. Stern rhetoric and "tough-minded" policy-making are rewarded as being "very serious" approaches to governing. Taking a position to support a valued institution like public schools, to assess their outcomes in a richer, student-centered way, and to ensure adequate, equitable funding, would take something altogether different – something more like, you know, real leadership. Source: <http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/people-dont-like-current-education-policies-so-why-do-policy-leaders/>

In Texas, group homes operate in a gray area of regulation By [Kevin Schwaller](#) Published: August 21, 2015, 6:51 pm Updated: August 22, 2015, 5:47 pm AUSTIN (KXAN) — Not all group homes and boarding houses have to be regulated by the state. When they fall short of needing a state license, it's up to local rules to decide on how much oversight the homes need. The Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services is looking into Zoe's Place at 8007 Burnet Road after complaints about air conditioning and an insect infestation. Austin Police records show emergency crews were called out to the Burnet Road address nearly 70 times since the beginning of the year. Although, it's unclear when the boarding home moved in to the location. By comparison authorities were called to the address three times last year. The state regulator also recently investigated another Austin group home. Austin City Council Member Ora Houston heads up the Health and Human Services Committee and is pushing for changes. "There has been an issue with unregulated homes in this city for the last seven years," said Austin City Council Member Ora Houston. Houston says in 2009, the state passed standards for municipalities to regulate certain group homes, but Austin has not implemented those standards. "We are still trying to figure that out," said Houston. "We have been working very closely with the code department. We've been working with the fire department EMS and police because they serve these homes directly." Houston says city leaders plan to meet with the code department in September. Even though some homes may fall outside of the state and city oversight, Austin technically requires licenses for boarding facilities. The code department says there are currently 34 active boarding home licenses. Source: <http://kxan.com/2015/08/21/in-texas-group-homes-operate-in-a-gray-area-of-regulation/>

Call for Improvement to Protect the Rights of Children in Care 21 August 2015 A new research report released today by the Human Rights Commission examines the Rights of Children in Care in Northern Ireland. It highlights there are currently more 'looked after children' in Northern Ireland than at any time since the Children Order came into effect and that the numbers of child protection and children in need referrals are on an upward curve. Chief Commissioner Les Allamby stated: "In 2015 we are even more aware how very vulnerable children in care are, children who for whatever reason cannot live with their families, must be offered the highest level of human rights protection. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child requires the best interests of the child to be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies. At the time compiling this report there were over 2,800 looked after children in Northern Ireland, almost one

fifth of these children had been in the system for 5-10 years. Our research identifies on-going difficulties with the current system and indicates that reforms are required in a number of areas. Our aim is for improvements be made without delay as it is essential that our laws and practices protect children's human rights at every step of their journey through the care system." The report identifies a number of areas for improvement, including: Practice of Moving Children: The report highlights that some children are facing placement moves due to financial pressure within Trusts', for example, moving from private foster placements, to Trust's foster placements. Of the looked after children who had placement moves in the year 2012- 2013, over 20% had between one to three placement moves. While these figures indicate that the majority of Looked After Children are in relatively stable placements, those who continue to experience placement moves are exposed to "a level of intense disruption" and "a risk to their sense of security and stability". Delay in N.I Adoption Process: The report shines the spotlight again on the N.I Adoption process. Despite the Department for Health and Social Services and Public Safety's recognition are far back as 2006 that the current law is out of date. The Adoption order NI Order 1987 has not been reformed. The Commission recommends that Department should expeditiously bring forward new legislation which addresses concerns surrounding adoption in NI, including delay. The right of the child to be heard and taken seriously: The report captures the voice of looked after young people who expressed that they feel a strong sense of powerlessness and lack of decision making in their care. It indicates that inadequate information is available regarding the protection of the right of affected children to be heard and taken seriously, as well as the participation of parents, at crucial stages of the child welfare system including: • in the care planning process; • in determinations regarding secure accommodation. Concerns over criminalisation of young people in residential care: Interviewee's in the report highlighted that young people in residential care were being penalised for offences in a way that they would not if they resided with their parents. They also stated that the practice of calling police out should only occur as a measure of last resort and that focus should be on finding alternative means of dealing with incidents. Concern was also expressed by some of those interviewed for the purposes of this report at the lack of consistency across residential care settings in how they responded to incidents, and suggested that there was a need for more staff training and learning from good practice. Further information: For further information please contact Claire Martin on: claire.martin@nihrc.org (028) 9024 3987). Notes to editors 1. The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission is an independent statutory body first proposed in the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement (1998) and established in 1999 by the Northern Ireland Act (1998). It is answerable to Parliament at Westminster. 2. Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is in the child's best interests and States are required to provide assistance to parents in fulfilling their parental responsibilities in order to prevent the need for alternative care. However, international standards also require the child's safety to be secured and in certain circumstances the child will need to be placed in alternative care in order to fulfil these rights. 3. At 31 March, 2014 there were 2,858 looked after children in Northern Ireland. • 249 (9%) been looked after for more than 10 years • 547 (19%) children had been looked after for between 5 and 10 years. 4. At 31 March, 2013 there were 2, 807 looked after children in Northern Ireland. • 247 children (9%) were Looked After for more than 10 years. • 529 children (19%) were Looked After for between 5 and 10 years. • 447 children (16%) were Looked After for between 3 and 5 years. • 862 children (31%) were Looked After for between 1 and 3 years. • 722 children (26%) were Looked After for less than a year. 5. The UNCRC requires the best interests of the child to be a primary consideration "in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies." This requirement is also reflected in international human rights standards regarding the rights of children such as the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. Similarly the Declaration on Social and Legal Principles relating to the Protection and Welfare of Children, with Special Reference to Foster Placement and Adoption Nationally and Internationally states that: "In all matters relating to the placement of a child outside the care of the child's own parents, the best interests of the child, particularly his or her need for affection and right to security and continuing care, should be the paramount consideration." 6. Access the Report: [Alternative Care and Children's Rights in Northern Ireland](http://www.nihrc.org/news/call-for-improvement-to-protect-the-rights-of-children-in-care) Source: <http://www.nihrc.org/news/call-for-improvement-to-protect-the-rights-of-children-in-care>

Mauritanian new anti-slavery law: Effective enforcement is the key – UN rights expert GENEVA (21 August 2015) – United Nations Special Rapporteur Urmila Bhoola applauded the adoption of a new anti-slavery law in Mauritania that doubles the maximum prison sentence for the crime of slavery from 10 to 20 years and creates special tribunals for prosecution of slavery and slavery-like practices. However, she cautioned, "this welcome development needs to be followed by its full implementation." "Slavery and slavery-like practices can be eradicated only if the existing laws, policies and programmes are implemented fully and effectively," said the independent expert designated by the UN Human Rights Council to monitor and report on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences. The Special Rapporteur commended the Government for taking this important step towards replacing the 2007 anti-slavery law, which had proven to be ineffective in terms of prosecution. Commenting on the new anti-slavery legislation adopted by the Mauritanian National Assembly last week, Ms. Bhoola hailed the fact that it gives the right to civil society organisations to lodge complaints in courts on behalf of the victims as civil party but noted that the requirements set in the law might impede some of them to do so. The Law also foresees free legal assistance for victims and refers to their right to reparation, however without elaborating on its modalities. She noted that the new legislation, despite some shortcomings, was an indication of the Government's commitment to implement the road map on the eradication of contemporary forms of slavery, adopted by the Council of Ministers in March 2014. "It is necessary that the implementing legislation regarding special tribunals adopts a rights-based approach, including by ensuring the right to an effective access to justice for all victims," the Special Rapporteur emphasised. Ms. Bhoola highlighted the need for "a holistic approach to eradicating slavery, combining the criminal law approach with measures aimed at addressing root causes of contemporary forms of slavery and programmes for victim protection, assistance and socio-economic integration with a view of providing them with alternative livelihoods." In this regard, the expert called on Mauritania to step up its efforts to implement the road map drawing on the recommendations made by the previous Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery following her official country visit to Mauritania in 2009, and the national action plan stemming from the road map. The Special Rapporteur offered to provide Mauritania with technical assistance and called for resources to be made available for tackling slavery and slavery-like practices, including by the international community. Ms. Urmila Bhoola (South Africa) assumed her mandate as Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences on 2 June 2014. Ms. Bhoola is an international human rights lawyer specialised in gender equality and labour law. She has 20 years of experience as a labour and human rights lawyer in South Africa and served as a Judge of the South African Labour Court for five years. She is a former Executive Director of International Women's Rights Action Watch for the Asia Pacific (IWRAP AP). Learn more, log on to: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Slavery/SRSlavery/Pages/SRSlaveryIndex.aspx> The Special Rapporteurs are part of what is known as the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council's independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures' experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity. UN Human Rights, Country Page – Mauritania: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/MENARegion/Pages/MRIndex.aspx> For more information and media requests please contact Ms. Janja Sinković (+41 22 928 9356 /jsinkovic@ohchr.org) or write to srslavery@ohchr.org Source: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16338&LangID=E>

Texans can help end child abuse - San Antonio Express-News Texans can help end child abuse Kurt Senske, For the Express-News Published 12:00 am, Sunday, August 23, 2015 The narrative around foster care in Texas usually centers on overloaded caseworkers, traumatized children and a flawed, underfunded state system. However, few of us look in the mirror and wonder what we ourselves can do to improve the lives of Texas children in foster care. Upbring, the largest nonprofit foster placement and adoption agency in Texas, believes that as members of a caring community, we all share responsibility for helping to raise healthy children prepared to embrace successful lives. In San Antonio, there are some wonderful stories of families stepping in to fill a great need. For instance, there are the contributions of David and [Teresa Ebert](#). Licensed foster parents since 2000, Teresa is a registered nurse who has a big heart for foster children with primary medical needs — vulnerable children who require extra care and attention due to terminal illnesses. The Eberts have fostered more than 30 children over the past 15 years. One of their many special stories is about a little girl named Angelina, who they adopted. Not expected to live, she was referred for hospice care services. Yet, miraculously, Angelina was released from hospice care four years ago and has been receiving 24-hour nursing care since. We are privileged to work with many families throughout Texas like the Eberts. If we intend to fundamentally improve the foster care system, we need more families like theirs, as well as greater participation from every sector of our community. Our mission is to break the cycle of child abuse by empowering children, families and communities. With more than 13 percent of U.S. children subject to abuse or neglect by a caregiver each year, maltreatment of children is

a pervasive problem affecting kids of every age, gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic background. Upbring recognizes the importance of improving the well-being of and long-term prospects for children, youth and families across our state. We know that 30 percent of people who were abused as children become abusers; 66,572 Texas children were confirmed victims of child abuse and neglect last year, most for the first time. Also in the Lone Star State in 2014, more than 17,000 children were removed from their homes; additionally, as the result of a recent study, we now know that over their lifetimes, this abuse and neglect costs the Texas economy an estimated \$454 billion. If we intend to break the cycle of child abuse, we must be comprehensive in our strategy. Kids enter the child welfare system at different stages of their lives and we must address the full spectrum of their needs. To do so, Upbring has established an innovative continuum of services and partnerships tracking progress across five key markers: safety, life skills, education, health and vocation. Currently, there is surprisingly little long-term data on Texas foster children or what strategies prove successful in serving them. To fill this void, Upbring is partnering with the [University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work](#) on a first-of-its-kind-in-Texas study that will track the progress and well-being of foster children. With comprehensive data, we will be better positioned to more consistently care for and meet foster children's varied needs — and we'll be better prepared to help these children as they age out of foster care. [Kurt Senske](#) is president & CEO of Upbring, the new [Lutheran Social Services of the South](#), a faith-based nonprofit organization devoted to breaking the cycle of child abuse. Source: <http://www.mysanantonio.com/opinion/commentary/article/Texans-can-help-end-child-abuse-6458428.php>

Former employee at group home charged with sexual assault Posted: Aug 23, 2015 11:04 AM PDT Updated: Aug 23, 2015 11:04 AM PDT NASHUA, N.H. (AP) - Police say a Massachusetts man charged with aggravated felonious sexual assault was a former employee of the Nashua Children's Home, where the 16-year-old victim was a resident when the assault occurred. The Telegraph of Nashua reports (<http://bit.ly/1Jpvf1b>) 30-year-old Jordan Dorsey of Lawrence, Massachusetts, turned himself into police earlier this month and is free on bail. The home's executive director, David Villiotti, says Dorsey was fired after the incident and hasn't worked there since June 16. Dorsey is due back in court for a Sept. 16 arraignment. He faces up to 15 years in behind bars if he's convicted. A phone listing for Dorsey could not be found Sunday. It's unclear if he has an attorney who could comment on the charges. Information from: The Telegraph, <http://www.nashuatelegraph.com> Source: <http://www.abc6.com/story/29860333/former-employee-at-group-home-charged-with-sexual-assault>

AAC encounters more scrutiny August 24, 2015 by Julie Miller, Editor in Chief [Share on facebook](#) [Share on linkedin](#) [Share on twitter](#) [Share on google](#) [More Sharing Services](#) | [Reprints](#) On August 20, AAC Holdings, Inc. presented an [update](#) to stockholders and the public in response to a number of online reports regarding the recent murder indictment against American Addiction Centers (AAC) and five of its employees. As the only public company solely in the addiction space, AAC faces greater scrutiny than a typical treatment center operation. "Short-sellers have been working overtime to spin out misinformation," said CEO Michael Cartwright, during the call. Cartwright highlighted among other things AAC's commitment to quality care, pointed to statistics demonstrating that AAC experiences fewer patient deaths per discharge than the industry average, and reiterated that AAC is not at fault for the patient death cited in the Riverside County, Calif. indictment. Additionally, he clarified the current role of company executive Jerrod Menz, who was among those charged in the case. Menz had been AAC's president and a member of the board of directors until the indictment was announced in late July. According to an AAC press release at that time, Menz "voluntarily stepped down from those roles to address these charges." Observers believed Menz had cut ties to AAC entirely, but Cartwright said that is not the case. "Jerrod Menz has not resigned from the company," he said. "Although he resigned from his policy making functions, including his role as president and director of the company, he remains very much active in developing business to expand our operations. We anticipate Jerrod will resume his former role once this case is resolved." A new website launched last week as well: aacthetruth.com. The site offers industry data from SAMHSA on deaths per discharge and instructions for obtaining the original coroner's report on the patient death from Riverside County by mail for \$23. [Blog: The Least You Need To Know About the AAC Charges](#) Public company Being a public company, AAC must be far more transparent than other treatment centers, according to Dexter Braff, MBA, president of the Braff Group. The risk is not so much in revealing day-to-day operations to the competition but rather in the company's obligation to disclose unique situations such as pending litigation. "The general notion is that transparency is an issue because everyone knows what you're doing," Braff tells Behavioral Healthcare. "Folks think twice about going public because of exactly that." AAC's stock experienced a sharp drop in early August as a result of the indictment surfacing, but it slowly began to regain some ground in the weeks since. After the August 20 update call, the stockholders did not react unfavorably, he says. "Especially for companies like AAC that see its stock rise dramatically over a short period of time, it is likely when there are stumbles to see it decline fast," Braff says. Stock prices could recover over time. As prices rose in the early days of AAC trading, there was novel exuberance in the marketplace, Braff says, and he's not surprised the news of the indictment took the air out of the high-flying stock. The fact that it's moving in an upward trend now tells a story, he says. Treatment center operations It will be months if not years before the industry knows the ultimate fate of AAC and its employees named in the case. Other treatment providers can potentially learn something from the situation, however. Fernando Gutierrez, a registered professional guardian and bioethicist in Florida, says that residential treatment centers must consider not just the patients' health status but also the patients' ability to make their own treatment decisions before intake. Specifically, Gutierrez wonders, based on the reports he's read, whether the patient identified in the AAC case was healthy enough for air travel to the AAC treatment center in California and whether an advocate or primary care provider would have recommended against it. "The family or the airline might have culpability," he says. "That's an issue that has not been addressed." Engaging the patient's regular care provider—or an independent advocate if the patient has no caregivers—might be part of due diligence before accepting anyone with medical comorbidities. "It helps treatment centers reduce liability," Gutierrez says. Source: <http://www.behavioral.net/article/public-company-aac-encounters-more-scrutiny>

--> Amended case filed against Rhode Island child welfare system Posted 10:07 p.m. Monday Updated 10:08 p.m. Monday 17 1 16 PROVIDENCE, R.I. — The Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families has egregiously failed children in its care and continues to put them "in harm's way," an advocacy group alleged in filing an amended federal lawsuit Monday. New-York based Children's Rights filed the complaint as a class-action lawsuit on behalf of some 1,800 children in Rhode Island's foster care system. A federal judge last year dismissed the original lawsuit, but a federal appeals court vacated the judge's decision and sent the case back to the lower court. The amended complaint said DCYF has not improved its services since the original lawsuit was filed in 2007, and it cited the cases of children it says were abused. One 9-year-old boy has been in foster care for five years and separated from his siblings, the group says. He was hospitalized after a foster parent was unable to care for him and was sexually abused while in group care. Another child, 11, was placed in a home with a registered sex offender and was sexually abused by a child in another foster home. The lawsuit said DCYF doesn't limit the number of children who can be assigned to a caseworker; children are placed in unlicensed homes; they aren't able to visit their families; and foster care maintenance payments are "grossly inadequate." The complaint asked the court to order the state to keep casework to a manageable load, recruit more foster homes and improve payments for foster parents. It also said the state needs consistent licensing and abuse investigation practices. An audit of DCYF last month revealed lapses in management and financial controls within the agency, which has been plagued for years by budget deficits. Gov. Gina Raimondo, who took office in January and called for the audit, announced afterward the agency will be overhauled. Plans to restructure the department may be completed this fall. "Sadly, children in Rhode Island foster care today continue to suffer the same harms that led to the initial filing of this case," Sara Bartosz, lead counsel for Children's Rights, said in a news release. "We now intend to secure an enforceable court order assuring that the glaring systemic defects placing children at risk are finally addressed." The attorney general's office, which represents the department, declined to comment. Read more at http://www.wral.com/advocacy-group-files-amended-complaint-against-dcyf/14852023/#6B2KeUGHjoVMWs9V_99

3Qs: Fixing Massachusetts' troubled foster care system August 26, 2015 by [Matthew McDonald](#) Last week, the death of a 2-year-old foster child in Auburn, Massachusetts, drew widespread attention to the state's troubled child welfare system. As criticism of its Department of Children and Families continues to mount, we spoke with Northeastern professors [Elise Dallimore](#) and [Christie Rizzo](#). Dallimore, an associate professor of communication studies and a foster parent herself, studies the role of communication in the process of organizational learning, including methods for enhancing organizational development activities. Rizzo, an associate professor of applied psychology who served as the assistant director of the Juvenile Mental Health Clinic at the Rhode Island Family Court, studies the prevention of high-risk behaviors among adolescents in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. Northeastern professors Elise Dallimore and Christie Rizzo discuss Massachusetts' troubled child welfare system and the changes that should be made to improve it. Photo from iStock Do you believe the recent criticism leveled at the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families is warranted? Dallimore: As an educator who requires students to be skilled in utilizing data to improve organizational decision-making, I am deeply troubled by the lack of assessment done in this country, and

particularly in the state of Massachusetts, to document and then share best practices for enhancing the quality of foster care. The public hears stories in the press of foster children who suffer abuse, neglect, and even death while in foster care in Massachusetts. What they do not hear are the frustrations of many committed social workers, lawyers, and child advocates who are constrained by policies, procedures, and state-mandated requirements that, based on their professional training and experience, they know to be counter productive if not downright dangerous. My experience would suggest that many social workers are chronically overworked and under-resourced only to find their efforts scrutinized by an otherwise disinterested and fault-finding public, including stakeholders with competing and mutually-exclusive self interests. Rizzo: The situation is incredibly complex. When a child is harmed under DCF's watch, it is natural to assume that failures in the system are solely to blame for what has taken place. However, that assumption is based on the notion that it is possible to accurately predict the safety of a home environment every time. I would argue that, even when the conditions of the system are perfect, when foster homes are continually reevaluated and data are leveraged to make the placement decision, it is still not possible to be right every time. This is the first hurdle and it is a big one. A second hurdle relates to pragmatics. We are plagued by a dearth of available foster families with whom to place children. A third hurdle relates to the flow of children into the child welfare system—such as the rapid increase caused by the opioid epidemic in Massachusetts and nationwide. When the flow of children into the system increases, the system must care for them despite having the same resources, staffing, training, and foster placements that it had when fewer children were in care. In light of recent events, what changes should be made to improve the foster care system? Dallimore: I see a broken DCF system without a data-based plan or infrastructure for more effectively achieving its fundamental mandate. There is a need for our state to more effectively track and measure current foster practices and to direct attention to benchmarking data, which will help identify best practices elsewhere in the country. There are a number of states that have recently made significant gains in the quality of foster care, such as Virginia, Colorado, Utah, and even Florida, which has historically performed poorly alongside Massachusetts. We need political leaders and a general population who are not only genuinely committed to better understanding the challenges faced by our foster system, but equally committed to addressing those challenges. Rizzo: It is vitally important that DCF has adequate resources to hire the proper number of staff needed to manage the number of children entering and exiting the system at any one time. Staff should be properly credentialed and receive appropriate training for the work that they are being asked to do. They should not be asked to carry more cases than is feasible given the expectations of their job. Staff also need to have timely access to all relevant data regarding foster parents and the children they care for. All of this requires a streamlined system of communication and oversight. Lastly, the quality, adequacy, and availability of resources and training for foster parents should be regularly improved and evaluated. What is the role and the importance of a foster parent? Dallimore: The most fundamental role of a foster parent is as a social advocate. As a foster parent myself, I believe my responsibility is to be a committed advocate for any child placed in my home and entrusted to my care. In attempting to successfully fulfill this role, I have found myself defending a child's interest against opposition posed by medical and educational professionals, other well-meaning but often uninformed community stakeholders, and even an occasional DCF social worker who has not acted in a child's best interest. My personal goal as a foster parent is to both empower and enable one of the most disregarded and disenfranchised segments of our population. Rizzo: Foster parents are invaluable. They volunteer to care for children in their own home until those children are reunited with their biological family, are adopted, or can live independently. Frequently, the amount of time that a child will remain in foster care is unknown, so foster parents are expected to tolerate that uncertainty. What's more, many children and adolescents in foster care present with multiple psychosocial and mental health problems. They have a higher and more complicated burden of disease than other youth including physical, mental, developmental, behavioral, and social-emotional concerns. For this reason, it is the hope that foster parents can provide a home environment that is predictable, caring, and stable so that youth who have experienced trauma, loss, and stress have a chance to feel safe and cared for. Source: <http://www.northeastern.edu/news/2015/08/fixing-massachusetts-troubled-foster-care-system/>

State found foster issues in western region – last year [072315ambert01.jpg](#) Photo by: Ted Fitzgerald Jack Loiselle 1 Wednesday, August 26, 2015 [Print Email 2 Comments](#) By: [Erin Smith](#) Investigators warned last year that children funneled to an unlicensed foster home were part of a widespread problem in the western region of the state — an area that has come under scrutiny after one foster child died and another remains in critical condition, according to a report obtained by the Herald. The investigation by the Department of Early Education and Care — dated July 30, 2014 — found an unlicensed Franklin County foster home had operated without home inspections, training for the foster parents or necessary paperwork completed. A social worker for the Department of Children and Families also failed to check on the children during their first month living in the home, which also served as a day care, the report shows. “The investigation found reasonable cause to believe that there were other foster homes being quickly opened ... that might not meet correct criteria,” stated the EEC report. “This appears to be directly related to a significant shortage of foster homes in that area.” The DCF offices in the western region have come under fire after 2-year-old Avalena Conway-Coxon died and a 22-month-old girl remains in critical condition after being rushed to the hospital from their Auburn foster home, which had been licensed. DCF has also been criticized for failing to remove Jack Loiselle, a 7-year-old Hardwick boy under the agency's watch, before police say he was found starved and beaten by his father last month. After last year's EEC probe, a DCF spokeswoman said the agency initiated a “corrective action plan” and highlighted moves to hire more social workers, update technology and better train staff. The spokeswoman did not respond to questions about whether Lian Hogan, the former director for the western region, was aware of the unlicensed foster homes or if she did anything to fix the problem. The Herald reported last week that Hogan, a top administrator for the DCF's western region, was promoted to acting deputy director of field operations on July 26 — just weeks after Jack was found unconscious. EEC officials wouldn't say how many children where housed at the unlicensed Franklin County foster home last year — declaring the information confidential. A Herald review also found EEC has done very little to hold state child welfare officials accountable. Last year's probe was one of only two DCF foster care reports produced over the past decade by EEC — the supposed state watchdog charged with licensing foster care and adoption. EEC records show licensing inspectors hadn't visited some DCF offices in years. In 2011, EEC officials visited a single office — in Springfield — and used that inspection to renew DCF's foster care license for all nine offices in the western region. In addition, the licensing agency has opened only five investigations into DCF foster care operations and two probes into adoption programs within the past 10 years. The majority of the inquiries were opened before 2010. The most recent EEC foster care investigation was opened in DCF's western region Friday — about a week after Avalena died and the Herald began inquiring about EEC probes. In contrast, there were more than 70 reports of abuse or neglect of foster kids in 2013 alone, according to the Office of the Child Advocate. An EEC spokeswoman said inspectors are reviewing all DCF licenses but did not respond to questions about why there have been so few investigations. Matt Stout contributed to this report. Source: http://www.bostonherald.com/news_opinion/local_coverage/2015/08/state_found_foster_issues_in_western_region_last_year

Abuse and neglect cases rising in Kentucky's 'fractured' foster care system Posted: Aug 27, 2015 8:31 AM PDT Updated: Aug 27, 2015 10:26 AM PDT By Jason Riley [BioEmail Connect Biography jriley@wdrb.com](#) LOUISVILLE, Ky., (WDRB) – As longtime foster parents, Louisville residents Debbie and Roger Lance know better than most the intricacies of navigating Kentucky's foster care program. And they can quickly rattle off the problems they believe the state needs to work on: * The caseload is crushing for the number of social workers in Kentucky, overwhelming the system * The courts are so backed up and the process so cumbersome that it takes several months, if not years, to get a child out of a bad situation * Parents are given too many chances, allowed to keep their children even after allegations of abuse or neglect have been sustained, sometimes repeatedly “Parents are given chance after chance and it's just not fair for the children,” said Debbie Lance, claiming two of her foster kids were abused, yet continued to live with their parents until yet another allegation of neglect was substantiated. “It infuriates me. ... I feel like as foster parents, we have no voice, none.” Child protection experts don't disagree with the Lances. “If the system's not broken, it's at least fractured or sprained,” said Terry Brooks, executive director of Kentucky Youth Advocates, a private organization that promotes child well-being. “We know that more kids face crisis in 2015 than we could ever imagine.” Statistics provided by the Department of Community Based Services, the agency that oversees child protection in Kentucky, appear to support those claims. There were 129,000 calls to a state abuse hotline in fiscal year 2015, up from 108,000 calls in 2011. Of those calls, 60,000 met the criteria for an investigation and in 26,500 cases, the abuse was substantiated. As a comparison, in 2013, 18,000 abuse claims were supported. In addition, the number of Kentucky children removed from homes because of abuse or neglect has been closing in on nearly 8,000 in the last few months, compared to a little more than 7,000 cases in 2010. “Our caseloads are too high right now,” Teresa James, the department's commissioner, said in a recent interview with WDRB. “I don't believe that we have adequate staffing at this department right now to deal with the additional calls, the additional number of children in care and the additional responsibilities for investigations right now.” James said the average caseload is about 20 cases per worker, much higher than it should be, especially given the complexity of the cases. While James couldn't say what she would like the caseload number to be, she said the department was currently figuring out how many more staffers needed to be hired. “It is a significant number and

quite frankly it will be a significant cost to the commonwealth," she said. Experts say caseloads are rising, at least in part, because of increasing drug abuse, especially the heroin epidemic across the state. In her first decade on the bench, Chief Jefferson Family Court Judge Paula Sherlock said she remembers only one case in which a parent was using heroin. "The last two years, on my neglect docket, it's virtually every other case," Sherlock said. Just last week alone, she had 10 hearings to temporarily remove children from their homes -- and six involved parents using heroin. "My observations are that these parents are in very poor physical shape, are either homeless or on their way to being homeless and not easily going to treatment," she said. And in many cases, Sherlock said, parents are choosing heroin instead of their children, refusing to go to treatment and often not even showing up to court. "Even losing their kids is not enough motivation to overcome the pull of addiction," she said. There are currently 971 kids in foster care in Jefferson County, the highest number in the last five years. "My firm belief is we have lost more parents in the last two years to heroin than to a number of years before to prescription pill overdoses." It can take several months, if not more than a year, to remove a child from a home in which allegations of abuse or neglect have been substantiated. James acknowledges the adoption process in Kentucky takes too long. However, under federal guidelines, parents are given up to 18 months to come up with a plan and permanent residency, with some treatment programs lasting as long as a year, she said. "We have to have exhausted all reasonable efforts, is what the law requires of us," James said, adding that foster care is a "last resort," as the goal is to keep families together if possible. "Stats really show us that if kids can be reunified safely, that is the best outcome." Still, James said the department is working to add or expand programs that should improve the system, including a system meant to reduce caller wait times and provide better quality. And the state hopes to work with Kentucky Youth Advocates and expand a "Kinship care" program, in which children go live with family members instead of being put in foster care. Currently, according to Kentucky Youth Advocates, six percent of Kentucky children are in the program, which the organization says is the highest rate in the nation. Brooks said the number of Kentucky kids in Kinship care has doubled in the last ten years. "If our goal is to reunite kids with their parents, family reunification is enhanced through Kinship care," Brooks said. The state has recently created a Kinship hotline to provide resource coordination and support to assist relative caregivers. Both Brooks and James said that Kentucky is making strides to improve the system -- and noted that similar issues are plaguing foster care across the country. "I think there is more awareness about the growing number of kids in crisis and a growing commitment toward those kids," Brooks said. For Debbie and Roger Lance, while they have been frustrated by the system and are hoping for major reform, the end result is worth the struggle. "It's very rewarding, to see the children come into your home, and most of them are broken ... and then to watch them blossom and grow and feel safe and secure - there is nothing that can describe that feeling," Debbie Lance said. Source: <http://www.wdrb.com/story/29893106/abuse-and-neglect-cases-rising-in-kentuckys-fractured-foster-care-system>

Lawmaker wants to study issue of unlicensed group homes Posted: Aug 25, 2015 8:55 PM PDT Updated: Aug 25, 2015 8:55 PM PDT By Samuel King Email_Connect_sking@cbs19_tv Residents of an unlicensed group home treated for heat-related illnesses TYLER (KYTX/KVUE) - State Sen. Kirk Watson has asked Lt. Governor Dan Patrick to allow the Senate Health and Human Services Committee to study the issue of unlicensed assisted living facilities. The request comes after two such facilities were discovered in Central Texas this month. Some of the conditions discovered included a lack of air conditioning, bed bugs, even sometimes no running water. "Are we giving the state government, DADS (Department of Aging and Disability Services) and others, sufficient tools and take care of bad situations and be able to do it in a timely fashion," said Sen. Watson in an interview with KVUE in Austin. Some East Texas facility directors told us they are often frustrated by those who don't follow the law. "I want to stay right with how we are regulated," said Pastor Greg Fleck, Executive Director of the New Creation Foundation in Troup. "We do comply with the building codes and things as we are required, our facility is monitored for fire." Since New Creation is a religious-based organization, it is not required to be licensed by the state, but it is required to register. Nevertheless, Fleck told CBS19 he wants to be in compliance. In 2009, lawmakers passed legislation allowing cities and counties to opt in to regulating boarding homes but only five have enacted such local legislation. The deadline to submit recommendations to the Lt. Governor's office is Sept. 4. Source: <http://www.cbs19.tv/story/29880226/lawmaker-wants-to-study-issue-of-unlicensed-group-homes>

Judge slams foster parents who forced abused child to stand in scalding water By [Priva Joshi](#) August 27, 2015 20:19 BST [6](#) Abuse or neglect in early life activates some genes that can have implications on the child's long-term development. (posed by model) A foster mother forced a girl to kneel in scalding water and subjected her to racist abuse, a court has heard. Neighbours reported shocking accounts of cruelty by the foster mother who referred to the young Zimbabwean girl as a 'dirty little b****' and used the 'N' word. The youngster, who cannot be named, had been born in Luton, Bedfordshire. She had lived with the couple who were British and white for about a decade under an 'informal fostering arrangement'. Neighbours, who first contacted the police about the mistreatment suffered by the child, recounted an incident they witnessed in the garden of the family's Lancashire home in the summer of 2010. Judge Singleton explained how the neighbours said they noticed the girl, now 12, "standing unnaturally still in full sunshine". She had "plainly wet herself" and was subjected to a tirade of abuse by the foster mother who ordered her to remove her clothes. The foster mother then forced the girl to clean herself by kneeling in scalding water after she soiled herself. The judge added: "She called her, so far as (that neighbour) could hear, a "dirty little b****" and said that (the girl) would have to wear that dress "tomorrow". The girl was then left outside naked until her foster mother shouted at her to come in. The judge described how the child was treated with "cold contempt" by her foster mother and the woman's partner. "On another occasion, (that neighbour) had observed (the girl) picking up faeces in the garden which she, perhaps not unreasonably, thought were dog faeces. She also observed (the girl) surrounded by the Rottweilers and had the impression that she flinched. Overall, she was disturbed by how cold (the foster mother) was to the child." Judge Singleton said both foster parents "indignantly" denied the allegations, had "failed to be truthful" and had "told deliberate lies from time to time". She said the foster mother had given "frankly incredible" accounts of the girl "pouring or splashing boiling water over herself". "On balance ... and it is very hard to contemplate, I do consider that those scalding injuries were deliberately inflicted. They were probably linked with somebody's disgust and vituperation over the soiling accidents and were likely to be linked with an abusive method of cleaning her up or forcing her to clean herself up." Judge Singleton told Blackpool Family Court the girl had been left physically scarred by her foster parents, who kept animals including three Rottweilers, at least one cat and a 'large' pig. She said the foster mother had demonstrated more warmth for the animals than the girl when giving evidence at the court hearing. Judge Singleton also concluded the girl had been bitten by the couple's three Rottweiler dogs. "I do not think it likely that the three Rottweilers were deliberately set upon her to attack her, but I do think it likely that she was frightened of the dogs, that in their presence she was treated, by (the foster mother) particularly, to being shouted at and to contemptuous treatment that might well cause a dog from time to time to nip her and bite her because that is what the dogs would perceive (the foster mother) or (the foster father) to be doing to her." The judge said the girl had lived with the couple for about a decade, but had been in the care of Lancashire council for the past two years after making complaints about her foster mother's 'cruelty and abuse' during sessions with a counsellor organised through a school after teachers also expressed their concerns for her well-being. According to [Sky News](#) the foster parents were not named, and the ruling gave no indication as to whether they had been charged with criminal offences. The child is now in the care of Lancashire council. REPORT ABUSE: Contact the [NSPCC helpline](#) and speak to a trained counsellor if you are worried about a child Source: <http://www.itimes.co.uk/judge-slams-foster-parents-who-forced-abused-child-stand-scalding-water-1517377>

County zoning board considers overturning Pine Grove decision By Stephen J. Pytak Published: August 28, 2015 Article Tools Font size: [\[A\]](#) [\[A\]](#) [\[A\]](#) [Share on facebook](#) [Share on twitter](#) [Share on google](#) [Share on linkedin](#) [Share on email](#) [Share on print](#) [More Sharing Services](#) [3](#) Our Social Networks Facebook Sign Up [newsletter](#) The Schuylkill County Zoning Hearing Board is trying to determine whether a collection of four facilities in Pine Grove it approved "group home" variance permits for this year are actually "treatment centers," Daniel Daub, zoning board chairman, said Thursday night. "We also have to determine if the county's zoning officer acted accordingly when issuing these permits," Daub said at a hearing called by the Borough of Pine Grove to appeal two of those permit approvals. The question isn't an easy one for a county zoning officer to tackle, according to one of the expert witnesses, Charles S. Schmehl, vice president of Urban Research & Development Corporation, Bethlehem. Schmehl authored the most recent version of the Schuylkill County Zoning Ordinance, which was adopted by the county commissioners Dec. 22, 2010. "Part of the problem is we do have limitations under the HIPAA (the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) Privacy laws that limit the ability to find out about medical and health care information without the written permission of the person involved," Schmehl said. At the county courthouse Thursday night, the board heard nearly two and a half hours of testimony on the matter, from people including the county zoning officer, the mayor of the Pine Grove and a borough police officer who said there have been physical assaults at the facilities in question. With more testimony plus public comment on the agenda, the board decided to recess until 7 p.m. Sept. 3. Supportive Concepts For Families Inc., Reading, Berks County, runs four group homes in the borough, according to Ryan D. Smith, president and CEO. He said the addresses and the number of people residing in them are as follows: 202 Walters St., three residents; 13 Ridge Vista Drive, two residents; 8 Ridge Vista Drive, two residents; and

1 Hillside Vista Drive, one resident. In early 2015, the county zoning board approved permits to allow Supportive Concepts to open the group homes at 202 Walters St. and 13 Ridge Vista Drive in areas zoned R-2, medium density residential district. On May 5, the county zoning hearing board approved permits allowing Supportive Concepts to open similar homes at 8 Ridge Vista Drive, Pine Grove, owned by Ronald S. Landis, and 1 Hillside Vista Drive, Pine Grove, owned by Forino Co. L.P. On June 3, the Borough of Pine Grove submitted an application for a hearing before the zoning hearing board to appeal the decision. In reference to both properties, the borough made these statements in the application: • "The neighborhood is single family residential homes and not appropriate for group homes. Specifically, Pine Vista Estates is approved only for single family residential use, not group homes." • "The property is not suitable for group homes and fails to meet the zoning ordinance requirements for a group home. There is insufficient information with the applicant's application to permit the zoning officer to determine whether the permittee meets the requirements under the zoning ordinance for use of the subject property as a group home. The zoning officer has improperly acted under the requirements and procedures of the zoning ordinance." The definition of "Group Home," according to the county ordinance, includes: "A dwelling unit operated by a responsible entity with a program to provide a supportive living arrangement for individuals where special care is needed by the persons served due to age, emotional, mental developmental or physical disability." The definition of "Treatment Center," according to the ordinance, includes: "A use (other than a prison or a hospital) providing housing for three or more unrelated persons who need specialized housing, treatment and/or counseling because of: A. Criminal rehabilitation, such as a criminal halfway house; B. Current addiction to a controlled substance that was used in an illegal manner or alcohol; and/or C. A type of mental illness or other behavior that causes a person to be a threat to the physical safety of others. D. Homeless shelter." When presenting his case Thursday night, Paul J. Datte, an attorney from Pottsville, who represented Pine Grove borough at the hearing, was concerned with C. When they took the stand Thursday, Pine Grove Mayor Will Shiffer and Pine Grove police Sgt. Christopher Taylor emphasized there were a total of 13 incidents which occurred at the Supportive Concepts properties in the borough between April 27 and Aug. 12. "These included incidents where residents assaulted caretakers or assaulted residents in the home," Datte said. Other members of the zoning board present were: Scott Thomas, the vice chairman, and members David Ambrose and Mary Jo Moss. Source: <http://republicanherald.com/news/county-zoning-board-considers-overturning-pine-grove-decision-1.1933649#>

Web of Secrecy Surrounds Federal Half-a-Billion Handout to Charter Schools Friday, 04 September 2015 10:22 By [Jonas Persson, PR Watch](#) | Report font size [decrease font size](#) [increase font size](#) [Print](#) 40 Email (Photo: [Classroom](#) via Shutterstock; Edited: LW / TO) The US Department of Education is poised to spend half a billion dollars to help create new charter schools, while the public is being kept in the dark about which states have applied for the lucrative grants, and what their actual track records are when it comes to preventing fraud and misuse. Already the federal government [has spent \\$3.3 billion](#) in American tax dollars under the Charter Schools Program (CSP), as tallied by the Center for Media and Democracy (CMD). But the government has done so without requiring any accountability from the states and schools that receive the money, as [CMD revealed earlier this year](#). Throwing good money after bad, Education Secretary Arne Duncan [called for a 48 percent increase](#) in federal charter funding earlier this year, and the House and Senate budget proposals also call for an increase - [albeit a more modest one](#) - while at the same time slashing education programs for immigrants and language learners. The clamor for charter expansion comes despite the fact that there are [federal probes underway](#) into suspected waste and mismanagement within the program, not to mention ongoing and [recently completed](#) state audits of fraud perpetrated by charter school operators. Earlier this year, the Center for Popular Democracy documented more than [\\$200 million](#) in fraud, waste, and mismanagement in the charter school industry in 15 states alone, a number that is likely to be just the tip of the iceberg. Is now really the right time to plow more tax money into charters? Insiders Deliberate Far From the Public Eye The Department of Education is currently deciding what states to award \$116 million this year, and more than half a billion during the five-year grant cycle. So who is in the running and what are their track records? Which states have applied for a grant designed to eviscerate the public school system in the name of "flexibility?" (CMD's review of state applications and reviewers' comments from the previous grant cycle exposed "flexibility" as [a term of art](#) used by the industry for state laws that allow charter schools to: operate independently from locally elected school boards, employ people to teach without adequate training or certification, and avoid collective bargaining that helps ensure that teacher-student ratios are good so that each kid gets the attention he or she deserves.) There is no way of knowing. The US Department of Education has repeatedly refused to honor a CMD request under the Freedom of Information Act for the grant applications, even though public information about which states have applied would not chill deliberation and might even help better assess which applicants should receive federal money. The agency has even declined to provide a list with states that have applied: "We cannot release a list of states that have applied while it is in the midst of competition." The upshot of this reticence is that states will land grants - possibly to the tune of a hundred million dollars or more in some cases - all at the discretion of [charter school interests](#) contracted to evaluate the applications, but without any input from ordinary citizens and advocates concerned about public schools and troubled by charter school secrecy and fraud. But, if people in a state know that a state is applying they can weigh in so that the agency is not just hearing from an applicant who wants the money, regardless of the history of fraud and waste in that state. Charter Millions by Hook or by Crook: The Case of Ohio Despite ED's unwillingness to put all the cards on the table, state reports tell us that Ohio has once again applied for a grant under the program. The state, whose lax-to-non-existing charter school laws [are an embarrassment](#) even to the industry, has previously been awarded at least \$49 million in CSP money - money that went to schools overseen [by a rightwing think-tank](#), and, more worryingly, to schools overseen by an authorizer that had its performance rating boosted this year [by top education officials](#) who removed the failing virtual schools from the statistics so as not to stop the flow of state and federal funds. As [The Plain Dealer](#) put it in an exposé: "It turns out that Ohio's grand plan to stop the national ridicule of its charter school system is giving overseers of many of the lowest-performing schools a pass from taking heat for some of their worst problems." Another component of this plan, it turns out, was to apply for more federal millions to the failing schools that - by a miraculous sleight of hand - are no longer failing. The director of Ohio's Office of Quality School Choice, David Hansen, [fell on the sword](#) and announced his resignation in June. But [Democratic lawmakers](#) suspect that this goes higher up in the chain of command, and have called on State Superintendent Richard Ross to resign. Did the scrubbed statistics touting the success of Ohio's charters find its way into the state application for federal millions, signed by Superintendent Ross? What about other states, [such as Indiana](#), with a similar history of doctoring data to turn failing charter schools into resounding success stories? After Abysmal Results, States Re-apply for More Money While the known unknowns are troubling, the known knowns - to [paraphrase Donald Rumsfeld](#) - also equally disturbing. For example, [Colorado applied](#) for grant renewal this year. But, the last time around, in 2010, the state landed a \$46 million CSP grant thanks in no small part to the lax ["hiring and firing"](#) rules and the lack of certification requirements for charter school teachers - a reviewer contracted by the US Department of Education to score the application noted. Look at California. Through [meeting minutes](#) from the California State Board of Education we also know that the Golden State submitted an application this year. In 2010, California was awarded [\\$254 million](#) over five years in CSP money, but as the Inspector General discovered [in a 2012 audit](#), the state department of education did not adequately monitor any of the schools that received sub-grants. Some schools even received federal money "without ever opening to students." A review by CMD revealed that a staggering 9 out of the 41 schools that shuttered in the 2014-'15 school year were created by federal money under CSP. How about Wisconsin? Wisconsin received \$69.6 million between 2010 and 2015, but out of the charter schools awarded sub-grants during the first two years of the cycle, one-fifth (16 out of 85) have closed since, as CMD discovered. Then there's Indiana. Indiana was awarded \$31.3 million over the same period, partly because of the fact that charter schools in the state are exempt from democratic oversight by elected school boards. "[C]harter schools are accountable solely to authorizers under Indiana law," [one reviewer enthused](#), awarding the application 30/30 under the rubric "flexibility offered by state law." This "flexibility" has been a [recipe for disaster](#) in the Hoosier state with countless examples of schools pocketing the grant money and then converting to private schools, as CMD discovered by taking a closer look at grantees under the previous cycle: The Indiana Cyber Charter School opened in 2012 with \$420,000 in seed money from the federal program. Dogged by financial scandals and plummeting student results the charter was revoked in 2015 and the school last month leaving 1,100 students in the lurch. Padua Academy lost its charter in 2014 and converted to a private religious school, but not before receiving \$702,000 in federal seed money. Have They Learned Anything? Secretary Duncan has previously called for ["absolute transparency"](#) when it comes to school performance, but that's just a talking point unless he releases the applications, or even a list of the states that are in the running, before they are given the final stamp of approval. As it stands, there is no way of knowing if the state departments of education seeking millions in tax dollars: Have supplied actual performance data that reflect the reality for students enrolled in charter schools rather than "scrubbed" or doctored numbers; Try to outbid each other in "flexibility" by explaining, say, how charter schools in X can hire teachers without a license and fire them without cause. In its [2010 application](#), the Colorado Department of Education, for example, boasted of how charter school teachers are "employed at will by the school"; Have corrective action plans so as to avoid repeating the costly waste and mistakes from the previous grant cycle (such as schools created by federal seed money closing within a few years or never even opening). Because the federal charter schools program is designed to

foster charter school growth, which in turn means that money will be diverted from traditional public schools to an industry that resists government enforcement of basic standards for financial controls, accountability, and democratic oversight, the public has a big stake in this and a right to know more, before their money disappears down black holes. Source: <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/32655-web-of-secrecy-surrounds-federal-half-a-billion-handout-to-charter-schools>

September 4, 2015 **More Kansas parents upset over authorities taking their children away** By: KAKE News Updated: Fri 7:59 PM, Aug 28, 2015 By: KAKE News WICHITA, Kan. — One man says that the foster care system is broken and some of the foster parents are only in the program for the money. Gaberial McDonald says he was put in the system in the early 2000s and was abused. McDonald says he was raped 17 times, beaten and starved. He claims that one of the men that raped him is now in jail on aggravated indecent liberties charges. McDonald says he and his three siblings were taken out of their home after their mother could no longer afford utilities and the home had no electricity or water. He thinks that many other children are placed in homes that are worse than the home they were taken out of. "They are just throwing us out there, taking us out of bad situations and putting us in worse," he said. Executive Director of the Sedgwick County Court Appointed Special Advocate Program Ashley Thorne says that there are situations where the foster home is not a healthy environment. "Sometimes the system itself will abuse the child and it may not be physical abuse where they actually have hands on the child, but simple things like not getting their medical needs met in a timely manner," Thorne said. She says that there are around 1,200 children in foster care inside Sedgwick County and the CASA organization only has the staff to serve 150 children. Thorne wants people to volunteer their time because their organization gets results. "If the CASA says this home environment is not healthy or they are being abused, the judge will remove that child on the spot in the courtroom," she said. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment confirms that it used to take care of the training for foster parents, but as of July 1, 2015, that responsibility was handed over to the Department of Children and Families. KAKE News made multiple requests to speak with the Department of Children and Families. It has not responded. To read the story on the legal action some parents are taking [click here](http://www.kake.com/home/headlines/More-Kansas-people-upset-over-authorities-taking-their-children-323257481.html). Source: <http://www.kake.com/home/headlines/More-Kansas-people-upset-over-authorities-taking-their-children-323257481.html>

When Louisiana lost its foster children BY [Laura Santhanam](#) August 29, 2015 at 9:09 AM EDT ? 163 +1 [EMAIL 101](#) Boarded-up Memories — The Boys Town Louisiana group house where Herman and Yvonne Clayton lived with Dederah Johnson remains boarded up 10 years after Hurricane Katrina made landfall over New Orleans. Floodwaters spared the house, but wind and rain damage made the home uninhabitable. Photo by Josh Brasted Two days before Hurricane Katrina made landfall on the Gulf Coast, Herman Clayton packed his two kids and four foster children into a van and fled New Orleans, heading north to Shreveport. Seventeen hours later, Sonia Cooper, a child welfare worker, filled two vans with 15 children, nine of them foster kids, and drove west toward Houston. State workers had lost track of an estimated 25 percent of the foster children living in those storm-damaged areas. The following morning at daybreak, Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans. Winds exceeding 125-miles-an-hour destroyed trees, roofs and structures. Levees failed, and floodwater rose to rooftops. The storm devastated the Gulf region, killing 1,833 people and forcing more than 1.5 million to evacuate — displacing [400,000](#) from New Orleans alone. It also shook the Louisiana's foster care system to its core, revealing fundamental weaknesses in its disaster plan. In Louisiana, about 2,000 foster children lived in the path of the hurricane. And two weeks after the storm, state workers had lost track of an estimated 25 percent of these children. A month after Katrina, 158 remained unaccounted for, state officials said, according to this [NPR report](#). This was in part due to the fact that shelters were overwhelmed, and many of the staff who handled foster care cases were displaced, said Susan Sonnier, secretary for the state's Department of Children and Family Services. But it also stemmed from problems in communication and monitoring. At the time of the storm, Sonnier directed Louisiana's Children's Cabinet and the Juvenile Justice Commission. "It is the core mission of the department to ensure that children are safe," Sonnier said. "What we learned in Katrina is it's very hard to do that if you don't know where they are." Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina — A traffic light hangs over floodwaters from Hurricane Katrina September 7, 2005 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Photo by Chris Hondros/Getty Images Leaving home Meanwhile, the families of foster children who evacuated faced a number of additional challenges: among them, paying for food and shelter, accessing critical medication and getting their children back to school. At the time of the hurricane, Sonia Cooper was program administrator of Raintree Children and Family Services, a small, non-profit foster care agency. As such, she was responsible for 57 children in residential and in-home foster care. But in the days immediately following the storm, a handful of those children remained unaccounted for. Every day on the road, starting at 6 a.m., she and her staff began making calls. When they weren't caring for the children who were with them, they were trying to find the others. They dialed every phone number on their list of foster parents and biological families. But the storm had knocked out cell towers in New Orleans. Most calls were met with busy signals. When they were able to connect, calls often dropped. "We didn't know where everybody was. We didn't know if everybody was safe," Cooper said. At the same time, they were trying to care for the girls in their custody. These girls had already experienced trauma through abuse or neglect or families who couldn't meet their needs. The storm was another layer of trauma. Cooper vividly remembers the children's terror during the 24-hour drive to Houston — a drive that normally takes a third of that time to complete. They'd packed enough water, sandwiches and snacks for eight hours. And when they checked into a Houston hotel, they saw on television familiar places underwater. They wondered aloud if their family members were alive. "We wanted to be in touch with what was going on, but we were traumatizing ourselves," Cooper recalled, adding that she still has nightmares about those early days. Home again — Herman Clayton, right, stands on the steps of what was once his front porch when he worked as a family teacher for Boys Town Louisiana. Dederah Johnson, right, hugs Clayton outside the home they shared when she was in the foster care system. Hurricane Katrina damaged the roof and dumped rain into the home, making it uninhabitable. It remains boarded up today. Photo by Josh Brasted No plans in place Within days, they ran out of necessary antidepressant and antipsychotic medications for the girls. They spent an entire day inside a Houston hospital's emergency room to refill that medication, but were unsuccessful. It would take more than a month before they could access the drugs. Because medical care for foster children is paid for by in-state Medicaid, accessing prescription drugs was complicated, since Cooper and the girls had evacuated out of state, to Texas. This was a problem for anyone who received Medicaid coverage in Louisiana and then crossed state lines. On Sept. 16, 2005, the federal government [issued a waiver](#) that allowed states to temporarily cover Medicaid recipients that Katrina displaced. They ran out of clothes for the girls and relied on donations from local churches. And when it became obvious that the evacuation would last far longer than three days, they were met with a new problem: how to enroll the girls in school. School records had been left in the group home. "We just don't know if we're really better off today than we were ..." — Tanya Weinberg, Save the Children "You had no plans in place. Nobody took the time to say, 'If something happens, this is where you need to go, what you need to do to take care of yourself,'" Cooper said. Two hundred miles away in San Antonio, Texas, Clayton faced his own set of obstacles. For nearly two decades, Clayton and his wife, Yvonne, had worked as family teachers with Boys Town Louisiana, a nonprofit child welfare agency. They cooked meals and gave hugs like parents but conducted group therapy and problem-solving sessions like counselors. Together, they served as mother and father figures for as many as 300 children. Now they were on the road with 39 of those kids. Within two weeks, they had stayed at a hotel in Shreveport, Louisiana, a campground in Marshall, Texas, another hotel in Dallas, Texas, and a converted convent in San Antonio. Even with the support of Boys Town, he and other staff struggled to find housing for everyone. The kids were scared. Many didn't know if their families were safe. Among them, fights broke out. Some tried to run away. "You couldn't say, 'No, I'm going back home' because there wasn't nothing to go to," Clayton said. Meanwhile, Boys Town Louisiana staff in Baton Rouge checked off names on a whiteboard as they found children's biological family members and coworkers alive, said Dennis Dillon, who had been executive director of Boys Town Louisiana for about one year when Katrina hit. They also monitored direct deposits of paychecks to see if people survived. "There were some people who never claimed those checks," Dillon said. "We don't know. We didn't get 100 percent." Helper needed help — Before Hurricane Katrina made landfall, Sonia Cooper evacuated New Orleans with nine girls she cared for in a foster care group home at Raintree House. She and her staff struggled to care for the displaced foster children and themselves. Photo by Josh Brasted 'They showed me what family really was' Dederah Johnson was 12 when she entered foster care with the Claytons and 17 when the storm hit. Her childhood home was unstable. Johnson's parents were both crack addicts; her grandmother raised her until she died in 1999. Relatives told her she'd be pregnant by the ninth grade and never finish high school. She got into fights, ran away and eventually found herself in front of a juvenile court judge. In 2001, she was placed in the Claytons' white, two-story group house on the corner of Louisiana Avenue and Dryades Street. It sat under oak trees about a dozen blocks from the banks of the Mississippi River. Faded purple and green beads dangled from nearby tree limbs and powerlines, reminders that the house was on a Mardi Gras parade route. With the Claytons, Johnson and the girls learned table manners and job etiquette, attended Celebration Church in Metairie and ate special meals at Ryan's steakhouse restaurant. Yvonne coaxed the children to eat their broccoli by telling them it would make their eyes prettier. And Johnson no longer worried about coming home to an eviction notice or going to bed hungry. "They showed me more love than I got anywhere

ever. They showed me what family really was... At the end of the day, that's what really matters," Johnson said. Johnson was on a home visit with her siblings when she heard about the hurricane brewing in the Gulf. Her mother was in jail. And during her visit, the phone rang. It was Clayton. Did Johnson want to evacuate with him or stay with her family, he wanted to know. "I didn't want them to leave me," Johnson said. "I wanted to be with Mr. Herman and Mrs. Yvonne because I knew they would comfort me." Within the hour, Herman picked her up in an agency van. There were eight more vans just like theirs, filled with more than three dozen teenagers, connected by walkie talkies and all on their way to Shreveport. They prayed in a circle before driving away. During the trip, she recalls hand games and bingo in the car, but also trying desperately to reach her biological family back home. She tried to call her sister, but no one picked up. "They're gone," Johnson told Clayton, as she held the phone, tears streaming down her face. Raintree House route in red and Boys Town route in blue. Before Hurricane Katrina reached the Gulf Coast on Aug. 29, 2005, more than 1 million people evacuated the region. Herman Clayton, Sonia Cooper and the foster children in their care were among those evacuees fleeing the storm. Clayton and Cooper went in different directions, but they both struggled to find a safe and stable place for the children who didn't have anyone else to protect them. These are the routes they took before eventually returning home to New Orleans. Are we better off today? That summer, people from the Gulf learned to send text messages. That's because phone systems were overwhelmed, and messages [took up less bandwidth](#). Power outages and flooding wiped out communication for more than 3 million phone lines, along with dozens of 911 emergency call centers, the Federal Communications Commission [reported](#). One-fifth of cell phone towers in the hardest-hit areas remained damaged a week after the storm. "In the beginning, that was truly the crisis," said Sonnier with the Department for Children and Family Services. People were desperate to hear from missing family members. Even Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco had trouble putting a phone call through to New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin, she said. But foster parents had their own set of challenges. They didn't know how to report the status of their child's safety or location to the state. Who would even answer the phone? Many of the state's workers had evacuated. Those who stayed behind were helping the people who were stranded on rooftops and running shelters and aid, Sonnier said. They were overwhelmed. On the day Katrina made landfall on the Gulf Coast, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children helped Louisiana set up a hotline for foster care parents and providers. But few, especially in the early days, knew about the service. "There really weren't" formal evacuation plans in place for children in foster care, Sonnier said. "That's why it was such a huge lesson learned." Rebuilding — Since the storm, Raintree Children & Family Services, the small, non-profit foster care agency in New Orleans, has nearly twice as many children in foster care since 2005, and donations since then have doubled to \$400,000, said current executive director Lashawna Schofield. Photo by Josh Brasted In the decade since, new policies have been implemented to improve the foster system's emergency plan. All child care workers and foster parents must submit an evacuation plan, with emergency contact information, to the state. If the storm disrupts their evacuation location, foster parents are required to inform the state of new plans. Disaster response and emergency preparedness is now a part of foster parent training, and child welfare workers train each year to maintain awareness and address staff turnover, a common problem nationwide among child welfare workers because of the job's potential for intense stress. In 2006, it became [federal law](#) that all states maintain written disaster plans for children in the foster care system. [Today](#), that's more than 400,000 children nationwide. But the degree to which these plans are effectively enforced is unclear. Save the Children, a children's advocacy group, [recently reported](#) that "there does not appear to be an updated evaluation to show impact." "We just don't know if we're really better off today than we were, and that's really concerning," said Tanya Weinberg, a Save the Children spokesperson. "These are almost like forgotten children, and they don't have a powerful political voice in this country. Let's not wait until a Katrina hits your state to take action." The foster children lost to the state in the days after the storm were among more than 5,000 children reported missing after Hurricane Katrina. "We weren't prepared for the disaster to deal with displaced children," said Robert Lowery with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. "Today, we believe we are much better prepared." An [act of Congress](#) resulted in a national emergency family registry database to collect information about children and families to reunite them if needed after a disaster. However, inclusion is voluntary. If you don't submit your information to the database, you can't benefit from it. Another major problem at the time: the helpers needed help. Often, their own homes were flooded; their own family members missing, said Gerald Mallon, executive director at the National Center for Child Welfare Excellence at Hunter College. Denise Goodman spent nearly four years rebuilding Louisiana's foster care system after the storm. For 30 years, Goodman has fixed broken child welfare agencies nationwide as a consultant for the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Normally, states called upon her when they faced a lawsuit, a child's death or a budget crisis, Goodman said. This was different. "This was the first time I had worked in a jurisdiction where a natural disaster caused the problem," she said. "This wasn't a manmade thing. It got people around the country to think about what would be their disaster plan for their children's welfare system. What would happen if we had an earthquake in California? How would we make sure we find all our kids and families and respond to it?" Searching after the evacuation — At one point after Hurricane Katrina, Dennis Dillon was the only employee of Boys Town Louisiana in the entire state. He and his staff checked off names of foster children and their own coworkers as they found out they were safe. They also monitored paychecks through direct deposit to see if their colleagues survived the disaster. Some of those paychecks were never claimed, he said. Photo by Josh Brasted Accepting change In Houston, Cooper's resources were running low, and there was pressure to return to Louisiana. In late September, they drove more than 200 miles to the small Louisiana town of Natchitoches where they lived until December. But the evacuation and instability had already taken its toll. The girls were often agitated, Cooper said. One suffered a mental breakdown. When the foster girls finally returned to New Orleans, Cooper herself wasn't ready to return. She stayed behind with her own children. "I cried for days. At that point, we were all family." As for Johnson, nearly one month after the storm, she finally made contact with her oldest sister. She had evacuated to Baltimore, Maryland with her fiancé. Her other sister was in Atlanta; her brother, in Texas. They were safe. Despite her homesickness and separation from her siblings, Johnson excelled in school in Nebraska. There, she graduated high school a year early. But during her final year in high school, the Claytons returned to New Orleans for work and encouraged her to stay in Nebraska to finish school. She lived in group housing with two other New Orleanians who had also evacuated. In May 2006, Boys Town flew the Claytons and her sister to watch her accept her diploma in Omaha. She was the first in her family to complete high school. "That was one of the biggest accomplishments I ever had," she said. Nearly a decade later, Johnson is back in New Orleans where she raises three children, works full-time as a security guard and is pursuing her bachelor's degree. She's engaged to be married, and plans to start her own business as a wedding and event planner. But the 27-year-old regrets her decision to return to New Orleans. She thinks that if she had gone elsewhere or even joined the military, she would have had more opportunities. Instead, she was 18-years-old, enrolling in college and not ready for bills and boyfriends. "I still don't accept changes," she says. "I like stability, and if I have to change, I really don't do it well." Emergency Shelter — People who weren't able to evacuate from Hurricane Katrina's path entered emergency shelters that were quickly overwhelmed, including the now-infamous Superdome in New Orleans. Aside from having adequate sanitation, food and water, officials realized that children were especially vulnerable in these highly stressful shelters. After Hurricane Katrina, Louisiana put into place disaster plans that included separate areas for children. Photo by Getty Images A lesson learned? It's been 10 years since Hurricane Katrina scattered thousands of foster care children across the country, and questions remain about how effectively states prepare their child welfare systems for disaster. These plans involve complex bureaucratic agencies at the federal, state and local levels, all intended to protect society's most vulnerable members — children who have already endured abuse, neglect and trauma and who live without their biological families. How much accountability is built into this system? And how closely has the federal government monitored these disaster plans for foster children? Hurricane Katrina forced Louisiana to address its fractured system of emergency preparedness and disaster response for children in foster care. What's unclear is if the rest of the country has done the same. Source: <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/katrina-foster-kids/#>

State Bungled Earlier Complaints About Group Home by [Terri Langford](#) Aug. 28, 2015 [8Comments](#) [Comment](#) [Republish](#) [Email](#) [Tweet](#) [Recommend](#)
[Enlarge](#) Photo by Hamid Najafi As the Texas Attorney General moved on Friday to shut down an illegal assisted living operation in Austin, The Texas Tribune has learned that the state failed to investigate previous complaints about the facility, and an employee of the attorney general's office may have been unlawfully assisting one of the facility's associates. On Friday, Attorney General [Ken Paxton](#)'s office obtained a temporary restraining order against Zoe's Safe Place, one week after the state Department of Aging and Disabilities Services sent investigators to interview residents there. After determining that Zoe's was operating as an illegal assisted living center, the department relocated five people and referred the case to Paxton's office. State law requires any facility to have an assisted living license if it offers personal care services such as administering medications or helping residents dress or bathe themselves. According to affidavits filed by department investigators, residents at Zoe's Place were found to be living in bed bug-infested conditions in the group home where the thermostat registered 87 degrees and roaches roamed freely. Some residents went without bed linens, and others without beds altogether. "I observed two people sleeping in the hallway and in the common area," wrote Barbara Hanshew-Swenson, a DADS investigator. "I observed live roaches crawling throughout the building." One resident told a DADS investigator he recently had been raped. In a press release issued Friday, Paxton praised investigators' work. "The diligent work of DADS

protects and supports the elderly and disabled of Texas, and I commend the investigators who dedicate themselves to safeguarding some of our most vulnerable," Paxton said. "Thanks to their hard work in this case, we were able to take appropriate legal action and seek justice against those who continue to threaten the health and safety of our loved ones." But the Tribune learned that two previous complaints — in October 2014 and last February — about Zoe's Safe Place received by DADS were never investigated. "We didn't investigate the complaints," said Cecilia Cavuto, DADS spokeswoman. "It fell through the cracks." Also, DADS investigators discovered through interviews that 15 of the approximately 60 residents living at Zoe's Place had recently been moved from a Belton group home called God's Blessings, which was temporarily shut down on Aug. 20 because it too was operating as an unlicensed assisted living facility. Cavuto confirmed on Friday that officials from the Social Security Administration and the U.S. Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General have contacted DADS about the God's Blessings group home, which is owned by Renee Segura-Livingston. Also on Friday, the Attorney General's office confirmed it was investigating allegations that one of its employees assisted with or approved paperwork granting Segura-Livingston power of attorney for several residents who were paying to stay at God's Blessings. Group home owners who do not accept Medicaid or Medicare sometimes have residents sign over their Social Security checks to pay rent. "We received an allegation of this nature concerning one of our employees and we're investigating those allegations," said Allison Castle, a spokeswoman for Paxton's office. Pressed for more detail, Castle responded: "All I can give you is what I just said." Attempts to reach Segura-Livingston and Tommie Yvette McKinney, owner of Zoe's Safe Place, were not successful. Source: <https://www.texastribune.org/2015/08/28/ag-shuts-down-facility-after-dads-failed-investiga/>

Does public health law apply to assisted living facilities? Aug 30, 2015, 6:00am EDT Updated Sep 1, 2015, 9:46am EDT Industries & Tags [Legal Services](#), [Health Care](#) Share [Order Reprints](#) [Save Article](#) [Print](#) [Email](#) [Twitter](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Facebook](#) [Google+](#) [Order Reprints](#) [Save Article](#) Amy Archer Flaherty Guest Columnist Amy Archer Flaherty Guest Columnist Home of the Day [Sponsor Listing Woodcrest Estate Home on 6+ Private Acres! See All Homes of the Day](#) [Enlarge](#) stokkete Nursing home Public Health Law § 2801-d was enacted in 1975. The statute gives a private right of action to residents of nursing homes, also known as residential health care facilities, permitting them to sue nursing home operators for the deprivation of a right or benefit created for their well-being. The statute permits the recovery of both compensatory and punitive damages. It was enacted to remediate accounts of abuse by some nursing home operators which was documented in the nursing homes industry in the 1960s and early 1970s. The investigation and findings were set forth in a report by the Moreland Act Commission on Nursing Homes and Residential Facilities. The response of the New York State Legislature was to enact Public Health Law § 2801-d, as well as to take other remediating measures. [Enlarge](#) stokkete Nursing home The statute has been used extensively as grounds for lawsuits by nursing home residents against nursing home operators. Allegations that an operator violated Public Health Law § 2801-d can be and are asserted along with claims of general negligence or nursing home malpractice. Upcoming Events [Mix Business With Pleasure - in Ellicottville! September 25, 2015](#) [Medicaid Reform - Power Breakfast September 10, 2015](#) [Women of Influence Awards and Luncheon September 17, 2015](#) [See More Events](#) The result has been an increase in lawsuits against nursing home operators and, as the statute intended, increased vigilance by nursing home operators intent on protecting the rights and benefits of residents of their facilities. The statute clearly provides that it applies to residents of residential health care facilities. But does it also apply to residents of other types of state-licensed facilities? The Fourth Department addressed this question in the recent decision of *Burkhart v. People Inc.*, 129 AD3d 1475 (4th Dept. 2015). The plaintiff in *Burkhart* claimed that Public Health Law § 2801-d gave a private right of action to the resident of a group home. Unlike nursing home facilities, group homes are not licensed or regulated by the Department of Health. Instead, they are licensed and operated by either the Office of Mental Health or the Office of People with Developmental Disabilities. The requirements for licensure for group homes are different from those of nursing homes. Source: <http://www.bizjournals.com/buffalo/blog/buffalo-law-journal/2015/08/does-public-health-law-apply-to-assisted-living.html>

State of emergency: Shortage of foster homes leads to separated siblings, moving far from home [Story Comments](#) [Print](#) [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) [Previous](#) [Next](#) Greg Price Floyd County Juvenile Court Judge Posted: Sunday, August 30, 2015 2:00 pm [State of emergency: Shortage of foster homes leads to separated siblings, moving far from home](#) Posted on Aug 30, 2015 by [Kristina Wilder](#) Georgia is in a "state of emergency" when it comes to foster care, and Floyd County was ranked the fifth highest county per capita for children removed from their homes, according to DFCS officials and a report from [Georgia Child Welfare Measures](#). Some 244 children from Floyd County were sent into foster care from April 2014 through March 2015, according to the statistics. That state rate over that time period was 31.2 children per 10,000. Floyd County's rate was 104.5 per 10,000. Why is the rate so high? There are several reasons, according to local officials. "It comes down to the fact that we are looking more," said Floyd County Juvenile Court Judge Greg Price. "We have two hospitals and many medical professionals who are required to report suspicious things. We have a high number of teachers and law enforcement as well." These individuals are trained to notice signs of trouble, he added. "When you're a mechanic trained to fix problems on VWs, when you drive down the road, you're going to see the VWs first," explained Price. Another issue is cyclical abuse and neglect, according to Price and Lindsey Howerton, director of the Floyd County Division of Family and Children Services. "We have many families who repeat the cycle of abuse and neglect," she said. "They stay here. Their children have children, and it keeps going and no one breaks the pattern." The reasons for the removal of children from their homes covers a wide range, with 120 removed for neglect, 80 removed because their parents were abusing drugs or alcohol, 52 removed because parents were unable to cope, 88 removed for inadequate housing, 30 were abandoned and 32 were victims of physical abuse. Other reasons include sexual abuse, domestic violence or because parents are incarcerated. Howerton said the specific reasons stated can be misleading. "Many times, when we investigate further, we may find signs of physical or sexual abuse when the child was originally removed for neglect or drug abuse," she said. "This is especially true for a younger child who is not in school. If that child is only going to the doctor once a year, it is much harder to catch." A major crisis situation arises after these children are removed, because Floyd County only has 16 DFCS foster homes. "This often results in our children being placed out of county, which causes all kinds of problems," she said. "The children have a harder time coming back for court dates and for visits with their families. Also, you have the added trauma for the child, which is just increased by them having to completely relocate and have nothing familiar around them." DFCS always tries to help the families, she added, and this is made more difficult when the child is miles away. "Our main goal when a child is removed from a home is to work with the parents to help them change behaviors if possible and bring their child home," Howerton said. "Having to place that child in a home in Macon just makes it that much harder on everyone." So, the first thing DFCS does is try to find a qualified family member or family friend who can take the child. This is the best option, but sometimes is impossible because they might not live in the area or may be unsuitable. Issues also often arise because of siblings, she said. "We have a lot of multiple-child families, and the ideal would be to have those siblings together or at least close to each other," she said. "This becomes hard because many foster families can't handle that many children at once." Floyd does have 23 homes that work with child placing agencies, such as Faith Bridge, Howerton added. However, these homes can have children who are not from Floyd County placed in them. Winshape Homes is its own entity and does work with DFCS as much as possible, she said. "We have two large sibling groups placed with Winshape currently," she said. The Open Door Home is a group home and children are only placed there if they are 13 or older. "We are always hoping that if people know there is a need, they will be willing to serve as foster families," she said. Potential foster families attend classes, she said. Families are taught about the process from start to finish about policies and how a child might behave. "For instance, a child who has suffered neglect may hoard food," she said. "I've had children who don't understand or know about the bath routine and a child who had never seen a toothbrush." Those who want to foster are also given a home study session in which a DFCS agent comes into the home and observes the environment and the family's interaction. "Most understand the reasons behind this," Howerton said. "It is all about the safety and well-being of the child. The home studies are usually completed within two or three sessions." Foster parents also have to undergo fingerprinting, background checks and financial checks. "We have to make sure they can handle the extra expense," Howerton said. "We do not so much pay as reimburse. A foster family has to be stable enough to handle extra costs like clothing, diapers and glasses, and then be reimbursed." Once approved, foster parents are often immediately needed. "I've had families receive a child the day they were approved," Howerton said. About 75 percent of the 422 Floyd County children in foster care are placed outside of Floyd County, Howerton said. Of the 25 percent here, the majority are placed with family members. These numbers frustrate Howerton, she said. "I would love to put myself out of a job," she said. "We are trying to build strong families in a strong community. When it comes to foster care in this county and this state, we are in a state of emergency." Source: http://www.northwestgeorgianews.com/rome/news/local/state-of-emergency-shortage-of-foster-homes-leads-to-separated/article_485e34c2-4edc-11e5-bf52-6f023a9a80c6.html

Escape casts spotlight on Washington use of juvenile inmates to fight wildfires Inmate, 16, shoots self in head after escaping Chelan Complex fire work camp Teen survives and state suspends decades-old firefighting program Juvenile inmates fight fires in Washington state, in a handout photograph taken in

July. Photograph: DSHS [Cathy Enders](#) in New York [@catyenders_email](#) Monday 31 August 2015 07.00 EDT Last modified on Monday 31 August 2015 07.55 EDT [Share on Facebook](#) [Share on Twitter](#) [Share via Email](#) [Share on Pinterest](#) [Share on LinkedIn](#) [Share on Google+](#) [Share on WhatsApp](#) Shares 1,803 1803 [Comments](#) 95 [Save for later](#) [Article saved](#)

As record-setting Washington wildfires burned last week, a 16-year-old inmate who was helping to fight the Chelan Complex fire escaped from a work camp, after punching a security guard. 'It's unrelenting': inside the Washington town surrounded by raging wildfires Omak is at the epicenter of several blazes that have created a fire line 1,000 miles long – a fire so overwhelming that officials have stopped talking about beating it: 'We're in total defensive mode. We have to be smart' Read more The next day, 22 August, police found the inmate on a nearby road and attempted to apprehend him. He pulled out a .22 caliber revolver and, after a brief interaction, fired one shot to his head. The teen survived, but the program that deploys young inmates to help fight wildfires was placed on hold. Washington has been employing inmates in juvenile detention to fight wildfires for decades. But the teen's escape has shed new light on the program. David Ball, a criminal justice lawyer and corrections expert at California's Santa Clara University, said he was surprised to learn of fire camps for inmates under the age of 18. "The word about scared-straight boot camps for juveniles is that they don't do any good," said Ball. "For most juvenile programs, there are lots of other things for these kids to do, like get their GED and go to counseling. This is really something that I have not heard of." The [Washington state](#) government said it was reassessing the juvenile work camps, in light of the events. Two deployed crews had been recalled to their main facilities. But Jennifer Redman, a probation officer with Washington's juvenile services, said she was hopeful the state will "get this program back up and running so we can deploy again". Advertisement Naselle Youth Camp, which houses 76 boys, deploys two fire crews throughout the year. Since the 1960s, camps like this one have supplied the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) with inexpensive labor for trail work, fire prevention and fire suppression. Redman said such crews were "not in the midst of heavy flames". She said they began their 16-hour days at around 4am or 5am, received a lunch break, and then continued work until the early evening. Receiving orders from a DNR fire crew, they assisted with digging trenches, hauling pails of water to put out hot spots and supporting frontline firefighters. "[They are] providing low-level fire suppression, so maybe just a smaller hose going to smaller areas," said Redman. "Or doing clear-cutting." During a 14-day rotation, she said, inmates on fire prevention work received between \$0.70 and \$1.60 per day. Stints could be extended to 21 days, with a day off, and overtime pay or bonus fire pay was possible. "Definitely the skills are transferrable," said Redman. "Just waking up early in the morning and going to work, which is not a skill our kids come to us with." The young inmates at Naselle have committed crimes ranging from theft or drug offenses to burglary and violent crime. The youth who escaped from the camp allegedly obtained the gun from a parks vehicle, about eight hours after he assaulted a guard and ran. According to a police report, he was in stable condition in hospital. "The length we've been involved in the program speaks for itself," said Redman, who said it was "extremely successful, both for the kids as well as the communities that they're providing support for". Advertisement The average age of children in Washington's juvenile work camps is between 16 and 17, according to juvenile services. For years, state budget cuts have threatened to shutter the low-security Naselle Youth Camp. In a [town hall meeting in 2009](#), Naselle graduates turned up to fight for the camp, which offers an alternative to typical incarceration. One former resident talked about working with the DNR for four years and being deployed at 12 fires. He called the work programs, which made him more than \$7,000, "irreplaceable" and said they helped him become a "successful and productive young man" upon release. California has two Division of Juvenile Justice fire camps. But in that state, juveniles must be at least 18 to work in a camp. In [California](#), which also operates 42 adult fire camps, 18- to 23-year-olds are expected to operate closer to the fire. In the 72 years the program has existed, inmates have died working the fire line. According to Bill Sessa, an information officer with the California department of corrections, "all of the juvenile offenders [used to fight fires] have committed serious or violent felonies". Sessa said spots in the program were coveted, available to both young men and women, and only granted to inmates that were exceptional. "They have to have the aptitude to be in the camp," said Sessa. "They have to be willing to work as a team. They have to take the responsibility to be part of a crew. And they have to be physically able to do the work. "You can't minimize the fact that it's dangerous work. But by the same token, the safety record of these crews is very good." The point of such camps, as laid out by the state of California, is to "provide the cooperative agencies with an able-bodied, trained work force for fire suppression and other emergencies such as floods and earthquakes". Redman said that while such work in Washington state was good for discipline, inmates were not necessarily receiving vocational training that would set them up for a job with the DNR upon release. "I wouldn't say it's very common," she said, "because there's competing demand for those jobs." [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Pinterest](#) The Chelan Complex Fire is reflected on Lake Chelan, earlier this month. Photograph: Jason Redmond/Reuters In many states, including California, inmate firefighters will be disqualified from fire crews once they get out of prison, due to their felony convictions. The Washington DNR conducts what a human resources representative called "extensive" criminal background checks. Certain types of felon are automatically barred. For adult inmates, David Ball said, the work may be dangerous but the camps are often a welcome alternative. "Prison is terrible," said Ball. "And this is the less terrible version of prison for most people." Ball said it was important for each state to assess whether such programs were rehabilitating inmates, not least when the inmates were minors. "It might be a great idea for these kids going out on these fire crews," said Ball. "But I'd like to know, what evidence do you have that that's true? We don't typically let children do this type of work." Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/31/washington-state-juvenile-inmates-fight-wildfires-escape>

Congress moves toward an overhaul of US foster-care system Help For Our Community, a Fitchburg-based organization, dropped off 100 bags with supplies for children placed in emergency foster care at the Leominster DCF office on April 18, 2015. Christine Hochkeppel/Worcester Telegram & Gazette via AP By Max Ehrenfreund, The Washington Post Posted: 08/31/15, 1:01 PM EDT | Updated: 4 days ago [# Comments](#) WASHINGTON >> Congress is moving toward an overhaul of the country's foster-care system, one that reflects a shift in how policymakers and child-welfare experts view the problem of keeping kids safe. It isn't yet clear what form legislation might ultimately take, and any agreement could be derailed by a dispute over the debt ceiling later this year. All the same, several lawmakers in both parties appear to be in agreement on the basic principles of a reform. Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, hopes to move legislation this fall, according to a spokeswoman. The federal government has long chipped in for foster care for children whose parents are abusing or neglecting them. But some advocates for children say the money would be better spent helping children's biological parents take care of them properly. Depending on the family, the state could pay for psychotherapy or treatment for a parent's alcoholism or addiction to drugs. Some new mothers need a nurse to talk to them about how to discipline their children without beating them, while others might just need a washer and dryer for the apartment so the kids can go to school in clean clothes. Advertisement Keeping a child in her biological parents' home if possible is not only better for the child, but will save the government money, too, lawmakers say. They are talking about helping states pay for some of these other services, beyond foster care itself. "When you ask a child who has been in foster care how we can best improve the current foster-care system, often the answer will be: You could have helped my mom so that I did not have to go into foster care in the first place," Hatch said at a hearing this month. Hatch's office has been working with Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., who has sponsored a bill. Sens. Michael Bennet, D-Colo., and Michael Crapo, R-Idaho, have also introduced legislation. Shadi Houshyar, who handles foster care for the family-advocacy organization [First Focus](#) in Washington, said the discussion on Capitol Hill was "a game-changer for child welfare." Little data on children who grow up in foster care is available, but current research suggests that focusing on keeping children with their parents will help many of them over the long term. Joseph J. Doyle Jr., an economist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, studied children whose homes were examined by Illinois's investigators 20 years ago to determine how foster care affected their lives as adults. He found that if a foster-care child had been visited by a stricter investigator -- those more likely to recommend a child be removed from a home -- then the child was more likely to be arrested, convicted of a crime and imprisoned as an adult. In other words, while many children must be removed for their safety, investigators often do better by kids when they give parents the benefit of the doubt. "There's this traumatic event of being taken away from your parents, and being told that your parents are not doing the right thing for you," Doyle said. "That has to be weighed against the trauma of continued child abuse and neglect in the home." Experts also say that while you can take a child out of an abusive household, that doesn't mean you've taken the abuse out of the child. Foster care is sometimes necessary for the child's safety, said David Sanders, who is in charge of public policy at [Casey Family Programs in Seattle](#). Beyond a safe place to live, though, children need counseling, and ultimately, a permanent family that will care for them as they grow up. Without that, Sanders said, many will repeat their parents' mistakes when they have kids of their own, perpetuating addiction, neglect and abuse to the next generation. "It's so easy to think removing children from their families is the solution," Sanders said. "That's not sufficient." Dozens of states already have waivers from the federal government allowing them to use money earmarked for foster care for other things. State officials say these experiments have been promising, and research suggests that in many cases, the benefits far outweigh the costs. A study found that one therapy program in the state of Washington, for example avoided tens of thousands of dollars in costs to the criminal justice system and victims of crimes that foster-care children would likely have committed if they hadn't participated. Source: <http://www.registercitizen.com/general-news/20150831/congress-moves-toward-an-overhaul-of-us-foster-care-system>

Boarding schools: A black hole of Native American history Zigmund Hollow Horn (NCR photo/Vinnie Rotondaro) [Vinnie Rotondaro](#) | Sep. 1, 2015 [The Trail of History](#) [Share on facebook](#) [Share on twitter](#) [More Sharing Services](#) [67 PrintemailPDF Eagle Butte, S.D.](#) Zigmund Hollow Horn sat inside the deanery of a small Episcopal church just off Eagle Butte's main street. A thick fog had settled over town. The engine of his pickup, parked outside, pinged and crackled. Sitting on a couch, his eyes trained outward and down, he began to talk about his life. "I'm a 65-year-old male, Native American, recovering alcoholic of 25 years," he said. "I've been in pain ever since I can remember," emotional pain, physical pain. "Day in and day out, I go to bed with it," he said. "Anyways, that's all due to my upbringing." Like many in Cheyenne River, and throughout Indian Country, Hollow Horn attended an American Indian boarding school. Boarding schools were government and church-run educational facilities that openly sought to Westernize and Christianize Native American children — an experience that facilitated a direct continuation of the logic brought by the Doctrine of Discovery. Get NCR's newest book: The Chronicles of Francis, the Cartoon Strip, featuring cartoons from the popular series Francis. [Buy it now!](#) Hollow Horn's mother died in childbirth. He spent the first five years of his life in quarantine with tuberculosis. Following his release from quarantine, his father sent him to "a Catholic Indian mission school, St. Joe's Indian mission" in Chamberlain, S.D. "When they take you down to Chamberlain, or any kind of Indian mission school," he said, "they take you down on Aug. 16 and you don't come back till May 21. You're just there. I did that for eight years." Hollow Horn and his classmates were given uniforms and chores. They "went to church three times a day, constantly, day in, day out." Standing in the pews, away from their family, their culture banished and condemned, some children would faint. "And when they faint, there's no mercy," Hollow Horn said. "They just drag you out, take you to the back of the pews somewhere, and they slap you up, wake you up, give you water or whatever. ... Then they take you back again, put you in your pew." Classmates were regularly hit or whipped with a belt. "The older classmates would hold you down," he said. "They had to hold you down. That's an order." Marcella Le Beau also witnessed abuse in a government-run boarding school. "I saw the whipping lines," she said, "when they would punish the boys. They would make them take off their leather belts ... and whip them as they ran through." Like Hollow Horn, she said that children internalized their anxiety and trauma. "We never talked about it," she said, even at night, sleeping bed to bed, "we never talked, and that's strange now that I think back on it. We couldn't be children. We couldn't talk and play. And we never talked about it afterwards either. It was just strange." Despite the trauma she suffered at boarding school, Le Beau later moved off the reservation, going to Pontiac, Mich., and California. She served as an Army nurse during D-Day, and eventually moved back to Cheyenne River, where she advocates for her people. Hollow Horn wasn't so fortunate. He said his boarding school experience broke him. Moving into adulthood, he fell into alcoholism and out of touch with his own children, spending the last quarter century in psychological, emotional and spiritual recovery. Others were even less fortunate. "A lot of these guys on this reservation, they kept quiet through their years, and when they got older, they went to alcoholism, and they died that way," Hollow Horn said. "They got us when we were young," he said. "I used to speak my native tongue when I went down there, and I can't even talk now. They beat it out of me. If you spoke your language, they held you down, put a bar of soap in your mouth." A fundamental violence Many contend that the boarding schools represented a focused effort — a collusion between church and state — to stamp out Native American identity, affecting generations of children. Tsianina Lomawaima, a leading authority on Native American education, agreed with that characterization to a point, but cautioned against generalizing. "People want to know the story, and there is no one story," she said. "Thousands of people went through this experience," she said, "all different tribal backgrounds, all different ages, all different personalities, and so there were many, many, many different boarding school experiences," from good, to very bad. The schools emerged in the late 1800s, part of a U.S. government-led effort to "civilize Indians," she said. "And that, of course, meant Christianizing — those two things were not seen as separate at all." According to Lomawaima, a professor of American Indian studies at the University of Arizona and also a Creek Indian, "about 25 off-reservation boarding schools operated in America" at their height. Plenty of on-reservation boarding and day schools also existed. Whether Catholic or the more numerous "federal" (run by the government and promoting Protestant Christianity), the schools functioned in essentially the same manner. However, student reaction "varied dramatically between someone who went into the school as an English speaker from a family that had been Christian for three or four generations, and really wanted an education," said Lomawaima, "and someone like my dad, who went in under duress, [on] order of the courts, separated from his family at the age of 8 or 9, didn't see his mom again until he was a teenager." "He was one of those that had a very negative experience and feelings about it, but still as an adult could say about some aspects of the school, like the trades training he got, 'There are things I learned there I would have never learned otherwise.' " Nevertheless, the schools exercised a fundamental kind of "violence," Lomawaima said, "taking kids away from their families, educating them in a system of knowledge, language, economy, law, diet, clothing, everything, different from who they are. ... And the physical violence on top of all that." Some children were forcibly brought to the schools by the police while others were sent "voluntarily" by parents. "But you have to think carefully about the word voluntary," Lomawaima said. "If this is the only school that will accept you, if it's the only chance for you or your child's education, is that voluntary?" During the Great Depression, "people couldn't feed their kids," she said. U.S. public schools were often closed to Native Americans, and "some parents really wanted their kids to have an education." Catholic boarding schools were numerous in the Northern Plains, Lomawaima said. They were also present nationally. But outside of Canada, very little is known about them. "I regret to say that I don't know of anybody who's looked at Catholic schools in the U.S.," she said. "Welcome to the black holes of Native American history." [Vinnie Rotondaro is NCR national correspondent. His email address is vrotondaro@ncronline.org.] Editor's note: It may seem like papal statements from 500 years ago are ancient history. But Native American activists and scholars insist that Catholicism's past continues to affect the present. Papal bulls from the 1400s condoned the conquest of the Americas and other lands inhabited by indigenous people. The papal documents led to an international norm called the Doctrine of Discovery, which dehumanized non-Christians and legitimized their suppression by nations around the world, including by the United States. Now Native Americans say the church helped commit genocide and refuses to come to terms with it. This is Part Two of a six-part series on the legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery. Source: <http://ncronline.org/news/peace-justice/boarding-schools-black-hole-native-american-history#>

Gilead shuttering Cromwell group home after pressure from officials, residents Gilead Community Services of Middletown has decided to close its residence for the mentally ill in a quiet dead-end street. File PHOTO By [Jeff Mill](#). The Middletown Press Posted: 09/01/15, 9:26 AM EDT | Updated: 3 days ago [1 Comment](#) CROMWELL >> Officials of Gilead Community Services have abandoned their plans to open a group home on Reiman Drive. The decision was announced Monday afternoon, following a meeting between Gilead officials, Mayor Enzo Faienza and Town Manager Anthony J. Salvatore. Gilead, which provides treatment for the mentally ill in the greater Middletown area, stirred up a [hornet's nest of opposition](#) when the agency announced last spring it was opening a group home on a residential street in town. The announcement — and a lack of specifics about the likely residents of the group home — generated a wave of questions and concerns from residents. Advertisement Reiman Drive is a quiet dead-end street lined with single-family homes. It is located roughly equidistant between the high school and Edna C. Stevens Elementary School. The town, which is home to at least nine other group homes, had consistently supported the residents. Town officials said they understood and, in some cases, shared some of the neighbors' concerns. Gilead officials said they intended to house six men in the home. But other than to say none of the six "has been convicted of a violent felony," Gilead officials were not forthcoming about the type of individuals who would be housed there. Faienza repeatedly said he [felt there were better locations in town for the group home](#). But Gilead officials stuck fast to their plan — until recently. During a joint announcement Monday afternoon, Faienza and Salvatore said Gilead officials had changed their mind "after much discussion and many meetings with town officials and residents of the town." Faienza said even though the town and Gilead were often at loggerheads over the issue, "We were able to maintain a dialogue." During those discussions, residents raised their concerns about the presence of the group home "because of the makeup of the neighborhood and the proximity to our schools," the mayor said. The issue came to a head on July 19 after a [client walked away from the facility](#). The man, who reportedly has dementia, was found safe in Hartford some four hours later in the company of an attorney who serves as the man's conservator. Faienza and Salvatore "applauded" Gilead's decision and thanked them for "listening to the concerns of the town officials and the residents of Reiman Drive." "This is a positive," Faienza said as he and Salvatore discussed the issue in the manager's office in Town Hall. "We are glad Gilead reconsidered and came to the conclusion this was not the right location for both the residents and clients Gilead serves." In a prepared statement, state Sen. Paul Doyle agreed. "It took some time for them to realize it, but I concur with Gilead's decision that this neighborhood was never the proper location for a facility of this nature," Doyle's statement said. "Obviously there is a need for mental health services across Connecticut and the country, but the style and delivery of those services needs to work in harmony with a community and its municipal leaders in order to be successful for everyone involved." Not only has Gilead dropped the idea of opening a group home on Reiman Drive, but, "We have been informed Gilead will sell the residence," Salvatore said. While the mayor and the manager were at pains to paint the outcome in the best possible light for all concerned, Gilead Executive Director Dan Osborne appeared to be a little more grudging in his comments. "It is with great sadness that Gilead has decided to discontinue services at our newest location on Reiman Drive," Osborne said in an emailed comment Monday. "Over the past couple of months, it has become evident that this specific location will not provide a supportive and healthy

environment for the individuals we serve to be received and thrive in the community.” “While this has been a very difficult decision and a difficult time for Gilead and its board of directors, we would like to take the opportunity to say thank you to the many Cromwell residents who have reached out to offer support for the program, to (the state Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services) and to our many dedicated community supporters whose essential assistance make a difference in so many lives,” Osborne said. As he has since the very beginning of the controversy over the location of the facility, Faienza said again Monday he remains committed to providing the opportunity for anyone to re-enter society and succeed. However, he opposed the location of this particular group home and argued against locating it on Reiman Drive. And, Faienza said, “The resistance of the neighbors was not going away.” Faienza wished Gilead “the best of luck,” and said he would be willing to work with the agency again in the future. Calling the outcome “a team effort,” Faienza credited the assistance of the town’s two state legislators, Doyle and state Rep. Christie Carpino, for their assistance, as well as that of state officials “over the past few months to bring this matter to an amicable resolution.” Source: <http://www.middletownpress.com/20150901/gilead-shuttering-cromwell-group-home-after-pressure-from-officials-residents>

Foster mom accused of sexual contact with teen in her care By Andrea Flores. CREATED Aug 31, 2015 OMAHA, Neb. (KMTV)- A foster mother, accused of taking advantage of a teen in her care, is set to appear in a Sarpy County Court Tuesday. Child advocates and non-profit agencies across the Omaha area say they are in shock after learning one of their own is accused of taking advantage of a foster child. Around 11:30 Thursday night, Bellevue Police approached a car parked behind the Gorman's off 15th and Cornhusker. Inside, they found 46-year-old Kim Carrera, and a 17-year-old boy, her foster son. "Officers approached the vehicle, it appeared to them there may be some inappropriate sexual contact occurring," said Laurie Synowiecki with Bellevue Police. Police learned the 17-year-old is a ward of the State of Nebraska, placed as a foster child with Carrera by the Nebraska Families Collaborative, less than two months ago. Friday, police took Carrera into custody at her home. They booked her, accusing her of sexual assault of a protected person. In a statement to KMTV, Ann Pedersen, a spokeswoman for Nebraska Families Collaborative, had this to say: "While it is the policy of this agency not to comment on an incident involving minor children or an ongoing investigation, what we can say is the safety and well-being of the children we serve is our number one priority. We believe that kids need to be safe regardless of whether they are in a foster home, kinship home or with their families. It is never acceptable to put any child, who is in the care of an adult, at risk." The Department of Health and Human Services tells us Carrera was licensed to become a foster parent back in 2006, and also has two adopted children. DHHS confirmed she worked at Child Saving Institute starting in December of 2014, until she resigned this in mid-August. President and CEO Peg Harriott says her position did not include individual work with children: "Kim Carrera worked at Child Saving Institute from December 2014 until she resigned in mid-August 2015. Her position did not include individual work with children. Criminal and abuse background screenings are completed on all employees prior to employment. Child Saving Institute's thoughts and concern are with the teen involved in the incident and the impact to any other children in the home," said Harriot. Source: <http://www.scrippsmedia.com/kmtv/news/Foster-mom-accused-of--323543341.html>

Child Safety Department revoking group homes' license Child Safety Department revoking group homes' license 4 Saved Save Article [My Saved Items](#) [Print Email](#) Respond: [Write a letter to the editor](#) | [Write a guest opinion](#) 2015-08-31T15:53:38Z 2015-08-31T19:02:39Z Child Safety Department revoking group homes' licenseThe Associated Press The Associated Press August 31, 2015 3:53 pm 0 PHOENIX (AP) — The state Department of Child Safety on Monday said it was moving to revoke the license of a Mesa company that runs four group homes for troubled youth in the Phoenix area. The action announced Monday against Golden State Human Development comes after repeated problems at the homes, including more than 170 law enforcement calls to two of the homes between January and July. Other alleged problems that prompted the unusual step included children being left unattended for hours, failing to provide medical treatment and not intervening in altercations between the children who lived in the homes. Golden State also didn't have proof that it did background checks on some of its workers and inadequately secured medication, cleaning supplies and medications. The foster children living at the homes were moved out in recent days, department spokesman Doug Nick said. The homes were licensed to care for 35 children and handled girls ages 10 to 17. "This is one of those situations that became egregious, so we made a move," Nick said. The company can appeal the loss of its license. Call seeking comment from Golden State CEO Greg Johnson at the number listed on the nonprofit's tax returns weren't immediately returned. Pause Current Time 0:00 / Duration Time 0:00 Remaining Time -0:00 Stream TypeLIVE Loaded: 0% Progress: 0% 0:00 Fullscreen 00:00 Unmute Playback Rate 1 Subtitles subtitles off Captions captions off Chapters Chapters Child Safety Department Director Greg McKay ordered more frequent licensing monitoring visits for group homes after taking over the department in February. He also implemented a policy of sharing responsibility for the care and safety of children in the foster care system between the state and group home operators. The state had more than 17,500 children in out-of-home care as of March 31, including more than 1,700 living in group homes. That number has steadily increased in recent years. Source: http://tucson.com/news/state-and-regional/child-safety-department-revoking-group-homes-license/article_dec033ba-2a5e-5e67-a23a-cb36e009efaa.html

September 4, 2015 **DCF responds to allegations of abuse happening in foster homes** By: KAKE News Updated: Tue 6:24 PM, Sep 01, 2015 By: KAKE News [Home](#) / [Headlines List](#) / Article Stay up-to-date with KAKE News: [iOS app](#) [Android app](#) [Follow us on Twitter](#) [Like us on Facebook](#) WICHITA, Kan. -- After a number of people came to KAKE News claiming they or their children were abused in the Kansas foster care system, the Department of Children & Families responds to the allegations. One man tells KAKE News he was beaten, abused and raped in the system. Another family tells us their children were bitten by bed bugs while in foster care. More families have contacted the KAKE Newsroom with similar stories of abuse while their children or they were in foster care. KAKE News spoke with administrator Amy Neuman of the Department of Children and Families about the allegations. "It is very, very rare," Neuman said, "within the Wichita region during the last two fiscal years, there has been almost 100 percent of safety in our family foster homes." The statement "almost 100 percent" means there were some cases of abuse. When asked how the DCF investigates allegations of abuse, Neuman provided this answer: "We investigate all reports the same. When a concerned person contacts the Kansas Protection Report Center, we look at the allegations of abuse or neglect, whether that is a parent, a caregiver, a third party, a family foster home, a facility, the same type of interviews and assessment investigation occur. We meet with children, we talk with them, we observe them and we find out what is occurring. From there, we talk to alleged perpetrators, we talk to family members and we talk to collateral witnesses such as schools, daycares, anyone who may have heard or seen from that child who would have information and we need that information from the children so that we can provide a thorough assessment and investigation." As of July 1, 2015, the DCF took over the responsibility of screening foster homes and training from the Kansas Department of Health & Environment. Neuman says this will better streamline the foster care system by having it in one organization, which ultimately will help the children in foster care. To read the story on how the DCF responded to allegations they are abusing their state granted power [Click here](#). Source: <http://www.kake.com/home/headlines/DCF-responds-to-allegations-of-abuse-happening-in-foster-homes-323769681.html>

Special Report: Renowned U.S. drug-rehab program spun out of control SHANNON STAPLETON By Kristina Cooke and Robin Respaut, Reuters September 2, 2015 MOST POPULAR [Photo of the Day](#) NEW YORK (Reuters) - Martin Szczipak had already been in and out of rehab when, for a misdemeanor possession charge, a judge sent the 21-year-old heroin addict to a century-old estate in the wooded hills of upstate New York for another chance to clean up. Belle Terre, the former home of a 19th-century copper baron, housed the 168-bed Phoenix House Delaware County Center, a private, nonprofit residential drug treatment facility. When Szczipak arrived in June 2012, all was not well behind Belle Terre's stately walls. In the two years prior to Szczipak's arrival, New York's Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) had twice closed Belle Terre to new admissions after inspectors discovered illegal drug use, insufficient treatment and bad record-keeping, among many other regulatory violations. In each case, Belle Terre resumed admissions after Phoenix House submitted a "corrective action plan" to regulators. Even so, residents and a counselor at Belle Terre when Szczipak was there said little had changed. Residents trafficked in drugs, cigarettes and other contraband. Nor were residents receiving the 40 hours a week of therapeutic services OASAS required. "This place is basically a super minimum security prison camp," Szczipak wrote in an Aug. 29, 2012, letter to a friend. "We do nothing all day." Still, Szczipak was hopeful. "I'm gonna be out ... before I even know it," he wrote. By December 2012, he had given up on the treatment program. He felt he would be stuck going from "dead end job and rehab and jail until I eventually drop dead," he wrote in a letter to his fiancée. "You deserve better than that." He didn't want to use drugs anymore, he wrote, "but realistically the odds are against me." Szczipak never sent the letter. Three weeks later, he walked out of Belle Terre without permission. One day after that, police visited Szczipak's mother, Inez, at her Staten Island home to tell her that her son had been found dead from a drug overdose. POLITICAL TRACTION Sending addicts to treatment rather than jail or prison for nonviolent offenses has become increasingly popular across the U.S. political spectrum. In the 2016 presidential campaign, candidates from Democrat Hillary Clinton to Republican Chris

Christie have hailed drug treatment as a smart way to tackle the problems of prison overcrowding and excessive sentencing. Facilities like Belle Terre are part of that solution. Underwritten by taxpayers, they work with the courts and probation departments to rehabilitate offenders. In 2012, the U.S. criminal justice system sent 580,000 people to drug treatment. There's little doubt that quality care in a controlled setting can help. Multiple studies have shown that people who complete drug treatment court, a special court for drug addicted offenders, are less likely to reoffend in the first year or two after their release. At Belle Terre, criminal-justice referrals account for the majority of residents. The facility is run by Phoenix Houses of New York, whose parent foundation is one of the nation's largest drug treatment nonprofits, operating in 10 states and the District of Columbia. In the year ended June 30, 2014, the Phoenix House Foundation and its affiliates reported operating revenue of \$141 million. Phoenix Houses of New York is 95 percent publicly funded and enjoys star-studded endorsements. Beyonce donated a cosmetology center at a Brooklyn facility. Financier Pete Peterson chaired a summer fundraiser in 2013 in the posh Hamptons on New York's Long Island. But as the case of Martin Szczupak suggests, the system as practiced doesn't always deliver on the promise in principle. A review of Szczupak's journal and letters and of state regulators' reports, as well as interviews with dozens of current and former Phoenix House employees and residents, reveal a respected institution that in recent years has consistently failed to provide the quality of care necessary to help addicts kick the habit. "PERSISTENT REGULATORY VIOLATIONS" The closures that preceded Szczupak's arrival weren't the last. And nor is Belle Terre an anomaly. In November last year, OASAS suspended admissions to Belle Terre and four other Phoenix Houses of New York facilities. In a letter to Phoenix House's then-chief executive in November 2014, OASAS said Phoenix House had "persistent regulatory violations and resident/patient care concerns dating back several years." An OASAS site report on the five facilities went into graphic detail. The regulator's findings at some or all of the facilities included use of marijuana, cocaine, heroin and other illegal drugs; sexual activity among residents; reports of violence and sexual assault; insufficient, inadequately trained or abusive staff; dirty premises; and lax security, with residents coming and going as they wished. In each case, OASAS allowed admissions to resume "based upon sustained systemic improvements," the agency said in a written response to questions from Reuters. On Aug. 19, Phoenix House said it would be closing Belle Terre and its 185th Street facility in New York City. In an open letter to staff, Phoenix Houses of New York's president and regional director, Peter Scaminaci, cited a changing environment, "particularly as a result of health care and criminal justice reform," as a reason for the closures. "These facilities do not lend themselves to our vision for a transformed Phoenix House," he wrote. In a statement to Reuters, Scaminaci said his organization was "engaged in a strategic effort to re-allocate our resources to locations where we can achieve the greatest impact." Phoenix House, he said, is "collaborating closely with OASAS on designing better treatment programs, improving our standard of care and offering increased options for those suffering from substance abuse." "RAMPANT DRUG USE" Belle Terre's recent run-ins with regulators date back to at least May 2010. That's when Albany City Court Judge Thomas Keefe, who had sent three addicts there, became concerned by stories of "rampant" drug use and high staff turnover at the facility. Keefe, long a proponent of drug treatment as a way to stop addicts from cycling in and out of jail, called the facility's director, Jerome Pryor. He was surprised by what he described as Pryor's cavalier attitude and "virtual non-action to address the problem." Keefe told state regulators in a subsequent 2010 complaint to OASAS. Believing his "addicts were in danger," the judge had them reassigned to other facilities. Later that year, Jessica Deagan, now 26, started a court-ordered 9-month stay at Belle Terre to treat her heroin addiction. "It was like the street inside of a building," she said. "There was a great amount of access to drugs. I used heroin, angel dust, Xanax, whatever was in there for the week." Former residents said dealers would throw drugs over the stone wall around the property or hide them along nearby hiking trails for residents to retrieve. On Aug. 11, 2010, three months after the judge's initial complaint, a team of OASAS inspectors descended on Belle Terre unannounced. As the inspectors introduced themselves to a staff member, who was leading a house meeting, residents began shouting, "Shut this place down," and "Get us out of here," according to the regulator's report, a copy of which Reuters obtained New York's Freedom of Information Law. "THERE WAS NO STAFF" OASAS recommended halting new admissions, citing widely available illegal drugs, unsupervised outings, sexual activity among residents, diversion of medications, unavailability of staff members, and lack of group counseling. Belle Terre Director Pryor, according to the OASAS report, attributed most of the problems to the recent loss of five staff members. Four new employees, he told the regulators, lacked experience in treating chemical dependency. Pryor declined to comment. A month after admissions were stopped, OASAS conducted a follow-up visit and determined that the facility had stabilized. Admissions resumed. Two weeks after that, Jordan Nedlik, a resident on kitchen duty, was stabbed in the back by another resident unhappy with the size of his meatball supper. "There was no staff," Nedlik said. Nedlik returned to Belle Terre after a brief hospital stay. He was sent back to Belle Terre in 2012, after failing a urine test, and later spent time in prison for his initial grand larceny charge. He said that as of August 2015, he has been clean for 14 months. In September 2011, inadequate staffing prompted counselor Mary Moynahan to quit. In her resignation letter, a copy of which she sent to OASAS, she complained that nonviolent, often very young offenders were mixed with residents who were "not addicts, but rather, hardened criminals avoiding jail time." She added: "The bottom line is the understaffing." "SUSPICIOUS RECORDS" Some former counselors told Reuters they lacked the training required to provide the individualized, holistic drug and alcohol addiction treatment Phoenix House promised on its website. Group sessions were haphazard, often pieced together from information gathered through Google searches the night before, they said. Treatment records were suspect. "There were times when I would say, 'I didn't write this. That's not my handwriting,'" said Glenn Williamson, a former counselor and military veteran. Another counselor, who asked not to be identified for fear of losing her license, recalled chasing a young man high on the synthetic opioid fentanyl around the grounds to keep him out of sight during an OASAS inspection. In November 2011, OASAS again halted admissions. The agency cited insufficient clinical and mental health services, strip searches conducted without consent, and failure to file incident reports. Residents drove program vans and stayed up all night as "night watchman," which kept them from participating in group therapy. OASAS also found that Belle Terre's new director, Henry Bennett, obstructed their request for records in an attempt to modify them before handing them over. Phoenix House fired Bennett. Bennett, who went on to work for various treatment providers before retiring in Georgia, said he had not been aware that the records were being altered. Bennett said Phoenix House "took their eye off the prize" by emphasizing business considerations over "things they need such as clinical functions and a good medical records system." "TOOL OF ABUSE" About 75 percent of Belle Terre residents at the time were on psychotropic medications, state records show, but the only psychiatric care for residents was a four-hour drive away in New York City. A van took seven residents there twice a week. Myke Champlin, a 2011 resident with borderline personality disorder, said he stayed clean for his first four months at Belle Terre, but by the time he graduated, "I was smoking more K2 [synthetic marijuana] and everything than you could imagine." Courts rely on treatment providers for updates on offenders' performance. If offenders don't comply with a treatment provider's rules, the court can use sanctions such as short jail stints or can extend their time in treatment. In some cases, offenders end up spending more time incarcerated than if they had eschewed drug treatment. At Belle Terre, the threat of reporting infractions could become a tool of abuse. As is common practice in many rehab programs, residents were assigned jobs in a hierarchy, from the lowest cleaning crew to managing other residents' schedules. This system, which counselors and residents called "the Structure," was meant to help residents break bad habits and prepare for working life. Former residents said the system became a means of settling personal scores. Higher-ranking residents could punish others for minor infractions, such as talking in the medication line. Infractions could result in cancellation of family visits, or could be reported to the courts. "PARTNERS IN ADDICTION" This was the milieu Martin Szczupak entered in the summer of 2012. Szczupak grew up in the New York City boroughs of Brooklyn and Staten Island. In middle school, he met Priscilla Pardo, with whom he shared a love of punk rock. "Punk rock is angry and abrasive, and for several years, so was I," Szczupak wrote in his journal. Szczupak was addicted to heroin by age 15, Pardo said. She was hooked at 18. Still, they managed to start college. He studied biology. She studied mortuary science. They missed a lot of classes, mostly to get high, Pardo said. They didn't know it, but they were part of a resurgence of heroin abuse in the U.S. In 2013, 517,000 Americans abused or were dependent on heroin, more than twice as many as in 2007, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Staten Island had the highest rate of heroin-related deaths among all New York City boroughs in 2012. Local officials have called it an "epidemic." Pardo nearly died from an overdose in 2011. That "scared the crap out of Martin," Pardo said. He persuaded his girlfriend to admit to their parents that they had a problem. Szczupak finished a stint in rehab in March 2011. On his way home, according to the account he gave to his mother and Pardo, the rehab facility van he was riding in made a stop. Szczupak, woozy and disoriented from prescribed medications, stepped out of the van. When he returned, he told Pardo and his mother, he mistook another vehicle for the rehab facility van. According to the police report on the incident, Szczupak was pulling on the vehicle's door handle and shouting, "open the door." Inside the Ford Explorer sat a woman and her 3-year-old son. She called the police. Szczupak was charged with attempted grand larceny and resisting arrest. Records show Szczupak told the police that he "wanted to take the car home." "DOWN THE DRAIN" Szczupak later told police he had no recollection of the incident. He pleaded guilty and agreed to go to treatment. A year later, he relapsed. He was arrested for possession on Staten Island, a probation violation. In court, the judge agreed to give him another chance at treatment. When Szczupak arrived at Belle Terre in June 2012, the facility was still short-staffed. Residents at the time described the lack of counseling and widespread use of

illegal drugs that OASAS staff had cited over the prior two years. Brian Moody, 33, a former Bank of America contractor who had been remanded to Belle Terre after violating probation on a drug-sales charge, said the place was in chaos. "There were people who were high," he said. "It was a circus show." Moody said he befriended Szczupak, whom he described as smart and determined. "He wanted to change," but felt he was getting no help, said Moody, now working as a debt-collection agent. Szczupak at first rose within the Structure. He was assigned to computer work, where he spent days listening to music, according to a letter to a friend. "I hoped this one would work, mentally he wanted it to work, he was pretty optimistic," said his mother, Inez. "And then all of a sudden everything went down the drain, and every phone call that I got was, 'I can't stand this place, this is bullshit, they don't treat me fair.' But I never understood what happened." In December 2012, Szczupak was demoted within the Structure for disrespecting a staff member, his treatment records show. The details are unclear. Szczupak told friends that the time already spent in treatment was worthless and that he would end up going to jail anyway. According to treatment records, Szczupak was given the option of starting over again in drug court, but he refused, saying he had heard "nightmare stories" from others. "HE SEEMED LIKE A SHELL" "This whole episode here has pushed back my completion of this shit," he wrote in an undated entry that ends his journal. "This whole drug court thing has got me frustrated." When Pardo spoke with Szczupak on Thursday, Jan. 3, 2013, six months after his arrival at Belle Terre, he seemed "really mad at the world, very dark, not making any jokes," she said. "He seemed like a shell." The next day, Moody said, Szczupak told him he would rather be in jail, with a clear end-date. He packed his belongings and walked out without approval. That Saturday, police were called to a Brooklyn house where they found Szczupak, dead from a heroin overdose. In November 2014, regulators again suspended admissions at Belle Terre, as well as four other Phoenix House facilities. State regulators noted high staff turnover and need for improved clinical practices at Belle Terre. They also warned the facility to let clients speak to their attorneys without staff present. OASAS let Belle Terre reopen in January 2015. Three of the other centers were reopened with limited admissions in late 2014 and early 2015. The Shrub Oak teen residential treatment facility was closed permanently in June 2015. In March, OASAS inspected Belle Terre again, prompted by unspecified complaints against director Alan Hargrove, OASAS reported. Phoenix House then fired Hargrove, based on OASAS's feedback. Hargrove declined to comment. Phoenix House announced on Aug. 19 it would be closing Belle Terre and the 185th Street facility. Pardo, now 24, lives with her parents on Staten Island and works the night shift at a convention center. She has been sober for three years after receiving treatment at Mount Sinai Beth Israel Medical Center in New York City. (This story corrects the seventh paragraph to fix the location of Inez Szczupak's home: It is located in Staten Island, not Brooklyn.) (Reporting by Kristina Cooke and Robin Respaut; Edited by John Blanton) Source: <http://www.thefiscaltimes.com/latestnews/2015/09/02/Special-Report-Renowned-US-drug-rehab-program-spun-out-control>

Report: Increase in Reported Abuse of Mass. Foster Kids | NECN Report: Increase in Reported Abuse of Mass. Foster Kids The release of the 2014 data comes amid renewed scrutiny of the state's child welfare system and calls to increase staffing and funding for the Department of Children and Families [View Comments \(0\)](#) | necn Documented reports of abuse or neglect of children in foster care and other out-of-home settings increased in Massachusetts last year, as did deaths among children receiving services from state agencies, according to a report filed Tuesday by the state's Child Advocate. The release of the 2014 data comes amid renewed scrutiny of the state's child welfare system and calls to increase staffing and funding for the Department of Children and Families. [Report: DCF Investigating Central Mass. Offices](#) The advocate's office counted 633 substantiated allegations of mistreatment in its review of 290 reports of abuse or neglect last year, an increase from 538 allegations of mistreatment in a review of 241 reports in 2013. A single report often includes multiple allegations of abuse or multiple victims. It counted 40 deaths in 2014, an increase from 29 in the previous year and the highest total since 2011. [DCF: 3 Workers in 2-Year-Old's Death Case Unlicensed](#) Child Advocate Gail Garinger said 184 of the reports involved children in DCF custody, including 117 who were in foster care. "Even the best organized and managed child-serving agency will fail if its staff is overwhelmed," Garinger wrote in a letter accompanying her annual report. "It is the responsibility of the governor and the legislature to ensure that sufficient resources are available." The report documented 136 "critical incident reports" involving deaths or serious injuries among children who were receiving services of some type from DCF or other state agencies, including the Department of Youth Services and the Department of Mental Health. The death of one 9-year-old boy from a gunshot wound was ruled a homicide, three deaths were ruled suicides and two resulted from traffic accidents. Sixteen deaths, including those of two children in DCF custody, were determined to be from natural causes or existing medical conditions; there were eight cases of "sudden and unexpected infant and toddler death," which includes Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and accidental suffocation in bed. The Massachusetts medical examiner has yet to officially rule on 10 other 2014 deaths, the report said. Last month, a 2-year-old girl in foster care died after being found unresponsive at an apartment complex in Auburn and another toddler from the same home was hospitalized in critical condition. Authorities have yet to release further details on the circumstances and no charges have been filed. Gov. Charlie Baker said at the time that the state would launch its own internal investigation. In July, DCF took custody of a 7-year-old Hardwick boy who had allegedly been beaten, starved and dehydrated by his father. The agency had been working with the family prior to the arrest of Randall Lints, who pleaded not guilty to assault and endangerment charges. In 2013, social workers lost track of Jeremiah Oliver, a 5-year-old Fitchburg boy who went missing from his home and whose remains were later found alongside a state highway. The case prompted a wide-ranging review of DCF procedures and an eventual shake-up in the agency's top management. Source: <http://www.necn.com/news/new-england/Report-Increase-in-Reported-Abuse-of-Mass-Foster-Kids-323823151.html>

Too Many Children In Foster Care Are Getting Antipsychotic Meds : Shots - Health News : NPR California Moves To Stop Misuse Of Psychiatric Meds In Foster Care September 02, 2015 12:02 PM ET [Elaine Korry i](#) Andy Baker/Ikon Images/Getty Images Andy Baker/Ikon Images/Getty Images By the time DeAngelo Cortijo was 14, he had been in more than a dozen foster homes. He had run away and lived on the streets for months, and he had been diagnosed with bipolar and anxiety disorders, attachment disorder, intermittent explosive disorder or posttraumatic stress disorder. He had been in and out of mental hospitals and heavily medicated. Cortijo, who was born in San Francisco, was taken from his mother after she attempted suicide when he was 3. After his later diagnoses, he was prescribed a combination of antipsychotics, antidepressants and stimulants, and was told that taking them was his only hope of being normal. Instead, he said, medication made him feel "doped up and completely lost." It was not until he spent several months developing a relationship with a horse — "and it was huge," said Cortijo with a smile — that he began to really acknowledge his own feelings. "Animals sense you, your fears, anxieties and insecurities," he said. [i](#) DeAngelo Cortijo, 22, says he benefited more from therapy than from psychotropic medications during his years in foster care. Elaine Korry hide caption itoggle caption Elaine Korry DeAngelo Cortijo, 22, says he benefited more from therapy than from psychotropic medications during his years in foster care. Elaine Korry Finding help through equine-assisted therapy — riding a horse, feeding, grooming and communicating with it — helped Cortijo to gain a better perspective on himself. "It allowed me to understand what a bond was, to realize I am an individual who is capable of caring, capable of being normal," said Cortijo. He's now 22, off all medication, and is helping troubled youth as a juvenile justice intern at the National Center for Youth Law. Children in foster care are prescribed antipsychotic drugs at double to quadruple the rate of that not in foster care, according to a [Government Accountability Office](#) report. Hundreds of children were found to be taking five or more psychotropic medications at a time, although there is no medical evidence to support such a drug regimen. Thousands of children were prescribed doses that exceeded FDA-approved guidelines. The report found monitoring programs for psychotropic drugs provided to foster children fell short of guidelines established by the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. In March, a [report](#) by the inspector general at Health and Human Services found quality of care concerns in more than two-thirds of claims for psychotropic drugs paid for by Medicaid, the health insurer for most children in foster care. That included too many drugs (37 percent); wrong dose (23 percent); poor monitoring (53 percent); or wrong treatment (41 percent). The OIG recommended that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) work with the states to enhance oversight, medical reviews and utilization reviews of psychotropics prescribed to children. In California, a sweeping package of laws to regulate the prescribing of powerful psychiatric medications to children and teens in the child-welfare system has passed the Senate and is heading to the state assembly, where it faces no formal opposition. The reforms also are being eyed as a template for federal legislation. Anna Johnson, a social analyst at the Oakland, Calif., -based [National Center for Youth Law](#), which helped write the legislation, said an enforcement mechanism is needed to change prescribing practices. "The legislation describes in detail the oversight function — what everyone's role is, from the juvenile court judge and the social workers, to the care providers, the lawyers, the doctors," said Johnson. "And it names specifically the prescribing practices we want to see reduced: the use of multiple drugs on children, dosages that exceed maximums and the use of antipsychotics where not medically necessary because of physical health risk factors." The push for tougher laws follows last year's publication of a [series of investigative articles](#) in the San Jose Mercury News, which alleged widespread use of antipsychotics and other psychiatric drugs without proper evaluation and monitoring among the estimated 63,000 California children in foster care. "It is well beyond time for us to be having this discussion and intervening," said Ken Berrick, president and CEO of the [Seneca Family of Agencies](#), which provides mental health and other services for

children in California. According to Berrick, overuse of medication has been a problem for decades, often because better alternatives simply weren't available. "Medication is available right now on demand, and other services are not," he said. "When you don't have a choice, you rely on what you have." Under the reforms, there would be better monitoring of children on medication and closer scrutiny of physicians to identify doctors who rely most heavily on medication. The bill also calls for stricter oversight of group homes to determine if psychotropic medications are used to control children's behavior. "Drugging and sedating children should never be considered the primary option in lieu of counseling, therapy and appropriate treatment," said the bill's author, Sen. Jim Beall, D-San Jose. In addition, social workers and caregivers in California would receive training in the risks, benefits and side effects of psychiatric medications. A mix of state and federal dollars would establish a structure to provide second medical opinions. Beyond reining in prescribing outliers, the legislation also places a new emphasis on defining what comprises appropriate care for vulnerable youth. "It's no longer a drugs-only approach," explained Johnson, who said the legislation would require that children who are being given powerful medications also receive other services. [i Andy Baker/Ikon Images/Getty Images](#) Andy Baker/Ikon Images/Getty Images "We're saying, you have to do something else — either first or at the same time — to really help a troubled child," said Johnson. "Swallowing a pill doesn't help with grief or trauma. It may contain symptoms, but it doesn't help you move forward and be functional in life." In legislative hearings, former foster youth testified about negative side effects from taking psychotropic medications, sometimes unwillingly. And they described how alternatives to drug therapy often led to better outcomes. For Tisha Ortiz, 22, help finally came in the form of a therapeutic behavioral services worker who took a genuine interest in her. "I felt loved by her, that she actually cared," said Ortiz. Ortiz had a chaotic childhood filled with emotional and sexual abuse. While she lived in various group homes, she often lashed out at adults and resorted to self-harm when her emotions got the better of her. For years she lived with flashbacks to traumatic events, which her caregivers and social workers misinterpreted. "They considered the flashbacks as hearing voices, so I got put on psychotropic meds for that, when I wasn't hearing voices at all." On medication, Ortiz gained weight and found it hard to stay awake, yet she continued to feel abandoned and depressed. "I just felt sedated, and I wasn't really dealing with the problems," she said. According to Ortiz, she did not begin to get better until she was connected with a behavioral services worker who encouraged her to talk about her past. "She helped me understand that what I was feeling was because of the situations I went through and not because there's all these things wrong with me." Since then, Ortiz has had other therapists who she felt really listened to her, whom she still occasionally calls if she's had a bad day. But the self-harm has stopped, and she's tapering off the one medication that she still takes. Ortiz says it was human interaction, not drugs, that helped her. "Having that love was one of the first steps that put me on the road to getting better." There are a lot of good evidence-based treatments that work, said Shadi Houshyar, vice president for child welfare policy at [First Focus](#), a national children's advocacy organization. "States are just struggling with finding the providers, the resources and the dollars to pay for these interventions," she said. Some states resort to Medicaid waivers or use their child welfare general funds to match Medicaid dollars, but that's not enough, Houshyar said. That's why First Focus and other advocacy groups have been big proponents of a White House program aimed at curbing the misuse of psychiatric medication in foster care. The Obama administration has called on states to advance alternative treatments in their child welfare systems. In his 2015 and 2016 budget proposals, President Obama unveiled a two-pronged plan allocating \$750 million in grant dollars and incentive payments to address the overprescribing of psychotropics. The demonstration project would bring child welfare and Medicaid agencies together to provide more coordinated services, including behavioral therapies, to foster kids with a history of trauma or mental health problems. "If we really want to solve this problem, we have to make the alternative interventions available at the same level at which medication is available," said Berrick. "It's really a question of access. When that happens, people will make the right decision." Elaine Korry writes about healthcare and social policy from the San Francisco Bay area. This story was produced by [Youth Today](#), the national news source for youth-service professionals, including child welfare and juvenile justice, youth development and out-of-school-time programming. Source: <http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2015/09/02/436350334/california-moves-to-stop-misuse-of-psychiatric-meds-in-foster-care>

Last teacher in Atlanta cheating scandal gets year in prison By [The Associated Press](#) updated Tuesday, September 1, 2015 - 8:02pm [0 comments](#)
ATLANTA | The final teacher awaiting sentencing in the Atlanta schools test cheating case was ordered by the trial judge Tuesday to serve a year in prison and four months on probation. Former elementary school teacher Shani Robinson was among 11 educators convicted in April by a Fulton County Superior Court jury in a conspiracy to inflate student scores on standardized tests in the Atlanta public school system. Robinson was found guilty of racketeering and other charges for changing students' answers on standardized tests given in 2009. Her sentencing had been delayed because she gave birth just days after she was convicted. Judge Jerry Baxter had offered Robinson the same deal as her 10 co-defendants — she could have avoided a prison sentence by admitting her guilt in court. Robinson's defense attorney, Annette Green, told the judge the ex-teacher was willing to accept the jury's verdict and her punishment but she still insists she did nothing wrong. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported (<http://on-ajc.com/1JA764L>) Robinson's mother pleaded with the judge to show mercy anyway, noting Robinson has a 4-month-old son. "She rejected her avenue out of this mess," Baxter said. In addition to sentencing Robinson to a year in prison and four years on probation, the judge ordered her to pay a \$1,000 fine and serve 1,000 hours of community service. The judge did allow Robinson to remain free while she appeals her conviction. He estimated it will likely be three years before she has to report to prison. Only two of the 11 convicted educators accepted the judge's offer to avoid prison by admitting their guilt during sentencing. They all received probation. Like Robinson, the other eight defendants refused the offer and were sentenced to one to three years in prison. Source: <http://onlineathens.com/local-news/2015-09-01/last-teacher-atlanta-cheating-scandal-gets-year-prison>

Former Tulsa Foster Care Provider Accused Of Sharing Child Porn Videos Posted: Sep 03, 2015 4:12 AM PDT Updated: Sep 03, 2015 2:36 PM PDT
Russell Hulstine, NewsOn6.com Email Connect richard.clark@newson6.net [Share this story on Facebook](#) [Tweet this story](#) [Plus one this story on Google Plus](#) [Email this story](#)
TULSA, Oklahoma - Authorities arrested a 44-year-old Tulsa man Wednesday following a month long child pornography investigation. According to the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, the man is a former respite care provider for foster children. OSBI began the undercover investigation into the sharing of child porn videos on August 6. They said their investigation led them to a computer belonging to Timothy Cheatwood. A report said the OSBI tracked the computer's IP address to a residence in the 6400 block of East 95th Place just off the Creek Turnpike. On September 2, authorities searched Cheatwood's home and computer. When questioned, investigators said Cheatwood admitted to using a peer-to-peer network to share child porn videos. Cheatwood was arrested and booked into the Tulsa County jail on a complaint of being in possession of child pornography. He is being held on a \$100,000 bond with a court appearance set for September 9. Investigators want foster parents who had contact with Cheatwood to call the OSBI hotline at 1-800-522-8017. Source: <http://www.newson6.com/story/29949919/tulsa-man-accused-of-sharing-child-porn-videos>

Ind. pastor accused of battering kids in boarding school Matthew Glowicki, The (Louisville, Ky.) Courier-Journal 7:14 a.m. EDT September 4, 2015 A 47-year-old pastor and a 21-year-old man are facing felony battery and neglect charges for beating young children. The children attended a boarding school run by the church. VPC Gerald Harris(Photo: Clark County Detention Center) 104 CONNECT [54 TWEET 1 LINKEDIN](#) 16 COMMENTEMAILMORE
LOUISVILLE — A Sellersburg, Ind., pastor and fellow church workers are accused of beating multiple children in their care with a wooden paddle. Clark County Prosecuting Attorney Jeremy Mull said the abuse occurred at Crossroads Baptist Church, led by Pastor Gerald Harris. It operates a boarding academy complete with dormitories and classrooms for mostly out of state students, he said. While parents, teachers and caretakers are allowed to discipline children "in a legal way," Mull said, the bruising allegedly seen on the children constituted criminal abuse. "That's the point where, in my opinion as a prosecutor, it crosses the line from appropriate discipline to a criminal battery," he said. [USA TODAY Father requests police presence when spanking child](#) Harris, 47, and Christopher Williams, 21, were both arrested earlier this week and face preliminary charges of battery and neglect of a dependent, said Clarksville Chief of Police Mark Palmer in a news release. Clark County Jail records indicate both live at the church. Clarksville police and Child Protective Services did a welfare check at the church, 6109 Appleleaf Lane, Tuesday and interviewed children ranging in age from 8 to 19. They told investigators of "various forms of punishment," Palmer said. Christopher Williams (Photo: Clark County Detention Center) Five children told police they were "whipped with a wooden paddle," according to a probable cause affidavit released Thursday. An 8-year-old boy said Williams tied a rope around his waist and jerked him around "for not behaving." An 11-year-old boy with "very serious bruising" on his buttocks and legs told investigators he was also hit with the paddle by both Williams and Harris when he wet his bed. The pastor allegedly made one 16-year-old stand before the other boys to be whipped with the paddle after Harris told him to keep reading his Bible and believed the teen gave him a smirk, the boy told police. Pastor Gerald Harris leads Crossroads Baptist Church in Sellersburg, Ind. He is accused of whipping children in his care with a wooden paddle. (Photo: Matthew Glowicki) Students at the academy were also told they could not use the bathroom once the lights were turned off at night, according to the affidavit. Kentucky law enforcement tipped off Clarksville Police after they learned of

children from the boarding academy who were selling candy bars in Owensboro, Ky., Mull said. One of the children allegedly told a customer he feared he would be whipped if he didn't sell enough candy. Pastor Gerald Harris leads Crossroads Baptist Church in Sellersburg, Ind. He is accused of whipping children in his care with a wooden paddle. (Photo: Matthew Glowicki) All children have since been removed from the church and returned to their parents or Child Protective Custody, Mull said. Williams appeared Thursday afternoon in Clark County Circuit Court in Jeffersonville, Ind., where he was advised of his rights by Judge Andrew Adams. Supporters of Williams who appeared in court declined comment. He is next due to appear in court Tuesday afternoon. Harris bonded out of jail, Mull said, but will likely appear early next week in court when formal charges are filed against both. A probable cause affidavit represents only one side of the case. Further charges could be filed as the investigation continues, Mull said, though he said he does not believe more adults harmed the children. Mull said he knows little about the school, such as when it began operations, how out-of-state parents found out about the school or how many total students attended. "We're looking at exactly what the arrangements were for keeping the kids, what the philosophy was, what the reasonings were for kids being here," Mull said. Clarksville Building Commissioner Ilpo Majuri also visited the property Tuesday and ordered the owners to cease 24/7, residential operations, he said. Owners of the church had come before the city at a board meeting a few years ago stating they were thinking of opening a school on the premises, but no rezoning ever occurred, Majuri said. An order from the Clarksville, Ind., building commissioner instructed the property operators to stop using the facility as a 24/7, dormitory-style residence, because the property is not properly zoned for such use. (Photo: By Matthew Glowicki, The Courier-Journal) "I think they are trying to comply," he noted. Mike Staggs, who operates a mobile home community next to the church, said he sometimes sees the boys out mowing grass or doing other chores on the church property. A few boys came by his office last month selling candy, he said. "But we never saw anything out of the ordinary," he said. Katherine Taul said two boys from the school stopped by her Versailles, Ind., office in January selling candies and giving out cards with the church's name and number. "I wish I had asked the boys more questions," she wrote to The Courier-Journal. "I remember trying to research the place, but wasn't able to find much, which I also thought strange." According to the school's Facebook page, the [Well of Grace Boarding Academy](#) "is a boys home under the authority of Crossroads Baptist Church." Its stated goals include "reaching school age boys heading down the paths of destruction" and "watching the transformation of unwanted, and seemingly ruined lives into Godly young men." Source: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2015/09/03/ind-pastor-accused-battering-kids-boarding-school/71678274/>

2 NYC Jail Guards Charged in Beating of 18-Year-Old Inmate NEW YORK — Sep 4, 2015, 7:13 PM ET By JAKE PEARSON Associated Press [Share 0](#) [Share on email 0](#) [Comments](#) A New York City jail captain and a correction officer have been charged with assault and other crimes in the beating of a mentally challenged 18-year-old inmate in a Rikers Island supply closet last year. Capt. Medzid Kolenovic and Officer Jean Destine pleaded not guilty to misdemeanor assault and official misconduct charges, as well as to felony charges that they altered use-of-force documents and falsely claimed workers' compensation after Ambirorix Celedonio's Dec. 9 assault. A Department of Correction spokeswoman said Kolenovic, 40, and Destine, 42, have been placed on modified duty, pending further disciplinary proceedings. Their lawyers didn't immediately return messages seeking comment. Celedonio's beating, first reported by The Associated Press, occurred the week before Mayor [Bill de Blasio](#) visited Rikers to pledge reforms, especially concerning the treatment of teenage inmates. Last August, a federal investigation found Rikers was a dangerous place for 16- 17- and 18-year-old inmates, who were routinely beaten by jail guards, each other and regularly placed in solitary confinement. Since then, officials have done away with solitary for teenage inmates and overhauled the way 16- and 17-year-olds are jailed. Celedonio was being held on a gang assault charge, but is no longer in custody and his case has been sealed. His attorney, Jenay Nurse, said her client has an IQ of 65 and was goaded into a verbal argument by Kolenovic in a cafeteria at Rikers. City investigators found that Kolenovic, whose confrontation was partially caught on security cameras, then invited Celedonio into the supply closet to settle the dispute, officials said. Celedonio emerged from the closet, which had no cameras, with a bloodied and bruised face; he was then rushed to a health clinic, officials said. "This egregious act should never have happened," said Nurse. "These were two grown men severely assaulting not just a kid but also a kid who is mildly mentally retarded." In a statement, jails Commissioner Joseph Ponte said officials are trying to better recruit and train correction officers. ——— This story has been corrected to show the correction officers have been placed on modified duty, not suspended. Source: <http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/nyc-jail-guards-charged-beating-18-year-inmate-33544885>

The lost boys of the Barrier [Save](#) Saturday, 05 September 2015 [Email](#)[Facebook](#)[Twitter](#)[Google+](#) [The New Zealand Herald](#) [Email](#) [Facebook](#)[Twitter](#)[Google+](#) John da Silva, who ran Whakapakari on his family's land. Phot / Bauer Media It was supposed to be an island boot camp to scare youngsters straight. But it spun out of control, scarring many participants for life and prompting comparisons with the classic dystopian novel Lord of the Flies. By Matt Nippert The second time Simon visited Great Barrier Island he says was made to dig his own grave. The man with the shotgun who supervised his spadework said: "You think this is a f***ing joke?" Simon (a court suppression order means the Weekend Herald cannot use his real name) was 15 years old. It was May 8, 1998, and the boy was one of four who'd escaped from the nearby Government-funded Whakapakari Youth Trust camp. The rustic tent facility was used to hold those too young for prison and as a dumping ground for difficult-to-manage wards of Child, Youth and Family. The four boys hadn't got far before being recaptured: no one escaped from Whakapakari. The nearest road was a 4km boat trip, or a hike across a thick scrubbed ridge, away. The Coromandel peninsula, the tantalising mainland looming on the horizon, was dozens of kilometres of choppy waves away. This isolation was a boon for containing young people who had a habit of escaping, but some of the boys sent there claim it took on a sinister life of its own. "The culture of the place ended up a bit Lord of the Flies, to be honest," says University of Auckland social work researcher Dr Ian Hyslop, who has reviewed the facility's files as part of an upcoming job as expert witness for nearly 40 former residents who are suing the Government. The camp had its own prison island, an isolated rocky outcrop in the middle of Mangati Bay, formally named Whangara, or Cliff Island, but known as Alcatraz. Despite repeated directives from CYFS head office in Wellington (dating from at least 1988 and continuing until the camp shut down suddenly in 2004) to cease its use, a whole generation of kids claim Alcatraz was used as a dump for camp troublemakers. Many say they were left there, or even dumped into the sea 100m from shore, without supervision or bedding and with only minimal supplies, for weeks at a time. During their brief, heady, afternoon on the lam the four escapers had broken into a Department of Conservation hut, ransacked a boat, taken a Casio watch, and stolen some marijuana and smoked it. The dope and watch belonged to the man with the gun. He'd demanded from Whakapakari staff, and apparently been granted, an afternoon alone with the petty thieves. The watch held sentimental value and was said to be a gift from a long-dead mother. The man with the gun, a hard man with tattoos, understood to be a senior gang member, didn't believe the boys when they claimed they'd lost it. Simon says it was after being interrogated about the watch - which first involved kneeling with gunshots being fired over their heads and later being forced at gunpoint inside a kennel containing a snapping dobermann - that the man brought up grave digging. "The others were digging their holes as well. They were crying. I had just turned 15 - the other boys were younger, 13 or 14. The look on their faces, I'll never forget it. The fear on their faces. We all thought we were going to die," he says. A still from the documentary Breaking The Barriers (1992). The boys didn't die that day. Simon told the Weekend Herald they ran for it when the man put down the gun and started waving around a garden slasher. Interviews with nearly a dozen former Whakapakari residents detail claims of regularised violence, which, though not as lurid as Simon's brush with the alleged gang member, was consistent enough to form part of the everyday background. They say larger and longer-serving boys were recruited formally as "Young Leaders" and informally as the "Flying Squad", deputised and encouraged by adult supervisors to maintain order through physical discipline. THE CAMP was finally closed in 2004, after a steady stream of complaints about abuse turned into a torrent. Initial investigations by CYF revealed a third of the boys said they'd been seriously assaulted by staff members. One alleged he had been raped by a supervisor but was too scared to press charges. Interview notes said many of the boys were traumatised, with one of them telling his social worker: "Before I went to the island I was different, always laughing. People say I'm different now." The camp had long had a mixed reputation among social workers. It was known as rough and ready, but also one of the few places available to send the most troubled of teens. Many of its former residents would go on to become some of New Zealand's most notorious hardened criminals, including RSA triple killer William Bell. Former resident Andrew (whose real name is also suppressed by the court) settled his claim with CYF earlier this year. He is blunt when describing Whakapakari as the worst of many state facilities he spent time in during his youth. "It was a f***ing hellhole," he says. Two years after the last boy had been evacuated, CYF undertook a formal study of how effective the facility had been at reducing reoffending. Of the 69 boys who attended the camp in 2004, only one in five had not offended, and 61 per cent had racked up multiple convictions. Simon, considered a nuisance and the instigator of the 1998 escape attempt, got his wish and was soon sent home to Dunedin. He says he's never talked with anyone from Whakapakari since, but can recall his last conversation with the three other failed escapees. "As I left they told me 'Get us some help'. I did the best I could - I told mum, told the courts - but it got swept under the carpet and covered up." It wasn't just Simon who tried raising the alarm. The quartet had shared

their tale with the Whakapakari supervisor tasked with picking them up after the incident, who was concerned enough to blow the whistle. The supervisor's complaint included the observation that two of the four boys had, literally, pissed themselves. Documents obtained under the Official Information Act as part of a wide-ranging civil suit against the Ministry of Social Development by Wellington law firm Cooper Legal on behalf of former Whakapakari residents, appears to show CYF's investigation into this incident was botched and the opportunity for justice - given the statute of limitations - has been lost. A still from the documentary *Breaking The Barriers*. The investigation report, dated September 7, 1998 shows the investigator didn't interview any of the boys, or the whistleblowing staff member, or the police, and instead preferred the explanation provided by Whakapakari director John da Silva. A former professional wrestler and star of 70s television staple *On the Mat*, da Silva had run Whakapakari on his family's land since the early 1980s. He claimed: • Gunshots would have been audible to locals but weren't heard; • The mock executions never happened; • The gang member was actually just a "heavily tattooed local fisherman," and; • The youths' work detail had been arranged by local police. The investigator concluded that the complaints "need to be viewed in the context of police involvement of arranging the work with the aggrieved neighbour" and that the camp director was well-intentioned. "At worst on Mr da Silva's part there was a concern to right the wrongs in order that the programme's credibility on the island could be maintained and the victim's loss [be in] some way atoned," the report said. But the whistleblower was not satisfied and made another complaint, this time to the Commissioner for Children. Another investigation was opened in 1999, but despite finding serious problems with da Silva's version of events, the Commissioner was unable to reach a finding of facts as he too was unable to locate and interview the boys involved. Crucially, the Commissioner's report shows that police formally denied any involvement in arranging the claimed work detail with the neighbour - a key plank of da Silva's version of events. The report also shows the final decision by police not to prosecute - delayed until July 2000 by the demands of an unrelated homicide investigation - was an almost shrugging of institutional shoulders. The allegations "may well have some truth to them", the investigating officer told the Commissioner. "Nevertheless I would not be prepared to pursue a prosecution with evidence of this standard - specifically the unco-operative and unreliable nature of the complainants." A review of the complaint files by the *Weekend Herald* shows Simon's version of events, unheard by police or CYF officials, broadly corroborates an evidential interview given by one of the boys and the initial complaint by the supervisor made in 1998. Garth Young, chief analyst for historic claims at the Ministry of Social Development said he was unable to comment on what happened at Whakapakari - or the handling of the alleged mock executions - as the matter was before the courts. He said the claims were being defended, but declined to elaborate on how CYF defended its conduct. Putting aside questions of fact and liability, Young agreed that Simon's description of children digging graves and being menaced by dogs sounded horrifying. "I don't think any reasonable person would have any other reaction to something like that. Absolutely I wouldn't for a minute want you to get the impression that I or anyone would be defending that." THE CAMP'S director, da Silva, now 81, still lives on Great Barrier Island and his Whakapakari camp has long been swallowed by the bush. He told the *Weekend Herald* that the neighbour at the centre of Simon's complaint was now deceased, and was simply a local fisherman. "There seems to be a lot of accusations about ill-treatment floated around, and it's very difficult now - it's so many years ago - to find the people involved," he said. He said his recollection was that the four boys involved seemed unharmed, despite the allegations of mistreatment. "They all came back in one piece, there didn't seem to be anything wrong with them." The former wrestler, who competed at the Olympics and in town halls up and down the country during a curious period in New Zealand history where professional wrestling was a legitimate local industry, defended Whakapakari by noting that no one had died. "We certainly never lost a life, but we did have some pretty harrowing moments," he said. His clients were the most difficult young people in the country, Da Silva noted. "Nobody has ever come up with a final solution to that kind of upbringing to magically make them good again." A still from the documentary *Breaking The Barriers*. Simon has a good word for the man who ran the controversial camp. "John Da Silva never condoned violence. I don't blame him for any of this " but he could have done with a second opinion." According to internal CYF documents, for two years following Whakapakari's closure debate raged over whether the camp should reopen. In 2004 Jessie Henderson, head of the Grey Lynn CYF office was unusually frank in voicing vehement opposition. She said Whakapakari had relied on the charismatic leadership of Da Silva, but as he aged and suffered health problems he moved away from living on-site and his influence waned. Something about the place seemed septic, Henderson said, noting that a highly-regarded and qualified former CYF social worker with an unblemished record also been accused of assaulting children after starting work on the island. "The very nature of the programme - the remoteness, the primitive living conditions, the lack of managerial oversight and accountability creates an environment where otherwise sane people start behaving in an inappropriate manner." Simon says he knows what the senior social worker means about the strange madness that occurred off the mainland. "The law on Great Barrier Island is a lot different from the mainland." Nearly 20 years on, he says the memory of that day with the spade, thinking his body would fall into the hole he had dug, has never left him. "Did it last two hours, did it last four hours? However many hours it was life-changing. It changed me." He says he came from a violent home and had been accustomed to a certain amount of background violence, but this episode escalated matters. "I have witnessed a lot of violent assaults, but not before this. It was all after this. After Great Barrier and Whakapakari I rebelled against the justice system and spend around 10 years in prison as a result," he says. "A young man's life can be complicated, no doubt, but I found myself in more trouble than not after that." He says after his initial complaint didn't appear to have been followed up, he thought no one would believe him and he still had flashbacks of the man with the shotgun who had made a point of writing down the four boys' names in a book before starting his interrogation. "I kind of think no one cared: People thought we were trouble. No one ever followed anything up. It was only a whole year later the police knocked on the door asking questions," he says. "At the time I was very fearful about what had happened. But I'm not afraid to talk about it now. "At the end of the day I'm now grown up, with kids of my own - and you just can't do that to children." Some former residents talk of Whakapakari helping to turn their lives around, but the recollections often come with hints of the problems that would later consign the facility to the dustbin of history. Former resident Zascha Paraku recounted on *Oldfriends* his 1989 placement, saying though some might call the camp a "doomed place", he had a different experience. "For me I thoroughly enjoyed every minute I spent here," Paraku said. The recollection ends with a shout-out to friends met at Whakapakari, including Calvin who, "got the meanest hiding and was shipped to hospital". THE SIGNS were even broadcast to the rest of the country in 1992, during an hour-long documentary on TV One. Half-way through *Breaking The Barrier* - a broadly positive take on Whakapakari, emphasising the facility as a last chance saloon before troubled youth entered the justice system - the programme's narrator takes a short but extremely dark detour. "The camp has woken up to the shocking news that one of the boys, desperate to get sent back to the city, has mutilated himself with a butcher's knife. 'Rat' has taken the extraordinary step of circumcising himself." "Rat", no older than 15, with his face blurred out and a bloodied towel around his waist says "this place is a shithole, man". Da Silva is observed fingering the instrument of mutilation, saying "the knife is not very sharp". He and other camp supervisors appear to have no idea what triggered such an extreme reaction. Aboard the rowing boat taking the teen to whatever he calls home, the boy who crudely circumcised himself raises his arms in triumph. "See you in Auckland!" he shouts. Source: http://m.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11508241

'Forced to dig their own graves' [Save](#) Saturday, 05 September 2015 [Email](#)[Facebook](#)[Twitter](#)[Google+](#) [The New Zealand Herald Email](#) [Facebook](#)[Twitter](#)[Google+](#) Whangara or Cliff Island, known as Alcatraz off Whangaparapara Harbour on Great Barrier Island, where a youth justice bootcamp programme was held. Photo / David White By Matt Nippert Young people sent to a state-run boot camp on Great Barrier Island were made to dig what they were told would be their own graves and concerned staff blowing the whistle were ignored, according to a *Weekend Herald* investigation. Residents of the camp were allegedly subjected to a culture described as akin to Lord of the Flies that resulted in one boy circumcising himself with a blunt knife in order to leave the island. The incidents have come to light following long-delayed High Court claims by nearly 40 residents of Whakapakari Youth Trust alleging horrific mistreatment between 1988 and 2004 at the Child, Youth and Family-contracted facility. The claims, brought by Wellington law firm Cooper Legal, have languished for nearly ten years in the legal system and are still without a court date, sparking claims the Government is trying to cover up the serious mistreatment of children. Sonja Cooper, the principal of Cooper Legal, said the first tranche of her clients' claims were filed in 2006. She blamed government lawyers for a series of delays that saw an April hearing date vacated and day in court unlikely until 2017. "The Ministry is actively trying to bury information about what happened in the past," Ms Cooper said. "It has become a grim, hang-in process for our clients." Judge Carolyn Henwood, speaking in her capacity as the chairwoman of the recently concluded Confidential Listening Service, said the situation was concerning and raised the prospect of vulnerable people being denied access to justice. "As far as I can tell, throughout the entire seven years the service was operating, some of that litigation has not made any further traction. It's concerning that nothing has been resolved," Judge Henwood said. She said a recent report exposing ongoing failures in the state care of children showed lessons from the past needed to be learned. Minister for Social Development Anne Tolley agreed the legal log-jam was unacceptable. "There is no doubt that some cases are taking far too long to settle through the court system and I acknowledge that this process can be emotional and difficult for

claimants," she said. Mrs Tolley said she had recently introduced a fast-track process, leading to 940 settled claims and \$14 million paid out in compensation. Source: http://m.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11508193

Foster mother awaits abuse charges Email Newsletters [Click here](#) to sign up for one of our email newsletters. For more information The statewide toll-free line is available 24 hours/7 days a week to receive reports of suspected child abuse. The number is 800-932-0313. For more information about child abuse in general, turn to: www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov/index.htm. To inquire about becoming foster parents, call the state Department of HS Director's Action Line at 800-862-6783 or EveryChildInc.org. Sources: Allegheny County Department of Human Services; Pennsylvania Department of Human Services; Every Child Daily Photo Galleries [Sunday - Sept. 6, 2015](#) AlleKiski Valley Photo Galleries [Tone of Labor United Celebration different with steelworkers picketing ATI plants](#) By [Chuck Biedka](#) Saturday, Sept. 5, 2015, 1:31 a.m. A former foster mother from West Tarentum awaits child abuse charges involving three children in incidents that allegedly occurred last year and again in May. Authorities say that Terri L. Thornhill, 35, of West Ninth Avenue, Tarentum was investigated last year after accusations of beating a girl, then 6, with a belt. Charges were not filed at that time. But Thornhill faces charges of child abuse after day care workers at the Allegheny Valley YMCA in Harrison reported in May a significant amount of bruising on the buttocks of a 4-year-old girl and the girl's 3-year-old brother. Those children also were foster children under Thornhill's care. As a result, Thornhill faces charges of aggravated assault and child endangerment regarding both alleged incidents, last year and in May. Thornhill pleaded not guilty. However, the charges against her were held for court at a preliminary hearing Wednesday before District Judge Carolyn Bengel. All three children had been placed in Thornhill's home by Allegheny County, which uses Every Child Inc. to provide some foster parents for the county. Laura Maines, Every Child's chief executive, said on Friday that Thornhill was previously overseen through the program. "She is not a foster parent at this time," Maines said. Witnesses testify At Wednesday's hearing, YMCA day care worker Jessica Swarek testified that in May she saw a significant amount of bruising on the buttocks of a 4-year-old girl and the girl's 3-year-old brother. "The girl had an accident and said it happened because her butt was too sore," Swarek testified. Authorities took photos of the girl's injuries. The state Department of Human Services and Allegheny County detectives investigated. The DHS certifies and licenses foster parents. County Detective Timothy Stetzer testified that investigators observed an interview between child abuse specialists and the younger children at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. Rebecca Lewandowski, a specialist with the state Human Services Department who investigates foster care abuse, testified that she sat with the boy, intending to watch him play with toys for a bit before questioning him. But the boy started talking to her right away. "He said 'Miss Terri' beat him with a belt," Lewandowski testified. "He said he didn't want to go back to the house." The boy also said Thornhill would often use one hand to "squeeze his face hard" when she was unhappy with him, Lewandowski said, demonstrating the one-handed squeeze on her own face. The 2014 case Last year, the 6-year-old girl told police Thornhill hit her with a belt, sometimes because the girl wouldn't want to go to bed, or when she spoke when ordered not to. The girl also claimed that her foster mother "sometimes wouldn't feed me" and that she would go hungry. Detectives filed charges in July based on the 2014 and 2015 allegations. In an interview Thursday, county Detective Lt. Tom Ianachione said changes in the state's child abuse law are enabling more prosecutions. The law that once required proof of "severe" injury to a child before charges could be filed has been changed to "substantial" injury, he said. District Judge Bengel set a non-monetary bond for Thornhill but ordered her to not have contact with the children. Chuck Biedka is a staff writer for Trib Total Media. He can be reached at 724-226-4711 or cbiedka@tribweb.com. Read more: <http://triblive.com/neighborhoods/yourallekiskivalley/yourallekiskivalleymore/9034287-74/child-foster-girl#ixzz315zyfJjR> Follow us: [@triblive on Twitter](#) | [triblive on Facebook](#)

Stop sending babies to boarding schools By Mum-in-chief Updated Monday, September 7th 2015 at 12:18 GMT +3 [inShare](#) | Photo: Courtesy This week as schools were opening I saw something that depressed me. As I was escorting my Class Eight niece to board a bus to school (she's a boarder) I spotted children my daughter's age (seven years) who are also boarders at the same school. These kids looked so innocent, confused and vulnerable; I wondered why their parents were sending them to boarding at such a tender age. What had they done to deserve such mistreatment and punishment? I wondered. I am no expert on early childhood development but what I do know for sure is that a Class One pupil is too young to be in a boarding school. At that age, the child is still in a crucial stage where they need tender loving care from the parents and close monitoring because they are still young children. I think as parents as much as we are too busy building our careers, sending our kids to boarding at such tender ages is doing the minors a disservice. The logic maybe that it is better to leave them in a structured place than with house helps. But then again, it is a case of misplaced priorities when we send our small kids to boarding schools so that we can give undivided attention to our careers. Parents may argue that the boarding schools are first class and that kids are well taken care off, but at that age kids need their parents in a big way for nurturing. Parents who choose to send their children to boarding at that age are abdicating their responsibility and with time they will pay the price when the kids turn out delinquent later in life. My daughter Tasha is in Class One and from what I see she is still too young to be left in the hands of a third party. She still needs close monitoring and direction. I have to monitor her school progress every day, by checking her homework and being in regular touch with her teacher to ensure she is progressing well. I need to see her everyday so that I can instill positive values in her like respect, hard work, compassion and godliness which will go a long way in molding her into a law abiding citizen. I need to be in close touch with her so that I can answer all her baffling questions about things she may have encountered at school. I need to see her everyday so that I know how she is getting along with other students at school. But clearly if I dump her in a boarding school at that tender age when she needs me, how will I know all these fundamental things? How will I know that she is struggling with Mathematics and she needs extra help? How I establish that she is poor in sciences when I have no opportunity to sign her diary and monitor her progress? How will I establish she is picking a vice from a fellow classmate when I only see her after a full term? Parents we need to stop abdicating our responsibilities by shipping babies to boarding. Source: <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/evewoman/article/2000175444/stop-sending-babies-to-boarding-schools>

How Jeb Bush's Florida Plan for School "Choice" Created an Industry of Corruption and Chaos Thursday, 10 September 2015 00:00 By [Jeff Bryant, AlterNet](#) | Report font size [decrease font size](#) [increase font size](#) [Print](#) 53 Email Presidential candidate Jeb Bush speaks at a public gathering in Sioux City, Iowa, July 13, 2015. (Photo: [Rich Koele / Shutterstock.com](#)) "We're making decisions just based on the money." That's Rosemarie Jensen talking, a tone of exasperation creeping into her voice as she describes the influence of money on education policy in South Florida. "Some things should be run like a business," she tells me in a coffee shop near Fort Lauderdale, Florida. "Education isn't one of those things." Jensen lives in Broward County, just to the north of Miami-Dade. Broward is home to a diverse population of students, drawn from the state's most exclusive gated communities as well as neighborhoods wracked by generational poverty. A former K-1 school teacher and current public school parent, Jensen is part of a [growing movement](#) of parents who believe they are being shut out of important decisions about public school governance, while those making the decisions too often have something monetary to gain. As a leader of United Opt Out, an organization that advocates boycotting standardized tests in public schools, Jensen has opted her own son, a special education student in high school, out of the Florida state exam now known as the Florida Standards Assessments. But standardized testing isn't the only thing that's got her steamed. Jensen recounts stories of her father, a first-generation immigrant and high school dropout, who cleaned out tankers so he could raise his daughter in a neighborhood with good public schools and eventually send her to college. Today, she sees that idealistic view of the American dream being undone in her community by an invasion of moneyed interests promoting charter schools. In her view, charter schools - the privately managed, publicly funded entities that operate outside the oversight of democratically governed school systems - are not now what they originally claimed to be: centers of innovation created by teachers and parents. Jensen has taken note of the amount of money these schools spend on advertising and marketing. She complains that the middle school her children attended can't get money to construct a safer point of entry, while the state steers funds to charters for new construction. She believes that making public schools compete with charter schools for money dilutes funding that should be paying for better education for all kids. While she used to be open-minded about these schools, she now considers herself to be "anti-charter." She's not alone. Charter schools may continue to enjoy generally favorable ratings in national surveys of Americans, but many parents and public officials across South Florida, where these schools are now more prevalent than in other parts of the country, openly complain about an education "innovation" that seems more and more like an unsavory business venture. Undermining Public Education The obsession over money that is driving charter school growth in Florida is increasingly evident to those who bother to look. "Outrageous," is the word former state Senator Nan Rich uses to describe recent decisions Florida lawmakers made to steer more money toward these schools. Until she termed out, Rich represented the 34th District that overlaps part of Broward County. Although she has never opposed charter schools, she now believes financial demands coming from the sector have become unreasonable. As a [recent article](#) in Florida's Herald-Tribune notes, for the past two years, only charter schools have received capital outlay funds from the state for new construction. Now charter school lobbyists say their schools deserve a share of local property taxes too.

"When they were started, charters were never supposed to tap capital funds," Rich explains, "but gradually lawmakers with ties to the charter industry tipped the scales to favor them financially." "I'm not one who opposes charter schools that are set up the way they were intended," Rich adds. But she now believes, "The whole movement ... is undermining public education and moves public money to private interests." What Rich and Jensen describe is an increasing fear among parents and public officials across South Florida - and Broward County in particular - that any educational value charter schools were supposed to bring to the state is now overshadowed by corruption and chaos linked to money-making. A new consensus is percolating from the ground up that those responsible for starting and operating charter schools, and making decisions to support the growth of these schools, "don't understand children," as Jensen puts it. They're mostly, "motivated by money." So how did this happen to Florida, and to Broward, specifically? Jeb Bush and the Charter School Business Model Most people trace the manic scramble for more charter schools in Florida to one source: former governor and current Republican presidential candidate Jeb Bush. In 1996, two years before he became governor, Bush helped steer passage of the state's first law permitting charter schools. That same year, he led the effort to open the state's first charter, [Liberty City Charter School](#) in Miami. During Bush's first administration, charter school growth averaged a whopping 56 percent annually in the Sunshine State, according to a Florida-focused [NPR outlet](#). Annual growth rates during his second and final four-year term dropped to 17 percent, but by the time Bush left office in 2007, charter schools across the state had grown from a modest 30 in total to well over 300. The number of Florida charter schools has since doubled to over 600. In his [initial campaign](#) to promote these schools, Bush maintained that charter schools would rescue students from supposedly failed public schools, especially in low-income communities of color. But by 2009 - two years after he left office - Bush's rationale for charter schools had significantly changed. According to a [Palm Beach Post](#) news article published that year, Bush debuted his revamped message at a summit put on by his non-profit organization, the Foundation for Excellence in Education, in Washington D.C. In his speech to that group, he declared, "I wish our schools could be more like milk. ... Go down the aisle of nearly any major supermarket these days and you will find an incredible selection of milk. ... They even make milk for people who can't drink milk." Bush would repeat his observation from the dairy aisle three years later at the Republican National Convention of 2012, and what was once thought of as a civil rights cause became firmly established as a campaign for a new business-oriented model that would offer increased consumer "choice." "It started as a movement and now it's an industry," Vickie Marble, a well-known Florida charter school advocate, gleefully declared to [NPR reporters](#) chronicling the evolving messaging campaign. Jeb Bush was not the only one touting charter schools. The same year he made his pitch to the RNC, an investment consultant enthused on [CNBC](#) that charter schools were "a great opportunity... a half billion dollar opportunity." In short order, news outlets from [Forbes](#) to the [Huffington Post](#) reported the growing interest among investors in charter schools and the lucrative opportunities resulting from this new model. And the cultivation of that interest continues: in March of this year, [Business Insider](#) reported that the "Walton Family Foundation - the philanthropic group run by the Walmart family - sponsored a symposium at the Harvard Club for investors interested in the charter school sector." Aided by influencers like the Waltons and others, Jeb Bush put South Florida squarely at the forefront of the charter school bonanza. And the rise of the charters as big business in Florida brought with it new and special forms of financial corruption. Innovative Education or Corrupt Business Model? When Bush announced his presidential campaign earlier this year, a reporter from [BuzzFeed](#) noticed that many of his campaign videos feature the candidate in classrooms filled with happy schoolchildren - but not just any old classrooms. "Almost all of the classrooms have something in common," reporter Molly Hensley-Clancy wrote. "They are at schools operated by Academics, [Florida's] largest for-profit charter school management company." With nearly 100 schools in Florida "and well over \$150 million in annual revenue," Academics has been a key player in charter school expansions in the state since 1999. And Bush has shown an affinity for the schools for years. "As governor," Hensley-Clancy reports, "Bush visited Academics schools several times, his emails show." But Academics has a long history of financial wheeling and dealing, so much so the organization is now the target of "an ongoing federal probe into its real estate dealings," as the [Miami Herald](#) reported in 2014. While the 1996 law allowing charters to operate in Florida restricted applicants to nonprofit groups only, profit-minded charter businesses like Academics have skirted that restriction. A [report](#) written by Patricia W. Hall for the Florida League of Women Voters explains how the scheme works: "Although charter schools must, by Florida law, be overseen by a non-profit board of directors, there are many ways in which for-profit organizations have begun to hijack the charter school movement. For-profit management companies frequently provide everything from back office operations including payroll, contracting with vendors for food services, textbook, etc., to hiring principals and teachers and curriculum control." Hall goes on to explain how real estate deals have become another form of profit-making in the Florida charter school business model. According to Hall, for-profit management companies such as Academics that manage charter schools receive "a variety of grants, loans and tax credits for building a charter school." Then they can charge the school district exorbitant rents and leases for the use of the building. This results in an "ever escalating" revenue stream of taxpayer dollars flowing to the charter school management company. Should the charter management company decide to eventually sell the building to another entity, it "reaps the profits," Hall writes. These sorts of charter school-related real estate schemes led to a firestorm of land deals in Florida during the Bush years, according to an investigation by Alec MacGillis in the [New Yorker](#). "Developers of new subdivisions teamed up with companies that were opening up charter schools less as a means to innovate than as a way to benefit from Florida's boom," MacGillis writes. By 2011, charter school chains like Academics were getting so fabulously wealthy they drew the attention of an investigative report from the [Miami Herald](#). Reporters Kathleen McGrory and Scott Hiaasen found 15 years of steady growth had turned Academics into "Florida's largest and richest for-profit charter school management company, and one of the largest in the country." The reporters found the charter school chain practiced a "business strategy repeated across Miami-Dade and Broward Counties." Through these complex real estate arrangements, Academics founders Fernando and Ignacio Zulueta - brothers who were former real estate developers - had built, by 2010, a portfolio of 20 land companies generating millions of dollars. Shady Land Deals Another large, Florida-based, for-profit charter school chain, Charter Schools USA, practices a similar business scheme. As a [Florida television outlet](#) reported in 2014, "Charter Schools USA makes millions by managing schools, but tens of millions building and renting their buildings." The reporters note that when a non-profit board opens a new charter school and contracts with Charter Schools USA to manage it, Charter Schools USA's for-profit "development arm, Red Apple Development, acquires land and constructs a school. Then, CUSA charges the school high rent." One charter school paid "a \$2 million rent payment to CUSA/Red Apple Development. The payment will equate to approximately 23 percent of its budget." Academics and Charter Schools USA are hardly the only large charter chains operating under these kinds of business practices in Florida and generating significant growth as a result. According to Hall's research, "The top four charter operators in Florida for 2011-2012 were Academics (72), Charter Schools USA (37), Charter School Associates (20), and Imagine Schools (23)." [More recent research](#) by Rutgers University professor Bruce Baker finds that large charter school chains - the ones mentioned by Hall, as well as others like White Hat Management, Rader Group, the Richard Milburn Academy and KIPP - dominate the state. As governor, then later as the head of his influential foundation, Jeb Bush did everything he could to facilitate these sorts of charter school business dealings. As MacGillis explains in his piece for the New Yorker, "Bush signed a law allowing charter operators who were denied approval by local school boards to appeal to the state." The "state," in this case means the Florida State Board of Education, which was appointed by, you guessed it, Gov. Bush. According to MacGillis, Bush also "signed a law to eliminate the state's cap on the number of charters" and joined in the fight "to increase the amount of taxpayer money available for charter construction, and to let developers build schools using the subdivision homeowner fees that they used for pools and other amenities." There's no doubt Bush's ties to the charter industry will stay strong during his presidential run. When he formally announced his 2016 presidential bid in June, John Hage - founder of Charter Schools USA and a former Bush policy analyst - was by his side, according to the [Miami Herald](#). "Before the speech," the reporter notes, "Bush gathered about 200 'alumni' - longtime supporters, former aides and friends - to thank them and 'get his crying out of the way.'" Hage was one of the chosen few; it was he who was quoted by the Herald. The Charter Invasion of Broward County From the outset, Broward was a central target in the charter industrialists' plans to take over Florida's schools. Armed with messages about consumer choice, charter operators quickly capitalized on the county where some of the state's [highest real estate](#) valuations and rental prices could be found. "Broward County has nearly two million people who live in relatively small cities," writes Sue Legg in a [report](#) for the [Florida League of Women Voters](#). Ft. Lauderdale, Broward's largest city, is home to fewer than 200,000 people. But Broward County has lots of charters, Legg notes. Of the approximately 310 schools in the district, more than one-third are charters, and charter school openings continue at a fast clip, with 19 new charters likely to open in the year ahead, says Legg. "What's particularly odd is that all of these charters are opening in Broward at the same time that so many existing ones have recently closed, or are in danger of closing. As Legg explains and a report from a [local news outlet confirms](#), 25 percent of the district's charter schools, a total 23 schools, finished the 2013-2014 school year with a deficit, "ranging from a low of \$4,591 to a high of \$318,567." Indeed, as the number of charter schools in Broward has expanded, so has the number of charter school failings due to financial insolvency and poor academic performance. As the [Sun Sentinel](#) reports, of the recent 36 charter school closings in South Florida, 21 occurred in Broward. One charter high school in Broward "shuttered hours before students were to report for class on the first day of school," the article notes.

Two other Broward charters shut down after two weeks because their shared building wasn't fully constructed. And here's the other significant problem with the charter schools in Broward: it's never been clear that the citizens who live there actually asked for them. Who Wants Charter Schools? "Charter schools open up at will whether there's a need for them or not," explains [Laurie Rich Levinson](#) in an interview over the phone. Levinson is a Broward school board representative and the daughter of former state senator Nan Rich. "We don't get to decide who can open charter schools and where exactly they can open," she explains. "Charters were supposed to be created to fill a gap... do things differently for a specific community of students. But at this point there's no collaboration." Levinson complains about an onerous process from the state that requires local school districts to approve new charter school openings on very short notice. "We must approve them even when we don't know where exactly they'll be located," she says. Michael Ryan, mayor of the city of Sunrise, a Broward municipality, is another local official who is grappling with the impact of charters without seeing any strongly expressed need for the schools coming from his constituents. In his view, the original idea of charters was to open in neighborhoods where citizens felt the schools are not working. But "we're not that type of community," he tells me during a conversation in his office. "We love our schools." One of the clearest signs of the low demand for charter schools in Broward County can be found in the main reason these schools so often close: low enrollment. A 2014 report from South Florida-based [Naples Daily News](#) found that charter schools across the state frequently overestimate the potential demand for their services. Reporter Jacob Carpenter found that the 48 charter schools that opened in Florida in that year ended up enrolling just 54 percent of what they estimated they would enroll on their charter applications. A "conservative" estimate by the paper found that these schools missed their revenue projections by a total of "at least \$35 million." Carpenter highlights one school in particular, New Life Academy in Broward County, which opened up in a strip mall and attracted just 50 students - "less than one-tenth" of its projected enrollment. In the county's [official enrollment counts](#), taken in October of last year, the number of students served by New Life Academy in 2014-'15 was down to 37. Another Broward charter school, Avant Garde Academy, "ended up with 85 students ... after planning for 750 children." Carpenter also pointed to five recently closed Broward charter schools that enrolled as few as 18 students. Only one of the closed schools had over 100 students. And with a new school year just starting in Broward, there are already [reports](#) of charter schools being closed due to low enrollment. Location, Location, Location Despite this unproven demand, the drive for profit has kept the charter business booming, a fact many of the local officials in Broward, who have to deal with the human consequences of the expanding sector, find unsettling. "They seem to go wherever they want," Mayor Ryan says about charter schools, "even in areas zoned light industrial." The siting of charter schools recently prompted Ryan and the Sunrise commissioners to pass a one-year [moratorium](#) on the creation of new charter schools. Although the commissioners eventually [approved](#) the charter trying to locate in an industrial zone, Ryan and his colleagues continue to consider other ways to influence where and how these schools operate. What often drives charter school locations, Ryan believes, is the need to be centrally located and accessible by car ("like a big box store," he observes), because charter schools generally don't have to provide their students with transportation. Also, because there is little demand for charter seats from local parents - who generally prefer to have their children attend traditional public schools - charter operators are especially prone to site their schools in places where they will draw attendance from outside the community. (Even when students who live in Sunrise do want to attend one of the new charters, state law prohibits them from getting preference over students coming from outside the community.) All these factors governing charter school location seem to amount to a deliberate design to place schools on properties that have high real estate values to justify expensive construction and lease arrangements - and to ensure the properties will hold their real estate values over time. "The business model these schools seem to follow," Ryan observes, is clearly "site-driven as opposed to needs-driven," which is the cause of more than just headaches for city administrators. It also potentially threatens the welfare and safety of the county's children. Are the Children Safe? Unlike traditional public schools, charter schools can open their doors without having to adhere to traffic restrictions, building codes and other kinds of regulations that are required of most other businesses and institutions. "If you want to open a business in this community, you have to meet certain requirements," Levinson observes. "But charter schools don't have to do that." This absence of meaningful regulations on charter school building and operational guidelines has more than one Broward County official concerned. Children's safety is what motivated Lauderhill mayor Richard Kaplan to take action to provide more regulation of charter schools. Kaplan sees charter school proliferation as a potential endangerment to the health, safety and welfare of Broward County's citizens. "We have no problem with charter schools," Kaplan explains in an interview in his office. "They're supposed to be less regulated from other forms of schools so they can do what they deem necessary for their students." Nevertheless, Kaplan led Lauderhill in placing a [moratorium](#) on new charter school development even before Sunrise did, and then [imposed](#) restrictions on new charter schools that did open. Why? "We have an obligation to ensure the school is a safe environment and the school has the capacity to provide certain requirements," Kaplan says, and then ticks off a list of obligations any parent would agree they want schools to adhere to, including crossing guards, adequate entrances and exits, insurance, fire escape routes, background checks of employees, and the financial wherewithal to operate for a full year. Kaplan shares harrowing accounts of charter school disregard for the safety of students, including picking locations at busy intersections with no crossing guards to protect students going to and from the school, and no traffic lanes for parents to wait in when picking up their children. According to Kaplan, at one charter school, a fire alarm went off and no one knew what to do because the school had no procedure for fires and had never conducted a fire drill. "No one has been injured that I know of," Kaplan explains, "but there could be a time when a kid is injured, and that's what I worry about." Kaplan also worries that people who oppose charter regulations of any kind will "run to their state legislator to have him step in." He imagines that a pro-charter lawmaker might eventually propose a bill to prevent local authorities from regulating charter schools. "But," Kaplan says, "I find it hard to believe they'd convince others that we don't have the authority to require things like crossing guards and fire escapes." The Real Cost: Undermining Public Schools The damage inflicted by the spread of charters in Broward and elsewhere does not stop at the corrupt land deals and the mounting chaos in communities. The most dangerous element of their impact is that they seriously damage the financial viability of local public schools. As early as 2011, it became apparent that the spread of charter schools in Broward and Miami-Dade was causing financial mayhem for local public schools. As an [independent media source](#) reported at the time, charter schools located in those districts were already "siphoning off \$40-\$50 million in state money." "The loss of the funds comes at a time when both districts are facing financial difficulties due to state funding reductions caused by the continuing economic downturn," [another article](#) from the same news source reports. But it's not surprising that public schools struggle financially when competing charters open near them, given the prevailing financial model used to fund charters. As in most states where charter schools exist, Florida funnels state funding for charter schools through local school boards that ensure the charter school receives a proportion of operating funds based on the number of full-time students enrolled. Local public schools receive funds much in the same way. In this practice, where "the money follows the child," as each child transfers to a charter, state funding is added to the charter and subtracted from the public school's state funding. When a neighborhood school loses a percentage of students in a particular grade level or across grade levels to charters, the school can't simply proportionally cut its permanent costs for things like transportation and physical plant. It also can't cut the costs of grade-level teaching staff proportionally. That would increase class sizes enormously and leave the remaining students underserved. So instead, the school cuts a support service - a reading specialist, a special education teacher, a librarian, an art or music teacher - to offset the loss of funding. This damages the effectiveness of the neighborhood school long-term and causes it to slide further into the ranks of "low performing." The opening of charters isn't the only thing harming communities; their negative financial impact can actually worsen when they close. As a report from a [South Florida news outlet](#) found, local officials in Palm Beach County, just north of Broward, are "pursuing legal action against two [charter] schools that closed to try to get about \$400,000 back. The schools either moved the funds or [they] had been frozen by lien holders." In Broward, according to a recent Sun Sentinel [report](#), "County schools may have to repay \$1.8 million owed by two closed charter schools." Because a recent state audit found the charters didn't keep accurate counts of the number of students enrolled in the schools, money the closed schools already collected will be withheld from future payments to the district. As state funding for local schools declines, counties like Broward have the option to raise property taxes and/or offer bond referendums (often called mill levies) to pay for increased operational and construction costs. But charter school advocates in Florida are lobbying to get a [share](#) of those funds as well. Thus, the race to the bottom continues, confined to issues of money and finance, rather than debates about how to actually educate children. A Movement Whose Mission Has Soured It is worth noting that many of the individuals who led the creation of the charter school movement - including [Ray Budde](#) who introduced the idea and [Albert Shanker](#) who made the idea famous - ended up opposing it. These schools, which were [originally conceived](#) as laboratories that would experiment with education innovations, today seem to provide very little that is innovative. As a scroll through the current [directory](#) of Broward charter schools maintained by the state shows, charters in Broward County tend to practice a uniform method of teaching called [direct instruction](#), a strict form of teacher-directed pedagogy that is far from new or groundbreaking. Proponents of charter schools argue it's time to "move on; charter schools are [here to stay](#)." Instead of questioning the actual need for charter schools, they want to see the discussion shift to issues of "choice" and "scalability," topics that are more germane to business and industry than to teaching and learning. Critics of the charter school

industry, like Rosemarie Jensen, have other questions they'd like answered. "When can we get our libraries and librarians back?" Jensen asks. "When can we get instruction in the arts and music back in schools?" How would Jeb Bush answer that? Source: <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/32728-how-jeb-bush-s-florida-plan-for-school-choice-created-an-industry-of-corruption>

Mass. Auditor Suzanne Bump: 2014 report warned of state foster care problems | masslive.com Mass. Auditor Suzanne Bump: 2014 report warned of state foster care problems Jack Loiselle, age 7 of Hardwick, is in a coma the result of abuse he allegedly suffered while the family was under the supervision of state caseworkers. (Photo Provided) [Print Email](#) By [Jim Kinney](#) | jkinney@repub.com The Republican [Follow on Twitter](#) on September 07, 2015 at 1:48 PM R BOSTON - State Auditor [Suzanne Bump](#) says issues of a lack of collaboration between agencies, weak policies and procedures, and unreliable or outdated data cited in last week's state report how 7-year-old Jack Loiselle of Hardwick ended up in a coma while his family was under state supervision are no surprise. Bump said she and her staff raised the same issues of systemic ineffectiveness in a 2014 audit of the state foster care system. (That 2014 report is available at the end of this post.) "The systemic issues my office identified in a 2014 audit of DCF's foster care system are the same ones raised yesterday," Bump said in a Saturday release. "(Friday's) report from the Department of Children and Families' investigation into the tragic circumstances that landed a child in a coma while under state supervision is a woeful necessity and long overdue," Bump said. On Friday, [the state released a report on the Loiselle case, a report done on the orders of Gov. Charlie Baker](#). Baker called for the report after 26-year-old Ryan Lints, Loiselle's father, was charged in July with beating and starving his boy. Young Jack, was taken to the hospital in mid-July with 38 pounds and with bleach burns on his feet. The report says that about 16 caseworkers had interaction with the family for about five months with a total of 110 visits. Lints has been charged with abuse and Loiselle remains in a coma. Bump's news release also made an apparent reference to the case of Avalena Conway-Coxon, a 2-year-old girl who died in a [foster care home in Auburn last month](#). A second foster child from the Auburn home was also hospitalized. Bump wrote: "Of the findings in our audit, one of the most troubling was that we had no way of evaluating the agency's background check waiver process for foster parents because DCF did not maintain this information. Without this vital information, children can be placed in unsafe and unhealthy living situations. Our findings also identified a lack of collaboration between DCF and other agencies crucial to maintaining the safety of the children in its care – specifically the state's Sex Offender Registry Board and MassHealth." Bump went on to say: "We in state government should not wait for a tragedy to spur us to action, but consistently look for ways to bring more effectiveness and accountability to our services and programs." Source: http://www.masslive.com/business-news/index.ssf/2015/09/mass_auditor_suzanne_bump_2014_report_wa.html

Foster care and institutional abuse study: Former state ward Priscilla Taylor urges others to share stories at Adelaide forums [891 ABC Adelaide](#) Updated Sun at 8:38pm Sun 6 Sep 2015, 8:38pm [Photo: Chance to tell stories of abuse: A national study is looking at long-term impact of foster care and childhoods lived in institutions. \(ABC News\) Related Story: Many abuse victims reject SA Government payments Related Story: State funeral for champion of reconciliation Related Story: Child abuse remains rife in remote lands Map: Adelaide 5000](#) A woman who became a ward of the state when she was two and had 60 placements by the age of 18 says it is important people get to tell their stories now. A national study is tracking the long-term outcomes for generations who are now being referred to as the "forgotten Australians" - people who were in foster care, orphanages or other institutions between 1930 and 1989. Priscilla Taylor told 891 ABC Adelaide she was taken from her single mother in 1954 and she and her sister were abused over many years. "The longest I was left [of 60 placements] was in the first foster home where my sister and I were abused for many years," she said. "An inspector was sent out but his comments on my files are 'The girls are fine, the house is clean and tidy' and we were left there for years. 'My files have certainly filled in gaps.' Ms Taylor said she had told no-one of the abuse until [South Australia's Mullighan royal commission](#) was held. "I just kept on trying to get through life. I didn't tell of the abuse, didn't have the opportunity until the age of 54, during the Mullighan inquiry," she said. "Until you speak about it, I honestly believe that you cannot move forward and try to begin to heal, I really strongly believe that. "I have been able to move on to a certain degree. I do have a good relationship with my sons now and my two grandsons." She said legal avenues had been explored since the Mullighan inquiry but police were unable to pursue her case because her abuser was long dead. Broken marriage and struggles since childhood foster care The Adelaide woman said she had struggled through adult life and a broken marriage. "I'm not sure I really know what trust is," she said. "I have struggled and I have trudged through life as best I can. "I'm the mother of three boys. I was still a ward of the state when my first son was born so he was forcibly removed and adopted." These individuals were subjected to very harsh physical punishment, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, neglect of their schooling. Elizabeth Fernandez She said the younger generations of her family suffered because of her own trauma. "Unfortunately my marriage broke up after 14 years of trying. Because of this my sons have suffered too," she said. Confidential forums, to hear from people such as Ms Taylor, are being held in Adelaide from Tuesday to Thursday of this week, as university researchers compile their report. Elizabeth Fernandez is a professor of social work at the University of New South Wales and is chief investigator of the forgotten Australians study. "It is an independent research project to increase our understanding of the lived experience in care and after care of people who are referred to as the forgotten Australians, [including] the child migrants and members of the Stolen Generations," she said. "These experiences were not limited to their childhoods, there also have been significant impacts across their lives. "These individuals were subjected to very harsh physical punishment, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, neglect of their schooling. "When they left care to live in the community, they brought with them ... this history of trauma and maltreatment, also alienation from their birth families, physical and mental health difficulties and very serious intergenerational effects." The study's aim is to help improve public policy and models of care for current generations, Professor Fernandez said. Adelaide people who want to tell the researchers their stories are still able to contact them on 02 9385 1516. Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-09-07/foster-care-abuse-national-study-priscilla-taylor/6755112>

4 years on, still no trial for Anchorage adoptive mother accused of abuse, kidnapping [Michelle Theriault Boots](#) September 6, 2015 [Share on email](#) [Email](#) [Print](#) Text Size -A +A Zemira James, photographed on Friday, August 28, 2015, was 15 years old when she was rescued from the home of the woman who had adopted her from Alaska's foster care system. The woman, Anya James, remains free on bail more than four years after she was arrested on charges of assault and kidnapping. The case has not gone to trial. Loren Holmes / ADN Zemira James was a bone-thin 15-year-old when she was rescued from the home of the woman who had adopted her from Alaska's foster care system. That was back in October 2010. Related: [Anchorage woman charged with abuse of adopted kids](#) When Anya James was arrested seven months later, in May 2011, [the case made headlines](#). Prosecutors alleged the Anchorage woman forced a bleak, isolated existence on her six adoptive children in a sprawling Hillside home, locking them in bare basement partitions with concrete floors, forcing them to use kitty litter buckets as toilets, feeding them "power meals" of oatmeal gruel, ground-up spaghetti and raw eggs, or withholding food until some of the teenagers and young adults showed signs of starvation. Anya James was charged with 16 felony counts in which she is accused of assaulting and kidnapping the six children, all while collecting hundreds of thousands of dollars in state adoption subsidies. More than four years after she was arrested, the criminal case against Anya James still hasn't gone to trial. The 55-year-old James is out on bail and on her fourth defense attorney. Her trial date has been rescheduled 22 times. Today, Zemira James is a striking, healthy-looking 20-year-old who lives with her boyfriend and has dreams that include working with animals or writing a book about her life. She wears mostly black, a tangle of rubber bracelets and a spiked cuff on her wrist. She says the black is symbolic of grief. Without a trial, Zemira says, she is tethered to the past. She can't go into a Fred Meyer or drive past a McDonald's or dental office in Anchorage without a flood of memories. She wonders if she'll run into her former adoptive mother at the grocery store. Even her name, changed at the time of her adoption, is a daily reminder of the eight years she spent with Anya James. After the trial is over, "I'd look at the city probably in a very different way," she said. "I'd rejoice. I'd walk out of the courtroom crying and smiling at the same time." Until then, she said, "I feel like I'm drowning." Two civil cases against the Office of Children's Services -- [which placed the children in the home and which attorneys say failed to investigate claims of abuse](#) -- are stalled until the criminal case is resolved, attorneys say. The civil cases represent the best chance the victims will receive money or other restitution from the state. "(Zemira) was 15 years old when she was rescued basically from a cage in a garage of a half-million dollar mansion on the Hillside," said Mike Kramer, Zemira's attorney in a civil case against the Office of Children's Services that names Anya James as a third-party defendant. "She lives every day with nightmares that she's going to run into Anya James, who has been out on bail for four-and-a-half years." Meanwhile, James is "living in a mansion and getting a series of free lawyers," Kramer said. Lawyers and the judge involved in the case say they are frustrated by the way the case has festered in the system. Still, there's no clear end in sight. Zemira says the delays don't surprise her: The system has been failing her for a long time. "All my life," she said. "I just haven't seen any good. I know they could do a lot better than what they are doing." 'What's keeping me back is fear' When she was placed in James' home at age 8, Zemira had already been in foster care for much of her life. Her first placement was with a woman in her 50s named Fran, when she was about 4 years old. That was a happy experience. "She would always dress me up, buy me dresses. I had nice long hair, and she'd put me in these white nice gowns. She was a really nice lady," Zemira said. "I love her a lot." But the

woman moved out of state, and Zemira was placed in an emergency foster home. By then, her biological brother was already with James, she said. In a phone conversation, Zemira remembers him telling her about the big house he was living in. There were lots of cats and dogs. Prosecutors later said the children at James' home lived with more than 60 animals, part of a pet boarding business. "He said, 'it's a big mansion. It looks like a castle,'" Zemira said. "He was 6 years old. He still had his baby teeth. I decided to stay there because of him. I had already created such a strong bond with him." James legally adopted them and changed their names. She also withdrew Zemira from Kasuun Elementary -- where Zemira says she had thrived -- and started homeschooling the girl instead. Life in the home started out OK, but escalated to physical abuse and the isolation and deprivation documented in hundreds of pages of court filings, Zemira said. One of the biggest lingering effects of her eight years in the home is a sense of isolation and difficulty connecting to people, especially peers her age. "What's keeping me back is fear. Fear of being around people, fear of talking to people I don't know." "This has gone on too long" On a Monday afternoon in August, James took her seat behind the defendant's table in a third-floor courtroom in downtown Anchorage. She wore a pink sweatshirt and blue pants, her hair in a ponytail. Anchorage Superior Court Judge Michael Spaan asked her current attorney, a court-appointed lawyer contracted by the Office of Public Advocacy named Jason Gazewood, how realistic the latest scheduled trial date in October would be. Given the volume of evidence, that didn't seem realistic, Gazewood said. In Alaska, crime victims have a constitutional right to a ["timely disposition"](#) of the case "following the arrest of the accused." But that doesn't always happen. Serious, complex cases often take years to get to trial, said Taylor Winston, the head of the state Office of Victims Rights. As a prosecutor, she worked on a few homicide cases that stretched into the five-year range before ever going to trial or seeing resolution. Time is necessary to allow attorneys on both sides to sift through evidence and prepare a strong case for trial, she said. "(These cases) deserve not to be shoved through a system quickly," she said. But there are costs to victims and the system when trials are delayed for years. Beyond the time of judges and attorneys, victims often put education, trips and other plans on hold in order to be available to testify for a constantly shifting court date, Winston said. "It keeps them chained to the criminal justice system and to the case," she said. "They really can't be free until its over." So why is Anya James' case taking so long to reach trial? Part of the issue is a revolving door of attorneys paired with a mountain of evidence. Because each of the six children were placed in the home by the Office of Children's Services and received an array of services -- all documented -- there are tens of thousands of pages of documents to sift through. The criminal and civil cases against Anya James her span multivolume files that are inches thick. An index that simply lists OCS files referenced in the civil lawsuits is more than 40 pages alone. Those documents could be crucial to James' defense. Her lawyers have argued that James took in severely emotionally disturbed and disabled children and tried her best to care for them, despite violent behaviors. James was represented for more than three years by Rex Butler, a private attorney in Anchorage known for defending high-profile clients. Court filings by Butler said James' elderly parents were initially financing her legal defense and paid \$75,000 in bail money to get her out of jail. They were also paying the mortgage on her home and living expenses. In February 2014, Butler pulled out of the case, saying James had run out of money and could no longer pay him. Her trial date at the time was three months away. In a contentious hearing, Spaan chastised Butler for spending three years on the case and then leaving it months before trial. "You took her \$100,000 and you withdraw," Spaan said, according to a courtroom transcript from the hearing. "I shouldn't do any trial in your courtroom because of your view of me," Butler responded. Spaan said he respected Butler's skill as an attorney but was "distressed" by his actions in the case. After that, James was appointed an attorney from the Public Defender Agency. Court-appointed attorneys are supposed to go to indigent defendants who have no means to hire a lawyer on their own. Usually, judges simply ask defendants about whether they can afford a lawyer. If they say no, they are assigned a public defender. At the time of the alleged abuse, James and the children lived in a 4,000-square-foot Hillside home valued at more than \$600,000. Public records still list her as the owner of the home. Anya James' case was soon transferred to an attorney from the state Office of Public Advocacy, which also represents indigent clients. Gazewood, a different contract attorney with OPA, recently took on the case, making him James' fourth defense lawyer. At the August status hearing, Gazewood said he'd worked his way through about 8,000 of 50,000 pages of evidence; all parties agreed to another status hearing in September. "This has just gone on too long," Spaan said. Anya James and a friend walked out of the courtroom together. She declined to comment, saying she couldn't tell her side of the story right then. Zemira says she and the other children have spent the years since they were removed from the home trying to forge new lives. But she is certain she will testify at the trial, when it comes. "I am mad at Anya. I am very hurt," she said. "But she must be feeling scared right now, just the way I was." Correction: The headline of this article originally identified Anya James as a "foster" mother. She is actually the adoptive mother of the children. Source: <https://www.adn.com/article/20150906/4-years-still-no-trial-anchorage-foster-mother-accused-abuse-kidnapping>

State looking to revoke foster agency's license after investigation Posted: Sep 08, 2015 2:10 PM PDT Updated: Sep 09, 2015 8:52 AM PDT Posted By Brianna Owczarzak, Managing Web Editor [Email Connect brianna.owczarzak@wnem.com](mailto:brianna.owczarzak@wnem.com) By Andrew Keller, Multimedia Journalist BioEmail Connect Biography andrew.keller@wnem.com Omariion Humphrey State looking to revoke foster agency's license after investigation [More >](#) BURTON, MI (WNEM) - The state is looking to revoke the license of a foster agency. MORE Additional Links Poll [Fundraiser begins for Omarion Humphrey memorial](#) [Fundraiser begins for Omarion Humphrey memorial](#) Updated: Monday, July 27 2015 12:49 PM EDT 2015-07-27 16:49:05 GMT Jul 27, 2015 9:49 AM PDT Jul 27, 2015 9:49 AM PDT A fundraiser begins Monday in honor of 9-year-old Omarion Humphrey. Humphrey, who was autistic, was found dead in a Davison Township Lake after wandering away while in foster care. [More >](#) A fundraiser begins Monday in honor of 9-year-old Omarion Humphrey. Humphrey, who was autistic, was found dead in a Davison Township Lake after wandering away while in foster care. [More >](#) The investigation into its past violations was sparked after one of its foster children died. Omarion Humphrey died in July at the Lake Callis Recreation Complex in Genesee County. It was his death that put the Alternatives for Children and Families agency under a microscope. The state released its report on the investigation on Sept. 8. The report is 44 pages long. In it, violation after violation detailed against the Burton based foster agency that was in charge of taking care of 9-year-old Omarion. The state said the report and the severity of the violations are the reason the agency should lose its license. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services claims the agency did not properly train its foster parents. Especially when it came to dealing with children with autism. Humphrey was severely autistic. The report said the foster parent should have been trained for Omarion's needs and how to handle issues due to his communication skills, physical safety and self-care. The report also said Humphrey was placed in a foster home with a laundry list of previous violations, many for lack of supervision. Those violations included a 2012 case where a 17-year-old foster child was arrested for having sexual contact with another youth in the home. In 2013 a 2-year-old died choking on a peanut butter sandwich. The agency received citations. Earlier this year a foster mother investigated was found to have lied about a previous criminal charge of retail fraud. There were also several violations in the report detailing the lack of supervision. The state department notified Yvwan Richardson, the administrator of Alternatives for Children and Families, in August noting the disciplinary action against her license is recommended. Six foster homes were reviewed in the process. The report even claimed some foster parents training included watching Hollywood movies. Alternatives For Children and Families has released the following statement in regards to the report: While we are exercising our appeal rights and attempting to work cooperatively with the Division of Child Welfare Licensing, we feel that it is not appropriate or useful to air our differences in the public forum that can be created by the press/social media. The State of Michigan procedure does not allow us a full and fair hearing before release of a DHS investigation report. Hopefully, a full and fair hearing at which we are allowed to dispute allegations with actual evidence will provide the truth. Therefore, we will not be commenting publicly on specifics contained in the Investigation Report. Yvwan H. Richardson CEO Alternatives For Children and Families Read more: <http://www.wnem.com/story/29983748/state-looking-to-revoke-foster-agencys-license-after-investigation#ixzz3IYeSDi2j>

Assembly passes three bills to curb psych drugs in California foster care By Karen de Sá kdesa@mercurynews.com Posted: 09/08/2015 02:36:14 PM PDT [1 Comment](#) Updated: 09/09/2015 09:59:35 AM PDT The state Assembly on Tuesday unanimously approved legislation to better protect California foster children from too many psychiatric drugs through greater oversight by nurses, social workers, caregivers and court professionals. The three-bill package authored by state senators Jim Beall, D-San Jose, and Holly Mitchell, D-Los Angeles, aims to correct the often dangerous overprescribing revealed in this newspaper's investigative series "Drugging Our Kids." A fourth bill in the package -- introduced by state Sen. Bill Monning, D-Carmel -- would have strengthened court oversight of doctors who prescribe to foster children. That bill, however, was unexpectedly pulled from the legislative package last week, after heavy lobbying from physician groups and ongoing concerns from state health officials about costs. Monning has vowed to reactivate his bill in January for consideration next year. Assembly member David Chiu, D-San Francisco, is a co-author on the bills and called for Tuesday's floor vote. "Today's actions by the Assembly to pass these bills that would provide much-needed oversight over the use of psychotropic drugs in the foster care system is a start in making sure our foster youth aren't being unnecessarily drugged," Chiu said in a statement. "I'm encouraged by today's votes, and look forward to continuing the work on

these issues in the days and months ahead." The three currently pending bills now head back to the Senate for a final concurrence vote and then are expected to be delivered to Gov. Jerry Brown. The governor has until Oct. 11 to approve or veto the bills. Contact Karen de Sá at 408-920-5781. Source: http://www.contracostatimes.com/breaking-news/ci_28777674/assembly-passes-three-bills-curb-psych-drugs-california

Area substance-abuse treatment center to close 0 Share this with your friends! From To Compose your message Area substance-abuse treatment center to close http://www.thedailystar.com/news/local_news/area-substance-abuse-treatment-center-to-close/article_79ac89ee-6ef0-57f8-9d47-7f89fa200aa3.html Story Print Create a hardcopy of this page Font Size: Default font size Larger font size Posted: Tuesday, September 8, 2015 8:39 pm | Updated: 7:34 am, Thu Sep 10, 2015. [Area substance-abuse treatment center to close](#) By Jessica Reynolds Staff Writer The Daily Star While rehabilitation centers across the country are busy holding events and raising awareness for National Recovery Month, one area substance-abuse treatment center is preparing for its impending closure, officials said Tuesday. Phoenix House Delaware County Center, a male-only residential rehabilitation facility in South Kortright, will be closed as of Nov. 15, according to Amy Singer, Phoenix House's senior vice president for business development and public/private partnerships. The closure of the facility — which is frequently referred to as "Belle Terre" — has been in the works for several months, Singer said Tuesday, and can be attributed to a variety of factors, including changing health care policies, fiscal challenges, a remote location and fewer clients. "We've been talking about whether or not this makes sense for a while," Singer said. "We tried to see if we could bring the census up, and thought about it off and on. Eventually, it just became clear for a variety of clinical and financial reasons that it was time. ...It's an absolutely gorgeous facility and we've loved working in the community." New leadership also contributed to the decision, Singer said. On July 1, Phoenix House — the nonprofit that runs Belle Terre and more than 70 similar facilities in 10 states — hired a new president and chief executive officer, Ann Bray, who reviewed the organization's properties and decided to make the cut. "The facility didn't really work well with the new vision," Singer said, "which is a shift toward smaller, community-based outpatient programs. Belle Terre made more sense 30 years ago, but it just doesn't make sense now." Belle Terre's large building, which has "a long and rich history," will eventually be sold, according to Singer. Many of Belle Terre's 25 employees will be relocated to work at other Phoenix House programs. John Chimento, a part-time employee at Belle Terre, said he is concerned for the facility's clients because "many of them say it's the best drug facility rehab they've ever attended and, if you're in treatment and they pull the carpet out from underneath you, that's not going to help." According to Singer, the majority of the center's 66 male clients will have completed their treatment programs by November, but anyone who hasn't will either be transferred to another program or discharged. Source: http://www.thedailystar.com/news/local_news/area-substance-abuse-treatment-center-to-close/article_79ac89ee-6ef0-57f8-9d47-7f89fa200aa3.html

Too Often in Foster Care, Kids' Privacy Rights Used to Protect Agencies by [Marie K. Cohen](#) September 9, 2015 The privacy rights of children and their families caught up in the child welfare system should be protected. But all too often, they are used to shield agencies from questions about their actions. In my last column, I [wrote about Ashley Rhodes-Courter](#) and her efforts to find out the truth about the death of a foster child who was briefly in her care. The story of a child welfare system trying to suppress information about the death of a child is unfortunately all too common. But a recent story from upstate New York illustrates an agency hiding behind privacy rights at the expense of a living child. A 13-year-old in Warren County, New York, is being kept in foster care so that the child welfare agency can keep secret the circumstances under which she was allowed to stay with a heroin addict and convicted felon who was unrelated to her. The child in this case had been in the system most of her life. She was living with her maternal grandmother, but they were not getting along. A crisis was reached on July 4, when the grandmother called police and the girl threatened to run away. The next day, the girl was picked up by a family friend, Shannon Dickinson. The sheriff's office told the [Glens Falls Post-Star](#) that Dickinson was a known heroin addict who overdosed last December after injecting heroin while driving. He is also a twice-convicted felon and a paraplegic as a result of a failed suicide attempt decades ago. According to the Post-Star, the Warren County Department of Social Services (DSS) approved the placement with Dickinson. Because he was a family friend and the maternal grandmother approved the placement, she could be placed in his home as a "kinship placement" and a background check did not have to be done before she was placed. The child remained with him until July 30, when she reported that he had sexually abused her the night before. DSS then placed the girl in foster care. They later stated that they were not aware that the paternal grandmother had custodial rights. On August 26, the paternal grandmother came to court to request custody of her granddaughter and get her out of foster care. Judge Jeffrey Wait told her attorney to file a motion. But he could not schedule a hearing on that motion because of a DSS appeal of his ruling about closing the court. DSS wants the courtroom to be closed for further hearings. The judge has refused this request twice. But DSS announced its intention to appeal his decision, so the judge stated that he would schedule no more court dates at this time. In the meantime, the 13-year-old remains in foster care with strangers. The agency claims that it wants the courtroom closed to protect the girl's privacy. But the judge noted that the press has not reported her name nor the names of any family members. And according to a reporter who was there, the child's court-appointed guardian urged the court to allow the case to go ahead. On September 2, the [Glens Falls Post-Star](#) ran a hard-hitting editorial stating that DSS has "made the girl's welfare secondary to their own interest in keeping details of this case secret." All of my information comes from the Post-Star, and the press can sometimes be an accomplice in blaming individuals when systemic problems are at fault. That is one reason why agencies are so preoccupied with protecting themselves. I know how hard it is to be a social worker in the child welfare system, especially working with children old enough to run away. I once allowed an 18-year-old client under agency supervision to stay with a family member after her father kicked her out. There were some concerns about the family member's home but I knew my client would run away if I placed her in foster care with a stranger. Another family member, who was mentally ill, came over and got in a fight with my client, seriously injuring her. If God forbid my client had been killed, this could have been portrayed as my negligence, rather than choosing the option that appeared the least unsafe. The press can be unfair and uninformed. But the answer for agencies is not in sacrificing their client's interests to protect themselves. This is simply unethical. We will not be able to improve policy or practice unless we know why things go wrong. Since the agency does not seem to be open to explaining and fixing its own problems, the public needs to be informed, so that those who truly care about children can step in to prevent similar problems in the future. Source: <https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/blogger-co-op/agency-chooses-protect-self-rather-child/12868>

Foster Care Provider Accused Of Child Porn; BA Foster Mom Feels 'Betrayed' Posted: Sep 09, 2015 8:30 PM PDT Updated: Sep 09, 2015 8:30 PM PDT Allison Harris, News On 6 [BioEmail Connect Biography richard.clark@newson6.net](#) Share this story on Facebook Tweet this story Plus one this story on Google Plus Email this story Previous ImageEnlargeNext Image 1 / 2 Timothy Cheatwood was a respite foster parent - like a babysitter for foster kids - and one Broken Arrow foster mom said Cheatwood babysat her two foster children. BROKEN ARROW, Oklahoma - Foster families are coming forward after police arrested a foster care worker on distributing child porn allegations. Timothy Cheatwood was a respite foster parent - like a babysitter for foster kids - and one Broken Arrow foster mom said Cheatwood babysat her two foster children, who have special needs, and now she's concerned. Cheatwood went through the same extensive background check she did. It's done by the FBI and requires references from a pastor, boss, friends and neighbors, it also requires 48 hours of training, including sexual abuse training. [9/3/2015 Related Story: Former Tulsa Foster Care Worker Arrested For Child Porn](#) The woman said, "We were floored. Sickening, and, I guess it just...the longer I thought about it, it makes sense that somebody wanting to do evil will go to great lengths." Cheatwood has not been charged, only arrested for distributing child porn. But the Broken Arrow foster parent said she feels betrayed. "Just thinking that he groomed these kids, that he prayed not over these kids but on these kids," she said. He was trained by the Bair Foundation in Tulsa, the same nonprofit the woman went through to become a foster parent. It's a foundation for Christian special needs children in DHS custody. She said Cheatwood babysat her two foster children with special needs eight times over eight months at his Tulsa home. She even asked him why he became a respite foster parent. "He said that he'd been divorced and had two little boys and he missed being around the kids. Okay, I get that. (nervous laugh)" If Cheatwood is found guilty she knows DHS and the Bair Foundation were not to blame. Cheatwood has no criminal history; she said there's nothing DHS and the Bair Foundation could have done. "Just being vigilant, just keeping your eyes open, paying more attention. That's all we can do to protect these kids," she said. She said, looking back, she believes Cheatwood was grooming them - taking them to fun places, buying them ice cream, those sorts of things. Cheatwood has not been charged and has bonded out of jail. The Bair Foundation declined comment, saying they don't want to interfere with the investigation. Source: <http://www.newson6.com/story/29996388/foster-care-provider-accused-of-child-porn-ba-foster-mom-feels-betrayed>

State says agency placed 9-year-old boy in home with 'several' infractions 1 / 7 Omarion Humphrey's siblings remain under court's care, judge rules Jamell Humphrey, right, Omarion's father, reacts during the hearing concerning the status of his 10 minor children that remain in foster care Friday, July 24, 2015, at Oakland County Probate Court in Pontiac, Michigan. The hearing concluded that all of their 10 minor children will remain with family or in foster care. Danny Miller | MLive.com [Danny Miller | dmille17@mlive.com](#) Print Email By [Jiquanda Johnson | jjohns16@mlive.com](#) The Flint Journal [Follow on Twitter](#) on

September 09, 2015 at 6:11 PM, updated September 09, 2015 at 9:51 PM Reddit Email Missing 9-year-old boy [Read full state report on foster agency of autistic boy, 9, who drowned](#) State says agency placed 9-year-old boy in home with 'several' infractions Agency that placed 9-year-old boy who drowned may appeal state report Agency that placed autistic boy who drowned should lose license, state says Lake Callis memorial to 9-year-old who drowned is fundraising goal [All Stories](#) BURTON, MI - A state investigation says that the Burton agency responsible for 9-year-old Omarion Humphrey, who drowned after wandering away at Lake Callis park July 4, placed him in a home that had several infractions including lack of supervision. In August, the state reviewed six of 59 foster homes registered with Alternatives for Children and Families. That investigation included Lulu Richardson's home, the home where Alternatives for Children and Families placed 9-year-old Omarion, who was severely autistic. [Body found at Lake Callis believed to be missing 9-year-old boy Omarion Humphrey](#) Davison Township police investigate discovery of child's body Friday, July 10, 2015 at Lake Callis Recreation Complex. The investigation report recommends [revocation](#) of the agency's license. Richardson is not named in the investigation, but she is presumably Foster Parent A in the report because of details regarding Omarion's case outlined in the 44-page document, including lack of training specifically for autistic children. When interviewed by the Flint Journal in July, [Richardson](#) said she was not under investigation and she was in compliance. Richardson could not be reached for comment on the report. Foster Parent A has had six special evaluations conducted by Alternatives for various claims, including a 2012 allegation in which a 17-year-old boy was arrested for allegedly having sexual contact with another child living in the home, according to the state report. In 2013, there was another allegation that Foster Parent A hit a child in the face and in 2014 foster children reported to case workers that other children were involved in sexual misconduct, the report said. Other infractions included not properly administering medication to children, not properly securing medications and not having training for children with autism. "Since 2012, the agency completed six special evaluations of Foster Parent A," read the report. "Foster Parent A was found to be in non-compliance of licensing rules and provided with a corrective plan for four of the special evaluations." There are an average of 13,000 children in the Michigan foster care system on any given day. Department of Health and Human Services spokesman Bob Wheaton said it is rare that children [die](#) while in foster care. "Deaths of children in foster care are thankfully rare and an accident while the child is in care that leads to death is even more uncommon," Wheaton said. "Also, many children come into care sick, or injured from severe abuse that resulted in them ending up in foster care." Wheaton said "many" recover but some die due to things that happened to them prior to being placed in care. He also said they occasionally have a teenager who commits suicide or a child who dies of asphyxiation while sleeping. In 2014, the state had 10 children die while in foster care. That number was 16 in 2013 and 17 in 2012. Wheaton said in Alternative's case, the agency recognized the infractions but failed to follow through with corrective measures. "One of the findings of our investigation is that Alternatives had a pattern of investigating violations and then failing to make recommendations for corrective action that were consistent with their findings," Wheaton said. "So it's not that they didn't notice the infractions - it's that they didn't respond with appropriate recommendations." Other homes had not reported pets, proper income and needed training and background checks. In addition, it was reported that a 2-year-old child died after choking on a peanut butter sandwich in one of the homes. Wheaton said the state conducts audits annually with at least 5 percent of the agencies it uses to place foster children. Omarion was removed in February from his Pontiac home, where state officials said he and eight other siblings were living in squalor. He wandered away from his foster family at the Davison Township park on July 4. Hundreds of people searched for Omarion. His body was found six days later in the park's lake. Since his death, Alternatives has agreed to not take on new foster care cases. It is still licensed and the issue may go to circuit court. The agency issued a statement saying it is not commenting on specific details of the investigation but plans to [appeal](#) the state's recommendation to revoke its license. "The State of Michigan procedure does not allow us a full and fair hearing before release of a DHS investigation report," said the agency's attorney Gregg Gibbs in an emailed media release signed by Alternative's chief executive officer Yvwanita Richardson. "Hopefully, a full and fair hearing at which we are allowed to dispute allegations with actual evidence will provide the truth. Therefore, we will not be commenting publicly on specifics contained in the Investigation Report." Alternatives was incorporated in 1998, Wheaton said. Since 2008, the state has carried out 10 investigations of Alternatives, records show, including a 2014 case where the agency was found to have placed a child with relatives for more than six months without completing a home study or documenting that the home was a safe and an appropriate placement for the child. The state investigation revealed Alternatives violations dating back to 2012. Wheaton said the issue could drag out for months. "At this point we have made our recommendation to revoke the license of Alternatives as a remedy for the problems that our investigation found, so we're letting the due process system for revocation play itself out rather than considering other action," he said. Source: http://www.mlive.com/news/flint/index.ssf/2015/09/agency_placed_9-year-old_boy_i.html

Severe Abuse Alleged at Illinois Home for Girls By LORRAINE BAILEY [ShareThis](#) CHICAGO (CN) - Illinois regularly sent foster children with a history of sexual abuse and emotional problems to a facility where they were raped and assaulted by staff members and other residents, former wards claim in court. The lawsuit filed Wednesday in Cook County Court is latest misfortune to befall Rock River Academy & Residential Center, a residential treatment center for adolescent girls with severe emotional disabilities run by Universal Health Services. Rock River closed earlier this year after an investigation by the Chicago Tribune found the residents suffered severe abuse during their stays. The five plaintiffs behind Wednesday's lawsuit say they were minors while the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) was contracting with the facility to provide female wards of the state with services. They say Rock River failed to deliver on its promise of providing each resident with "exceptional personalized care" in a safe environment. The Tribune's investigation newspaper found that the Rockford Police Department fielded more than 700 reports "concerning victimization of girls under DCFS's care including rape, aggravated battery and sodomy at the Rock River Academy," during a four-year period, according to the complaint. Each of the plaintiffs claim they were serially, sexually abused and raped by Rock River staff members, who "intentionally administered psychotropic drugs which they used to keep her in a semi-conscious state so that she could be more easily manipulated and sexually abused." In its [investigation](#), the Chicago Tribune [reported](#) that violence was constant at the 59-bed home, with 10 to 20 fights breaking out between residents every day. The girls received little to no effective therapy or schooling, the Tribune reported. It found that the rate of physical restraints at Rock River was nearly eight times the median for all Illinois facilities. Coupled with Rock River's very high rate of dispensing psychoactive drugs, wards of the facility had the second-highest rate both of self-inflicted wounds and psychiatric hospital visits, the Tribune reported. Universal Health Services, a market-leader in behavioral health that runs more than 190 facilities nationwide, denied the accounts that former patients gave the Tribune about their experiences at Rock River. Universal did not immediately respond to a request for comment about the new lawsuit. The women are represented by Peter Polansky with Polansky & Cichon. Source: <http://www.courthousenews.com/2015/09/10/severe-abuse-alleged-at-illinois-home-for-girls.htm>

Pennsylvania Foster Kids Prescribed Too Many Psychotropic Drugs [In The News](#) September 10, 2015 [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Email](#) [Print](#) [7 Comments](#) 233 Views Amid growing criticism about the over-prescription of psychotropic medication in foster care, Pennsylvania commissioned PolicyLab to conduct an analysis of the use of psychiatric drugs among all of the state's Medicaid-enrolled children. The report, released in June, found that the rates of psychotropic prescriptions among youth in Medicaid and foster care are higher than previous estimates. In an interview with Medscape, the study's authors discussed their results. "We are concerned that doctors are turning to psychotropic medications because they are more readily available and easier to access than nonpharmacologic interventions," Kathleen Noonan, codirector of PolicyLab, wrote. "These medications with less evidence behind them are more plentiful than proven therapies." To determine the trends of psychotropic medication use in Pennsylvania's Medicaid program, the researchers analyzed patient data on youth age 3-18 from 2007 to 2012. They examined the records for foster care status, the use of any psychotropic medication, the use of antipsychotics, and the diagnoses of children receiving polypharmacy. They found that youth in foster care were prescribed psychotropic drugs at nearly three times the rate (43%) of other youth on Medicaid (16%). Those in foster care were also four times more likely to be prescribed an antipsychotic (22% vs. 5%) and four times more likely to receive polypharmacy, the prescription of multiple classes of medications simultaneously (12% vs. 3%). The researchers point out that the majority of youth prescribed antipsychotics only had a diagnosis of ADHD. A diagnosis for which antipsychotics are neither clinically recommended nor FDA approved. This is also concerning because "antipsychotic medications are associated with serious side effects in youth" and those with an ADHD diagnosis "receive significantly fewer behavioral health visits than youth with more severe behavioral health impairments, and thus, may not be receiving adequate medication monitoring." In an interview for Medscape, the authors make varying suggestions about how to bring down these prescription rates. Noonan, a lawyer, suggests policy reform. While she notes that most states have yet to make such changes, she suggests laws "related to the use of psychotropic medications in children; the use of multiple medications; the use of medications in very young children; or the identification of prescribing red flags, such as the use of antipsychotics for a nonindicated condition." David Rubin, a pediatric specialist, disagrees. "We can focus on restricting authorization for

antipsychotics," he writes, "but at the end of the day, we are not going to get ourselves out of this crisis without a serious discussion about trying to provide other therapies for children who have been traumatized." Public health researcher Meredith Matone proposes a switch to specific therapies that can be offered instead of prescription drugs. "Evidence-based and trauma-informed nonpharmacologic therapies, such as parent/child interaction therapy, may be a well-suited alternative to medication." For the full Medscape interview with the PolicyLab study authors [click here](#) → * Matone, M., Sarah Zlotnik, M. S. P. H., Dorothy Miller, J. D., & Kreider, A. (2015). Psychotropic Medication Use by Pennsylvania Children in Foster Care and Enrolled in Medicaid. ([Full Text](#)) --Justin Karter, News Editor Source: <https://www.madinamerica.com/2015/09/pennsylvania-foster-kids-prescribed-too-many-psychotropic-drugs/>

Nearly 4,000 foster kids in California live in group homes SHARES: 29 [VIEW COMMENTS](#) @inquirerdotnet [INQUIRER.net U.S. Bureau](#) 12:48 AM September 12th, 2015 R September 12th, 2015 12:48 AM PALO ALTO, [California](#) – The number of foster children in California who live in family-like placements, instead of shelters or group homes, has declined since 1998, according to the [Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health](#). [Children](#) fare best in families. To preserve the wellbeing of children who enter the foster care system, out-of-home placements must be in the setting that most closely resembles family life. The same holds true for children in the child welfare system. ADVERTISEMENT The Adoption Assistance and [Child](#) Welfare Act of 1980 was meant to ensure that children in the child welfare system grow up in families-cared for in their own homes or the homes of relatives whenever possible, or in new permanent homes if not. (See First Entries into Foster Care in California, by Type of Placement.) While the vast majority (more than 80 percent) of foster children in California are living in family-like placements (i.e., in Foster [Homes](#) or Foster Family Agency Homes, with Guardians or Kin-Relatives, or in Pre-Adoptive families), between 1998-2014, the proportion of children living in these types of placements did not grow; rather, it saw a slight decline. That means that each year, there remains a substantial number of foster children living in non-family placements, such as shelters, group homes, and other congregate or temporary placements. In 2014, there were nearly 4,000 foster children living in group homes, one of the least optimal placement options. The U.S. foster care system aims to provide temporary living arrangements for children while attempting to safely reunite children with parents, or to find other permanent homes. In reality, many foster children spend years in the system, and move between multiple homes. Children age 6-20, as well as those with disabilities or illnesses, and those of African American and American Indian descent, comprise a disproportionate number of youth in the foster care system (see links below). Children in the system face higher risks of physical and [mental health](#) problems as well as academic barriers. Advocates of providing all children with safe, permanent homes, urge policymakers to ensure that prevention services, mental health resources and [educational](#) support are available to foster children, their biological parents, and their foster parents. Efforts, they say, should also be made to [recruit](#) and support foster families who are kin to the children in their care, as well as non-kin families who are well-suited to provide homes to these children in need. Read more: <http://globalnation.inquirer.net/128305/nearly-4000-foster-kids-in-california-live-in-group-homes#ixzz3laQGxo5U> Follow us: [@inquirerdotnet on Twitter](#) | [inquirerdotnet on Facebook](#)

Children start program to comfort others in foster care | State News | [columbiainquirer.com](#) Children start program to comfort others in foster care By ANDRA BRYAN STEFANONI/Joplin Globe Sep 11, 2015 [0](#) Roger Nomer/The Joplin Globe Mason Hymer, 12, and Mackenzie Hymer, 14, assemble a Bundle of Hope on Tuesday. The two, who were once in the foster care system themselves, started a not-for-profit organization to put together bundles of pajamas, stuffed animals, personal hygiene items and a handwritten note to give to children headed to foster families. prev next JOPLIN, Missouri — When Mason Hymer was 3 years old, he was taken by a social worker to the doorstep of a couple he'd never met before and told that would be his new home. "It felt lonely," said Mason, now 12. "I didn't know what to expect, or what would happen." He also arrived at that rural Jasper County home between Carl Junction and Asbury with virtually nothing but the clothes on his back, [The Joplin Globe reported](#). advertisement As a 9 year old, that experience was the inspiration for a project that Mason and an adoptive sister, Mackenzie Hymer, now 14, decided to start for other children in the foster care system. To date, they've served an estimated 1,000 children in eight counties in Southwest Missouri, Southeast Kansas and Northeast Oklahoma. In the United States, nearly 400,000 children live without permanent families in the foster care system, according to the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute. More than 100,000 are eligible for adoption, but nearly 32 percent of those children will wait more than three years in foster care before being adopted. Often times, children are removed from their biological families abruptly, noted Emily Hymer. She and her husband, Aaron, have adopted Mason and Mackenzie, as well as five other children. A conversation in the car with them one day in 2012 about how they could serve others and God prompted Mason to begin brainstorming ways to help comfort children in foster care. Additional input from Mackenzie led to the creation of Bundles of Hope. They would work to gather pairs of youth pajamas, stuffed animals and toothbrushes to tie up with a ribbon and a note that someone in the world cared, and ensure those bundles got into the hands of children headed to foster families. Mason and MacKenzie, who with the other Hymer children are homeschooled, began with a booth at the Carl Junction schools Christmas bazaar. Their handcrafted poster announced the project and requested donations of items and funds. That day, they collected \$200. They also gained two more team members: Their booth caught the eye of twin sisters Mati and Abbey Goebel, 13, who are students at Carl Junction Junior High, friends with the Hymers and are passionate about community service. They also have an adopted little brother, Cooper, now 6. They put their heads together with the Hymers and got busy. "We started a bank account and called Jasper County Children's Division to ask what they needed," Mackenzie said. Eventually, they added more items to the bundles. They did OK, handing out a few hundred, but they stalled out at one point, they admitted. A challenge this summer by the Hymer's dad, Aaron, to serve all surrounding counties by September rekindled their passion. "We spent the month of July talking to supervisors, setting up appointments and delivering the bundles," Abbey Goebel said. "And we met the challenge with a month to spare." Today, the team has a logo they wear on T-shirts. They have the phone numbers of circuit managers in the eight counties on speed dial in their cellphones. They routinely speak to groups of as many as 40 about their project. They also have [a website](#) and Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts. They are licensed as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization and have a post office box in Carl Junction. And they now have one side of a large, sunny craft room above the Hymer's garage dedicated to Bundles of Hope. Upstairs, above the garage, Mason climbs onto a step stool to reach one of several gray, Rubbermaid totes on a wall of shelves. It's carefully labeled "10 and bigger boy's winter pajama packets." MacKenzie reaches for one labeled "stuffed animals." The Goebel twins stretch to reach a couple of colorful backpacks on an upper shelf and a few personal hygiene items. Within seconds, they've brought it all to their work table, assembled the backpacks and tied a hand-made tag on each with a verse from the book of Proverbs and a checkmark to indicate whether the recipient should be a boy or girl, and in which season. "The verse is Proverbs 23:18. 'There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off,'" Abbey says as she turns to show the back of her shirt, which, like the tag, is printed with the verse. "This is all about giving kids hope." They also demonstrate how a "Car Bundle" is assembled — a new idea they conceived to help ease what could be a scary car ride for a child leaving his or her home for foster care. "Car Bundles" stay in a social worker's back seat and are filled with games, snacks, bottled drinks and inexpensive toys. They are replenished when needed. "We do nothing but drive them," said Mason and Mackenzie's mom, Emily Hymer, who popped in to the interview only briefly. She said she prefers to allow them to be the spokespeople since the project is "all theirs." "Their initiative, determination, their ambition, is inspiring to us as their parents," their mother said. "We've seen through their actions what we could all do if we got up and did it." The four youths say they get as much out of the project as they give. "We like to have responsibility," Mackenzie said. "It shows us what we'd have to do as adults." They also enjoy the camaraderie and the feeling of being in charge of something, they said. Back downstairs, the team wants to show a video made by Christ in Youth, which chose the four as Kingdom Workers of the Year. The Hymer's adopted siblings take a break from school work to watch. The video reveals something Mason, Mackenzie, Mati and Abbey had forgotten to share: That one day two years ago, two young siblings, Adam and Eve, were brought to the Hymer home by a social worker. When Mason came to the door to greet them, he saw they were carrying Bundles of Hope. "He ran to his room crying," his mother said, "because he realized then the impact that what he had started truly had. It hit home." They plan to continue, "as long as God will allow us," Mackenzie said. But they don't want the glory, they added. They credit their church, Christ's Church of Oronogo, along with hundreds of other donors, with financial support and donations of items. They also credit a local "extreme couponer," who each month clips coupons for toothpaste, body soap and other consumables and goes shopping for Bundles of Hope. "We've all grown a huge passion for it," Mati Goebel said. "God has given us a passion for it." Currently serving Jasper, Newton, McDonald, Lawrence, Barry and Stone counties in Missouri, Ottawa County in Oklahoma and Bourbon County in Kansas, they have discussed partnering with other individuals and groups across the nation to expand their reach. "We have a motto now," Mason said, crediting Mati Goebel with thinking of it. "Today our country, tomorrow the world." "And it all started in a car ride." Source: http://www.columbiainquirer.com/news/state_news/children-start-program-to-comfort-others-in-foster-care/article_aled7f25-c47e-5c3a-bfd1b-2c872daf2a29.html

The Miseducation of Foster Youth by [Sade A. Daniels](#) September 11, 2015 I'm currently in the midst of my first semester of graduate school at the University of California, Berkeley, and I want to drop out. I've called an aid advisor to see how much of a financial strain I'll inherit if I drop my courses. As an educated woman, I understand the importance of school to society. But as someone who has hated school since the beginnings of time, with an even more horrid experience once I entered foster care, school will never be a true priority to me, especially when my livelihood is jeopardized or I feel like I'll fail at it regardless. I'm still battling embedded inadequacies around education, and I emancipated from the system eight years ago! For most kids in America, school is a major facet in discovering one's skills and talents while honing in on possible career paths. Our children not only learn about the Pythagorean theorem and verb conjugation, but how to aspire and dream. But for many foster youth, the school experience often fuels low self-esteem as it is another system in which their plight is ignored and aspersions are reinforced through disciplinary action. Photo credit: PBS.org Here are a few ways that school becomes a low priority to foster youth: When foster care placements offer little support in transportation to and from school When school administrators use foster care backgrounds as supportive evidence for punitive responses to behavioral issues When teachers fail to engage foster care placements in learning plans and needs of foster youth When foster care placements fail to engage with teachers about learning plans and educational supports needed for foster youth When physiological needs aren't being met (seriously, no one is paying attention in class when hungry, seven-day notice'd, lacking proper clothing, and/or fearful of their placement environment) When emotional support isn't being offered at home and at school When academic institutions aren't trained on the specific needs and culture of system-dependent children or of available resources to facilitate supports When foster care placements are made and/or changed with little regard to current school proximity When alternative schools are presented as the only option for transition-age youth When foster care placements have limited knowledge of academic support programs and resources to supplement learning gaps or problem subjects When academic excellence isn't the expectation for foster youth When academic mediocrity is the accepted norm for foster youth When teachers and other school personnel are silent to the perils foster youth face while in out-of-home care. Those same noted sentiments, actions and inactions showcase a low regard for foster youth by school professionals as well as foster caretakers. In layman's terms: If professionals in youth and education services don't care enough to ensure smooth transitions and efficient support to foster youth in school, then how can we expect foster youth to be overly invested in their academic careers? If we look thoroughly at high school dropout rates, college readiness, entrance and graduation rates, suspensions and expulsions, we'll see glimpses of a subculture in foster care where academia is regarded with low reverence. That lack of connection is a byproduct of substandard treatment and supports while in school. There is hope that some of the issues I have pointed out will be addressed through national reform efforts, but there is so much more to do. As providers and caretakers, we have to ask ourselves how important should school be to our youth. Because if it's supposed to be a top priority, we have to ensure that all environments cultivate that belief. We cannot expect our young people to excel in school if we're not doing our best to support them in their academic endeavors. Because of systematic failures, we're now combating a culture of accepted and expected miseducation of foster youth. Source: <https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/blogger-co-op/miseducation-foster-youth/12880>

Paxil isn't safe for teens Updated: Sep 17, 2015 6:49 AM PDT [Share on facebook](#) [Share on twitter](#) [Share on email](#) © Comstock / Thinkstock Health [More cavities seen in kids of chronically stressed mothers](#) [More cavities seen in kids of chronically stressed mothers](#) Dental cavities are more common among kids whose mothers suffer from chronic stress, according to a new study. Dental cavities are more common among kids whose mothers suffer from chronic stress, according to a new study. [Teens copy parents' smoking](#) [Teens copy parents' smoking](#) Although many teens don't often copy their parents' behavior, there's one habit they may pick up from mom or dad -- smoking. Although many teens don't often copy their parents' behavior, there's one habit they may pick up from mom or dad -- smoking. 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Although many teens don't often copy their parents' behavior, there's one habit they may pick up from mom or dad -- smoking. [Childhood vaccines debate rekindled at GOP presidential debate](#) [Childhood vaccines debate rekindled at GOP presidential debate](#) Some parents' long-simmering concerns over the safety of childhood vaccines received unexpected -- and, in some quarters, unwelcome -- notice during the second Republican presidential candidates' debate. Some parents' long-simmering concerns over the safety of childhood vaccines received unexpected -- and, in some quarters, unwelcome -- notice during the second Republican presidential candidates' debate. [This year's flu vaccine should be better match](#) [This year's flu vaccine should be better match](#) This year's flu vaccine should be a better match than last year's for circulating flu strains, U.S. health officials said Thursday. This year's flu vaccine should be a better match than last year's for circulating flu strains, U.S. health officials said Thursday. [Paxil isn't safe for teens](#) A controversial clinical trial of the antidepressant Paxil came to the wrong conclusion when it declared the drug safe and effective for treating troubled teenagers, according to a reanalysis of the original data... A controversial clinical trial of the antidepressant Paxil came to the wrong conclusion when it declared the drug safe and effective for treating troubled teenagers, according to a reanalysis of the original data more than... [See More Articles](#) By Dennis Thompson HealthDay Reporter (HealthDay News) -- A controversial clinical trial of the antidepressant Paxil came to the wrong conclusion when it declared the drug safe and effective for treating troubled teenagers, according to a reanalysis of the original data more than a decade later. This new look finds Paxil (paroxetine) can make some teenagers suicidal and likely to harm themselves, claims a report published Sept. 17 in the BMJ. "The original study says paroxetine is safe and effective for the treatment of depressed adolescents," said co-author Dr. John Nardo, a psychiatrist with the Emory University Psychoanalytic Institute in Atlanta. "Ours says paroxetine is neither safe nor effective in the treatment of adolescents," Nardo added. "And I don't know of any example where two studies in the literature with the same data ever reached opposite conclusions." This reassessment was prompted by the RIAT (restoring invisible and abandoned trials) initiative, launched by an international group of researchers, Nardo said. RIAT calls for the public release of data behind unpublished or questionable clinical trials so that outside experts can check the findings, he explained. The original trial, known as Study 329, has been controversial ever since its 2001 publication, Nardo said. That trial was funded by the drug's marketer, SmithKline Beecham, which is now GlaxoSmithKline (GSK). The medication is currently marketed in the United States by the drug company Apotex, GSK officials said. A year after Study 329's release, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration declared it should be considered "a failed trial," according to an editorial by BMJ Associate Editor Peter Doshi that accompanies the new analysis. Despite this, more than 2 million prescriptions were written for U.S. children and teenagers in 2002, spurred by a marketing campaign that said Study 329 had demonstrated Paxil's "remarkable efficacy and safety," Doshi wrote. In 2003, the FDA mandated a "black box" warning -- the most serious type of warning in prescription drug labeling -- for Paxil and other selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) antidepressants. The warning signaled a possible risk of suicidal thoughts among children and teens. GlaxoSmithKline agreed to make the data behind Study 329 publicly available as part of a 2004 court settlement in New York, Nardo said. The drug manufacturer has since come out in favor of transparency in clinical trials, and provided electronic access to the data for the new analysis, the company said in a statement. The original trial involved 275 kids, between 12 and 18 years old, diagnosed with major depression. They were split into three groups and received either Paxil, the antidepressant drug imipramine (Tofranil), or an inactive placebo. The new reanalysis revealed that neither Paxil nor high-dose imipramine was more effective than a placebo in the treatment of major depression in adolescents. The researchers also considered the increase in harms with both drugs to be clinically significant. The original results appear to have been skewed by several decisions researchers made during data analysis, Nardo said. For example, the way the researchers classified teenagers' behavior caused them to undercount the number of suicidal ideas or self-injurious actions, such as cutting or jumping from heights. Some were categorized as "emotional lability" -- the tendency to laugh or cry unexpectedly -- and this masked differences in suicidal behavior between Paxil and placebo, the reanalysis found. The new paper also pointed out

that the trial researchers ignored unfavorable data about potential harms on the grounds that the differences between Paxil and placebo were not statistically significant. Based on the reanalysis, people can conclude that the original report "was misleading," said Dr. David Henry, a professor at the University of Toronto Dalla Lana School of Public Health and co-author of a second editorial accompanying the BMJ paper. "It's not clear whether it was deliberate or accidental, but it wrongly gave the impression that an antidepressant drug was effective and safe in children and adolescents," Henry said. "Where trials are going to determine treatment for very large numbers of people, we need to know they are effective and safe, and sometimes the results are wrong." Henry said that people concerned about the credibility of future studies should stick with established medical journals. "The high-quality, high-impact peer-reviewed journals didn't get there by chance," he said. "They have really done their work, and they're realizing now that these problems occur so they're taking more care." GlaxoSmithKline said the new results reaffirm concerns that have become widely known since Study 329's initial release. "Importantly, the findings from this team's analysis appear to be in line with the longstanding view that there is an increased risk of suicidality in pediatric and adolescent patients given antidepressants like paroxetine," the company said in its statement. "This is widely known and clear warnings have been in place on the product label for more than a decade. As such we don't believe this reanalysis affects patient safety." This particular trial, conducted in the 1990s, "was included in detailed reviews carried out many years ago by regulators and by GSK, which identified the increased risk. It's something the medical community and regulators are aware of," the statement concludes. Source: <http://www.kait8.com/story/30053332/paxil-isnt-safe-for-teens-new-analysis-says>

Sheriff's office search for runaway teens by [Jessica Lindley](#) Cherokee Tribune September 17, 2015 12:06 AM | 1632 views | 0 | 6 | | [Adriania Berndt slideshow](#) [Sarah Graham slideshow](#) Several juveniles have been reported as runaways in Cherokee County this week, and the search continues for two of the missing teens. Investigators with the Cherokee Sheriff's Office are looking for 16-year-old Adriania Natasha Berndt and 15-year-old Sarah Grace Graham. A third teen, Deshaun Tiller, also had been reported as a runaway Monday, but he has since been located, sheriff's office spokesman Lt. Jay Baker said. Authorities said Berndt was last seen at her home in Canton on Monday night. She is described as a white female with brown hair and blue eyes, according to a report released by the sheriff's office Tuesday afternoon. Berndt is about 5 feet 4 inches tall and weighs about 115 pounds. She was last seen wearing a black zip-up sweatshirt and blue jeans shorts, according to the sheriff's office. Graham, according to authorities, was last seen by a family member at about 8:15 p.m. Tuesday in the vicinity of Bells Ferry Road near Kellogg Creek. "She told another family member she would be at school (Wednesday)," Baker said, adding that the girl did not show up at school. According to a sheriff's office release, Graham is described as being 5 feet 3 inches tall and weighing about 112 pounds. She has brown hair and blue eyes, and was last seen wearing multi-colored pants and a white sports bra, according to investigators. Although the two teenage runaway girls left on their own accord, Baker said the potential for dangers exist. "Maybe not the same type of dangers you think of when you are talking about a missing 10-year-old, but there are real hazards juveniles often don't consider when they run away from their home. Without a parent or guardian, young teen runaways can often be exploited or manipulated. Also, with no parental supervision it is very common for runaway teens to make poor choices related to sex, drugs and alcohol use," Baker said there was no evidence, however, to suggest that the teens were being lured into any type of sex trafficking ring. The Cherokee Sheriff's Office also continues its search for **two teenage girls who ran away from North Georgia Angel House** in Cherokee County on Aug. 13. Baker said Angelique Beacham and Jayde Hayes, whose families do not live in Cherokee, had left the facility for troubled youth in an unknown vehicle and their current location remains unknown. Beacham, 16, was described by investigators as being 5 feet 4 inches tall and weighing 119 pounds. She has black hair and brown eyes. Hayes, also 16, is 5 feet 4 inches tall and weighs 145 pounds, police said. She was also described by investigators as having black hair and brown eyes. Anyone with information regarding the whereabouts of any of the missing teens is asked to call detectives at (770) 928-0239 or 911. Source: http://cherokeetribune.com/view/full_story/26862009/article-Sheriff-s-office-search-for-runaway-teens?instance=home_top_bullets

Adoptive parents of abused child rap DCF [Comment](#) By Paula J. Owen Telegram & Gazette Staff telegram.com By Paula J. Owen Telegram & Gazette Staff Posted Sep. 12, 2015 at 9:01 PM Updated Sep 13, 2015 at 5:36 AM An undated family handout photograph released in 2005 of Haleigh Poutre, shown at approximately 10 years of age. She is now 21. Submitted Photo By Paula J. Owen Telegram & Gazette Staff Posted Sep. 12, 2015 at 9:01 PM Updated Sep 13, 2015 at 5:36 AM Zoom An undated family handout photograph released in 2005 of Haleigh Poutre, shown at approximately 10 years of age. She is now 21. Submitted Photo By Paula J. Owen Telegram & Gazette Staff Posted Sep. 12, 2015 at 9:01 PM Updated Sep 13, 2015 at 5:36 AM More than 10 years after Haleigh Poutre was beaten into a coma, the Department of Children and Families is still making the same mistakes that led to her near death, including not following a law created in light of the case to have a clinical review team review cases after multiple allegations of abuse. When Haleigh was brought to a Westfield hospital in September 2005, her teeth were broken, her face was swollen and old and new burns were on her chest. But the most severe injury was to her brain stem, which doctors said was partially sheared, leaving her "brain dead" and in a vegetative state. DCF, at the time called the Department of Social Services, was harshly criticized over its handling of the case, which included the subsequent arrest of her aunt and stepfather, Holli and Jason Strickland, on assault charges. In 2006, a legislative oversight committee determined that DSS was at fault for failing to protect Haleigh. DSS received at least 12 reports of abuse or neglect of Haleigh between 2001 and 2005, and had been involved with the Strickland family since 1998. DSS officials later acknowledged that they missed signs of abuse before Haleigh was brought to the hospital. DCF sought an order to remove Haleigh's life support eight days after she was admitted, and it was ultimately upheld by the state Supreme Judicial Court. But on Jan. 18, 2006 - the day doctors were scheduled to remove her life support - Haleigh regained consciousness and began breathing on her own and responding to commands. Many people remember the Haleigh Poutre case as it relates to end-of-life decisions for children in the state's custody. But the child abuse she endured inspired many changes in the way the state handles abuse reporting, including a special review requirement of cases where three or more reports of abuse and neglect are made, increased penalties for failing to report child abuse and the creation of a registry for keeping track of foster parents. Also, then-Gov. Deval L. Patrick created a child advocate position that reports directly to the governor regarding severe child abuse or neglect in the state. The adoptive parents of Haleigh Poutre - now Haleigh Arnett, a 21-year-old woman who loves music and Disney, but cannot walk or use the bathroom on her own - say the same state system that failed Haleigh is continuing to fail other children. Her adoptive father, Keith A. Arnett, 45, and adoptive mother, Rebekah E. Arnett, 42, said the state is still making the same mistakes with other people's children that it made with Haleigh. The state, they said, is not learning from its mistakes. "Policies and procedures fall by the wayside and kids are not being taken care of," Mr. Arnett said in a phone interview. "It is maddening. If society can't take care of its children, what does that say? Haleigh is paying the price like no other for a system failure. It is sad that this was allowed to happen, and it probably could have been prevented. It is pretty intense for me. We've gone through a lot to adopt Haleigh - so many studies, checking backgrounds. We're squeaky clean, but it was invasive and totally over the top. Then, with a kid like Jeremiah Oliver, they missed eight visits and didn't review the case and the kid ends up dead, and the Hardwick boy is in a coma. That is inexcusable." Mr. Arnett is referring to [Jeremiah Oliver](#), the 5-year old boy from Fitchburg whose body was found in a suitcase in Sterling a year after he disappeared; and [Jack Loisel](#) of Hardwick, who remains unresponsive in a long-term rehabilitation center after allegedly being starved and beaten by his father, Randall Lints of Hardwick. Haleigh's, Jeremiah's, and Jack's cases are similar in that multiple reports of abuse and neglect were made, but not investigated by DCF. Moreover, in Haleigh's and Jack's cases, social workers believed their caretakers' explanations of how Haleigh and Jack sustained multiple injuries - through self-harming, they told them. In Haleigh's case, Mr. Arnett said when social workers would ask her how she got hurt, her adoptive aunt was always an intimidating figure in the room. Haleigh, Mr. Arnett said, is a blessing to his family, and adopting her was a dream come true. He quit his job as a special education teacher and started a small trucking business to help with Haleigh's round-the-clock care when he and his wife adopted her into their Western Massachusetts home. Ms. Arnett home-schools their three biological sons and also cares for two foster children. The Arnetts have been taking in foster children for almost 10 years and knows how the child welfare system operates, Mr. Arnett said. Haleigh's social workers have been amazing, he said, but he also points to a lack of support for social workers who are often overwhelmed as part of the problem and disconnect between management and what is happening on the frontlines in children's homes. "Haleigh is in a good place and we love her to death," he said. "I'm encouraged by her and strengthened by her. It is a great joy taking care of Haleigh. She is just awesome. She is perfect. But, I don't wish any other adoptive or foster parent to go through this or worse - the kid is dead." Another issue, Mr. Arnett said, is that DCF continues to keep the same social workers and managers on the very cases they made mistakes in as they did in Haleigh's case. "No one wants to take responsibility for kids dead or dying, and that is the way it has been," he said. "The fact continues that reviews are not done and now a kid is in a coma. They knew certain things about the dad in Hardwick and they didn't do anything. That is insane when you think about it. DCF is a machine. As foster parents it is so hard to get any answers out of anybody. The system is so big it doesn't look at kids as individuals - just policies and procedures - and that is where the system really got it wrong. They are so far removed from what the realities are." When Mr. Patrick overhauled the state's child welfare system in 2008, cases like those

were supposed to undergo a special review by a state board, if the department receives three or more reports of suspected child abuse. The results of that review were intended to be evaluated by prosecutors and police. At the time, Mr. Patrick said the new law was "a giant step forward," and that "nobody wants tragedies to repeat themselves." Yet, DCF's failure to follow that law since, has in some cases, led to child deaths or severe injuries more than 10 years after the Poutre case that initially inspired the change. In a statement, DCF officials said, "Despite the best of intentions, the Department does not have an up-to-date intake policy and is working diligently to develop a new one that will be executed statewide. The children of the Commonwealth deserve nothing less." DCF officials said that Worcester-area offices recently implemented regular meetings where managers and supervisors provide oversight on the 51A process, screening process and decisions regarding ongoing cases, and have implemented a protocol where a clinical review team will review complex and difficult cases. DCF is considering "rolling this out statewide," they said. "The Department does not have readily available data that would capture compliance with the 2008 legislation," DCF officials said in a statement. During a recent press conference on the Loisel case, Gov. Charles D. Baker Jr. said the special review requirement was an "unclear policy" within DCF. Elizabeth Guyton, a spokeswoman for Mr. Baker, said, "Keeping the children of the Commonwealth safe is our highest priority. Our social workers are dedicated but they need clear and updated policies and strong management behind them to do this important job. The reforms that we began putting in place with the CWLA report and continue to enhance as new information becomes available will make a great impact." However, retired Judge Martha Grace, who oversaw child abuse cases for more than 20 years, said she believes part of the problem is that DCF does not follow through with policies already put in place to protect children. "They need follow-through," she said. "But, if you want a second set of eyes, where does it come from? If you can't answer that question, there is no hope new directives will be implemented today, tomorrow or in the future. The lack of follow-through always bothered me. It is not a question of putting more directives in place when the old ones are not being implemented everywhere. We need to take what we have for laws and not accept the easy answer of 'not enough manpower' for why they are not implemented; but, ask how you can implement them with what you have." Source: <http://www.telegram.com/article/20150912/NEWS/150919659>

SLED investigates S.C. MENTOR group home death [Christina Elmore Email @celmorepc](#) Sep 12 2015 10:25 pm Sep 12 11:10 pm [x](#) State Law Enforcement Division agents are investigating the death of a 23-year-old man who had been left in the care of a Charleston area group home. Charles William Noland, of Charleston, suffered a medical emergency Sept. 5 while residing at South Carolina MENTOR. The facility cares for intellectually and developmentally disabled adults, in addition to other services. Paramedics transported Noland to Bon Secours St. Francis Hospital where he later died, Charleston County Deputy Coroner Dottie Lindsey said. An autopsy was completed the following day, according to Lindsey. A cause of death, however, remains under investigation. Further details surrounding the death were not immediately available Saturday. Lindsey declined to comment on the nature of the medical emergency or what may have brought it on, citing the ongoing investigation. SLED began looking into the death immediately after it occurred, spokesman Thom Berry said. "The facility is required by law to notify us," Berry said. "We then began our investigation." South Carolina MENTOR was the subject of a similar investigation after an autistic man died while in its care in 2013. Forrest Carlton, 22, of Charleston wandered from the facility and was fatally struck by a vehicle in a hit-and-run around 3 a.m. Dec. 8 of that year. A wrongful death suit filed by Carlton's father alleged negligence on the part of the group home. Carlton tried to wander from the facility at least four times since moving into the facility in November 2012, alleged Nathan Hughey, an attorney for Carlton's family. The home's staff failed to heighten its supervision accordingly, he said. The facility reached a confidential settlement last year with Carlton's family. In a statement released Saturday, Stan Butkus, South Carolina MENTOR's state director, said he was "devastated" by the latest "unexpected" death of an individual in its program. "As an organization we are committed to continuous quality improvement and place great emphasis on safe environments and providing services that are responsive to the needs of the individuals we are privileged to serve," Butkus said. "Our staff provides care according to each person's individual service plan which describes the type of assistance, supervision and structure that each person requires." The facility's staff receive CPR and first aid training to ensure the safety of those in its care, Butkus said. "As a matter of course, we are required to report the death of any individual receiving services to SLED and we are working cooperatively with them in their review of this matter," Butkus said. Reach Christina Elmore at 937-5908. Source: <http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20150912/PC16/150919709/sled-investigates-sc-mentor-group-home-death>

Rock River Academy & Residential Center sued over allegations of abuse [Mark Trammell](#) Sep. 14, 2015, 11:04am 1 2 0 13 Several former residents of a Cook County residential center are suing for alleged sexual and physical abuse by the staff. Ashley Lombardo, Mary Bohanon, Alicia Mondloch, Nikki Harris and Alicia Weathers filed suit on Sept. 9 in Cook County Circuit Court against **Universal Health Services Inc., doing business as Rock River Academy & Residential Center**. According to the complaint, Rock River is a residential treatment center for adolescent females with moderate to severe emotional disabilities and was advertised to be a safe and secure environment, promising the highest level of care and individualized treatment for each of their patients. According to an investigation by the Chicago Tribune cited by the complaint, over a four-year period of time there were more than 700 reports made to the Rockford Police Department concerning alleged victimization of girls under its care, including rape, battery and sodomy. Each of the plaintiffs were minors under the care of Rock River during various periods from 2010 to 2013, and each of them have alleged counts of systematic abuse and neglect, including but not limited to various incidents of alleged sexual abuse, battery, inappropriate touching, fondling, sexual assault, and administration of psychotropic drugs to keep them in a semi-conscious state so that they could be easily manipulated and abused by various members of the defendant's staff, the lawsuit states. The plaintiffs allege neglect on the behalf of Rock River, failure to properly screen their staff for potential sex offenders, failure to provide proper counseling when such alleged incidents were brought to light, failure to protect their residents from such abuse or to remove them to an area in which they would be safe from it, failure to investigate said incidents properly, failure to report said incidents to the authorities, and general carelessness and neglect. The plaintiffs seek restitution of more than \$50,000 each for their mental, physical and emotional injuries, and subsequent medical and psychiatric costs in the past and future, as well as attorney fees and court costs in an amount to be determined by the court. The plaintiffs are being represented by I. Peter Polansky of Polansky & Cichon CHTD, of Chicago. Source: <http://cookcountyrecord.com/stories/510638014-rock-river-academy-residential-center-sued-over-allegations-of-abuse>

Legislature Approves Foster Care Overhaul [Katie Orr](#) Monday, September 14, 2015 | Sacramento, CA | [Permalink](#) [playpause](#) 00:00 / 00:43 Update Required To play the media you will need to either update your browser to a recent version or update your [Flash plugin](#). The California foster care system would be overhauled under a bill passed by the state Legislature. The measure changes the focus of the foster care system in the state.. Democratic Assemblyman Mark Stone authored the bill. "What this bill does is move the care away from congregate care, group homes, and into more individualized care," he says. Stone says children may still be placed in group facilities for short periods of time. But he says they would receive intensive treatment while there. A greater effort will also be made to return children to their families or find them new permanent homes. Foster parents will also receive more training and support. The bill includes recommendations from a 2015 Department of Social Services report on reforming the foster care system. It is awaiting action from the governor. Source: <http://www.capradio.org/articles/2015/09/14/legislature-approves-foster-care-overhaul/>

Husband and Wife, Operators of Foster Care Homes, Pleaded Guilty to Misappropriation of Public Funds and Embezzlement September 15, 2015 9:44 am by: [Staff Report](#) Category: [Crime + Courts](#), [News](#) [Leave a comment](#) [A+](#) / [A-](#) Latest crime and court news. A husband and wife who contracted with Los Angeles County to operate four foster homes providing care to 28 children pleaded guilty today to misappropriation of public funds and embezzlement. CSJ Kidogo, the former executive director of Little People's World, pleaded to one felony count of misappropriation of public money. His wife, Hitaji Kidogo, LPW's former assistant executive director, pleaded to one misdemeanor count of embezzlement. The pair were originally charged with 11 counts each of misappropriation of public funds and embezzlement by an officer. LPW group homes were closed as a result of the arrests. "Money intended to care for children in foster homes instead lined the pockets of the executives who ran the programs," District Attorney Jackie Lacey said when the pair were arrested at their Banning home Sept. 18, 2014. The county's auditor-controller discovered that CSJ Kidogo borrowed money earmarked for foster care to buy real estate and pay mortgages on properties not used in the foster care program. CSJ Kidogo is expected to be sentenced to six months in jail and five years probation when the couple returns to court Jan. 15. His wife is expected to be placed on five years probation. Deputy District Attorney Susan Choi said the couple had already paid large amounts of restitution and must pay an additional \$109,093 to the county when they return for sentencing. Source: <http://westsidetoday.com/2015/09/15/husband-and-wife-operators-of-foster-care-homes-pleaded-guilty-to-misappropriation-of-public-funds-and-embezzlement/>

Walt Investigates: Austin Foster Kids Crisis Updated: Wed, Sep 16 2015, 10:31 PM Thirteen Texas children died in foster care in just the past two years. The state legislature raised requirements for foster parents to help weed out the people unfit to care for children. But now there is another problem. The state says there are not enough willing and eligible parents to the overwhelming number of children in the system. "I know what it feels like to be that kid that is followed around by a file and tagged as bad because of their circumstance when they're just really longing for acceptance," Carmen Todd says. Todd knows because she was a foster child who craved normalcy but suffered in silence. "Embarrassment about being in care," Todd says. "My family and my background. That was something I carried around for a long time." She says was lucky. She wasn't abused as a child but she was invisible, lost in the system. "I remember being in a home and it was as if we were just there," Todd says. Now Todd says she has a calling to help. With the assistance of a foster placement group called Upbring, she's now fostering four teenagers. "Something inside just led me to say you have to take these children because if you don't do it nobody else will," Todd says. "There is nobody else. You are it." Ron Brown is the director of Texas Foster Care. "I think there's always been a shortage, and it's getting worse," Brown says. He says the state says desperately needs more Carmen Todd's. "We get calls day and night for a home to place children because they don't have any homes," He says. There are roughly 1,700 children in Austin who need foster homes. But there are only 750 foster families in this region who are actively fostering. That means nearly 1000 children have nowhere to go. They're living in shelters or transferred miles away from home to another family. "There's about 20 percent that go out of region, and there's about 70 percent that go out of county, so that's a problem," Brown says. The farther they're placed away from home the less likely they are to be adopted. Then they age out of the system alone. Brown knows there are willing and qualified foster parents out there who are just paralyzed by fear. "I can only guess that all the foster parents that might want to do it are afraid of giving up their privacy maybe, their time maybe, and it requires a lot of resources," Brown says. Carmen says the most important resources you need are an unending supply of love and grace. "I knew going in that these kids are not what they're tagged," Todd says. She says she also knows the rest will work itself out. "These kids will be part of our family," Todd said. [By Walt Maciborski](#) Source: <http://www.keyetv.com/news/features/top-stories/stories/Walt-Investigates-Austin-Foster-Kids-Crisis-206089.shtml>

Ombudsman criticises Dudley Council's handling of foster care complaint in "shocking" report Ombudsman criticises Dudley Council's handling of foster care complaint in "shocking" report Exclusive by [Bev Holder](#) // [Regional](#) Share [1 comment](#) DUDLEY Council has been ordered to pay compensation to a mum and her two adopted children after being criticised for failing to investigate fully a complaint about their treatment in foster care. The Local Government Ombudsman has told the council it must "review its policies and procedures to ensure it takes complaints from children with the seriousness they deserve" following its investigation into the matter which concerned two young girls, aged four and five at the time, who told their new adopted mother that their previous foster carer had smacked them, made one wear a nappy meant for a disabled child and given them cold baths. A report by the Ombudsman says the council failed to arrange a meeting with the relevant officers to discuss the complaint despite the adoptive mother raising concerns and the authority's designated officer deciding the issue should be dealt with as a serious concern. Instead, the foster carer was told about the allegations before social workers had chance to speak to the mother and children. The incident was recorded as 'unsubstantiated' and the council decided no further action should be taken. Months later the adoptive mother made the council aware of further allegations and the council held a 'position of trust' meeting chaired by an independent reviewing officer to look at whether the authority had investigated properly. Promoted stories But at that meeting it was decided any investigation might be traumatic for the children and cast doubt over whether enough evidence would be available given the time that had passed. The report says the adoptive mother tried to take her complaint through the statutory three-stage complaints process, but the council refused to take it through to the second stage - going against government guidance which states authorities must ensure any complaint proceeds through the stages if the complainant wishes it. The mother had also complained the foster carer had not forwarded to her the children's savings and memory boxes, which should have included important photographs and toys; and that some items were eventually sent to the youngsters but many, including birthday and Christmas photographs, were missing. Local Government Ombudsman, Dr Jane Martin, said: "While I recognise councils often have difficult judgement calls to make, the statutory children's complaints procedure is not optional and is there to make sure vulnerable young people's voices are being heard. "The children themselves must be central to the complaint to ensure that their needs are met." Dr Martin has now ordered the council to review how it investigates allegations and remind staff to ensure complaints are progressed through the statutory process. The authority has also been asked to apologise to the adoptive mother and agree a plan on how it will interview the children as a matter of urgency. It also must pay the adoptive mother £200 in recognition of the frustration and distress caused, and a further £200 to each child in recognition of the distress caused to them by not ensuring their carer passed on their belongings. Dudley's Conservative leader Councillor Patrick Harley and the borough's UKIP group leader Councillor Paul Brothwood have spoken of their shock at the Ombudsman's findings after only last month highlighting concerns about Dudley's children's services department which has, to date, failed to address fundamental flaws flagged up by Ofsted three-and-a-half years ago. Both, however, said they were "not surprised". Cllr Brothwood said: "It's very sad but confirms all my fears about the failure of the council's leadership team and children services. "I have been raising my concerns about children's services in Dudley for a long time now and finally the truth is coming out." Dudley's cabinet member for children's services, Councillor Ian Cooper, said: "As a local authority one of our absolute priorities is our parental role to children in care, but in this case it is clear that our own very high standards have not been met. Share article "We are currently going through a fundamental and comprehensive restructure in our children's services directorate to make sure it can meet the challenges facing local government, while at the same time, ensuring looked after children have the best care and support for their start in life. "In this case we have acknowledged the report from the Ombudsman and we will be following up the recommendations made." Source: http://www.eveshamjournal.co.uk/news/regional/13766625.Ombudsman_criticises_Dudley_Council_s_handling_of_foster_care_complaint_in_shocking_report/

White Plains group home mishandled abuse complaint [Ernie Garcia](#), elgarcia@lohud.com 1:55 p.m. EDT September 18, 2015 Many group homes in Westchester, Rockland and Putnam counties serve developmentally disabled people and those with mental health issues. Agencies also supervise many apartments. The entrance sign for Bryant Estates, a cluster of 10 group homes in White Plains, on Sept. 11, 2015(Photo: Ernie Garcia) 35 CONNECT [13 TWEETLINKEDIN](#) COMMENTEMAILMORE WHITE PLAINS — A group home serving developmentally disabled adults was cited by the state for bungling an abuse investigation and mismanaging at least two residents' medical conditions last year. In one case, staff at Padwe House didn't monitor a resident's severe constipation, ignored a hospital's discharge instructions and failed to document whether the resident received any medicine after an emergency-room visit, leading to a second trip to the hospital, according to state documents. In another case, a resident with an open sore on a toe received no documented medical treatment for at least a year. Padwe House, a state-run adult group home at 264A Bryant Ave. with 12 residents and 20 employees, including nurses, is one of many group residences in Westchester, Rockland and Putnam counties that serve developmentally disabled people and those with mental health issues. In addition to group homes, social service agencies also supervise many apartments for two to three residents. The Journal News obtained copies of inspection records from 2014 and early 2015 through Freedom of Information Law requests for adult group residences in the three-county area that are regulated by the state Office of Mental Health and the state Office for People With Developmental Disabilities. The two agencies released 17 reports for residences in the Lower Hudson Valley — one from OPWDD and 16 from OMH. Many of the OMH inspections cited such issues as household disrepair, messiness and inadequate record keeping. OPWDD oversees Padwe House, which has been operating since 1980. It is in a little neighborhood called Bryant Estates, a cluster of 10 group homes run by the state and by private social service agencies. When inspectors cite a group residence for serious violations, state law requires a corrective action plan that outlines how issues will be resolved to bring it into compliance with state regulations. State officials redacted portions of a corrective action plan for Padwe House dated Nov. 18, so the nature of the abuse or mistreatment complaint is unknown. The plan stated staffers received additional training to address the failures, the complaint case was reopened and greater documentation was required of attending physicians and nurses if hospital discharge orders are not followed. During a recent visit to the home, staffers declined to discuss the conditions there, saying they were not authorized to do so. Jennifer O'Sullivan, a spokeswoman for the OPWDD, would not say whether any staff members at Padwe House were disciplined, citing confidentiality issues. "OPWDD continuously monitors services and supports to ensure that high quality services are being provided and that any improvements that are needed are immediately addressed," O'Sullivan wrote in an email about the corrective action plan. "Due to strict confidentiality laws we must adhere to, we cannot comment on the individuals we provide supports to or on investigations." Barbara Masur, president of the White Plains-based GROW, a parent and family advocacy group for the developmentally disabled, said OPWDD's confidentiality rules are barriers to ensuring that group-home residents receive proper care. "This is not a single incident and it's not limited to the state-run houses or a single agency," said Masur, who was not familiar with Padwe House's

corrective action plan or its lapses. "We're trying to get a family-guardian bill of rights so, when someone is sent to the hospital or emergency room, immediately the parent or guardian is notified. Across the board this does not happen." State Assemblyman Thomas Abinanti, D-Greenburgh, is the sponsor of the family bill of rights legislation, which passed in the Assembly in June, but did not advance in the state Senate. Abinanti, who was unfamiliar with Padwe House, said he plans to reintroduce the legislation. The law would give families or guardians of adults in homes for people with developmental disabilities the right to have "meaningful input" into a resident's care plan, be notified "within a reasonable time" of any event affecting a resident's health or safety, and make unannounced visits, among other privileges. "We want to empower family members to step forward and assert the rights that people with disabilities would assert for themselves if they could," he said. "There are downsides to it. It could lead to interference in the operations of the facility. I've made the decision that the scrutiny is better than the possible interference." The 16 inspection reports released by the OMH in the Lower Hudson Valley had minor issues. St. Dominic's Home in Blauvelt was cited for issues including improper paperwork, tripping hazards and cigarette butt litter on a deck. Chris Winward, St. Dominic's vice president of strategic partnerships, government affairs and communications, said the home's issues were resolved as quickly as possible, with weather permitting on outdoor issues. "We take any potential issues very seriously and immediately began to correct these concerns, putting policies in place to reduce the opportunity for error in the future," Winward wrote in an email. Rehabilitation Support Services was cited for its Pleasant Manor Community Residence in Katonah. The 12-bed facility's violations included inadequate records, one of which misstated a resident — who was actually in jail — attended house meetings. Jerry Lesczynski, managing director at Rehabilitation Support Services, wasn't sure what happened with the misstated meeting attendee, but said the attendance list could have been a printout of an outdated residents list. "They were not happy with how accurately things were summarized," Lesczynski said of the inspectors' record-keeping citations. "We used that as a training issue for staff." Source: <http://www.lohud.com/story/news/2015/09/17/group-homes-violations/71967396/>

Man arrested for allegedly hitting elderly woman at Great Neck group home Posted 9:02 PM, September 16, 2015, by [Alyssa Zauderer Facebook188 Twitter4 Reddit Pinterest Email Google](#) Randolph Bien-Aime, 26, allegedly punched a female resident, 71, in the face at the ACLD group home in Great Neck. GREAT NECK, N.Y. — A Queens man was arrested after police say he assaulted an elderly woman in a Long Island group home. According to Nassau County police, Randolph Bien-Aime, 26, allegedly punched a female resident, 71, in the face at the ACLD group home in Great Neck. The incident happened in June, officials say. Bien-Aime, who is no longer employed by ALCD, was arrested at his home on Wednesday. He was charged with endangering an incompetent person and endangering the welfare of an elderly person. He will be arraigned Thursday at First District Court in Hempstead. According to ACLD's website, the organization is a "leading not-for-profit agency that serves the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families." Source: <http://pix11.com/2015/09/16/man-arrested-for-allegedly-hitting-elderly-patient-at-great-neck-group-home/>

Former group home employee charged with sexual exploitation 7 hours ago BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — A former disability services worker has been charged with exploitation after allegedly trying to begin a sexual relationship with a 17-year-old group home resident. The Billings Gazette reports (<http://bit.ly/1iV67DJ>) 47-year-old Jason Oland was charged Thursday with felony exploitation of a person with a developmental disability. His bond has been set at \$25,000. Oland had worked for the disability services organization, COR Enterprises, when he met the teenage girl. Court documents say the girl told police Oland had sent her nude photos and that they had held hands and kissed at her group home. She said she told Oland she couldn't have sex with him. Oland initially denied the allegations, but later said the teen was his girlfriend. Oland's attorney noted that Oland also has mental deficiencies. Source: http://missoulian.com/news/state-and-regional/montana/former-group-home-employee-charged-with-sexual-exploitation/article_6a5a47fa-d0a0-584e-9596-6728fdbadbd0.html

Medical Biller Sentenced to 45 Months in Prison for Role in \$4 Million Health Care Fraud Scheme U.S. Department of Justice September 18, 2015 WASHINGTON—The medical biller of a Chicago-area visiting physician practice was sentenced today to 45 months in prison for her role in a \$4 million health care fraud scheme. Assistant Attorney General Leslie R. Caldwell of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Zachary T. Fardon of the Northern District of Illinois, Special Agent in Charge Lamont Pugh III of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services-Office of Inspector General (HHS-OIG) in Chicago and Acting Special Agent in Charge John A. Brown of the FBI's Chicago Division made the announcement. Mary Talaga, 54, of Elmwood Park, Illinois, was convicted in May 2015 following a jury trial of one count of conspiracy to commit health care fraud, six counts of health care fraud and three counts of false statements relating to a health care matter. In addition to imposing the prison term, U.S. District Judge Gary Feinerman of the Northern District of Illinois ordered Talaga to pay approximately \$1 million in restitution. From 2007 to 2011, Talaga was the primary medical biller at Medicaill Physicians Group Ltd., a physician practice that visited patients in their homes and prescribed home health care. The evidence at trial showed that Talaga and her co-conspirators routinely billed Medicare for overseeing patient care plans (a service known as "care plan oversight" or CPO) when, in fact, the doctors at Medicaill rarely provided the service. The evidence at trial also showed that Talaga and her co-conspirators billed Medicare for other services that were never provided, including services rendered to patients who were deceased, services purportedly provided by medical professionals no longer employed by Medicaill, and services purportedly provided by medical professionals who, based on billing records, worked over 24 hours per day. According to the evidence presented at trial, during the five-year conspiracy, Medicaill submitted bills to Medicare for more than \$4 million in services that were never provided. Medicare paid more than \$1 million on those claims. Rick Brown, 58, of Rockford, Illinois, and Roger A. Lucero, 64, of Elmhurst, Illinois, were also convicted of offenses based on their roles in the scheme. Brown was convicted along with Talaga at trial and was previously sentenced to serve more than seven years in prison. Lucero, Medicaill's Medical Director, pleaded guilty and will be sentenced at a later date. The case was investigated jointly by HHS-OIG and the FBI, and was brought as part of the Medicare Fraud Strike Force, under the supervision of the Criminal Division's Fraud Section and the U.S. Attorney's Office of the Northern District of Illinois. This case was prosecuted by Trial Attorney Brooke Harper and Senior Trial Attorney Jon Juenger of the Criminal Division's Fraud Section. Since its inception in March 2007, the Medicare Fraud Strike Force, now operating in nine cities across the country, has charged over 2,300 defendants who collectively have billed the Medicare program for over \$7 billion. In addition, the HHS Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, working in conjunction with the HHS-OIG, are taking steps to increase accountability and decrease the presence of fraudulent providers. To learn more about the Health Care Fraud Prevention and Enforcement Action Team (HEAT), go to: www.stopmedicarefraud.gov. This content has been reproduced from its [original source](#). Source: <https://www.fbi.gov/chicago/press-releases/2015/medical-biller-sentenced-to-45-months-in-prison-for-role-in-4-million-health-care-fraud-scheme>

Operator of toddler boot camp sent to jail A woman who offered intensive potty-training classes abused a child By [Gary T. Kubota](#) POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Sep 19, 2015 A Maui woman who operated a potty-training "boot camp" has been sentenced to three months in jail. After a trial, Wailuku District Judge Kelsey Kawano found Rebecca Stapp, 39, of Waiehu guilty of third-degree assault of a toddler. A Maui woman who operated a potty-training "boot camp" has been sentenced to three months in jail. After a trial, Wailuku District Judge Kelsey Kawano found Rebecca Stapp, 39, of Waiehu guilty of third-degree assault of a toddler. Source: <http://www.staradvertiser.com/s?action=login&f=v&id=328362191&id=328362191>

A third of foster children in South West move homes several times a year By [Plymouth Herald](#) | Posted: September 19, 2015 SHARE PICTURE Copy link to paste in your message A third of foster children in South West move homes several times a year Share Tweet Share Pin It Email Copy link to paste in your message / SHARE PICTURE Copy link to paste in your message [Rugby World Cup: shock as Japan beat South Africa 1 Plymouth memorial service will commemorate 75th anniversary... 1 Reports of crash on Wolsley Road in Plymouth this evening 1 Comments \(0\)](#) A THIRD of foster children in the South West move homes several times a year, new statistics reveal. A Freedom of Information request by charity Action for Children has revealed that nearly a third of foster children in the South West — more than 1,400 — move home two or more times a year. Children and young people who regularly move between foster care homes are more likely to have poor social skills, reduced education outcomes and limited future employment prospects — impacting on their mental health and exacerbating any existing behavioural and emotional issues, the charity says. Action for Children is warning that too many children in foster care are still being disrupted by repeated moves to new homes, and has launched an appeal to find thousands of new foster carers to help provide the best homes for vulnerable children at the earliest possible opportunity. Brigitte Garter, director of children's services in the South West, said: "For children in care, moving home is not just about leaving a house. It means leaving a family, friends, school and everything that's familiar to start all over again. "It is impossible to imagine the damage to a child or young person, who has already had the toughest start in life, to have to move several times a year until they find the right foster carer who will stick with them through thick and thin. "We know of children as young as four who have had to move three times in less than a year

before finding a stable family home. “Sadly we know that it can be necessary to move children from their current foster homes as relationships between a carer and child can break down, especially for children who have faced the most traumatic experiences and find it hard to trust someone new. “However, too many children in care are still facing instability in their lives. “That’s why we urgently need more dedicated foster carers to help children and young people overcome trauma by helping them to love and trust again, feel safe, rebuild their sense of worth and belonging.” Anita May and Chris Gaydon from Plymouth have been fostering with Action for Children for five years. Chris said: “We became foster carers as we believe every child deserves to be loved and feel safe. “We make sure that the children who stay with us have everything they need to have secure, happy and healthy lives. It is the most satisfying thing we’ve ever done. “There are challenges, of course, as with raising any child, but I’d recommend fostering to anyone who can offer a child a warm and loving home, with Action for Children’s support it’s a fantastic thing to do,” Action for Children is looking for people across the South West who can provide a secure and loving home to children who have experienced trauma and loss. Lots of people can foster; it doesn’t matter if you’re older, whether you own or rent your home, are single, co-habiting or married, male or female or in a heterosexual or same sex relationship, but you must have a spare room and the ability to stand alongside children and young people to help them recover. If you would like to find out more about being a foster carer visit actionforchildren.org.uk or call 0845 200 5162. Read more: <http://www.plymouthherald.co.uk/foster-children-South-West-homes-times-year/story-27829953-detail/story.html#ixzz3mEfbRpO5> Follow us: [@heraldnewsline on Twitter](#) | [theplymouthherald on Facebook](#)

3 Police Officers Charged With Child Cruelty At A Boot Camp For Troubled Youths September 19, 2015 1:17 PM [Share on email](#) [3 View Comments](#)
Photo of boot camp from Huntington Park Police Dept.’s Facebook page. (CBS) Related Tags: [Boot Camp](#), [Child Cruelty](#), [Drill instructors](#), [Gomez](#), [Gomez-Marquez Larios](#), [Lead](#), [San Luis Obispo](#) SAN LUIS OBISPO (CBS/AP) — Three police officers have been charged with abusing 10 children at a boot camp for troubled youths in the mountains of San Luis Obispo. Friday, San Luis Obispo County prosecutors filed misdemeanor charges against South Gate Officers Edgar Gomez and Carlos Gomez-Marquez. They also charged Huntington Beach Officer Marissa Larios. Prosecutors contend the three roughed up 12-to 16-year-olds while serving as drill instructors at a weeklong boot camp held in May. According to the [Los Angeles Times](#), the \$400 police-sponsored boot camp for Los Angeles County youth was at a military base. Parents sent their kids there to learn “the three pillars of the LEAD program: Leadership, Empowerment and Discipline.” Parents said their children reported being slapped, kicked, stomped and beaten bloody at times. One boy returned home with a fractured hand. The arrests were the result of a 2-month investigation “that included searching the cellphones, computers, vehicles, photos and belongings of camp leaders.” The three officers are on leave and are free while awaiting arraignment. Messages seeking comment from William Hadden, an attorney for Gomez and Gomez-Marquez, wasn’t immediately returned. It wasn’t immediately clear whether Larios had a lawyer. Huntington Police Chief Jorge Cisneros this is the first time he’s ever heard any accusations of this kind about the LEAD program. “I’ve been here for five years, and these are the first allegations that I’m aware of,” he said. Police have temporarily suspended the program. Source: <http://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2015/09/19/3-police-officers-charged-with-child-cruelty-at-a-boot-camp-for-troubled-youths/>

Advocates address harsh reality for LGBTQ youth in state care By CR Staff At a panel discussion Wednesday night, members of Children’s Rights and advocacy group Lambda Legal addressed a grim reality: Two out of five LGBTQ youth are homeless, 14 percent are in the juvenile justice system and almost 20 percent are in foster care. LGBTQ kids who are rejected by their biological families are eight times more likely to attempt suicide. From left to right: Artist and Philanthropist Molly Gochman, Senior Attorney with Lambda Legal and Director of the Youth in Out-of-Home Care Project Currey Cook, Children’s Rights Senior Staff Attorney Christina Wilson Remlin. Photo credit: Jackie Snow. These were some of the many alarming statistics brought to light when a small crowd gathered in Manhattan to discuss the wide-ranging vulnerabilities of LGBTQ youth in state custody systems. The event was hosted and moderated by artist and philanthropist Molly Gochman, who founded the [Red Sand Project](#) — an activist artwork dedicated to raising awareness of human trafficking. While there have been significant strides made for the LGBTQ community over the past year in the United States, panelists emphasized that no federal protections currently exist for those in juvenile justice systems or foster care. “As shocking as it may be, nowhere does it say you cannot discriminate against a young person in out-of-home care because of their sexual orientation,” said Currey Cook, senior attorney with Lambda Legal and director of the Youth in Out-of-Home Care Project. Many LGBTQ youth enter foster care after being rejected, neglected or abused by their biological families because of their identities. But instead of finding a safe haven, these young adults often continue to experience the same type of treatment in state care. In New York for example, researchers found that 78 percent of LGBTQ youth were removed or ran away from their foster care placements because of hostility toward their gender identity or sexual orientation, and 56 percent chose to live on the street rather than in foster care because they felt safer. “When you’re talking about children in foster care, you’re already talking about an incredibly vulnerable group,” said Christina Wilson Remlin, senior staff attorney at Children’s Rights, noting that a disproportionate number of children of color are in foster care, and that kids in care are more likely to be from low income backgrounds. She described a heartbreaking example of a young LGBTQ man who said he felt safer on the streets than in foster care. From left to right: Children’s Rights Board Chair Alan C. Myers, Executive Director Sandy Santana, Board Member Alice Rosenwald. “He had been through nearly 20 placements, and in every single place he was exposed to homophobia, physical and emotional abuse,” she told the audience. “He found himself homeless after hurricane Katrina, squatting in houses. The roofs were caving in and the floors were falling through. He had to light fires at night to keep the rats away. He said that this was the first place he felt safe.” What can be done to protect the LGBTQ community? For starters, Remlin and Cook say there is a critical need for federal protections in juvenile justice and foster care systems. They also emphasized the need for better training and policies. “These systems don’t require that the people who are working with these vulnerable kids espouse affirming supportive attitudes about this population,” said Remlin. “The system itself is silent and in being silent it condones discrimination, abuse and neglect of these young people.” “You would think that these foster care systems are taking these children in, protecting them, and helping them heal ... but instead kids are being tortured in the very systems meant to protect them,” said Sandy Santana, executive director of Children’s Rights. “This is a critical human rights issue. We are looking to shine a very bright light on systems that have discriminatory and non-affirming policies for LGBTQ youth.” Source: <http://www.childrensrights.org/advocates-address-harsh-reality-for-lgbtq-youth-in-state-care/>

‘Enough is enough’: Troubled Long Beach group home’s lease terminated The Bayfront Youth and Family Services building on Fountain Street in Long Beach, CA on Wednesday, September 23, 2015. After three years of problems with Bayfront Youth and Family Services in Long Beach, ChildNet, the landlord, will terminate its lease with the children’s home at the end of the year. (Photo by Scott Varley, Press-Telegram) By [Karen Robes Meeks](#), Long Beach Press Telegram Posted: 09/23/15, 6:25 PM PDT | Updated: 1 day ago [# Comments](#) A sign in front of the Bayfront Youth and Family Services building on Fountain Street in Long Beach, CA on Wednesday, September 23, 2015. After three years of problems with Bayfront Youth and Family Services in Long Beach, ChildNet, the landlord, will terminate its lease with the children’s home at the end of the year. (Photo by Scott Varley, Press-Telegram) After a three-year battle with residents, a group home housing 40 of the state’s most troubled youth will no longer wreak havoc on a Long Beach neighborhood. The director of ChildNet Youth and Family Services on Wednesday said that ChildNet will terminate its lease with Bayfront Youth and Family Services at 4151 E. Fountain St. at the end of the year, though Bayfront announced later in the day that its board of directors voted to cease operations at the Long Beach facility effective Oct. 31. Despite the changes Bayfront made to address the many issues — which included escaping teens, staff handling the youths roughly, trash strewn onto neighboring properties — nearby residents raised, it was “too little, too late,” said Kathy Hughes, the director of Long Beach-based [ChildNet](#). “It was a very difficult decision to make, but I had no choice,” Hughes said. “I felt like ChildNet needed to end this.” The announcement comes after the Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing released an inspection report that determined that “deficiencies were observed and cited” during an unannounced visit at Bayfront Sept. 16. The report cited a “lack of oversight and program accountability by management.” Bayfront, which has been operating in Long Beach since 1999, moved from 14th Street on the city’s West side into larger digs on Fountain Street in 2012. Bayfront is considered a Level 14 facility, which houses the state’s severely mental and behaviorally challenged youths, said Michael Weston, deputy director of Public Affairs and Outreach Programs for the California Department of Social Services. It’s among more than 50 facilities statewide that carry Level 14 status. Since relocating to the Traffic Circle area, Bayfront has been the subject of numerous neighborhood complaints and community meetings. Some said they were scared to leave their homes, according to ProPublica, which last month [detailed many of the troubles](#) at the Long Beach group home. In one instance, a woman in her email to the California Department of Social Services wrote that she and her neighbors on May 11 witnessed a girl run out of the home screaming for help. “She was then tackled to the ground by one of the Bayfront staff, a male staff member put her in a chokehold,” according to the email published by ProPublica. “The male staff member held her with such force that at times this little girl was literally lifted off the ground.” Hughes said she had not heard one complaint about the property until six to eight months ago. “I

figured Bayfront was being a great neighbor," she said. Community meetings involved residents, Bayfront, ChildNet, 4th District City Councilman Daryl Supernaw's office and the Long Beach Police Department. As a result, Los Angeles County suspended the admission of more youths to Bayfront, according to ProPublica. Bayfront officials said they made several changes to deal with the neighborhood's concerns, including the installation of cameras around the home and hiring a private security firm. Advertisement But Hughes said the decision to end Bayfront's lease early was a necessary one. "Enough is enough," she said. Evan Lamont, a spokesman for Bayfront, said it was too early to say where Bayfront would relocate, adding that the organization is hoping to find a somewhere close to schools and everyday services. "But an ideal location will be hard to find," Lamont said. Meanwhile, Lisa Campbell-Motton, Los Angeles County Probation director, said Wednesday that her office has been working closely with Bayfront to ensure a seamless transition of the handful of teenagers belonging to the county to other living situations. Supernaw said he was happy that he was able to bring everyone to the table to address the issue. "I'm so pleased that we got a resolution here," he said. Contact Karen Robes Meeks at 562-714-2088. Source: <http://www.pressestelegram.com/social-affairs/20150923/enough-is-enough-troubled-long-beach-group-home-bayfronts-lease-terminated>

September 22, 2015 New York Military Academy Closing After 126 Years, Boarding School Counts Donald Trump, John Gotti Jr. Among Alumni
Joanna Jaguar After 126 years, the New York Military Academy is closing its doors for good. The prestigious boarding school — which once counted the likes of Donald Trump, mob boss John Gotti Jr., famed movie director Francis Ford Coppola, and celebrated musical composer Stephen Sondheim among its ranks — has been facing financial troubles in recent year, as enrollment numbers have dropped from over 500 in the 1960s to less than 100 last year. In March, the military academy filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, but despite this, Anthony Desa, president of the board of trustees of the New York Military Academy, posted a letter on the academy's website on August 28, stating that school will indeed begin in September as usual. "On behalf of NYMA Board of Trustees, faculty, and staff, I am pleased to announce that NYMA's fall term will commence on September 14, 2015. After the great uncertainty of the last several months, this term will not only be special from the standpoint of developing future Cadets, it will be special for allowing NYMA's legacy as an exceptional preparatory academy to continue forward in great stride." The surprise for many, however, came when [the academy failed to open their doors last Monday](#), which left parents and students struggling to find alternative schools — a difficult feat for students who would have been seniors this year, Jane Opie — whose 18-year-old son was one of those students — told the New York Times. "It was an emotional rollercoaster. When we were supposed to be visiting colleges in the spring, we were visiting high schools. My son is angry. He's still angry." Business Insider reports that there are some who are still holding out hope that New York Military Academy alumnus [Donald Trump will be the school's guardian angel](#) by offering up the \$13 million the academy needs in order to pay creditors and remain open — though it's doubtful. According to the New York Times, in 2011, Trump was asked for \$7 million to aid the failing academy, but the presidential candidate deemed his former school a "failing enterprise." With the New York Military Academy closing, the school and the 113 acres it sits on are scheduled to hit the auction block at the end of September. The minimum bid is \$9.5 million, and the winning bidder has no obligation to maintain a school on the property. The original plan to sell the academy to a group of California-based investors fell through earlier this month when they failed come through with the promised \$1.3 million down payment. Do you think Trump has any obligation, moral or otherwise, to save the New York Military Academy — the school he once credited as being the source of his maturation as a teenager? Sound off below. [Image Credit: [New York Military Academy](#)] Source: <http://www.inquisitr.com/2439018/new-york-military-academy-closing-after-126-years-boarding-school-counts-donald-trump-john-gotti-jr-among-alumni/>

Foster Families Speak Out on Child Welfare System Public News Service - MI | September 2015 | Foster parents will be at the Michigan State Capitol today to share their experiences, and offer suggestions for improving the child welfare system with lawmakers. Credit: Rodney Campbell/Morguefile.
 September 22, 2015 LANSING, Mich. — It's welcome news for some of the state's most vulnerable residents, as advocates for foster children believe the political climate is favorable for making improvements to the child welfare system. Michele Corey, vice president with the independent policy organization Michigan's Children, says some members of the Legislature have been foster parents, or adopted children from the child welfare system. The organization has arranged for a day of testimony at the Capitol today about what the state is doing to support foster families. "We're talking about foster parents, adoptive parents, guardians in some circumstances and even the birth parents," says Corey. "A large number of kids that enter into the foster care system actually end up being reunified with their birth parents." At any given time, the state has roughly 13,000 children in the foster care system. Corey says one of the most common frustrations expressed by foster youth and parents is a lack of stability, as many children are uprooted and moved several times. She says targeted investments from the state could help. "That clearly has a lot to do with how foster parents are recruited, and how guardians are supported, she says. "How we're really doing as a state, in terms of finding more permanent situations for these kids." Since many foster children are vulnerable — having already suffered trauma, abuse or neglect — Corey says the policies and choices the state makes can speak volumes. "They are more at the whim of how we're investing, how we're making decisions, than other children," she says. "We need to learn from their experiences, and learn from the experiences of their caregivers." Testimony is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. in the Speaker's Library at the Capitol. Mona Shand, Public News Service - MI - See more at: <http://www.publicnewsservice.org/2015-09-22/childrens-issues/foster-families-speak-out-on-child-welfare-system/a48231-1#sthash.oA28VczJ.dpuf>

Report: More monitoring needed of children in foster care taking psychotropic drugs Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) Latest news and weather from Action News By [Catherine Varnum](#) A new report says children in foster care are taking psychotropic drugs, but caregivers are not following proper procedures. Those procedures were set in place after the suicide of a 7-year-old boy. Gabriel Myers was found hanging from a shower fixture in his foster home in south Florida in 2009. Gabriel's death changed the policy for the Florida Department of Children and Families when it comes to giving kids psychotropic drugs. Gabriel committed suicide in 2009 after taking two different medications intended for adults. A new report from the Florida Institute on Child Welfare at Florida State University said the state still needs better policies. [Latest News Headlines from Action News](#) According to the report, as of July, 11 percent of kids in foster care were taking at least one psychotropic drug. When 140 of those files were reviewed by the organization, in only 20 percent of the cases were proper procedures followed. The report also indicates an increase in children taking the drugs as mood stabilizers and anti-psychotics. Action News Jax has been looking into the number of kids in northeast Florida taking one or more of the drugs that include Prozac and Adderall. In Clay County, there are 24 kids, ages 8 to 17, taking the drugs. In Duval and Nassau counties, there are 119 kids, with 58 of them taking more than one drug. In St. Johns County, there were 20 kids, and there were four kids in Baker County. While the report said DCF has good policies in place, they say more monitoring needs to take place. Action News Jax has reached out to DCF for a comment on this report but has not yet heard back. - See more at: <http://www.actionnewsjax.com/news/news/local/report-more-monitoring-needed-children-foster-care/nnk8J/#sthash.hj4uGL4c.dpuf>

Police charge group home employee with rape of teenage resident Brittany Horn, The News Journal 6:27 p.m. EDT September 22, 2015 Joniequa Macklin (Photo: DELAWARE STATE POLICE) 247 CONNECT [4 TWEETLINKEDIN](#) 4 COMMENTEMAILMORE An employee of a Middletown-area group home was charged Saturday with repeatedly raping a 17-year-old resident of the home, state police said Tuesday. Police began investigating Joniequa Macklin, 32, of Lincoln, on Sept. 4 after receiving reports of a young man who voluntarily left the group home at about 9:40 p.m. and did not return, Master Cpl. Jeffrey R. Hale said. Through interviews, police learned that the boy may be involved in an inappropriate relationship with Macklin, believed to have started in July, Hale said. About two weeks later, police received another tip that the two may be in a home in the 100 block of Bright Way in Milford together and went to the home, he said. Macklin attempted to escape from the home in a vehicle but was taken into custody, Hale said. The 17-year-old also attempted to run away but came back shortly after, he added. Macklin was charged with 10 counts of rape, interference with custody, endangering the welfare of a child, reckless endangering, knowingly abusing a resident, sexual abuse of a child by a person of trust, continuous sexual abuse of a child and driving while suspended. Lacking \$86,600 secured bail, she was committed to Baylor Women's Correctional Institution near New Castle. The teenager was turned over to authorities from the Prince George's County Maryland Division of Social Services. Due to the nature of the incident, police said specific details will not be released to protect the teenager. Contact Brittany Horn at (302) 324-2771 or bhorn@delawareonline.com. Follow her on Twitter at [@brittnayhorn](#). Source: <http://www.delawareonline.com/story/news/crime/2015/09/22/police-charge-group-home-employee-rape-teenage-resident/72646078/>

Experts: Kinship Care Better Alternative To Foster Care Posted: Sep 21, 2015 3:10 PM PDT By Jenifer Abreu, Weekend Anchor/Reporter [Email Connect](#) [jabreu@wlio.com](#) Caught up in everyday life, it may be easy to take family for granted. One organization is spreading the importance of kinship. September is Kinship Appreciation Month and on Monday, the Allen County Children Services spoke at the Exchange Club's meeting. Kinship care is a better alternative

to foster care, according to experts. It's when children are placed with a relative or someone they already have a relationship with, like a family friend or a coach. In 2014, Allen County Children Services helped 71 families and one 118 children. "The children that are in kinship care experience a lot less difficulties, they are usually able to stay with family members who they know. It's a lot less traumatic for them. They are usually able to stay in the same school system," said Shelly Conrad, Family Stability Supervisor. If you'd like donate, or get involved with the kinship program, contact the Allen County Children Services. Source: <http://www.hometownstations.com/story/30082164/experts-kinship-care-better-alternative-to-foster-care>

Frustrated father pulls mentally disabled daughter from group home | Appnews | waaytv.com Frustrated father pulls mentally disabled daughter from group home [Christine Flores Christine Flores](#) Updated Sep 24, 2015 @ 9:00 Ross Pruett and his daughter, Nikki, playing in the yard. prev next Officials are threatening to decertify a dozen Restore Care Inc. group homes in Toney. The reason why, a father says he decided to take matters into his own hands. Family members who have loved ones in the facilities say they received a call from the state about relocation and very vague answers. Organizers say closing these homes would mean 35 residents could be relocated and 200 people could be without jobs. The claims stem from a review done by the Alabama Department of Mental Health that says the organization was in violation of state codes, citing safety concerns. Ross Pruett pulled his 19-year-old daughter, Nikki, from Restore Care Wednesday. Pruett says he's not upset with the facility. Instead, he's afraid of the unknown. Tuesday night Pruett says he received a call advising him the violations mean Nikki would be moving to a different home, in a different location, on an unknown day. But a phone call Wednesday only added to Pruett's stress. "I was contacted by a facility in Athens. They told me they were going to pick her up this afternoon. That is unacceptable," says Pruett. "I haven't toured the place. I haven't researched them." The state says they've filed an injunction against Restore Care, but they will not remove anyone from the group homes until a court date is set between the two parties. The Alabama Department of Mental Health says legal guardians can remove their loved ones from the facilities on their own free will. But, they would not give any further details on the violations. Source: http://www.waaytv.com/appnews/frustrated-father-pulls-mentally-disabled-daughter-from-group-home/article_edddd4c6-6263-11e5-9d1f-87b00bd79e80.html

Former employee: Clay group home for disabled adults a 'house of horrors' | jacksonville.com Former employee: Clay group home for disabled adults a 'house of horrors' By [Beth Reese Cravey](#) Wed, Sep 23, 2015 @ 6:04 pm | updated Wed, Sep 23, 2015 @ 8:56 pm [Photos](#) Provided by BASCA website/bascainc.org The state Agency for Disabled Persons has ordered the emergency closure of the Pine Forest group home in the Orange Park area because of "health and safety" issues. The group home, which houses six profoundly developmentally disabled men, is run by BASCA, an Orange Park-based nonprofit. The Fleming Island group home where reports of violence led to a state investigation and the home's emergency closure in August was a "house of horrors" for its profoundly disabled adult male residents, according to a former employee. Although the home on Pine Forest Drive was designated as "behavior-focused," staff members were not trained and licensed in how to handle the residents' sometimes aggressive behavior, said Claudette Barger, who worked there 18 months. Her early August departure stemmed in part from the group home closure — "I was told not to come back," she said — and from her own frustrations at management failing to address her concerns about conditions there. The lack of staff training, she said, led to violence on the part of at least one resident, who Barger worked with as a one-on-one day-care trainer. "That's why he was doing these things," she said Wednesday. "He was abused. ... They were getting hurt left and right. They had no behavior plan. They didn't know what to do with him." The Pine Forest location was one of four group homes run by BASCA, an Orange Park-based nonprofit that serves intellectually and developmentally disabled adults. The closure was rescinded Monday under a settlement with the state Agency for Persons with Disabilities. BASCA attorney Ashton Scott, who has acted as spokesman for the nonprofit during the investigation, said staff at the group home had standard training and were scheduled to receive additional behavior training when the closure occurred. He denied that any resident became aggressive or was hurt because of lack of staff training. He said Pine Forest would be reopened shortly, with the additional training and monitoring mandated in the settlement. Barger said the 31-year-old resident who became violent was autistic, but intelligent. "He knew what he needed," she said. "If he had cancer and was denied services ... people would be outraged." Also, there was no indoor access to — or air conditioning in — the bathroom at the nearby church space where the Pine Forest residents received life-skills training. Scott said there was a covered walkway to the bathroom. Teri Herzog, whose grandson lived at Pine Forest until it closed, echoed Barger's complaints about the lack of staff training. Her 26-year-old grandson, who is autistic, never attacked anyone else at the group home, she said, but hurt himself and did property damage. "Nobody listened, until now," she said. When she raised concerns with John Cone, BASCA's founder and executive director, she got nowhere. "Anytime you didn't agree with him, he would say, 'Leave,'" she said. BASCA also received state money for her grandson to receive a one-on-one day-care trainer, but that help was never provided, she said. "They didn't do what they were supposed to do," she said. "I am never going back to that place. ... It was a nightmare." Her grandson is now living in a group home run by another agency. The staff are properly trained and he is happy, she said. Scott said BASCA met or exceeded staff requirements, including one-on-one assistance, and "appropriately" used all state funding. Barger and Herzog said they decided to go public with their stories — and the residents' — after learning the details of the settlement agreement. The agreement requires more training and monitoring for BASCA personnel, among other things, but allows Cone to remain on staff. He will be barred from direct management responsibility, access to the group homes or have direct contact with the people who live there — other than his own disabled son. Instead, Cone will focus on program development and fundraising. The group home access restrictions also apply to one of Cone's top staffers, Jonnie Scott. But Barger, who discussed her concerns with state staff Tuesday, said leaving Cone on staff was a mistake, given his history. The state order that initially closed Pine Forest on Aug. 7 stemmed from complaints about how BASCA and Cone handled repeated violence by the particular resident toward other residents and staff members. Staff were told not to report the incidents to the state or call 911, but to call Cone, who was injured himself when he attempted to restrain the violent resident, according to the order. Reports that were prepared about those and other incidents were altered or not filed at all, according to the order. Not so, said Scott. "Allegations of incident report violations have already been raised by, investigated by and settled with the APD [Agency for Persons with Disabilities]. There has been no finding that such occurred, no admission that such occurred, and BASCA denies any violation occurred in regard to incident reports," he said. BASCA did not object to the organizational restructuring, which was already "occurring in practice," according to a statement from the nonprofit. BASCA objected to the group-home access restrictions on Cone but acquiesced to "facilitate" a settlement, according to the statement. "It is a sacrifice that Mr. Cone encouraged BASCA to accept, despite BASCA's knowledge that the alleged violations ... were unsubstantiated," it said. BASCA did not object to training and monitoring mandated in the settlement. "Additional training is always beneficial and monitoring, while unnecessary, does not hamper BASCA's mission," according to the statement. The settlement not only lifted the Pine Forest closure order, but also the planned termination of BASCA's Medicaid waiver, which allows providers to be reimbursed by Medicaid for their services. A separate investigation by the Clay County Sheriff's Office remains under way. BASCA was founded in 1994 as Baptist Association for Special Children and Adults and now goes by the acronym. Beth Reese Cravey: (904) 359-4109 Source: <http://jacksonville.com/news/metro/2015-09-23/story/former-employee-clay-group-home-disabled-adults-house-horrors-residents>

California prison advocates say suicide checks are inhumane treatment Since August, inmates at Pelican Bay state prison say they have been awoken every half hour by guards in a practice that amounts to sleep deprivation. Former prisoners carry a sign during a rally in Oakland, California, earlier this month. Photograph: Robert Galbraith/Reuters Halima Kazem in San Francisco Friday 25 September 2015 11:52 EDT Last modified on Friday 25 September 2015 12:05 EDT Less than a month after inmates at a California maximum security prison reached [a landmark settlement to curb decades-long solitary confinement](#), inmates and their advocates are protesting against another new policy that they say is subjecting them to inhumane treatment. Since August, inmates at Pelican Bay state prison say they have been awoken every half-hour by prison guards in a practice that amounts to sleep deprivation. The policy, known as security and welfare checks, requires prison guards to check on inmates in segregated housing, including solitary confinement cells, every 30 minutes to make sure they are not injuring themselves or trying to kill themselves. A CDCR spokesperson said the checks are based on a 1995 court order in a class action lawsuit (Coleman v Brown) between a group of prisoners with severe mental disorders and the state of [California](#), which determined that CDCR wasn't providing adequate care to prisoners with mental illness. Prison officials say the suicide checks started in other prisons in 2006 but were implemented less than two months ago on 3 August at the Pelican Bay prison in northern California. The timing has raised the ire of inmates and their families, occurring a month before advocates reached the settlement to curb solitary confinement measures that sparked numerous hunger strikes and national campaigns to end a practice [many consider inhumane](#). "Being in the SHU [secure housing unit] is hard as it is ... being by yourself and isolated, but it's torture when you can't sleep because of the nonstop banging of the metal doors, stomping by the guards, buzzers, and the guards shining a flashlight in your eyes two times an hour," said Akili Mims, a Los Angeles resident who was released from Pelican Bay's SHU on 5 September, more than a month after the checks were implemented. Inmates in the SHU, otherwise known as solitary confinement, spend 22-23 hours in a windowless 8ft by 10ft concrete room, and are denied all physical contact with visitors, phone calls, and

educational and recreational programs. There about 2,700 inmates currently in Pelican Bay, about 1,200 in the SHU and another 350 in other segregated and psychiatric units. [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Pinterest](#) A cell in the secure housing unit of Pelican Bay state prison in Crescent City, California. Photograph: Reuters

Terry Thornton, a spokeswoman for the CDCR said the agency received complaints from Pelican Bay prisoners as soon as the checks started and that the department has provided ear plugs for the inmates and softer shoes for the guards so they make less noise going up and down prison stairs. "I visited my son in the Pelican Bay SHU on 12 September and he is going crazy from not being able to sleep. I've never seen him like this. He couldn't think and he fell asleep while I was talking with him from across the glass partition," said Dolores Canales, whose 38-year-old son John Martinez has been in the Pelican Bay SHU since 2011 for allegedly being affiliated with a gang. Canales and a group of about 20 other protesters gathered in front of the Pelican Bay prison on Wednesday with banners reading: "Sleep deprivation is Torture." Through his attorneys, Martinez has written to CDCR leadership saying that the checks are in violation of his rights, under the US constitution's eighth amendment, which bans cruel and unusual punishment. "Our client is being treated like a prisoner of war, in a torture interrogation facility, when he is not allowed to sleep for more than 30 minutes at one time," says a letter from Martinez's attorney representative, Deborah Cain, to the CDCR chief ombudsman, Sara Malone, on 28 August. Canales says that Martinez is serving time for second-degree murder, which he was convicted of more than 20 years ago. He has also served 10 years in the SHU in the California state prison in Corcoran, central California. Steven Fama a staff attorney at the Prison Law Office, said the court ruling, *Coleman v Brown*, doesn't specifically order CDCR to do the checks and that it is up to CDCR what kind of suicide monitoring system they develop. Fama said he and other attorneys in his office are concerned about the health of the Pelican Bay prisoners affected by the checks. In a 31 August email to CDCR leadership, attorneys at the Prison Law Office said that they "received multiple credible reports from multiple prisoners that custody officers in the SHU are intentionally awakening each and every prisoner in the SHU every 30 minutes through not only aggressive use of the Guard One wand system and excessive stomping/key jingling noise throughout the rounding, but also by repeatedly slamming the door to the Pod, and shining their flashlights into every prisoner's eyes". "Once they [the guards] finish one round they have to start another. They hate it and so they take it out on the prisoners," said Mims. Canales and other prison rights advocates say the implementation of the checks is not a coincidence. "The case that this policy is based on is from 2006 but I think it is the prison system retaliating against prisoners in solitary confinement who supported the Ashkar case," said Canales, the mother of prisoner John Martinez. Canales is referring to the legal settlement on 1 September that ended the state's ability to indefinitely lock up prisoners in solitary because of their "status" – having been labelled as gang members or associates of gangs. The new system will only allow prisoners to be placed in solitary for set terms if they have committed a serious crime in prison or are proven to be physical threats to other prisoners. Thornton says the new checks are not connected to the Ashkar settlement but didn't answer questions about why the checks started at the Pelican Bay SHU almost nine years after the court order was issued. Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/sep/25/california-prison-suicide-checks-inhumane-treatment> (HEAL NOTE: This practice is equally inhumane when done in "treatment" settings, including youth "treatment" settings.)

Buffalo may consider boarding schools By [Mike Desmond](#) • Sep 28, 2015 Share [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Google+](#) [Email](#) The Buffalo School Board is fighting over boarding schools for the most fragile children and this time the superintendent is interested. Listen Listening... 0:00 / 0:55 Mike Desmond reports Kriner Cash supported the idea when Memphis superintendent. School Board Member Carl Paladino has long pushed for boarding schools, citing the SEED schools in Washington and some other public examples. The idea hasn't gone far in the past but he's bringing it up again. City Schools Superintendent Kriner Cash cites the potential value to homeless students and the availability of vacant schoolhouses for space. Buffalo Schools Superintendent Dr. Kriner Cash. Credit WBFO News file photo Paladino said boarding offers an option to many students who have few options for a better life. "Many of the students in the BPS are from highly at-risk homes or are characterized as homeless and statistics bear out that without appropriate guidance, nutrition, development of study habits and exercise from a young age, at-risk students are not given a fair opportunity for education and become doomed to failed lives," Paladino said. Cash has agreed to study how much need there is here for a boarding school. The proposal is strongly opposed by some members of the school board and has been strongly opposed in the past. Source: <http://news.wbfo.org/post/buffalo-may-consider-boarding-schools#stream/0> [HEAL NOTE: This is a huge problem. Instead of supporting families and keeping families together, the public schools are considering ripping children from their families entirely. This is unacceptable.]

For private foster agencies, a new layer of scrutiny [Brett Kelman](#), The Desert Sun 9 a.m. PDT September 28, 2015 Adina, a 23-month-old Imperial County girl, poses for this undated photo. Adina died in privatized foster care in December 2014. (Photo: Submitted photo) 339 CONNECT [16 TWEETLINKEDIN](#) 4 COMMENTEMAILMORE Adina, a 23-month-old girl, lay on the floor in the darkened bedroom of a Calexico home, alone. It was Dec. 9, and she was slipping away as blood pooled inside her skull, the result of a powerful blow to her forehead. Two days later, Adina was declared dead at a hospital in San Diego. A coroner's report said she may have bashed her head on the floor while jumping between two beds in the bedroom, but officials couldn't be certain. There were no witnesses and no proof. One fact was clear, however. Adina's death was a dramatic failure of the foster system that has grown to depend heavily on privatized care. A rambunctious toddler, who had a habit of jumping on furniture, was left unsupervised in a room with two beds. After Adina was injured, her foster parents called 911, then hung up, then didn't call back for nine minutes. And finally, although foster parents are required to know CPR, law enforcement documents say these parents didn't know the basics. "They were supposed to keep my granddaughter safe, and they failed," said Scott Faris, 46, Adina's grandfather. "The county is ultimately responsible for the child, who is in their care, whether they hand it off or do it themselves." Adina died in the hands of Alba Care Services, a nonprofit corporation that runs about two dozen foster homes spread throughout Riverside and Imperial counties. Over the last 30 years, corporations like Alba — called Foster Family Agencies, or FFAs — have grown to eclipse California's public-run foster care, creating a \$300 million industry. For some, that unbridled growth has sparked concerns about foster home standards and the perils of profiteering in foster care. California lawmakers responded this month with unanimous support for increased standards in the private foster system. A new bill, which is likely to become a new law, will require all foster family agencies to seek accreditation by 2017. [DESERT SUN They stumbled upon a child porn ring, then did nothing](#) This mandate will bring a wave of change to Riverside County, where only 6 of 30 existing FFAs are accredited. Over the next 15 months, these agencies will need to either open their doors to accreditors — who will scrutinize their recruiting, training and oversight procedures — or close their doors for good. Ideally, the process will weed out any substandard or unscrupulous agencies, according to proponents of the bill. "I suspect there will be some agencies that just roll over and say – 'I'm not going to do this anymore,'" said Carroll Schroeder, executive director of the California Alliance of Child and Family Services, a statewide trade association that accepts FFAs as members, but only if they are accredited. "Accreditation is a little bit like getting an audit. You can try to cheat on it, but you can't cheat on it for very long," Schroeder added. The new legislation is AB 403, a far-reaching bill that seeks to reform California foster care on several fronts. Gov. Jerry Brown hasn't taken a public stance on the bill, but even if he were to veto it, lawmakers already have more than enough votes to override the veto. Under the proposed law, FFAs must receive accreditation from one of several accrediting companies, chosen by the state. FFAs that can't meet the 2017 deadline can seek a two-year extension. But, even with that leeway, accreditation will be a difficult hurdle for FFAs, said Sandra Austin, the founder of a local foster agency. Buy Photo Sandra Austin is the CEO of Family Health and Support Network, a foster family agency in Palm Desert. She believes that foster reform is necessarily, but worries that mandated accreditation will be too expensive for some agencies. (Photo: Jay Calderon/The Desert Sun) Austin is the CEO of Family Health and Support Network in Palm Desert that began in 2004 and runs 39 foster homes in Riverside, San Bernardino and Orange counties. Austin believes wholeheartedly that reform is needed to improve overall quality of foster care, but worries the accreditation process will be too pricey and too cumbersome for some smaller agencies. The law designed to squeeze out substandard caregivers might inadvertently shut down some first-rate ones too, Austin said. "I believe in setting standards," Austin said. "But it would be really cool if the state or the county would offer some assistance with the accreditation process and the cost." Accreditation costs vary based on the size of each individual FFA. However, even for smaller agencies, the fees amount to thousands of dollars per year. Although AB 403 has been widely supported, not everyone is convinced the accreditation mandate will make a huge difference. Audrey Karen Brandon, 19, a former Riverside County foster kid, worried that accreditation would become just another bureaucratic box to check. Eleven years ago, Brandon spent a year in private foster care in Colorado, a state that uses FFAs just like California. Sometimes her foster mother would punish her by making her pull cacti with her bare hands. Sometimes she was made to sleep outdoors. Would accreditors have caught that? Maybe, but Brandon has her doubts. "I feel like there is pretty much a way out of anything," she said. "If somebody goes to get a smog check, they can get it written off if they know the right person. I really don't think this would be any different." "It's worth a shot, but I don't think it's a guarantee it's going to improve anything." Buy Photo The entrance to a Riverside County Department of Public Social Services building in Rubidoux. (Photo: Brett Kelman, The Desert Sun) 'Money-makers' California's foster family agencies first boomed during the crack epidemic of the late '80s, which overwhelmed the existing public foster system. Privatized foster care has continued to grow since

then, and today the state has about 250 of these agencies — plus another 170 “sub-agencies” — licensed by the state. Together, these agencies house a majority of California foster children who are not placed with a relative or guardian. In Riverside County, there are more than 1,500 children in FFA homes, and they outnumber the kids in traditional foster homes five to one. In return for housing all those children, the FFAs receive more than \$30 million per year from the county. Those numbers are no surprise to Silvia Signoret, a longtime Palm Springs foster parent who leads For the Children, a local foster parent support group. Signoret said the public and private foster systems are both capable of producing good and bad homes, but the FFAs are much better at recruiting than their public counterparts. The Coachella Valley faces a constant shortage of foster parents, so it is no wonder that many kids — and so much money — go to FFAs. “The FFAs are money-makers,” Signoret said. “But they have to exist because the county does such a poor job of recruiting and keeping foster parents.” The Riverside County Department of Public Social Services said in a written statement that it has an ongoing need for foster parents, and recently tapped state funding to prepare a countywide recruiting plan. SOURCE: UC Berkeley data, as of April 1 CHART: Robert Hopwood, The Desert Sun Foster care, by the numbers There are more than 4,500 children in Riverside County foster care. About 1,500 of those kids have been placed with relatives, who were licensed as foster parents. Of the rest, half are in privatized care. SOURCE: UC Berkeley data, as of April 1 CHART: Robert Hopwood, The Desert Sun Foster care, by the numbers There are more than 4,500 children in Riverside County foster care. About 1,500 of those kids have been placed with relatives, who were licensed as foster parents. Of the rest, half are in privatized care. The plan involves new public service announcements, social media and prominent local officials, the agency said. “We are constantly recruiting foster and adoptive homes, because we can never have too many and we sometimes lose foster families who end up adopting a child in their care,” the statement said. “In those instances, it is still a positive outcome, because a child has a permanent family.” In a traditional foster care system, a parent who wants to help foster kids is first trained, vetted and licensed by either the California Department of Social Services, or in some cases, a county subsidiary agency. Once a foster parent is licensed, a county social worker will place children in the home as necessary. Parents receive a monthly stipend of \$688 to \$859, depending on the age of the child. In the privatized system, parents are not licensed by the state but are instead recruited and “certified” by their individual FFAs. The agencies also employ their own social workers, who place children and oversee care. In return, the county gives the FFA a larger stipend, between \$1,789 and \$2,060 per child, each month. Half of that money is passed on to foster parents, but the rest stays with the FFA, paying for social workers and administrators. Of the FFAs that operate in Riverside County, at least one third pay their CEOs a salary of \$150,000 or more, according to tax filings reviewed by The Desert Sun. In the eyes of critics, this system is ripe for abuse. Because FFA revenue is based entirely on foster stipends, these organizations have a business incentive to take as many children as possible. Potentially, an unprincipled FFA could lower its recruiting standards so it could hire more foster parents, take more foster children and collect more revenue. [DESERT SUN They stumbled upon a child porn ring, then did nothing](#) “To me, it just seems like asking for trouble, because they have, by definition, a need to stay in business,” said Gerald Singleton, a civil rights attorney who specializes in cases of maltreatment in foster care. Singleton is representing Adina’s family in a lawsuit against Alba Care Services and Imperial County. Alba CEO Antonio Romero declined to comment on the death or the lawsuit. In court, Alba has denied all wrongdoing and cited a dozen legal defenses. Singleton argues that Adina’s death is just one example of the dangers of injecting profitability into foster care. But others say the issue isn’t that simple, and that lawsuits like the one against Alba show exactly why. Jill Duerr Berrick, a foster care expert at UC Berkeley, said that FFAs are liable for the parents they recruit, so they have a business incentive to raise standards, not lower them. Any agency that cuts corners to recruit more parents risks losing far more in the courts than it stands to gain in county stipends, Berrick said. “Applying the standard economic model to this field doesn’t always work,” Berrick said. “Because every time you expand the number of service providers, even if it expanded your revenue, it also expanded your liability.” Reporter Barrett Newkirk contributed to this story. Reporter Brett Kelman can be reached by phone at (760) 778-4642, by email at brett.kelman@desertsun.com, or on Twitter @TDSbrettkelman. Source: <http://www.desertsun.com/story/news/2015/09/27/private-foster-agencies-new-layer-scrutiny/72945626/>

Federal judge orders ex-charter school director in SC to prison – now | The State Federal judge orders ex-charter school director in SC to prison – now Bishopville educator to go to minimum security prison known as “Camp Cupcake” Former educator wanted to stay out of prison while case is appealed but must report on Tuesday Jury found she embezzled \$1.5 million in years-long scheme that robbed poor children Benita Dinkins-Robinson File photo/The State i Benita Dinkins-Robinson File photo/The State By John Monk jmonk@thestate.com [LinkedIn](#) [Google+](#) [Pinterest](#) [Reddit](#) [Print](#) [Order Reprint of this Story](#) COLUMBIA Federal Judge Terry Wooten has ordered former Lee County charter school director Benita Dinkins-Robinson to report to prison Tuesday to start a three-and-a-half year sentence. Wooten’s order likely will end a weeks-long effort by Dinkins-Robinson, 40, a mother of two school-age children, to stay out of prison. Instead, the former Bishopville public charter school director is to report to Alderson Federal Prison Camp in Alderson, W. Va. That prison was chosen by the federal Bureau of Prisons as the best facility for her. The prison is a minimum security facility housing some 1,200 female inmates, most of whom are serving time for non-violent offenses. Financial fraudster Martha Stewart served time there in the early 2000s. It has no barbed wire fences, and some have nicknamed it, “Camp Cupcake.” After a trial in March in Columbia, a federal jury found Dinkins-Robinson guilty of two counts of embezzling government funds. In August, after hearing FBI and government prosecutors present evidence that the total she took was some \$1.5 million, Wooten sentenced her to 42 months in prison. In orders last week with the U.S. Clerk of Court, Wooten rejected Dinkins-Robinson’s allegation of jury misconduct during the trial and rejected her bid to stay out of prison while her case is appealed to the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals. “The defendant is directed to report to Federal Prison Camp Alderson on (Tuesday),” Wooten ruled. During Dinkins-Robinson’s nine-hour sentencing hearing in August, Wooten indicated he had little patience with her arguments for a light sentence. “She was supposed to help children who were needy, children who had a lot to gain from a good education,” Wooten said before pronouncing her sentence. Stressing the children were low-income, Wooten said, “This is a very serious matter.” Wooten has a record of giving prison time to public officials who betray the public trust. Earlier this year, he rejected a proposed plea deal that would have spared former Lexington County Sheriff James Metts a prison sentence and ordered Metts to spend time behind bars. Metts had been convicted of bribery in a scheme to let illegal Mexican immigrants out of the Lexington County jail. During Dinkins-Robinson’s March trial and August sentencing hearing, FBI case agent Julie Bitzell testified about how the former educator siphoned some \$1.5 million in federal funds from the public school account and transferred it to corporations she set up and then to her own retirement accounts. She also spent the money on transactions at places like Harrah’s Hotel and Casino, Victoria’s Secret and Carnival Cruise Lines, the FBI investigation showed. Dinkins-Robinson had refused repeated FBI requests to produce invoices to show how she spent money, telling the FBI that her companies were private businesses and she didn’t have to tell federal investigators what she did with the money, Bitzell testified at the trial and hearing. The FBI’s investigation covered five years of spending at the school, from about 2007-12, during which time it received more than \$5 million in state and federal funds. Dinkins-Robinson’s case focused attention on the lack of financial scrutiny and oversight at the state’s charter schools, which were established as a way to give parents more choice. Dinkins-Robinson was able to move millions in public money around with little accountability. Her school in Bishopville, the Mary Dinkins Academy, which later moved to Sumter County, was set up to help disadvantaged children. The federal money that Dinkins-Robinson stole came from the U.S. Department of Agriculture children’s nutrition programs and U.S. Department of Education funds, evidence showed. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Winston Holliday, who told the judge that Dinkins-Robinson was a “money launderer,” and Benjamin Gardner prosecuted the case. Lawyers for Dinkins-Robinson were Eleazer Carter and Johnny Watson, both of Columbia. Read more here: <http://www.thestate.com/news/local/crime/article36777144.html#storylink=cpy>

It will take more than smartphones to stop boarding school children being damaged A new claim that modern technology means boarding pupils no longer feel cut off from their parents ignores the deep and lasting effects of institutionalised abandonment Sending young children off to boarding school is a peculiarly British habit that can cause long-term damage among ‘survivors’. Photograph: Hero Images/Corbis Nick Duffell Tuesday 29 September 2015 12.03 EDT Last modified on Tuesday 29 September 2015 19.03 EDT Two things are infinite, suggested Einstein: the universe and mankind’s stupidity. Should we survive as a species, we will surely look back with horror on how we sanctioned the abandonment of children in boarding schools. We may wish we had outlawed publicity stunts such as [an article in the Telegraph this week](#) celebrating the fact that: “Today’s boarders are no longer cut off from their overprotective parents.” This is apparently due to the smartphone, which has “killed the ‘traditional’ boarding schools’ experience”, according to an “expert” who happens to be [Hilary Moriarty](#), former director and marketing guru of the Boarding Schools Association. Moriarty seems unaware of the evidence: not one child development theory supports the British habit of sending children away from their homes. Leading neuroscientists and attachment theorists now conclude that the trauma of early boarding has severe repercussions in adult family life; the publisher Routledge has commissioned two new books on psychotherapy with ex-boarders in the past two years, as demand for informed therapeutic treatment outstrips supply. This is to say nothing of what damage boarding does

within families, or that the rise of Nicola Sturgeon and Jeremy Corbyn is not unconnected to many people's despair at the politics of the [public-school clique](#) led by David Cameron and Boris Johnson. If you have to disown your vulnerability to survive as a boarder, you will be very unlikely to understand vulnerability in others. Moriarty declares: "Boarding schools have counsellors, house staff and the latest technologies." Ever since I wrote an article, 25 years ago, explaining why I began clinical work with what I called Boarding School Survivors, I still receive daily letters, mostly from ex-boarders relieved to know they were not alone in suffering, but too ashamed of their social privilege to complain. Parents also write to me. Last year, a distressed mother of a smartphone-equipped 13-year-old wrote: "Everyone is saying, 'He'll get over it, he needs to detach,' but it's been six weeks and he's getting worse, not better. I'm receiving emails and texts of great distress and he says I've just left him, abandoned him, while the staff are telling me to ignore his calls and only speak to him once a day for five minutes, then hang up on him." I also hear from despairing school counsellors. "As with a number of other children I have seen, I question [the value of] helping 'A' to cope and develop defences," wrote one. It is this adaptation to institutionalised abandonment that amputates feeling and empathy, which keeps the whole British habit going. Perhaps one day we'll look back and feel sad. The writer is a psychotherapist and psychohistorian. He founded [Boarding School Survivors](#) in 1990 and is the author of [Wounded Leaders: British Elitism and the Entitlement Illusion – a Psychohistory](#) (Lone Arrow Press, 2014). Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/science/shortcuts/2015/sep/29/take-more-than-smartphones-stop-boarding-school-children-being-damaged>

Haley, DSS chief agree to increase protections for children in foster care By [Glenn Smith](#) and [Jennifer Berry Hawes](#) Sep 29 2015 1:41 pm Sep 29 8:17 pm DSS Director Susan Alford x Gov. Nikki Haley and the state Department of Social Services' director have agreed to examine South Carolina's approach to housing foster children and adopt workload limits for caseworkers in response to a class-action lawsuit that alleges "dangerous deficiencies" in the system. U.S. District Judge Richard Gergel on Monday signed an interim consent agreement that will launch changes aimed at better protecting foster children in DSS care. It does not end the lawsuit. PDF [MICHELLE H. vs HALEY](#) PDF [Final Signed Interim Relief](#) Full settlement talks continue to address an array of critical shortcomings outlined in the federal lawsuit, said Christina Remlin, senior staff attorney for Children's Rights, one of the advocacy groups that filed the civil rights lawsuit in Charleston nine months ago. "This is a fundamental first step in reforming the system to make it more safe for vulnerable children in South Carolina," Remlin said. "This should have a really big impact." The lawsuit was filed on behalf of 11 children the advocacy groups say were abused, overmedicated with powerful prescriptions, separated from their siblings, kept in solitary confinement and fed moldy or expired food, according to court documents. The lawsuit also contends the Department of Social Services has failed to maintain an adequate number of foster homes for children in the system, that DSS caseworkers have been assigned too many cases to manage and that children enrolled in foster care have not been receiving the basic health care that they need. Haley, DSS Chief Susan Alford and attorneys for the children agreed to the following changes: DSS will conduct a study to determine how many children agency caseworkers can handle and adopt workload limits for those workers. The agency agreed to consider national standards in adopting those limits, which will apply to all workers and supervisors. The agreement doesn't address how the agency would pay for additional caseworkers. Within 60 days, DSS will come up with a plan to phase out placing children ages 6 and under in non-family group homes and treatment centers. DSS also will phase out the use of hotels, motels and DSS offices for housing foster children overnight. DSS will no longer recommend that children remain in juvenile detention simply because workers can't find foster care placement for them. A DSS spokeswoman said that Alford has been working to strengthen the child welfare system since she came into her post. The director has hired 177 more case workers and 67 caseworker assistants, aggressively recruited for those positions, increased caseworkers' salaries, restructured the child welfare division, streamlined the foster home licensing process and improved the support structure for existing foster homes, DSS spokeswoman Marilyn Matheus said. "DSS anticipates that the agreed-upon provisions of the interim relief agreement will continue this forward momentum, and DSS is hopeful that it can continue to work towards a full resolution of the lawsuit," Matheus said in a statement. Earlier this year, The Post and Courier documented a number of problems with the state's foster care system in its series ["Warehousing our Children."](#) The series cited federal data that shows South Carolina sends its youngest foster children into group homes and institutions at a much higher rate than any other state in the country. Firsthand accounts from former foster children and group home employees indicate some young people are neglected, beaten and molested in these facilities even as the outcomes of investigations into such allegations are kept secret. Meanwhile, state taxpayers spend millions of dollars a year on these facilities but have no way to evaluate which ones keep children safe because state laws shield the homes from public scrutiny. The federal lawsuit contains a number of disturbing stories alleging ill treatment of foster children. Among them: A girl named "Michelle H." was repeatedly beaten with a belt by her foster mother in Beaufort. "Ava," who was placed in the Jenkins Facility in Charleston, was deprived of food and feminine hygiene products. Also, "a maintenance worker asked Ava to take nude pictures of herself and provide them to him. Ava reported this to Jenkins staff but no action was taken." A 13-year-old named "Sammy V." was inappropriately touched by another resident after he was placed at New Beginnings of Charleston, two hours away from his biological family. "Andrew R." received no mental health evaluation at Epworth Children's Home in Richland County, but was placed on "a powerful psychotropic medication for the first time in his life. The medication is commonly prescribed to treat bipolar disorder; yet Andrew had never been (and has never been) diagnosed with bipolar disorder." According to federal data cited in the lawsuit, more than 3,000 children are enrolled in the state's foster care system. "We are talking about some of the most vulnerable children in the entire state," Remlin said. "This (interim agreement) gets the ball rolling on some real fundamental needs." The lawsuit was filed by Children's Rights, the South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center and attorney Matthew T. Richardson. Although critical issues remain unaddressed in Monday's agreement, including an alleged lack of medical assessments and treatment for foster children, Remlin applauded DSS for taking a meaningful first step. "I'm tremendously optimistic we will be able to reach agreement on this," Remlin said. Source: <http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20150929/PC16/150929268>

Arrest Warrant Issued for Woman Working at Group Home By: [Vicky Nguyen](#) - [Email](#) Posted: Tue 2:29 PM, Sep 29, 2015 By: [Vicky Nguyen](#) - [Email](#) [Home](#) / [Headlines List](#) / Article An arrest warrant was issued for a Bismarck woman accused of raping a 15-year-old boy who lives in a group home where she works. Twenty-four-year-old Ethmonia Barclay was charged with felony corruption of a minor in South Central District Court. The victim told Bismarck police he was raped by Barclay several times. A detective contacted her about the case, but she declined to comment. A judge signed a warrant for her arrest on Monday, but she still hasn't turned herself in. Barclay could receive up to five years in prison and be required to register as a sex offender. Source: <http://www.kfyrvtv.com/home/headlines/Arrest-Warrant-Issued-for-Woman-Working-at-Group-Home-329977651.html>

Man charged with sexually assaulting girls in foster care YELLOWSTONE COUNTY Text Size: [Small](#) [Text](#) [Medium](#) [Text](#) [Large](#) [Text](#) [Print](#) BILLINGS, Mont. - A 68-year-old Billings man is charged with sexually assaulting two girls who are in foster care. Gary Eugene Smith was charged Monday with sexual intercourse without consent and two counts of sexual assault against the girls, ages 15 and 14. He did not enter a plea. Justice of the Peace Pro Tempore Lance Lundvall set Smith's bail at \$75,000. Smith remained jailed on Tuesday. Charging documents say the girls were staying with Smith and his wife on Friday while their primary foster parents had a free weekend. Smith's wife was getting ready for bed when she heard one of the girls calling for her. They said Smith touched them inappropriately. Court records say Smith's wife told officers that he said he'd done something he wasn't supposed to do. Source: <http://www.nbcmontana.com/news/Man-charged-with-sexually-assaulting-girls-in-foster-care/35562882>

Oregon lawmakers ask scathing questions about foster kids 1 / 6 Oregon foster care dashboard A key slide on foster care safety in the Department of Human Services' May 2015 performance "dashboard" was last updated with data from June 2011. [Denis C. Theriault](#) | [The Oregonian/OregonLive](#) Print [Email](#) By [Denis C. Theriault](#) | [The Oregonian/OregonLive](#) The Oregonian Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#) on September 30, 2015 at 5:06 AM, updated September 30, 2015 at 5:08 AM 2015 Oregon Legislature SALEM — Oregon lawmakers have begun casting a critical eye on the state's foster care system, pressing officials to defend their ability to protect thousands of vulnerable children. The issue flared this week when the Senate's human services committee confronted the Department of Human Services over accusations that a publicly funded foster care agency abused or neglected children with little apparent oversight from state officials. Those accusations — that the agency denied food and clean bedding, used improper force, rewrote reports, tolerated mold and rodents — have prompted an internal review as well as scathing questions from lawmakers who worry children served by other providers might be experiencing similar treatment. More hearings are planned before February's legislative session. The committee's chair, Sen. [Sara Gelser](#), D-Corvallis, said her concerns have been building for months. In June, The Oregonian/OregonLive found the department had [struggled to report](#) a basic means of keeping children safe: monthly visits from caseworkers charged with checking for signs of abuse. "Every child has the same right to safety, security and dignity," Gelser said in an interview, making clear her fears stretch beyond one provider's alleged misconduct. "How do we make sure that whatever safeguards failed in one place aren't failing someplace else?" For now, scrutiny is being heaped on Northeast Portland's Give Us This Day, which continued to take in foster children despite

deep financial problems, reports of abuse and a state Department of Justice investigation over its nonprofit status. Willamette Week [detailed](#) the agency's struggles this month. State officials stopped referring children to Give Us This Day this month, citing the justice department's investigation. On Monday, Gelser invited a woman identified as a former employee, Rachel Rosas, to testify. Rosas offered fresh accusations that left lawmakers and Department of Human Services employees stunned. Rosas accused Give Us This Day staffers of doctoring time sheets and rewriting incident reports to cover up potentially abusive conduct. She said children and workers at one group home dealt with rats, flies and mold. Groceries and grooming products sometimes were lacking. Mats, without clean sheets, filled in for beds. She said the agency added cameras to bedrooms to monitor employees' use of force. But some rooms, she said, had the cameras taped over. Rosas said state workers typically dropped children off without venturing past the home's nicely renovated intake area. And if employees complained, Rosas said, managers threatened to fire them. "You've painted a pretty dismal condition for this building," said Sen. [Alan Olsen](#), R-Canby. "Why wasn't DHS able to see through this smokescreen?" Rosas replied: "The problem is people aren't coming around to ask questions. This program had been in question before, but somehow they still keep getting clients." Give Us This Day's director, Mary Holden, said she wasn't invited to the hearing and didn't remember Rosas working for her. "Every child has the same right to safety, security and dignity. How do we make sure that whatever safeguards failed in one place aren't failing someplace else?" — Sen. Sara Gelser, D-Corvallis She defended her nearly 40-year-old agency, pointing out that the black-owned nonprofit accepts difficult foster children — kids with gang ties or sexual-abuse victims — whom other agencies often refuse to take. Holden accused the state of contributing to Give Us This Day's struggles by not promptly paying reimbursements. She said the accusations of abuse and neglect are fabrications from disgruntled workers, and she equated the hearing with "public lynchings." Lois Day, the state's child welfare director, met with Rosas after the hearing. Day faced questions from lawmakers alongside the Department of Human Services' lead licensing and abuse investigation managers. Olsen and Gelser said the department's license inspections, which happen every two years, need to be more rigorous. "We get greater scrutiny when we want a car loan," Olsen said. "Putting children in a facility that can't afford to feed them, can't afford to pay staff — to me that would be paramount when licensing a facility." Day repeatedly told them the department was looking into its rules around licensing and abuse complaints to make sure they're stringent enough. Overall, the state is responsible for more than 8,000 foster children on any given day. Beyond checking for obvious harm, caseworkers use regular visits to ensure children are receiving proper health care and adjusting to new schools. After the hearing, Gelser said the Give Us This Day case shows "a consequence of not doing" regular check-ins. The state made sure [83 percent of Oregon foster children](#) received a monthly visit from a caseworker in May. That's up from a little more than half after 2011 but still below the state's target. Gelser said she's waiting to see what the Department of Human Services' review turns up. She worries other providers might be awash in similar accusations. "What kind of message," she said, "does that send to these kids?" — Denis C. Theriault Source: http://www.oregonlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2015/09/latest_abuse_accusations_feed.html

PBSO: Lake Worth woman slapped and choked 5-year-old with Autism | www.palmbeachpost.com PBSO: Foster care parent slapped, choked 5-year-old with autism 5:16 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2015 | Filed in: [News Comments 0](#) Story Highlights [Family refutes suicide ruling](#) Access to MyPalmBeachPost.com included for Post subscribers [Explore](#) NEED TO KNOW MORE? [Sign up](#) for FREE Post e-newsletters. Travel, News, Golf and more. Choose your favorites and we'll deliver. LAKE WORTH — Deputies arrested a West Palm Beach foster care parent on child abuse charges after finding a 5-year-old Autistic boy bleeding from his ear and covered in dirt and feces. Witnesses saw Janice Elaine Haye pulled over roadside on 10th Avenue near D Street in Lake Worth beating the 5-year-old Friday, according to the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office. Haye, 47, had three children and one teen all with special needs in her white Volkswagen hatchback at the time, although her relationship to the children is not clear. Janice Elaine Haye Haye is a caregiver in the foster care system, Department of Children and Families spokeswoman Paige Patterson-Hughes said. The children in her care have since been removed and placed elsewhere, she said. A witness contacted police after she saw Haye "slapping, punching and shaking [the 5-year-old's] face like a sack of potatoes," the report states. Haye told police the boy has level one Autism, separation anxiety, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and intermittent explosive disorder, characterized by angry outbursts, according to deputies. The boy had a temper tantrum in the car, which sent the other passengers — two 12-year-olds and a 14-year-old — into tantrums, Haye told police, denying that she ever disciplined them with force. She pulled over the hatchback so the 5-year-old could stand outside and cool off, she told deputies. Haye said everything happened so fast and she may have accidentally hit the 5-year-old, the report states. A second witness also contacted police to report the roadside abuse, but declined to be interviewed, the report said. When Palm Beach County Fire Rescue examined the boy, he was bleeding from his left ear, had red marks and a cut on the left side of his face and bruises on his arm and shoulder, the report states. He also was wearing dirty clothing and had feces on his pants and legs. Deputies interviewed the child, who told them that he was "being bad at school" so Haye slapped him with her shoe and choked him while in the back of the car, then gave him a popsicle to calm him down. A DCF investigation into Haye is pending, Patterson-Hughes said. Haye has no prior criminal history in the county. She was arrested and taken to Palm Beach County Jail, then released Saturday under court supervision. Source: <http://www.palmbeachpost.com/news/news/pbso-lake-worth-woman-slapped-choked-5-year-old-au/nngxC/>

Roane Academy leaders leave embattled center WBIR Staff, WBIR 4:58 p.m. EDT September 30, 2015 Two Roane Academy officials have left the embattled center. (Photo: WBIR) 2 CONNECT [5 TWEETLINKEDIN](#) COMMENT EMAIL MORE (WBIR) Two leaders have left a Roane County residential treatment facility from which several teenage residents have run away. Omni Visions owns and operates the Roane Academy, which treats juvenile males. Over the last several months, several boys have left on their own from the center, and four employees and a teen resident suffered injuries during a disturbance at the center. Some neighbors also have expressed concern about living near the center, although authorities have said the teens at the academy pose no threat. Omni Visions said last week it would move to improve security. More: [Roane Academy concerns persist despite promise of fence](#) According to Omni Visions, facility director Mark Akers and clinical director Andrea McCarter stepped down Friday. Omni Visions did not give a reason for the resignations. It said supporting staff through the leadership transition is its top priority. A search is underway for the directors' replacements. Among the changes the operator said it would make is building a new fence around the property. Neighbors said the fence was promised before the facility received approval in 2014 to locate in the Roane County Industrial Park, but the fence was never built. The building has a small fenced-in area in the back. Source: <http://www.wbir.com/story/news/2015/09/30/roane-county-academy-leaders-leave-embattled-center/73109276/>

Judge dismisses state's case against Madison County group home accused of abuse, neglect [Print Email](#) By [Crystal Bonvillian](#) | cbonvillian@al.com The Huntsville Times Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#) on September 30, 2015 at 8:30 AM, updated September 30, 2015 at 8:32 AM [Reddit Email](#) (File image) A Madison County Circuit Court judge has [dismissed the case against a Madison County group home](#) that state officials accused of abuse and neglect. Restore Care, a Toney-based facility that serves about 35 mentally disabled residents, will be able to continue operations as usual. In an order issued Tuesday afternoon, Judge Donna Pate said that the Alabama Department of Mental Health failed to meet the burden of proof needed to allow officials to remove residents from their homes. Pate said that the state also failed to show that the hardship caused by relocating the residents would not outweigh the benefit of removing them. "To the contrary, the Court is satisfied that granting the preliminary injunction would impose a serious hardship on the very individuals sought to be protected by the Department," Pate wrote in her ruling. The state and representatives of Restore Care, which operates more than a dozen homes in Madison County for its clients, [went before Pate on Monday](#) as the state sought a preliminary injunction that would allow it to remove the residents. Courtney Tarver, associate commissioner for ADMH's developmental disabilities division, testified that such a move is unusual, but that the volume and nature of the complaints - which included allegations of bruised residents, medication errors, delayed medical treatment and a staff member hitting a resident - warranted the state's intervention. The home had 140 complaints of abuse or neglect logged against it over the past year. Dr. Celia Lloyd-Turney, director of Restore Care, denied the allegations, saying the state had inaccurate or incomplete information and that the accusation of a staff member striking a client was not true. Family members of some of Lloyd-Turney's clients also testified that any issues pertaining to their loved one's care had been addressed and that they wanted them to remain with Restore Care. Source: http://www.al.com/news/huntsville/index.ssf/2015/09/judge_dismisses_department_of.html

Judge: Child foster care lawsuit can move forward - SFGate Judge: Child foster care lawsuit can move forward Updated 7:25 pm, Wednesday, September 30, 2015 0 PHOENIX (AP) — A federal judge has rejected a bid to dismiss a lawsuit alleging the state of Arizona violated the civil rights of nearly 17,000 foster children. Children's advocacy groups filed the lawsuit in February in U.S. District Court. It claims the state fails to provide needed mental and other health care, and enough foster homes for children removed from their families. The lawsuit names as defendants the head of Arizona's child welfare and health services agencies. The defendants had asked a judge to dismiss the lawsuit, saying it interferes with state-level proceedings. Judge [Roslyn Silver](#) denied the

request this week. She says if the plaintiffs prevail, the court could fashion a remedy that doesn't impinge on decisions made by juvenile courts in specific cases. Source: <http://www.sfgate.com/news/crime/article/Judge-Child-foster-care-lawsuit-can-move-forward-6541842.php>

DHS flunks the common-sense test in ignoring foster-care home's red flags: Editorial Sen. Sara Gelser, pictured in this 2014 photo, chaired a hearing this week in which she and other legislators grilled DHS for its oversight of Give Us This Day, a foster-care organization. (Oregonian/OregonLive file photo) [Print Email By The Oregonian Editorial Board](#) The Oregonian Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#) on October 01, 2015 at 3:00 PM, updated October 01, 2015 at 4:24 PM Reddit Email [Get The Stump content in your inbox every Sunday.](#) [Sign up for email updates here.](#) Sponsored Link There were red flags all around Give Us This Day, a Portland foster-care agency that housed abused kids for the Oregon Department of Human Services: Workers who were routinely not getting paid. IRS tax liens piling up. A lack of documents to show it was providing the services it claimed to. You would think DHS' child welfare employees or investigators would be all over the nonprofit corporation. But it was the Oregon Department of Justice that did the legwork to shut down the venture. DOJ's charitable activities section began investigating Give Us This Day in 2013 after it lost its tax-exempt status due to three years of failing to file IRS returns. The investigation, about which DHS had been alerted, [ultimately turned up evidence](#) that director Mary Holden used money meant for care of foster kids to instead pay for meals at steakhouses in Las Vegas, trips to Jamaica and thousands of dollars worth of designer clothes. The investigation also found some [\\$441,000 worth of "cash or other unexplained withdrawals"](#) had been taken from Give Us This Day accounts. Meanwhile, the foster children often went hungry, relying on food-bank donations, according to a former employee who [testified this week](#) to a state Senate committee. The kids, some of whom were severely mentally ill and had significant behavioral problems, [slept on dirty mats, lived in filthy conditions](#) and weren't taken to counseling services, said Rachel Rosas, who worked at the home from 2011 until 2013. The attitude by Give Us This Day management, she said, was that these were "the kids that nobody wants" and that "nobody would come asking questions." Oregonian editorials [Editorials](#) reflect the collective opinion of The Oregonian/OregonLive editorial board, which operates independently of the newsroom. [Members of the editorial board](#) are Mark Hester, Helen Jung, Erik Lukens, Steve Moss and Len Reed. To respond to this editorial: Post your comment below, submit a [commentary piece](#), or write a [letter to the editor](#). If you have questions about the opinion section, contact Erik Lukens, editorial and commentary editor, at elukens@oregonian.com or 503-221-8142. Unfortunately, with regards to DHS, Give Us This Day's cynical assumptions were right. The agency didn't ask questions, even though the child-welfare division was well aware of the nonprofit's difficulties making payroll and paying taxes. Child Welfare Director Lois Day said her department is trying to match up Rosas' testimony with complaints the agency received and to find out what investigative action was taken. But she acknowledged to The Oregonian/OregonLive editorial board that her division did not take any steps beyond its normal monitoring and checking of children to ensure that the financial problems weren't affecting child safety. She noted that caseworkers, lawyers, court-appointed advocates and others come in contact with the children, and they expected they would have heard of substandard conditions through those channels. "We did not receive information that child safety was at risk," she said. It makes you wonder what kind of information would actually sound an alarm. A [story by Willamette Week earlier this month](#) documented a long list of safety concerns identified by Portland Fire & Rescue, several former employees and even a Multnomah County tax assessor employee. DHS' own licensing inspections uncovered problems with the foster-care agency's practices, according to the story. Even if the financial issues were the only problems the agency knew about, DHS flunked the common-sense test. How could a foster-care organization that receives \$1.6 million a year from the state, [according to Willamette Week](#), get so far behind on its taxes that the IRS would file liens? How could the agency overlook that it was the lone provider that had its state funding garnished for payment of a judgment over unpaid wages? Why would it not alert its caseworkers or its investigators to take an extra close look at the facility and make sure the kids were well cared for? Thankfully, the DOJ's Charitable Activities section took action that DHS should have pursued. Assistant Attorneys General Michelle Smith and Heather Weigler led a team of investigators that persevered in demanding documentation, interviews and answers despite months of [delay, accusations of racist behavior](#) and other roadblocks from Holden. DOJ negotiated a [Sept. 18 settlement](#) that calls for Give Us This Day to shut down, its insurance provider to pay the state \$500,000 and for Holden, also known as Mary Ayala, to not serve in a fiduciary position for any charitable organization in Oregon for seven years. Credit too the legislators who are not letting this go. Sen. Sara Gelser, D-Corvallis, who chairs the Senate Committee on Human Services and Early Childhood, and vice-chair Sen. Alan Olsen, R-Canby, made clear their frustration that the many red flags set off nobody's alarm bells at DHS, as [The Oregonian/OregonLive's Denis Theriault reported](#). The agency is now reviewing its licensing and investigative procedures as well as going through its record of complaints at the foster home, Day said. Her agency is also looking at whether it needs to bring more financial expertise in evaluating licensees. While that's worth considering, it also misses the point – it should not take a sophisticated business background for DHS to exercise some common sense. Consider for example one of the earliest exchanges between DOJ's Smith and Holden's attorney. While Holden addressed one failure right away, Smith didn't stop there, noting that "such issues can be [symptomatic of larger management issues](#) within an organization." DHS should take that sentiment to heart, both in monitoring other foster-care providers and in evaluating its own handling of this case. - The Oregonian/OregonLive editorial board Source: http://www.oregonlive.com/opinion/index.ssf/2015/10/dhs_flunks_the_common-sense_test.html

Head of foster care agency accused of misusing millions of dollars Posted: Sep 30, 2015 9:15 PM PDT Updated: Sep 30, 2015 9:15 PM PDT By FOX 12 Staff [Email Connect fox12news@kptv.com](mailto:EmailConnectfox12news@kptv.com) Building where Give Us This Day was located. PORTLAND, OR (KPTV) - Officials said the head of a local foster care agency misused millions of dollars while needy children went without. Now, the organization has been shut down. MOREAdditional LinksPoll The agency called Give Us This Day has been caring for foster kids in group homes and placing them with foster families in the Portland area for years. Organizers relied on state funding, but investigators said the money was mishandled and one former employee told FOX 12 she can back that up. "We had to go on our own to food banks and churches and places that donated food to pick that up on our own time. When we weren't getting paid. Just to make sure the kids had food to eat, or we'd bring our own lunches and they'd beg us for our own lunches. So it was difficult," said Rachel Rosas. Rosas used to work for Give Us This Day, caring for foster kids in group homes. She said not only were the living conditions sub-par, with very little money for groceries, linens and clothes, but she said her paychecks were late on a regular basis. When she asked managers about it, they told her the state wasn't giving them their funding. Mary Holden ran the agency and had several foster parents working for her. Several of them have also complained to FOX 12 that they didn't get paid on time and are still owed money. Court documents show thousands of dollars were spent on travel, dining out, Las Vegas Casinos and clothing at Victoria's Secret and Louis Vuitton. Rosas testified before a senate committee about the agency and how money was appropriated. Just this week, the State Department of Justice signed a settlement agreement with Mary Holden, saying she will dissolve the agency, her insurance company will give \$500,000 back to the state and she is not allowed to work for a non-profit for 7 years. Rosas feels that a lot of neglected children are finally getting a voice. "The foster kids will contact me. They've aged out of the program or they're homeless or they've been in jail and they just feel like, what did they do wrong? Or why didn't they get a chance? And it's just showing them that it wasn't their fault. Somewhere the system failed them," said Rosas. FOX 12 was not able to locate Mary Holden to get her side of the story. FOX 12 asked state officials if she could face criminal charges and they said they can't comment on that at this time. Read more: <http://www.kptv.com/story/30158358/head-of-foster-care-agency-accused-of-misusing-millions-of-dollars#ixzz3nSogBxq2>

Employees say former DA is now the one breaking the law Employees at a Clayton County daycare say they want to be paid a fair wage and on time. WXIA Rebecca Lindstrom, WDA 7:03 p.m. EDT October 2, 2015 Former employee wants to know if her boss is taking out taxes. (Photo: Nick Moron) JONESBORO, Ga. -- Workers at two Clayton County businesses say there's something about their paychecks that isn't right. They claim they're not getting paid on time, if they get paid at all. When they do, they say there's no indication taxes are being taken out. The owners should know the law – after all one of them, Jewel Scott, is a former Clayton County District Attorney. The other manager listed on state registration forms is Dr. Headley Scott, her husband. For the past six months Denise Lewis says she has worked full time, serving as the director of the Champion House, a group home for older teens transitioning out of the foster care system. Former employee expresses his frustration over not getting paid for more than 200 hours of work. (Photo: Mike Zakel) In that time she says she has only been paid \$1,100. She has received roughly \$150 a week as Administrator of another business, a daycare operated by the same people. But do the math and that's \$3.75 an hour for a 40 hour week. It's well below the legally mandated minimum wage of \$7.25. "I cannot afford to pay for an apartment. \$400, \$500. Nothing because they're not paying me," said Lewis. "He says, we're volunteers. That's what he says. It's volunteer services." Another employee showed me copies of her paychecks. In the notes field it often says "volunteer expenses." "It's a little disheartening, it's very upsetting. I'm kind of confused," said another former employee who asked not to be identified. He says he quit after the group home failed to pay him for 234 hours of work. 11Alive spoke with five former employees. All said the Scott's would tell them they didn't have the money, that parents or the state had yet to reimburse them for their services. But according to our open records request, the state says it paid the daycare more than \$162,000 in the past two years and the group home more than \$5,000 –

payment in full for services rendered. Now employees say it's their turn. Georgia Champion Project, just one of two facilities owned by the Scott's, where employees say they're not getting paid on time. (Photo: Mike Zake) "Not so much because I need it, but more so the fact that I earned it," said one employee. Employees also want to know why none of their paychecks show any sign of state or federal taxes withheld. No contributions to Social Security or Medicare. We asked the Scott's to provide proof taxes were being taken out and reported, but they declined. State inspection reports at the daycare the past two years show a struggle to keep enough staff and make sure that they are properly background checked and trained. One child was found sleeping in a room unsupervised. Another report says a class of three year olds was left alone for several minutes. Yet another visit revealed two year old's lumped with kids as old as eight, with only one teacher on staff. The group home officially opened in August of 2015. According to DFCS there have been no complaints about the quality of care at that location. Jewel Scott offered to meet with investigative reporter Rebecca Lindstrom, but made it clear she would not allow the conversation to be recorded either by video or audio. She was also given a chance to answer a series of questions in writing, but again refused to go on the record with any answers. She did release a brief statement however. It said: Ms. Lindstrom my response is and please feel free to quote me "you have been played." Legal counsel & CPA advise against any further response at this time. However, the truth will emerge." Source: <http://www.11alive.com/story/news/local/holding-powerful-accountable/2015/10/02/georgia-champion-project-house-jewel-scott/73230118/>

SeVon Jobs charged with texting naked pictures to teenage boy [Michelle Quesada](#) 6:38 PM, Oct 7, 2015 5:37 AM, Oct 8, 2015 Caregiver in charge of looking after troubled teens is behind bars In Loxahatchee WPTV A caregiver in charge of looking after troubled teens in the foster care system is accused of sending inappropriate text messages to a teen WPTV SeVon Jobs Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office In Loxahatchee WPTV WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. - Palm Beach County sheriff's deputies say a caregiver who looked after troubled teens was arrested for sending naked pictures to a teen he used to care for when working at the local facility. SeVon Jobs, 46, is charged with soliciting a child. A Palm Beach County sheriff's report says the 16-year-old victim looked up to Jobs as a father figure. The teen was transferred out of the facility but kept in touch with Jobs until the conversations started making him feel uncomfortable. The company Jobs worked for, **Vision Quest**, says Jobs was fired two weeks ago for unrelated reasons. Vision Quest was made aware of the allegations by the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office after Jobs had already been let go. "He seemed like, he was a good guy always on - work, he worked real well, worked with the kids real good," said Marcus Harwood, a current caregiver at the Loxahatchee facility. Harwood worked in the same home as Jobs, caring for a handful of teenage boys. According to Vision Quest Spokesperson Beth Rosica, teenagers under DCF supervision are placed in the Vision Quest facilities by Child Net, a company contracted by DCF. "We try to get them on the right track, sometimes they have troubled homes, and things like that, we send them to school, we give them a place to stay," added Harwood. Harwood was shocked to learn Jobs is being accused of sending inappropriate pictures and texts to a teenager who used to live at the home. "If he did do that, I have no idea that he did it cause he was always behind the desk working, doing paperwork," said Harwood. The report says Jobs started asking the teen questions about his private parts and was asking for him to send a picture. The teen became uncomfortable with the conversation and went for help. Vision Quest says it is working with the sheriff's office during the investigation. Source: <http://www.wptv.com/news/region-c-palm-beach-county/former-caregiver-in-charge-of-dcf-supervised-teens-arrested-for-texting-naked-pictures-to-minor>

\$12.5 million awarded to Logan family after child sex abuse case Saturday , October 03, 2015 - 7:01 PM Image by: Comstock By ANDREAS RIVERA Standard-Examiner staff Shares: 9 LOGAN -- The family of a Logan 4-year-old won a \$12.5 million lawsuit against a Utah company that helps people with intellectual and developmental disabilities after the child was sexually abused by an employee in 2008. The five-day trial against [Northeastern Services](#) wrapped up Friday, with the jury attributing at least 12 percent of the fault to the company, 85 percent to the former employee and convicted abuser, Matthew Cooper, and three percent to the victim's father. The case stemmed from an incident in which the child was invited into a group home for mentally and behaviorally disabled adults run by Northeastern Services. The child lived nearby the facility and, according to a press release from the victim's attorney, kids from the neighborhood were routinely invited to play there as part of the group home's therapy program. The news release did not state what the name of the group home was, only that it was run by Northeastern Services. The victim was reportedly molested by Cooper in a bathroom. He was arrested and later convicted of aggravated sexual abuse of a child. He is currently serving a 15 years to life in prison sentence at the Utah State Prison, according to court records. Photo Galleries The victim's family claimed Northeastern Services was accountable for the incident because it invited children into the home without parental consent and did not carefully screen Cooper before hiring him, according to the release. Cooper was reportedly fired from a similar job for abusing a disabled adult in his care. After the victim's family filed the lawsuit against Northeastern Services, the case was postponed for several years due to appeals by the company, but was eventually ordered to go to trial by the Utah Supreme Court. "On behalf of our daughter we want to thank the jury for holding (Northeastern Services) accountable for its negligence in hiring, and failing to train and supervise its employees," the victim's family wrote in a statement. "We hope this verdict will not only help our daughter meet her challenges, but that it will also send a message to all such organizations that they must act reasonably to protect our neighborhoods and our children." [The Orem-based company](#) provides day services, supported living and consultations for behaviorally and mentally disabled adults, across eight different locations in Utah. Contact reporter Andreas Rivera at 801-625-4227 or arivera@standard.net. Follow him on Twitter at @SE_Andreas. Source: <http://www.standard.net/News/2015/10/03/12-5-million-awarded-to-Logan-family-after-child-sex-abuse-case>

Group home counselor arrested for assaulting resident October 5, 2015 By BENJAMIN BRANCHAUD bbranchaud@ricentral.com WEST KINGSTON -- A resident counselor at Child and Family Services, a group home in West Kingston, was arrested Tuesday on a charge of simple assault and battery after he allegedly picked up a 17-year-old resident of the group home by his throat, pushed him against a wall and struck him twice in the face. According to police reports, Francis Zwolinski, 33, of North Kingston, a resident counselor, was eating dinner in the staff office at the group home while the 17-year-old victim sat in a separate chair in the same office. After repeatedly asking the boy to leave the office, Zwolinski became agitated and began to pull the boy out of his chair. When the boy struggled, Zwolinski reportedly struck him twice in the face and picked up the chair for use as a weapon. The victim of the assault, a South Kingstown resident, was also arrested and charged with one count of disorderly conduct and one felony charge of assault with a dangerous weapon after he allegedly fled the confrontation and armed himself with a kitchen knife. He was transported to the Rhode Island Training School early Wednesday morning. Ken Lombardi, an employee who witnessed the assault, said Zwolinski was the aggressor in the incident and described his punches as "hay-makers", the use of which violates the group home's restraint policy. Zwolinski declined the opportunity to provide the police with a statement or any information about the incident. He is due in Fourth District Court Oct. 8. A 16-year old resident of the group home was also arrested during the incident on one charge of disorderly conduct and one charge of obstructing an officer in the line of duty as he was allegedly disruptive throughout the investigation and yelled obscenities to the police throughout their visit to the group home. According to South Kingstown Police records department staff, there have been 17 arrests made on-site at the group home at 46 Liberty Lane since January of 2014. Those who list 46 Liberty Lane as their address have been arrested 26 times in the same time span. Source: <http://www.ricentral.com/content/group-home-counselor-arrested-assaulting-resident>

California foster care: New laws signed to restrict psychiatric drugs By Karen de Sá kdesa@mercurynews.com Posted: 10/07/2015 05:59:47 AM PDT [12 Comments](#) Updated: 10/07/2015 06:01:39 AM PDT Drugging Our Kids [Read the Bay Area News Group investigation about psychiatric drugs in the California foster care system.](#) SACRAMENTO -- Creating sweeping new protections for tens of thousands of California's most traumatized children, Gov. Jerry Brown on Tuesday signed the nation's most comprehensive set of laws to curb the overprescribing of psychiatric drugs in foster care. For the first time, the state will train caregivers and court officials on the hazards of psychotropic drugs, scour medicated children's health records for alarming prescriptions and step up scrutiny of residential facilities that rely too heavily on the medications to control kids' behavior. Child welfare advocates cheered the long-awaited reforms inspired by this newspaper's ongoing investigation "Drugging Our Kids," which found almost 1 in 4 California foster teens receive psych medications. "When we take kids away from their parents, we become their parents, and we assume the highest obligation to ensure that those kids have the best chance to thrive in life," said Frank Mecca, executive director of the County Welfare Directors Association of California. "And these bills give us the tools to make sure that kids don't just get pills but that they get high quality mental health treatment and that their well-being is closely monitored." Gov. Brown did not comment Tuesday upon signing Senate Bills 484, 319 and 238, which were authored by state Sens. Jim Beall, D-San Jose, and Holly Mitchell, D-Los Angeles. Advertisement "The 'Drugging Our Kids' documentary put the state on notice," Mitchell said, "and Gov. Brown has now put the tools in our hands to ensure that foster kids in our care are not over-drugged for profit or convenience by those we pay to nurture and protect them." Will Lightbourne, director of the California Department of Social Services, said in an email Tuesday that the state has already been working on reforms. "The approval of these bills helps the state and counties continue the practice changes underway to emphasize making psychosocial and trauma-based interventions available to children and youth, and avoid

unnecessary use of chemical treatment." The newspaper's investigation found the vast majority of medicated foster youth were prescribed antipsychotics, which often lead to debilitating side effects from lethargy to morbid obesity. The series showed how the state foster care system often relied on the drugs to address behavioral problems associated with trauma -- not the severe mental illnesses they were designed to treat. Under the new laws, more information will be provided to the juvenile courts where the medications are approved. And public health nurses who work with foster youth will have greater access to children's medical files, and play a larger role in monitoring medicated children's care. Beginning next year, regular reports will be produced on the number of prescriptions children have received, and whether they also received counseling services. And residential group homes that allow excessive prescribing could face corrective-action plans. "I hope that the child welfare agencies across the nation -- not just in the state of California -- will take heed and will start to implement the same laws and regulations," said Joymara Coleman, 25, an East Bay college student and former foster youth featured in the newspaper's series. Sen. Beall agreed that the legislation will likely have national sweep. "There's already a lot of discussion going on nationally on this subject and I think people are realizing that overmedication is a huge problem in group homes and the foster care system and these reforms are definitely needed on a national level," Beall said. But Michael Nash -- a recently retired presiding judge of the Los Angeles juvenile court who championed better oversight of psych meds -- urged caution. "These bills are a step in the right direction for foster children in California who are being administered psych meds," he wrote in an email. "However, they are not a panacea and do not relieve anyone who is involved with foster children from giving them any less attention than they would give their own children." Despite the progress, the legislation's more far-reaching goals were weakened following multiple amendments and intensive lobbying by associations representing physicians and group homes. Senate Bill 253, which would have called upon doctors to provide better justification for prescriptions before judges approved them, was removed from the bill package late in the legislative season. That bill, considered the most significant proposed reform, will be reactivated in January, according to its author, state Sen. Bill Monning, D-Carmel. Although physician groups pushed back against Monning's bill and many of the other bills' provisions, on Tuesday, the president of the California Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry offered only praise. "We're happy to hear that these three bills have been signed into law," Robert Holloway said. "We hope that they work the way they're intended and that they improve care." Holloway went on to say that his organization -- which fired a last-minute salvo against Monning's bill that delayed its progress -- intends to remain involved in efforts still to come. "We hope to continue working with the legislature in the next few years to keep improving the way we care for kids in the foster care system." Tuesday was a celebratory day at the Oakland-based National Center for Youth Law, which led the reform efforts. "We can cut side effects earlier, we can notice if a kid is gaining weight or losing weight, we can notice if it's having the effect it's supposed to have, and we can change their treatment if kids have an opportunity to weigh in," said Anna Johnson, the center's health policy analyst. "People will now be paying attention." Tuesday's news was emotional for former foster youths Rochelle Trochtenberg and Tisha Ortiz -- who both testified repeatedly in the state Capitol as the legislation was being considered. Ortiz, a 23-year-old college student from Hayward, said she was simply "ecstatic." And for Trochtenberg, 33, there is now a new way forward. "It's personally a piece in my healing to feel like I overcame systemic abuse and was fortunate enough to be able to have a voice in preventing other foster youth from experiencing the debilitating effects of being overmedicated," she said. "It's better healing than any drug to be part of this." Contact Karen de Sá at 408-920-5781. Source: http://www.mercurynews.com/california/ci_28930214/california-foster-care-new-laws-signed-restrict-psychiatric

October 8, 2015 The drugged children of foster care By [Gerald K. McOscar](#) A February, 2014 [Wall Street Journal article](#), "Drugged as Children, Foster Care Alumni Speak Out," examines the upsurge in strong antipsychotic drugs prescribed for children in Medicaid and foster care in the past decade and a half. It should be required reading for every parent, teacher, counselor, caseworker, and judge who has or may have contact with the child welfare system. I have been a court-appointed attorney for indigent parents in the Chester County, Pennsylvania Juvenile Dependency Court for about a decade. "Dependency" is a legal term of art and encompasses truancy; aggression; ungovernability; parental neglect; and physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. For me, the most disturbing thing about these most disturbing of cases is the widespread use of antipsychotic medication to treat behavioral problems in children. Children, both in home and in foster care or other institutional settings, some as young as three and four, are routinely prescribed antipsychotic medication for a variety of disruptive behaviors, from hyperactivity and rebelliousness to mood swings and poor grades. From my observations, the majority of these kids are exhibiting normal childhood behaviors, albeit writ large, not because of mental illness, but because of the vacuum, and resultant absence of structure and discipline, caused by broken homes. In the Journal piece, David Crystal, a professor of health services research at Rutgers University, based on 2009 data from Medicaid and private insurers, estimates that 12% to 13% of kids in foster care take these medicines. That compares with about 2% for children on Medicaid but not in foster care and about 1% for those with private insurance. The largest diagnostic groups receiving the drugs in foster care in 2009 were those with disruptive-behavioral disorders and attention-deficit/hyperactive disorders. "These diagnoses involve difficulty focusing attention or controlling behavior -- but that is different from not being in touch with reality," a key element of psychosis, he says. I agree. Chris Nobles, who became a ward of Pennsylvania at age 15, is the centerpiece of the article. In three years of care, doctors treated his depression and bouts of uncontrollable anger with a steady diet of psychiatric drugs. Now in his mid-twenties, Mr. Nobles lives on his own, works full-time, and refuses any medication, "not even Nyquil." Another foster-home alum, testifying in spring of 2013 before a Senate Finance Committee roundtable discussion on psychiatric drugs, cited a list of medications she was prescribed over the years: antipsychotics Abilify and Seroquel, three antidepressants, a drug for attention deficit disorder, and an anticonvulsant. She was variously diagnosed with depression, attention deficit disorder, and bipolar disorder. "How do you develop as a person and find out who you are when you have been given all these diagnoses?" she asks. Their stories mirror that of a local 17-year-old on Concerta and Seroquel and a 13-year-old on Lithium, Risperdal, Cogentin, Zoloft, and Clonidine. Each had diagnoses consistent with Dr. Crystal's findings. There are others. Kids are not magically adults at age 18. Chris Nobles altered his destiny. Many do not. A University of Chicago study on foster alumni in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa found that by age 26, fewer than half, 47%, were employed; most of those who worked earned less than \$12 an hour. Many had been sporadically homeless. They are also the parents of the next generation of dependent children. The Journal report highlights the groundswell of foster-care alumni sounding the alarm about how freely psychiatric drugs are doled out to kids. It's long past time. A February, 2014 [Wall Street Journal article](#), "Drugged as Children, Foster Care Alumni Speak Out," examines the upsurge in strong antipsychotic drugs prescribed for children in Medicaid and foster care in the past decade and a half. It should be required reading for every parent, teacher, counselor, caseworker, and judge who has or may have contact with the child welfare system. I have been a court-appointed attorney for indigent parents in the Chester County, Pennsylvania Juvenile Dependency Court for about a decade. 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Journal report highlights the groundswell of foster-care alumni sounding the alarm about how freely psychiatric drugs are doled out to kids. It's long past time. Source: http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2015/10/the_drugged_children_of_foster_care.html

Kids in care want foster family stability and contact with their siblings Duncan Barry Saturday, 10 October 2015, 11:00 Last update: about 2 days ago Children who live in institutions want more stable placements with foster families and to remain in contact with their siblings. The findings came out of consultation meetings chaired by Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca when she was family minister, at a time when the Child Out-of-Home-Care Protection Bill was first drafted. Speaking to The Malta Independent, Paul Gatt, who is the president of the Foster Care Association, questioned whether the Family Ministry and the Justice Ministry will consult with the association on the new amendments which are being done to the long-awaited bill. "If there's anyone who does understand children in foster care, it is us," Mr Gatt said, hoping that the government will introduce permanent fostering as part of the bill. He said that the ministry only consulted with the association briefly and after "umpteenth calls to meet up with the family ministry recently regarding new amendments to the bill have so far fallen on deaf ears". Mr Gatt said that when he sent an e-mail to the ministry recently to see what had become of the bill, he was told that it is to be discussed by Cabinet. The government is currently reviewing amendments to the long-awaited Child Out-of-Home-Care Protection Bill. However, before the summer it was still contemplating whether or not to include permanent fostering in the bill. The bill has not yet been discussed in parliament, despite the fact it was presented in March 2014 by then minister Coleiro Preca. Dr Farrugia had assured this newsroom in an interview that by the end of summer the amendments should have been reviewed together with the Ministry of Justice, since it is being proposed that care orders will be issued by the courts. Summer is over and The Malta Independent sent questions to Dr Farrugia on whether the bill will be presented in parliament sometime soon and if he will be roping in the foster care association, among others, on any new amendments. In reply to our questions, the ministry said that the child protection bill is being concluded together with the Ministry of Justice. Amendments will be passed to the Opposition prior to discussion at second stage "as we did with the counselling bill". The ministry also said that amendments to the fostering law will be discussed with all concerned. Mr Gatt also claimed that he spoke to the Prime Minister in person to set up a meeting, but that hasn't yet materialised so far either. Benefits of permanent fostering Mr Gatt explained that placement stability for children in out-of-home care is a priority. "Children cannot move forward and begin to heal the psychological wounds caused by the traumatic experiences they would have been through, unless they are offered peace of mind through stability and permanence in their placements. "Permanent fostering will do the job since children will no longer feel a lack of belonging," he explained. He said research shows that multiple placement changes can have important ramifications on children's development. Therefore, placement stability is important for children to develop healthy secure relationships and reduces any potential stressors that may arise from multiple placement changes. Youths who experience minimised placement changes are more likely to experience fewer school changes as well as less trauma and distress, research conducted by foreign experts shows. Mr Gatt said it is important that child welfare agencies find safe permanent homes for children who are in out-of-home care as quickly as possible. He pointed out that international research shows that state residential care is not ideal for most children. Explaining further, he said that those caring for children at residential homes run by the state work on a shift basis. "Does it make any sense for children to be woken up by a different person each day. How will this instil a sense of stability in children," he asked. Some children prone to abuse by natural parents He said that the natural parents of children may be experiencing issues such as substance abuse, mental illness, or domestic violence which can potentially lead to mistreatment and neglect of the child. He said it is of paramount importance to see that the process of children being reviewed by social workers is as swift as possible and a stable environment sought. It is also vital that a multidisciplinary team to review such cases is roped in, he added. On the fact that Minister Farrugia said that added financial help will be given to foster parents who accept to care for siblings, Mr Gatt pointed out that while agreeing that where possible, siblings are kept together in principle, each child should be assessed on an individual basis as it is not always good for children to continue living together. Dr Farrugia had pointed out that siblings are not kept together in all cases. "It is only if the board entrusted to review such cases advises that it is best that in certain cases siblings live together under one roof that we will go for this option. "One thing that bothers me is when siblings are separated. We have opened and concluded discussions with the Church regarding the Hamrun Fra Diegu home which has started catering for siblings. "This home has dormitories which allows young siblings to live together but when they reach a certain age, they are moved to another dormitory for boys and girls separately, but remain living in the same building. "The fact that they are living under one roof can help them interact with each other, giving them the opportunity to continue to integrate," Dr Farrugia had said. This is where the Foster Care Association is not in agreement with the Minister. Paul Gatt explained that in situations where children require long-term care for a long time, possibly throughout their childhood, it does not make sense to place them in a residential home set-up if there is the possibility for them to be placed with foster carers on an individual basis. While each family situation is to be assessed individually, the benefits of being brought up in a family environment, with the opportunities this usually offers children, should not be underestimated. Mr Gatt went on to say that the longer the bill will take to be drafted and presented, the more children will suffer. "Time is flying and the children involved are growing up," Mr Gatt said. "They have waited long enough," he continued. What does permanent fostering mean exactly? Permanent fostering is when children will stay with their foster family until they reach the age of 18 and, for many, will continue to be part of that family well beyond then. The importance of permanency in fostering: Permanency enables the child to develop a sense of [emotional] security while in care. Stability is important because it allows children to 'put down roots' and develop a network of relationships and because, as Jackson and Thomas (1999) outlined, it is likely to be a pre-condition for continuity in schooling, friendships, health care, and familiarity with the neighbourhood and local community. Source: <http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2015-10-10/local-news/Kids-in-care-want-foster-family-stability-and-contact-with-their-siblings-6736143173>

Far-Reaching Bill Promises Overhaul of Calif. Group Homes by [Jeremy Loudenback](#) October 12, 2015 California Gov. Jerry Brown signed legislation yesterday that aims to drastically reduce the number of children placed in group homes as well as the length of time they spend in such placements, part of a package of reforms that will reshape the state's foster care system. Introduced by Assemblymember Mark Stone (D-Monterey Bay), AB 403 will phase out the way treatment and services are currently provided at group homes by January 1, 2017, in favor of measures geared toward providing greater support to foster families. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) will be charged with establishing and administering new accreditation standards and payment rates for group homes and foster family agencies. Carroll Schroeder, executive director of the California Alliance of Child and Family Services (CACFS), calls the bill "a once in a generation opportunity to get foster care right." According to National Center for Youth Law Executive Director Jennifer Rodriguez, the passage of AB 403 caps more than 15 years of work to create reform for congregate care. "This is the first significant effort that aligns our state's policy with what developmental science is telling us, that congregate care is really detrimental to the development and well-being of youth in foster care," said Rodriguez, who spent time as a [group-home resident](#) during her youth. The primary driver of reform in the bill is the establishment of short-term residential treatment centers (STRTCs), a model that would take the place of existing group homes in the state. STRTCs would be licensed by the CDSS to provide only short-term, specialized and intensive treatment to those children with demonstrated need, and all such placements would require a case plan and timeline for moving the child to a less restrictive placement. Stays of more than six months can only be provided with the approval of senior county welfare directors, and most facilities would be incentivized to provide health services that resemble hospital stays rather than semi-permanent living arrangements. These centers will be subject to a monitoring system based on yet-to-be-created standards and inspection plans. The bill instructs the CDSS to develop the infrastructure for those quality control efforts, along with stepped-up monitoring of foster homes provided through contracts with foster family agencies. SB 403 would also require counties to pay attention to the needs of foster youth involved with the probation system (so-called crossover youth). The bill calls for the creation of STRTCs aimed at crossover youth, as well as the implementation of strategies aimed at recruiting and retaining specialized foster homes for these youth and increased supports that would allow them to live with relative caregivers when possible. Under the current system, many of the state's children with the highest level of mental health needs reside in group homes. Under AB 403, greater resources would be directed toward providing intensive treatment and therapeutic programs in foster homes, including wraparound services. As part of the efforts to provide family-based care, AB 403 would boost the amount of money provided to counties to recruit, retain and support foster parents and relative caregivers. Families will be able to receive financial support for child care, family-finding activities and other supports. The reforms included in AB 403 follow [recommendations](#) submitted by a DSS work group in January 2015. The product of three years of work examining the outcomes of foster youth living in congregate care, the [Continuum of Care Reform report](#) serves as a foundation for many of the ideas included in AB 403. Concerns about upsetting the state's child-welfare system have torpedoed previous attempts at reform. "We've been dealing with this like a child welfare worker who's always in crisis," Rodriguez said. "You never get to the overall reform because people are worried, and saying 'But what will we do with these kids?' That's what we've seen in congregate care." Implementing the sweeping overhaul of the state's group-home policies will prove

challenging. Now counties will need to quickly forge greater coordination with mental health agencies and find ways to create improved opportunities for family-based care, Rodriguez says. "For better or for worse, our experience in California has never been that bills can instantly self-implement," she said. "They always phase in over a very long period of time. [AB 403] sets a course for us. Now that we have to do it and we can't postpone these changes any longer, we're going to be forced to deal with the other issues, like resources for family-based support." The biggest test for implementation may come in the way that the reforms coordinate mental health care and other supports for families and relative caregivers. "You have to find more resource parents, more people in the community who can take care of these kids," Schroeder said. "Finding those people and supporting them with services to provide permanency for the kid is going to be a huge piece. Without that part, the whole thing could fall apart." Source: <https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/featured/far-reaching-bill-promises-overhaul-calif-group-homes/13720>

Fort Lauderdale Moves to Close Crescent House Group Home After Years of Complaints A [Facebook](#) 154 [Twitter](#) 6 [More shares](#) [recommend reddit email](#) 0 By [Kyle Swenson](#) Monday, October 12, 2015 | 4 days ago "If he rushes, kick that ass! Kick that ass!" The jacked-up voices of teenaged boys jumped the back wall into Donna's yard. Then came the sound of scraping feet and the unmistakable dull smacks of fists finding skin. "Swing, Carrot Top! Swing! Swing! Swing!" one boy screamed, using a nickname Donna recognized. "If he rush you, kick his ass." Then a voice yelled, "All right, y'all reset. Round 2. Fight!" That was in July. Donna — a normally easygoing blond woman — had become accustomed to hearing havoc next door. For nine years, she has lived next to Crescent House, a Fort Lauderdale group home among the facilities described in an August New Times investigation. At the property at 1135 NW Seventh Ave. and others in Broward, [New Times found lax oversight and hundreds of police visits](#). Drugs, weapons, and gang activity were all reported in homes where kids were supposed to find safe havens. Living near Crescent was a nerve-snapping burden for the neighbors. "It was awful," Donna says, recalling the overheard brawl. "'Menacing' is the right word for it. Most of the neighbors are also scared." Though residents of South Middle River say they have complained about Crescent House for years to no avail, the city is now apparently rolling up its sleeves, readying to shove the facility out of operation. Fort Lauderdale's code enforcement office and the city attorney's office have in the past six weeks jumped into action with fines and code violations. "What you have there is absolute chaos," says Dean Trantalis, city commissioner for the neighborhood. "We've just finally said enough is enough — we want the facility closed down." Crescent House comprises three modest single-story buildings clustered on the property. It is one of six Broward and Palm Beach residential group-care facilities operated by Chrysalis Health, a private for-profit health-care company based in Fort Lauderdale. The property has been owned by the state since 1984 and operated by Chrysalis since 2002. Currently, it operates as a shelter for 12-to-17-year-olds, up to 15 to 30 at a time. According to the program's director of residential services, Kristen Stablein, the ratio of "awake and alert" staffers at the facility is one trained personnel for every four residents — which is above the state-required ratio of one staff member for every six residents. "These are children who are abandoned and neglected," Stablein says. "The success of a group home is to make them as home-like as possible, so it has to be in a residential area. We have to normalize their lives for the greatest success." Related Stories [With Lax Supervision at State-Contracted Group Homes, Teen Prostitution and Drug Use Are Rampant](#) But according to homeowners, Crescent has ruined the neighborhood. As Exhibit A, they point to photos they've snapped of boys hopping the wall at night to wander the streets. They also have pictures showing residents hoisting a girl over the wall and into the facility, which is technically all male. And they have discovered hundreds of tiny plastic baggies — the kind used for crack cocaine — littering the area. "When you're driving up the street, the kids jump in front of your vehicle," says Sal Gatanio, a nearby homeowner. "They stop right there and just stare you down. And you can't go anywhere because they'll keep moving in front of your car, so you're barricaded in." Whenever Gatanio tries to say something to the kids or snap a photo of the threatening behavior, he says they pelt his car with rocks. "I'm from New York. I've seen the South Bronx — I've seen the ghetto, the slums. And I've never felt as threatened," he says. "Everybody on this street lives in fear for their person and their property. Every. Single. Day." Tim Emerson, who owns three properties nearby with his husband, says Crescent House kids taunt him almost daily when he passes. "They'll yell, 'Fag!' or 'What you looking at? You want to suck my dick?' when I drive by," Emerson says. Next door to Crescent, Donna — who asked that her last name not be used — says she is under siege. She hears basketball games and hollering well past midnight. "We are truly concerned about the safety of everyone living around and near the center," she says. Emails show that residents have been complaining since at least 2009. Fort Lauderdale has also been trying to jump into the situation. In 2012, City Manager Lee Feldman wrote to the state Department of Children and Families, pointing out that in just a year, "there had been 58 arrests of juvenile offenders that reside at the Crescent House." Two months later, the city, state, and Crescent staff sat down to hash out an action plan pledging curfew checks and better communication. Surprisingly, that same year, Crescent House earned glowing marks from the agency tasked with monitoring the facility. ChildNet, the \$158 million nonprofit parent company that handles all group homes and foster care for the state in Broward and Palm Beach counties, subcontracts with Chrysalis. In May 2012, a ChildNet team gave the facility a perfect score on an evaluation, making no note of the issues in the neighborhood. A report said it was "clean and free of safety hazards" and that none of the children discharged from the shelter left "due to undesirable, inappropriate, or disruptive behavior." (ChildNet has its own problems. Two lawsuits working through Broward Circuit Court contend the organization allowed sexual abuse at facilities run by subcontractors. In one suit, an unidentified mentally disabled teen alleges he was repeatedly assaulted by another boy over four months. In a lawsuit filed in May 2015, a boy under the age of 12 was allegedly molested for nine months after the a subcontractor working with ChildNet placed him in a foster home. ChildNet did not respond to written questions for this article by press time.) At Crescent House, things have worsened in recent years. City records indicate that from January 2014 to June 2015, kids from Crescent were arrested 138 times — for 74 felonies and 64 misdemeanors. Between December 2014 and this past June 2015, there were 384 calls for police service to the property. So now the city appears to be taking action. In August, New Times published its investigation into the lack of accountability and oversight in the group home system. Neighbors doubled their efforts, and Commissioner Trantalis agreed enough was enough. "A couple months ago, they started throwing rocks at a fellow who was renting a home next door," Trantalis explains. "When he complained, they tried to rough him up. There is absolutely no supervision. 'I took a tour of the facility a couple years ago, and it seemed clean and a pleasant environment. But the reality is that the facility is not intended for juvenile delinquents.'" The commissioner says the Department of Juvenile Justice has continued to place children with antisocial behavior and criminal issues in the center rather than find them suitable placement in facilities designed specifically to handle such kids. "They've just been packing them into Crescent House. The state has basically abdicated their responsibility to the children." But Trantalis is synched with his constituents. "This is an emerging neighborhood. We've had a lot of issues in the past, and we've overcome a lot of them. Now they have the right to the quiet enjoyment of their homes." In September, city code enforcement inspectors found 20 violations at Crescent. Emergency exit lights didn't work. Windows and doors were improperly blocked. Doors couldn't be opened from the inside. Illegal double-keyed deadbolts were used. Work had been done on the building without the proper permits. Circuits failed to meet manufacturers' criteria. In total, if the facility doesn't correct the violations by October 27, it faces up to \$3,000 a day in fines. Ed Lacasa, the chief operations officer and general counsel for Crescent operator Chrysalis, says the company is more than happy to fix the violations. But he says the code enforcement is obviously part of the large full-court press. "We're starting to get heavy code enforcement. It's out of the ordinary and unusual for them to be this intense," he says. "We know that this is the product of the neighbors complaining about this facility being in the neighborhood." Lacasa says Crescent has made every effort to work with the neighbors — the neighbors have simply refused to play along. Indeed, the city is pulling out all the stops. In August, the city served Crescent with a notice of violations well beyond building specs. An August 31 memo penned by Fort Lauderdale city attorneys claims Crescent's location isn't zoned for a residential group home. "The city views this case as a violation of the permitted uses," says Chaz Adams, a city spokesperson. "The property... constitutes a nuisance." On October 15, a special magistrate will hear the city's arguments at a 9 a.m. meeting at City Hall. Crescent's Lacasa remains confident he can defend the home. "This facility has been there for 30 years," he says. "We continue to do our best... The kids need the neighbors." Source: <http://www.browardpalmbeach.com/news/fort-lauderdale-moves-to-close-crescent-house-group-home-after-years-of-complaints-7322395>

Seattle acknowledges American Indian Boarding Schools KING 5's Ryan Takeo reports Ryan Takeo, KING 5 News 7:38 p.m. PDT October 12, 2015 Monday the Seattle City Council unanimously approved a resolution that acknowledged the "historical trauma" of American Indian Boarding Schools. (Photo: Hibulb Cultural Center) 4471 [CONNECT](#) [140 TWEET](#) [5 LINKEDIN](#) 9 [COMMENT](#) [EMAIL](#) [MORE](#) SEATTLE — Monday the Seattle City Council unanimously approved a resolution that acknowledged the "historical trauma" of American Indian Boarding Schools. The crowd erupted after the afternoon vote. They started chanting and banging drums in celebration. The council's resolution is one of the first of its kind across the country. "I would characterize it as being ignored," said Inez Bill, a member of the Tulalip Tribes who was sent to the Tulalip Boarding School. "They were not allowed to speak their language there," she said of her tribe's native language, Lushootseed. Bill's grandmother told her if the children tried to speak anything but English, they would face

punishment. "When you lose your language, you lose your culture," she continued. "It left our people scarred." Inez says the healing will take generations, but she's glad the council took the step it did Monday. "Hopefully this is part of that healing," she said. Monday's resolution also encouraged Seattle Public Schools to teach about what happened at the American Indian boarding schools. Source: <http://www.king5.com/story/news/local/seattle/2015/10/12/seattle-acknowledges-american-indian-boarding-schools/73845716/>

Gov. Brown signs Assemblyman Stone's bill to phase out use of foster group homes Assemblyman Mark Stone By [Samantha Clark](#), Santa Cruz Sentinel Posted: 10/12/15, 9:16 PM PDT | Updated: 3 days ago [2 Comments](#) SANTA CRUZ >> Gov. Jerry Brown signed a new law Sunday that will phase out the use of group homes for foster children. AB 403, authored by Assemblyman Mark Stone, D-Scotts Valley, advances California's long-standing goal to move away from the use of long-term group home care. "When you look at kids in group homes, a lot of them languish there, and a lot of the negative outcomes for them is attributed to that system of care," Stone said. The comprehensive reform measure aims to increase the number of children placed with foster families in part by improving the assessment process to help make sure that the first out-of-home placement is the right one. Counties also are to receive more funding and support to better recruit and train foster families. For children who aren't ready to go to families yet, the new law will transform the current group care system and replace it with short-term residential treatment centers that will provide specialized support only temporarily. In 2014, about 3,000 of the 60,000 foster youth in California lived in group homes, according to the state. More than two-thirds of them have remained there longer than two years. About one-third of them have lived in such placements for more than five years. Building upon years of policy reform aimed at improving outcomes for foster youth, AB 403 creates a time line to phase in the changes. It also implements a number of recommendations from a California Department of Social Services [report](#) released in January, which were developed with feedback from foster youth, foster families and other stakeholders. "The goal for all children in care is to live in a stable home where they, their parents and their caregivers have a voice in defining their needs and placement, and when necessary, specialized trauma-based services are provided to support successful development and relationships," said Will Lightbourne, director of the state Department of Social Services, which sponsored the bill. The governor's budget appropriates \$9.6 million to further the goals of AB 403, which Stone suspects won't be enough. "Over the next three years, the Department of Social Services is meeting with each county to see what their needs are," Stone said. "As we learn more about that and assist families with implementation, the cost will be better clarified." Source: <http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/government-and-politics/20151012/gov-brown-signs-assemblyman-stones-bill-to-phase-out-use-of-foster-group-homes>

Former head teacher at Perth boarding school guilty of molesting former pupils By [Kirsty McIntosh](#), 15 October 2015 3.50pm. 6 Share 6 Twitter Email Perth Sheriff Court.DC Thomson The former headmaster at a Perth boarding school has been found guilty of molesting two pupils more than 40 years ago. David Cowling denied the abuse, which took place when he was in charge of Balnacraig School. At Perth Sheriff Court the jury of nine men and six women unanimously found him guilty of embracing one girl before kissing her in an inappropriate manner and touching her inappropriately. They also found the 76-year-old guilty by majority verdict of entering the bedroom of a second girl lying on her bed, placing a hand on her hip and then carrying out a solo sex act. Both offences took place in the 1970s when the victims were in their teens. The court had earlier accepted a plea of no case to answer in relation to an assault charge. Sheriff Lindsay Foulis deferred sentence on Cowling, of May Place, Perth, until next month for reports to be obtained. Source: <http://www.thecourier.co.uk/news/local/perth-kinross/former-head-teacher-at-perth-boarding-school-guilty-of-molesting-former-pupils-1.905284>

Man accused of raping teen ran Milwaukee group home for boys Posted: Thu 4:57 AM, Oct 15, 2015 [Home / Headlines List](#) / Article MGN Online Posted: Thursday, October 15, 2015 --- 4:57 a.m. MILWAUKEE (AP) -- A man who ran a state-sanctioned group home for boys in Milwaukee is accused of raping a 15-year-old boy at gunpoint. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (<http://bit.ly/1PuwHd0>) reports that 37-year-old Jermarro Dantzler is charged with first-degree sexual assault of a child using the threat of force or of violence. He's accused of raping the teen July 19 and then handing him two \$20 bills. Police say Dantzler contacted the boy on Facebook about a month later, and that they were able to match him to DNA evidence collected after the assault. Dantzler ran the **Rights of Passage Living Center** group home for boys ages 14 to 16. Police records show officers frequently are called to the house and at least six residents have been arrested in the past year. Court records don't indicate an attorney for Dantzler. Source: <http://www.nbc15.com/home/headlines/Man-accused-of-raping-teen-ran-Milwaukee-group-home-for-boys-333006841.html>

Federal Report Calls for an End to Conversion Therapy Wednesday, 21 October 2015 00:00 By [Lindsay Patton](#), [Care2](#) | Report font size [decrease font size](#) [increase font size](#) [Print](#) 11 Email Washington DC and four states have already banned "conversion therapy," with [18 states](#) having introduced bans on it. A new federal report from [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) (SAMHSA) is pushing for a national ban on the controversial practice. "Conversion therapy" is used on LGBTQ individuals to, essentially, turn them straight and cis-gender. The practice dates back to the 1900s, when homosexuality was listed as a mental illness. (Homosexuality was taken off the American Psychiatric Association's list of mental disorders in 1974.) There have been multiple reports - in addition to SAMHSA's - that not only prove that conversion therapy does not work, but that it is extremely harmful to individuals. In April, President Barack Obama voiced his support for [Leelah's Law](#), a petition named after Leelah Alcorn, a 17-year-old transgender teen who committed suicide after her parents forced her to enter conversion therapy. There were three key findings in the SAMHSA report: Same-gender sexual orientation (including identity, behavior, and attraction) and variations in gender identity and gender expression are a part of the normal spectrum of human diversity and do not constitute a mental disorder. There is limited research on conversion therapy efforts among children and adolescents; however, none of the existing research supports the premise that mental or behavioral health interventions can alter gender identity or sexual orientation. Interventions aimed at a fixed outcome, such as gender conformity or heterosexual orientation, including those aimed at changing gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation are coercive, can be harmful, and should not be part of behavioral health treatment. Many "therapists" who conduct conversion therapy are not licensed and [have religious](#) - not medical - backgrounds, adding to the harm this practice causes. LGBTQ children and adolescents are the primary audience that conversion therapy practices target and are already at risk for increased bullying, suicidal thoughts and attempts, substance abuse and homelessness. Conversion therapy can exacerbate those risks by making the individual feel self-hatred for being who they are. The SAMHSA report focuses on how families, loved ones and educators can support and provide information to youth about gender identity and sexual orientation. Chad Griffin, president of the Human Rights Campaign, [released a statement](#) that praised the report and referred to conversion therapy as "child abuse." "This is dangerous junk science that uses fear and shame to tell young people the only way to find love and acceptance is by changing the very nature of who they are," he said. "Today's new health report shows the extensive damage that so-called conversion therapy can cause and why it's so urgent that we end it in all 50 states." SAMHSA is an agency within the US Department of Health and Human Services that makes information on substance abuse and mental illness more accessible to those who need it. Source: <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/33320-federal-report-calls-for-an-end-to-conversion-therapy> (HEAL Note: A federal ban will not regulate faith-based programs. Faith-based programs are where "conversion therapy" is practiced. There is no easy solution at the federal level. This must be changed at the state level to be effective.)

New Report: Federal Funds For Charter Schools Go Into A 'Black Hole' America's experiment with charter schools has thus far generated [academic results](#) that are mixed, at best. Another promise, that these schools would be more educationally "innovative," is also [generally unfulfilled](#) so far. Adding to those uncertainties posed by charter schools is another: Very little is known about how these schools have spent over \$3.7 billion the federal government has used to fuel expansion of the charter industry since 1995. That's the principal finding of a new [report](#) published by the Center for Media and Democracy, which looked for information about how much tax money coming from the federal government's Charter School Program (CSP) goes to charters and how that money is spent and found that information is often "severely lacking." According to the report, the federal government, state governments, and charter authorizers have generally not provided the public with ready information about how federal funds for charters has been spent. Attempts to trace federal grant money to recipients are apt to encounter "substantial obstruction" from states reluctant to reveal how charter money is spent and how state government handles charter oversight. The report contends, "Unlike truly public schools, which have to account for prospective and past spending in public budgets provided to democratically elected school boards, charter spending is largely a black hole." "A Classic Example Of Industry Capture" What the report does reveal, though, for the first time, is a list of actual schools that received grants from the CSP for start-up and "planning" expenses. In examining charter recipients of federal grants in just 12 states, mostly from 2010-2015, CMD investigators found millions in federal grant money going to charter schools that were closed after brief periods of service and to "ghost" charter schools that never opened. The report authors blame the lack of oversight of charters on federal and state lawmakers

who have favored “flexibility” for these schools rather than accountability to the public. “That flexibility has allowed an epidemic of fraud, waste, and mismanagement that would not be tolerated in public schools,” CMD argues. Where there are agencies and commissions charged with oversight of charters, CMD contends, more often than not, those regulatory bodies are staffed “mainly by charter proponents.” The report calls this “a classic example of ‘industry capture’ of the agencies charged with oversight by the industry they are tasked with overseeing. With such capture comes agency devotion to protecting funding, insulated by a lack of transparency about funding oversight and distorted through agency relationships with charter industry cheerleaders.” What’s needed, the report concludes, is for the U.S. Department of Education, which oversees the Charter School Program, to provide a list of charters receiving federal grants and to institute much more stringent regulatory requirements from states applying for the grant money. Where Does The Charter Money Go? Despite the obstruction to its information gathering, CMD’s report reveals startling examples of how individual charters that have received federal grant money under CSP have produced very little education benefit for students while channeling taxpayer money to unknown pockets. In Los Angeles, California, CMD found a charter that had been granted \$375,000 in CSP funds but later had its charter revoked after the school committed various legal and financial transgressions. “There is no public accounting available online of how that money was spent,” the report notes. Another California charter uncovered by the report “voluntarily surrendered its charter” after the local fire marshal shut the school down for being “dangerous and unsafe.” CMD notes, the school “had received a CSP grant of \$575,000, but there is no public accounting of how that was spent.” In Indiana, the CMD investigation found an Indianapolis charter that received \$700,000 in planning and implementation grants but was forced to close in 2015 “because of poor student performance.” Another Indianapolis charter “lost its charter in 2014 and converted to a private religious school, but not before receiving \$702,000 in federal seed money.” Another Indiana charter “was awarded a \$193,000 planning grant, but never opened. In Ohio, [a state notorious for charter school malfeasance](#), CMD reports that out of the 88 schools created with CSP grants between 2008 and 2013, “at least 15 closed within a few years; a further seven schools never even opened. These charters received more than \$4 million in federal taxpayer money.” Michigan ‘Ghost Schools’ Revelations in the CMD report on Michigan, which obtained \$34,997,658 in federal CSP funding for charters between 2010-’15, are particularly startling. In Michigan, where four out of five charters are run by for-profit management companies, “charter operators in the state have been accused, and convicted, of crimes.” These crimes include felony fraud and tax evasion, including an operator who received \$200,000 in federal grants and “funneled \$934,000 to his private account.” The charter operator eventually pleaded guilty of two felony counts for tax evasion and “conspiracy to defraud the United States.” CMD found 25 charter schools in Michigan that received nearly \$1.7 million in CSP funds for “pre-planning” and “planning” but never even opened. The report calls these “ghost” schools. Some ghost schools in Michigan still have the appearance of maintaining viability, such as the Taylor Academy for Aviation and Aerospace. This school received \$109,550 in federal funding and continues to maintain a presence on the [Internet](#). But a phone call by this author to the number listed on the website revealed the school has no current enrollments and isn’t taking in new students. Another Michigan charter, Oakland-Macomb Montessori Academy, which received \$179,677 in federal funds, never opened at its original location in Roseville. Oakland-Macomb Montessori, along with three other Michigan ghost schools, appears to be related to an entity called Project Team, which no longer seems to exist. One Project Team charter, Explorers’ School of Science and Technology, which received \$100,000, has disappeared. Another Project Team charter, Cultivating Growth Academy, which received \$96,748, no longer exists on Internet searches or state records of either existing or closed charter schools. So where does money for charter schools go if it doesn’t pay for real classrooms and education services for students? In Michigan two other ghost schools, the [Bertha B. Williams Academy](#), and the [Magna Charter](#) (seriously, who makes up these names) received \$110,029 and \$99,950, respectively, in federal funding. Neither opened, but they appear to have marketed their schools through [Manta](#), a small business promotional company in Detroit. The marketing effort didn’t make the schools viable but likely helped the marketing company. More Reasons To Doubt Arne Duncan’s Decision The CMD report arrives in the wake of a controversial decision by U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, made just three days prior to announcing his resignation, to [send \\$249 million in new federal funding](#) to the charter school industry. Under Duncan’s watch, the charter school industry has boomed. One of the conditions states had to meet to win a Race to the Top grant, his signature program, was to raise any caps they may have had on the number of charter schools allowed to operate in the state. His department [warned states](#) receiving waivers to the onerous provisions of No Child Left Behind not to do enact any new policies that would undermine charter schools’ “autonomy.” According to a recent [analysis](#) from a charter industry organization, charter schools in the past five years have become “the fastest-growing school choice option in the U.S.” Student enrollments in charters have grown by 70 percent. In 12 generally big-city school districts, more than 30 percent of students attend charter schools. “Eleven school districts saw increases in charter school enrollment ranging from nearly 20 to almost 40 percent in a single year.” Nearly three million students currently attend charter schools. One recipient of Duncan’s generosity is the state of Illinois. According to a [Chicago news outlet](#), much of the \$8.4 million Duncan is sending to the state is to be targeted for expansion of the Noble charter school chain in Chicago, Duncan’s hometown and where he is planning to relocate after leaving office. The grant, the news report notes, will enable the Noble Network to open eight more high schools in Chicago in the next five years, “despite the current financial crisis in Chicago Public Schools and increasingly organized opposition to the prospect of more charter schools.” CMD’s revelation that federal funds to charter schools generally go into a “black hole” further calls into question Secretary Duncan’s decision to award even more money to these schools. Source: <http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/new-report-federal-funds-for-charter-schools-go-into-a-black-hole/>

Baby girl’s death in foster care leaves family with unanswered questions By NAOMI MARTIN [Follow @NaomiMartin nmartin@dallasnews.com](#) Staff Writer Published: 16 October 2015 11:02 PM Updated: 17 October 2015 02:12 PM Related Serenity, 5 months old, died this week while in foster care. Norman Nickelberry doesn’t know how his baby granddaughter died. Nickelberry said he was the emergency contact for 5-month-old Serenity. But Texas Child Protective Services, the state agency responsible for her care, didn’t call him. Since Serenity’s death Thursday, Nickelberry said he’s been calling CPS with urgent questions: What happened to his granddaughter? Where is her body? And where are his other four grandchildren? But he said that CPS refused to talk to him because he’s not one of their parents. Both his daughter and Serenity’s father were in jail when the baby died. “We want answers,” Nickelberry said Friday. “We’ve been getting information on the status of the kids up until this day. But now they’re saying only the parents, only the parents.” Marleigh Meisner, a CPS spokeswoman, said Serenity’s death is under investigation by both her agency and law enforcement. She didn’t provide other answers to questions specific about Serenity’s case, but responded more generally about procedures. Department policy, she said, requires staff to notify the child’s parents within 24 hours of a death. If the parents can’t be located, the caseworker should notify “relatives who have been involved with the child,” she said. Meisner said in an email that the agency shares information with the biological parents of children. “It is up to them to decide what, if any, further information is provided” to other relatives, she said. Serenity’s mother, Whitney Nickelberry, 25, was in Collin County Jail on charges of theft and assault by threat when the child died. Whitney was notified by a guard but was unable to contact her father or other family members, said the baby’s aunt, Renee Richardson, 30. Richardson said Serenity’s father, who is in Dallas County Jail on a murder charge, also was notified. The Nickelberry family found out about Serenity’s death from one of his relatives, Richardson said. Whitney’s five children were placed in foster care when she was arrested about a month ago. Norman Nickelberry said he has been trying to get custody of them ever since. Besides Serenity, Whitney also has four other children in foster care: three boys, ages 6, 7 and 9, and a girl, 4. Richardson said the surviving children have been moved to another foster home. Nickelberry said he believed he was going to get custody of the children. He said CPS visited his Dallas home two weeks ago and performed a background check. Meisner, the CPS spokeswoman, did not respond directly when she was asked why the children weren’t placed with a relative such as Nickelberry. “It is always our goal that children who are in court-ordered CPS custody have the best and most appropriate placement,” she wrote in an email. “We first look to appropriate and available relatives. And if none are available, then a judge will order the children to be placed in temporary foster care.” Nickelberry said CPS let him visit the children on Wednesday. The kids and the baby seemed fine, he said. A CPS staffer called the baby’s godmother about 6 p.m. Thursday and asked how to contact Serenity’s doctor but refused to say whether anything was wrong, Richardson said. The godmother sometimes helped Serenity’s mother take her to the doctor. About two hours later, a relative of the baby’s father called Nickelberry and said the baby was dead. Richardson said she tried to contact CPS Thursday night but was unable to get in touch with anyone for a long time. Eventually, someone told her she would have to call back at 8 a.m., she said. “I couldn’t believe that,” Richardson said. “If this was your daughter, you’d wait until 8 a.m. to find out what happened? We have to make sure the other kids are OK.” Nickelberry said a social worker told him that the baby “stopped breathing” while she was in the care of a “qualified baby sitter.” He said he was told the foster parent was out of town. “This is unacceptable,” he said. Source: <http://www.dallasnews.com/news/metro/20151016-baby-girls-death-in-foster-care-leaves-family-with-unanswered-questions-ecce>

State report details Glade Run violations Source: Eagle Staff Writer Written by: By Amerigo Allegretto Published: October 17, 2015 ZELIENOPLE — A state report that highlights an alleged string of sexual encounters among children at **Glade Run Lutheran Services** also points to other instances where the organization faltered. The 55-page report by the state Department of Human Services details violations and instances that occurred at Glade Run between March and September. The DHS recently revoked Glade Run's license for one of its residential treatment facilities after a two-month investigation regarding child-on-child sexual abuse. Glade Run has four facilities on its campus, each with its own DHS license and houses about 100 youths from ages 8 to 21. The organization appealed the decision immediately after being told of the license revocation by DHS. Glade Run is allowed to continue operating the facility during the appeal, but must follow guidelines and operating rules of the department. Although it was the sexual activity among a group of young people that brought investigators to Glade Run, the probe soon discovered other instances in which the facility fell short of operating standards of the department. Staff neglect was cited in the report. On July 30, at Sandcastle Water Park, two children ages 12 and 15 ran away while two staff members were in a wave pool, too far away from the children to recognize that they had bolted. Glade Run reported the incident to police that day. However, it failed to report it to the DHS within 24 hours, instead waiting until Aug. 4 to officially notify the department. The children went missing for four days. They had been taken to an abandoned house in Penn Hills, Allegheny County, where they were forced to perform sexual acts by multiple persons. The 12-year-old who balked at the activity was shot multiple times with a BB gun. Both children walked door-to-door to contact authorities and were taken to Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh for treatment. They were returned to Glade Run on Aug. 4. The staff members received "progressive discipline" as per agency policy. On May 23, a resident used a broken piece of glass found on the facility's exterior grounds to cut his legs and left arm. The facility did not ensure the facility's exterior was free of hazards, the report said. Glade Run's corrective action was to perform daily inspections to the construction site between the school and cafeteria. Also on May 23 after dinner, a staff member pushed a resident onto a bed and used CPR motion on the resident's chest, resulting in three bruises to the resident. The staff member was "immediately suspended" and escorted off Glade Run's campus. All unit team members received refresher training related to boundary awareness and interactions. Other lesser violations included improper fire drill procedures, incomplete health assessments and inconsistent medication logs. Glade Run follows procedures and guidelines set in place by the DHS and itself, giving its employees frequent training. The report contains graphic details concerning the sexual abuse that led to Glade Run's license being revoked. The activity occurred in McCoid Cottage, one of four cottages in the residential treatment facility. The report says that staff members failed to check on the children every 15 minutes during sleeping hours and were "routinely" watching television within the living area, not within visual or audible distance of the children. A staff member was even seen sleeping overnight in the McCoid Cottage living area by a nurse. The staff member was suspended from his duties and ultimately fired. The department reiterated that staff must follow a protocol aimed at having periodic and frequent checks on the residential rooms. Eight children engaged in sexual acts with one another in the back of the cottage from March through July. The children were ages 8 to 13. After forensic interviews were conducted by the Butler County Alliance for Children, it was determined that no child will be criminally charged and that there "is no identified perpetrator." Investigators said some of the boys may have been more intimidating, but did not believe any actions were forced. "Interviewing children with emotional and behavioral support needs is difficult," said Kait Gillis, DHS spokesman. "In this case, the forensic interviews were conducted by an interviewer from a child advocacy center with specific training in interviewing children with these needs." Gillis said law enforcement were present at the interviews so children wouldn't have to be interviewed multiple times. Zelenople Police Chief Jim Miller said police have met with District Attorney Rich Goldinger to present their findings. The police department conducted its own investigation into the incident and officers were present for forensic interviews at the same time as the child advocacy center. The DHS provided the police department additional evidence and an investigation summary. - See more at: <http://www.thecranberryeagle.com/article/20151017/CRAN0101/710169841/-1/CRAN#sthash.KRiXkIbp.dpuf>

Family accuses Vermillion group home of negligence in death Family accuses Vermillion group home of negligence in death Saved Save Article [My Saved Items](#) [Print](#) [Email](#) 2015-10-19T10:34:00Z Family accuses Vermillion group home of negligence in deathThe Associated Press The Associated Press October 19, 2015 10:34 am • Associated Press [\(1\) Comments](#) VERMILLION | The family of a man who died in a Vermillion group home is seeking money damages for wrongful death. The Argus Leader reports (<http://argusne.ws/100jPnL>) trial is being held this week in the case of Darelle "Bill" Red Bear, who died in January 2009 when he choked on his own vomit. Red Bear's brothers and sisters contend the **Southeast South Dakota Activity Center** ignored his worsening health condition for four days without taking him to a hospital. They also say the facility and Red Bear's state-appointed legal guardian decided to donate his organs and cremate his body without family consent. Center attorneys say many of the family members hadn't been in contact with Red Bear for years, and that attempts to reach family members failed because their contact information wasn't accurate. Source: http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/family-accuses-vermillion-group-home-of-negligence-in-death/article_0bd781e0-6cac-59e8-a42a-4b28601fba5a.html

Attorneys Want State Monitored Another Year After Latest Foster Care Progress Report By [Matt Trotter](#) • Oct 19, 2015 Share [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Google+](#) [Email](#) Credit The Children's Society Attorneys involved in a civil rights case against Oklahoma's foster care system say the state should be monitored at least another year. Marcia Lowry represented children in the 2008 case and acknowledged the work is not easy. "When you're dealing with children's lives, it shouldn't be easy. It should be hard," Lowry said. "It should be hard work, and the state should be working hard to do it. Oklahoma, in many instances, is not." Sheree Powell with the Department of Human Services said the attorneys' call to extend the settlement is premature. "The decision about whether or not the state will be subject to further monitoring is up to the neutral monitors who are monitoring our progress, and they haven't made a determination yet," Powell said. The monitors, referred to as "co-neutrals," said DHS has failed to make good-faith efforts in four areas — decreasing the rate foster children are abused or neglected, developing therapeutic foster homes, housing fewer older children in shelters and permanently placing kids — but it has made progress in lightening social workers' case loads and getting more foster homes. The co-neutrals' latest report on Oklahoma's progress in a five-year settlement to fix the state's foster care system says kids in state custody are still being abused and neglected. The three court-appointed child welfare experts said 230 kids experienced maltreatment in the last year, 177 more than the state's goal under the so-called Pinnacle Plan. "What is the state doing? What are the citizens of Oklahoma doing with their tax money if they're not even taking care of the children that they've taken away from their family homes so that they will be safe?" Lowry said. Powell said **abuse and neglect is more likely in group settings**, so adding foster homes and closing state-run shelters will help. Source: <http://publicradiotulsa.org/post/attorneys-want-state-monitored-another-year-after-latest-foster-care-progress-report/stream/0>

Lawsuit alleges foster abuse Second complaint mirrors earlier one; county says its been proactive in investigations Comment 0 By Shea Johnson Staff Writer VVdailypress.com By Shea Johnson Staff Writer Posted Oct. 20, 2015 at 8:52 PM By Shea Johnson Staff Writer Posted Oct. 20, 2015 at 8:52 PM » Social News By Shea Johnson Staff Writer Posted Oct. 20, 2015 at 8:52 PM VICTORVILLE — A recently filed lawsuit accuses two Victorville foster parents of abuse over a period of two-and-a-half years and when combined with a similar complaint filed early last year, four of five children in the foster family are now alleged to have been mistreated. In the most recent suit filed last Wednesday, Costa Mesa-based attorney Jack H. Anthony claims two minors with certified foster parents operating under the license of Children's Way Foster Family Agency were subjected to "acts of physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect and mistreatment and denials of their personal rights ..." The complaint alleges the two children, identified only by initials because they are minors, were sexually abused by one parent between July 17, 2010 and about Jan. 30, 2013. Anthony said Tuesday the children are between 13 and 17 years old right now, making them between 8 and 12 years old when the alleged abuse began. No criminal charges have been filed against the parents named in the lawsuit, court records show. A telephone message left for Children's Way Foster Family Agency was not immediately returned on Tuesday. According to the complaint, the children were allegedly given just five minutes to shower, dress, brush their teeth and hair; not allowed to choose which clothes they wore; barred from practicing their religion of Christianity or celebrating Christmas; provided dinner at 3 p.m.; put to bed between 5 and 7 p.m.; prevented from calling family; and retaliated against through chore work when reporting negative information to social workers. The complaint mirrors a suit filed May 2, 2014, on behalf of two other foster children in the family, who were about 6 and 7 years old when the alleged abuse began. Anthony said the foster parents have since been decertified. Both suits also name San Bernardino County as defendants, citing the Department of Children and Family Services' breach of mandatory duties for failing to discover and/or properly respond to evidence the children were in an unsafe environment, among other things. The most recent suit had not yet been served to the defendants, according to Anthony, while the suit filed last year remains in the discovery phase. The latest filing, meanwhile, comes about three months after former county social workers, speaking on the condition of anonymity, told FOX 11 News that the Department of Children and Family Services was ignoring evidence of abuse leading to foster children's deaths. Anthony said Tuesday he was in the process of trying to confirm the accounts of FOX 11's confidential sources. "If they were accurate," he said, "there's no question then it's a systemic problem affecting not only my clients, but other

children." In an Aug. 31 response to FOX 11's stories, the county said it "had already conducted their own investigations into (the cases noted in the news station's report)," according to a copy of its statement provided by the county Tuesday. "In August of 2014, CFS moved into action to ensure that it was doing the very best it could to ensure the safety of our children," officials said. "In September of 2014, several changes were implemented to ensure a comprehensive and effective systematic approach to the protection of our children." According to the county, efforts have included adding a safety protocol for removing children from potentially abusive homes, where social workers can obtain court orders to remove children 24/7. In extreme cases, children in imminent danger are removed on the spot with assistance from authorities. The county also has partnered with the Public Child Welfare Training Academy to create a simulation training lab that became operational last month, officials said. Additionally, the county plans to hire 65 senior social services practitioners, launch an after-hours investigations operation and equip social workers with smartphones and laptops. Targeting more manageable caseloads, 125 new social workers were hired within the last year after county Supervisors authorized an ongoing, year-round recruitment process. As it stands, officials said the county receives nearly 30,000 calls yearly to investigate child abuse and neglect, and 7,000 children are under the county's care. In the last five years, 160,000 requests for investigation have come to the county, which has moved nearly 14,000 children out of their homes during the period. Nine of the children referred to the county, but not removed from their homes, died. It's a number county officials acknowledge is "unacceptable." "The County is committed to continuing to improve how it protects its children — their safety is our priority and purpose in life," the statement read. "Child Abuse and neglect occurs in every county — I ask that wherever you are, you join us in our mission to keep children safe and report suspected child abuse." Attorney L. Wallace Pate, an expert in foster care liability within private and government agencies, said Tuesday the lawsuits by Anthony were "not surprising," saying abuse in the foster care system was "the rule, not the exception." Pate has filed her own lawsuit against Rancho Cucamonga-based Interim Care Foster Family Agency on behalf of eight former foster children dubbed "the San Bernardino County 8." Filed in November 2014, the suit claims the agency failed to properly supervise two allegedly abusive foster parents who were evicted from four residences over a seven-period and even homeless for a time — all while children were placed under their care. The foster parents, Lisa Oates and Nawab Wilson, lived in Helendale and Victorville twice during the period in question. Oates and Wilson have not been charged with any crime, according to court records, but the civil case continues. Pate chalked up cracks in the U.S. foster care system to the over-filing of cases, saying only 17 percent of kids in the system are moved there because of physical or sexual abuse. The other 83 percent, she said, are children considered "at-risk," which indicates the children are likely to be severely injured if they stay at home. Yet Pate said too many children are being removed from their homes without evidence of being injured or immediately threatened to be harmed, adding children were 10 times more likely to be abused and neglected by non-relatives. She pointed to money as a lucrative incentive for agencies to over-file, reiterating her point that the system is marred by a "cash-for-kids" operation. "They're not doing social work now," she said. "They're warehousing children. This is not a local phenomenon." Meanwhile, Anthony said the foster parents targeted in his lawsuits likely had 40 foster children since at least 2000. FOX 11 News reported Anthony saying they had been previously decertified, but were allowed their last foster family due to a "clerical error." "I'm aware of previous referrals of abuse and neglect that were not on record," Anthony told the Daily Press. "I'm not fully aware of the specifics, why they were not on the record the way it should be." Source: <http://www.vvdailypress.com/article/20151020/NEWS/151029961>

Lawsuit challenges Mississippi 'debtor's prison' 10/21/15 10:58 AM—Updated 10/21/15 12:27 PM facebook twitter 3 save [share group 103](#) By [Amanda Sakuma](#) A coastal Mississippi city is accused in a new federal lawsuit of throwing poor people into jail if they're unable to afford court fees and fines. The suit, filed Wednesday by the American Civil Liberties Union, charges that Biloxi, Mississippi threatened jail time if fines weren't paid up front and in full, and often followed through on those threats. It's the latest step in a broader push by advocates for civil liberties and the poor to challenge what they call the "scourge" of debtor's prisons across the U.S. "It's a debtor's prison out of the dark ages," Nusrat Jahan Choudhury, a lawyer with the ACLU's Racial Justice Program, told msnbc, referring to Biloxi's system. "Bottom line: people are jailed because they don't have money." RELATED: [How falling behind on child support can end in jail](#) It's been more than three decades since the Supreme Court banned the practice of locking people up because they can't afford to pay court fines or fees, but allegations of modern-day debtor's prisons have continued to crop up throughout the country. And while heightened scrutiny and public awareness have led to significant reforms across several states in recent years, Biloxi is not alone. Similar lawsuits filed by the ACLU and Southern Poverty Law Center are also pending in Louisiana, Alabama and Washington state. Joseph Anderson, 52, sits and waits for his girlfriend Qumotria Kennedy to get off work in the parking lot of the apartment complex where he lives in Biloxi. Photo by William Widmer/ACLU The suit filed Wednesday—which names as defendants Biloxi Police Chief John Miller, Judge James Steele, and the for-profit Judicial Correction Services, Inc., in addition to the city—paints a picture of a city government that padded its coffers on the backs of the poor by establishing a probation program to collect significant fines for minor misconduct like traffic violations and misdemeanors. and it charges that the city adopted a policy to aggressively chase down court fines and fees. Indigent people who couldn't pay were slapped with arrest warrants and subject to serve jail time. "The city routinely arrests and jails impoverished people in a scheme to generate municipal revenue through the collection of unpaid fines, fees and court costs imposed in traffic and other misdemeanor cases," the suit alleges. Vincent Creel, public affairs manager for Biloxi, said the city had not yet received the lawsuit. "However, based on media inquiries, we believe the ACLU is mistaken about the process in Biloxi, and we look forward to explaining it to the ACLU. The City of Biloxi treats all defendants fairly under the law. In fact, the court has used community service in cases where defendants are unable to pay their fines," Creel said in a statement. RELATED: [Ferguson sued over alleged modern-day debtors' prison](#) According to the lawsuit, seven months of public records released by the Harrison County Adult Detention Center show that at least 415 people were jailed between September 2014 and March 2015 on charges for failing to pay off their debts owed to Biloxi. The suit goes on to allege that city officials routinely prolonged jail time for indigent people in order to coerce them into paying off their fines. The alleged victims include Joseph Anderson, a 52-year-old man with disabilities who according to the lawsuit was unable to pay his \$200 traffic fine in full — he made what payments he could using his disability checks. Anderson said he was not aware that police had issued a warrant for his arrest until they stormed into his home and took him away in handcuffs. He spent seven nights in jail before being brought before a judge, and says he was never informed that he had the right to a court-appointed attorney. Along with Anderson is Qumotria Kennedy, 36, who says she was jailed for five days after she was unable to pay the \$1,000 in fines she owed for minor traffic violations. The single mother of two says she lost her part-time job at a cleaning service because she was behind bars. "I was scared," Kennedy told msnbc. "I can't make money just grow out of my pockets." Source: <http://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/lawsuit-challenges-mississippi-debtors-prison>

Utah man sentenced for stealing from residents at care facility By [JESSICA MILLER](#) | The Salt Lake Tribune First Published Oct 21 2015 06:45PM • Last Updated Oct 21 2015 10:21 pm Courts » Jordan J. Jack gets 90 days in jail followed by 90 days under house arrest. Share This Article Ogden • A Clearfield man convicted of stealing money from intellectually disabled residents of the group home he supervised was sentenced to jail Wednesday. Before handing down the 180-day sentence, 2nd District Judge Ernie Jones told 29-year-old Jordan Jeffrey Jack that the fact that he violated the trust of vulnerable people was key in the case. "They put you in a position of trust and you took advantage of them," Jones said Wednesday at Jack's sentencing hearing. "... It's not just about the amount of money. It is significant because of who you preyed upon in this case. They were elderly people, they were disabled people. People that relied on you." The After a two-day bench trial in August, Jack was found guilty of seven counts of exploitation of a vulnerable adult, a third-degree felony. Jones also found Jack guilty of communications fraud, a second-degree felony, and misdemeanor theft by deception. The felony convictions carried a possible prison sentence, but Jones suspended the prison time and instead ordered Jack to serve in the Weber County jail. He will spend 90 days behind bars and the other 90 in home confinement. He was also ordered to pay more than \$11,000 in restitution to 14 victims. Jack's attorney, Kelly Booth, had asked Jones to sentence her client to only home confinement and ankle monitoring, saying that he now worked as a stay-at-home dad to his three children since he was fired last year from his position as assistant director at Chrysalis, a Weber County-based group home. Booth told the judge that Jack — who has no other criminal history — took the money from the residents as a way to "keep up with the Joneses." She said he, like many young people living in Utah, felt pressure to marry young, start a family and buy a home. She said many of the items Jack purchased with the stolen money, such as coloring books, stickers and jewelry, were for his wife and children. But assistant attorney general Kaye Lynn Wootton argued that the items Jack bought "were not necessities," and she pointed to evidence that the defendant spent several days in Las Vegas staying in a hotel that cost more than \$400 per night. While working at Chrysalis, prosecutors say Jack used "false receipts and altered financial statements to deceive his employer and steal money from over 14 residents of the group homes he supervised." Wootton said this went on from 2012 until Jack was fired in 2014. On Wednesday, Jack was apologetic and said he was sorry to the victims, to his co-workers and to his family. "I really cared about them," he said of the residents. "I know my actions indicate otherwise. ... I was supposed to be an example and a leader, and I was more of a hypocrite." None of the victims spoke in court Wednesday, but Troy Friden, a Chrysalis area director, told the judge of how difficult it was to notify

their clients and their families of the crimes. He said one mother had asked him not to tell her disabled son about it because he thought so highly of Jack. "These people trusted our employees would take care of their family members," he said. "... It was really their trust that he violated." Source:

<http://www.slttrib.com/news/3087242-155/utah-man-sentenced-for-stealing-from>

R.I. child advocate raises concerns over some group homes Comment 3 Related images Regina M. Costa By Jennifer Bogdan Journal State House Bureau Posted Oct. 22, 2015 @ 11:15 pm PROVIDENCE, R.I. — With months remaining in her tenure as the state's child advocate, Regina M. Costa has chronicled numerous shortcomings in the state Department of Children, Youth and Families and called attention to Liberty Lane, a South Kingstown group home that was shuttered this month after a staff member allegedly assaulted a youth. In her final annual report, Costa, whose five-year term as the watchdog over the state's child welfare system will end March 31, also revealed a nearly year-long investigation into Meadowridge Academy, a Massachusetts group home where some of Rhode Island's most troubled youth are sent. Despite seven complaints about the program — three by Rhode Island Family Court — the state continues to use the facility that housed 15 children at a cost of \$2.4 million in the last fiscal year. Costa said she has recommended that the Family Court individually monitor each of the children in the program intended for adolescents with complex trauma histories, educational and mental health challenges and behavioral problems. She said in a September report she cited concerns including lack of staff experience, the need for significant police intervention and repeated hospitalizations of youth in the program. Related content [Counselor, teen face criminal charges in confrontation that caused closing of South Kin...](#) One of the complaints that led to the investigation stated that a 16-year-old girl placed in the program because she hadn't been going to school didn't attend class for a year while she was there. There were also reports of inappropriate restraint measures, and drug use among the children in the program, Costa said. While Costa declined to name Meadowridge and Liberty Lane, DCYF identified the programs. Michael Raia, a spokesman for the state Office of Health and Human Services, said Liberty Lane, which is operated by Child and Family Services, was shut down Oct. 1 and six youth were removed and placed in alternative housing. The home remains closed while Child Protective Services investigates. Costa said she found the program understaffed and the youth "out of control." Governor Raimondo, who has called for an overhaul of DCYF and spoken about its myriad financial problems, announced earlier this month that she will not reappoint Costa and has launched a search committee to find her replacement. The litany of problems detailed in the annual report references challenges Costa said she encountered throughout her five-year term as she dealt with deteriorating services that she blames on the state's move to purchase services through two large network contracts. "As these changes in the delivery of services to children and families occurred, the staff at the OCA [Office of the Child Advocate] responded by what could only be described as crisis mode on a near daily basis. During the same time, staff at the OCA experienced a great deal of resistance in previously cooperative relationships with the ... senior staff members at DCYF. Strained relations often resulted in stalling or curtailing efforts to collaborate on making improvements in the provision of services to children and families," Costa wrote. "The child advocate's efforts to raise awareness about the deterioration of services for children and families ... were often met with skepticism given the perceived animosity between the department and the OCA. Community providers of services to children and families who attempted to raise awareness about the declining health of children and families in state care under these contracts met similar fates with (DCYF) often imposing consequences and retribution in response to outspokenness." Asked about those statements, Jamia McDonald, who has been selected by Raimondo as the de facto head of DCYF, said since she has taken over the department she has had a cooperative relationship with Costa. "She has sent memos and raised issues for us to address. We have included her and her staff in various meetings and workgroups," McDonald said. But Costa's report also makes mention of at least one group that has not included her. Costa said she has been excluded from internal reviews of DCYF's Child Fatality and Near Fatality Response Team. The group reviews deaths and "near fatalities" of children in state care. Costa said she hasn't been part of any review process since February 2014. Three children have died in state care in 2015. Raia, the spokesman for the Office of Health and Human Services, said all "passed away due to medical issues." Raia said the DCYF response team reviews all deaths of children in state care, including those in 2015. Raia said the membership of the team varies in each case, and there is no set list of team members. Source:

<http://www.providencejournal.com/article/20151022/NEWS/151029705>

Former worker at Bellevue group home charged with sexual assault Posted: Saturday, October 24, 2015 1:00 am [Former worker at Bellevue group home charged with sexual assault](#) By Emily Nohr / World-Herald staff writer The Omaha World-Herald Authorities are accusing a former employee of a Bellevue group home of sexually assaulting one of the home's residents. The Sarpy County Attorney's Office on Friday charged Adrian D. Galbreath, 38, with first-degree sexual assault and abuse of a vulnerable adult. Both are felonies. According to a search warrant filed by a detective with the Bellevue Police Department: Galbreath, who worked at **Hands of the Heartland**, invited the victim to his Bellevue apartment after the victim got off work on Sept. 23. Hands of the Heartland provides services to people with developmental disabilities. The warrant describes the victim as "mentally diminished." Authorities allege that after the victim became intoxicated, Galbreath pushed him down and began to assault him, according to the warrant. Trina Leech, human resource director at Hands of the Heartland, said Galbreath was terminated from his direct support professional position after the allegation arose. "We do take the safety of our clients very seriously," she said. "That's why if there are allegations we try to take immediate action." Source: http://www.omaha.com/news/metro/former-worker-at-bellevue-group-home-charged-with-sexual-assault/article_426beb9e-0f0b-565a-9bc6-c335ed51106f.html

Counselor, teen charged in RI group home confrontation A counselor at the Liberty Lane group home in South Kingstown, where adolescent boys in state care are sent, allegedly picked up a 17-year-old by the throat and punched him in the face because the boy would not leave his office. Comment 0 By Jennifer Bogdan Journal State House Bureau providencejournal.com By Jennifer Bogdan Journal State House Bureau Posted Oct. 23, 2015 at 11:15 PM By Jennifer Bogdan Journal State House Bureau Posted Oct. 23, 2015 at 11:15 PM SOUTH KINGSTOWN, R.I. — A counselor at the Liberty Lane group home where adolescent boys in state care are sent allegedly picked up a 17-year-old by the throat and punched him in the face because the boy would not leave his office. It was that incident described in a Sept. 29 South Kingstown Police Department report that resulted in the state Department of Children, Youth and Families' shutdown of the program the following day. Earlier this week the state confirmed that the group home has been closed while Child Protective Services investigates. According to the police report, the incident unfolded around 7 p.m. when Francis Zwolinski, a 33-year-old resident counselor in the program was seated in a staff office. He asked the juvenile, who is not named in the police report, to leave. When the boy refused, Zwolinski lifted the teen by the throat and "forced him against the wall." The teen reportedly threw up his hands to resist, "which caused Zwolinski to strike him twice in the face with closed fists." Zwolinski then picked up a chair and the teen ran to the kitchen and picked up a knife, and then the two entered a standoff. The teen involved in the incident was charged with felony assault with a dangerous weapon and disorderly conduct. Zwolinski was charged with simple assault, a misdemeanor. He has pleaded not guilty and denied the allegations through his lawyer, Jesse W. Duarte. "We are shocked and dismayed by these outrageous allegations made against my client, an experienced youth services worker, who, as the arrest report indicates, was actually the victim of an assault with a knife that night by the ... complaining witness, while his facility was understaffed and his coworkers stood by idly rather than calling the police," Duarte said. "Mr. Zwolinski firmly maintains that his actions were completely within facility protocol and affirms his innocence." Ken Lombardi, another staff member at the home, told the police that Zwolinski appeared to be the aggressor. He described the way Zwolinski punched the teen as "haymakers," a boxing term for a powerful hit. Duarte said police records state that the 17-year-old is 6 feet, 1 inch tall and 315 pounds. By comparison, Duarte said his client is roughly 5 feet, 10 inches tall and 165 pounds. Police accounts of the incident describe the scene at the home at 46 Liberty Lane as contentious. A 16-year-old boy in the program reportedly interfered with the police during the investigation by shouting obscenities, jumping onto a van and instigating other residents. The boy, who is not identified, was taken into police custody and charged with disorderly conduct and obstructing an officer. The program at Liberty Lane, which was state licensed as a home for eight boys between the ages of 13 and 17, is one of five group homes run by Child and Family Services. Source: <http://www.providencejournal.com/article/20151023/NEWS/151029590>

Ham: DCF problem is foster care system Comment 0 MetroWest Daily News, Framingham, MA Writer Posted Oct. 25, 2015 at 12:38 AM Posted Oct. 25, 2015 at 12:38 AM Posted Oct. 25, 2015 at 12:38 AM I'm screaming. Let's all scream for the plight of the children who have no voice when committed to the care and custody of the Department of Children and Families. The abused and neglected children are being further confused and harmed by placement in foster homes that have little or no ability to help them. It's an empty bed somewhere. With the current scrutiny of DCF even an empty bed will hard to find. The state has to accept the responsibility for the DCF children in need of professional care, mentally, physically, psychologically, perhaps scholastically. Before healing can begin it is necessary to undo the harm that caused them to be ordered to DCF in the first place. To then transfer the frightened children to a strange and possibly negative home environment could add to their trauma. They must be terrified, numb or angry. It is cruel. The tragedies of foster care include the deaths

of children and the couple of young children now in a vegetative state. And that is just in the last few months when the DCF management of children in crisis was exposed. It is reported that the budget for DCF was \$907.6 million last year plus \$2 million is pending for more social workers with 47,000 children under DCF jurisdiction. All the figures need an explanation. To continue to support DCF with more money and staff is to expect a different outcome while denying the real problem which is the current foster care system. The DCF children need professional guidance, treatment and understanding to overcome the present issues and to achieve a healthy future. Perhaps in a campus setting or the use of existing agencies that specialize in the welfare of children. The current DCF system has proven to be a dangerous failure. PRISICLLA J. HAM Shrewsbury Source: <http://www.metrowestdailynews.com/article/20151025/OPINION/151027084>

Our Voice: Privacy law can hinder foster care safety The Desert Sun Editorial Board 5:02 p.m. PDT October 24, 2015 Buy Photo The entrance to a Riverside County Department of Public Social Services building in Rubidoux. (Photo: Brett Kelman/The Desert Sun) Buy Photo 33 CONNECT [4 TWEET 1 LINKEDIN](#) COMMENT EMAIL MORE A recent two-day series by Desert Sun reporter Brett Kelman shed light on a troubling situation involving some of the state's most vulnerable residents. Kelman found that in Riverside County and across California, the overwhelming majority of Child Protective Services investigations end after allegations of abuse are unsubstantiated. In Riverside County, social workers investigate tens of thousands of parents each year, but more than three-fourths of those investigations end up with either "inconclusive" or "unfounded" findings. In foster homes, where the county's responsibility to wards of the state is even more pronounced, only four percent of complaints are substantiated. Ideally, one might look at these numbers and think that clearly the bulk of these claims are bogus and thankfully, children in the foster care system mostly remain safe. But experts say that in the 80 percent or so of cases that were unsubstantiated over a five-year period in Riverside County are cases of real abuse that just got away. Kelman found one such apparent case. A Coachella Valley man accused in what prosecutors deem one of the most notorious Southern California child porn rings in memory was the subject of a Riverside County child abuse complaint investigation. That probe of a report of a Desert Hot Springs man allegedly molesting two boys was closed as "inconclusive" even though the two investigating social workers found, as they had been told by the hotline caller, that the foster parent's computer contained photos of other children in their underwear. The social workers were concerned, but apparently not enough. The man kept his adopted boys, as well as his foster care license. Months later, John David Yoder is behind bars awaiting trial in an alleged Desert Hot Springs child porn ring that authorities believe victimized as many as 15 youths. Another man, Noland Harper of Virginia, was sentenced recently to 24 years in prison after pleading to participating in a child exploitation enterprise. Two others accused in the case -- Erick Monsivais of Los Angeles and William Thompson of Nevada, the alleged ringleader -- also await trial. Part of the problem appears rooted in California's strict privacy laws regarding Child Protective Services cases. In almost all cases, the substance of investigations is kept confidential, making it difficult to know if social workers are overlooking alarming evidence of abuse. In California, all CPS reports are automatically confidential, with disclosure exceptions for law enforcement and hospital officials but few others. There are at least 17 states where CPS officials would be free to answer questions about their investigations in circumstances similar to the Yoder case, according to a state-by-state analysis of confidentiality laws. In some of these states, details from the Yoder investigation would be unsealed because he was arrested. In other states, Social Services could answer questions about the case because The Desert Sun already knew Yoder had been investigated. But in Riverside County, neither of those exemptions exist. Despite public interest in knowing what went wrong in the Yoder investigation, these answers are forbidden by law. Some child welfare experts argue that absolute confidentiality in such cases is vital because children and families deserve privacy, even if they are being investigated. That's a noble ideal, but it must not be used as a shield to protect those who should be held accountable in circumstances like the Yoder case. Someone should have referred that case higher. Hiding behind the shield of child privacy lets this person or persons off the hook. Gov. Jerry Brown this month signed AB 403, which aims to reform California's foster care system in various ways, such as boosting training for foster families, setting new standards for homes and requiring group homes and Foster Family Agencies -- corporations that run multiple group homes -- to be accredited. Lawmakers have shown they can act to reform this social program to make it stronger. Lifting the veil of secrecy and allowing watchdog agencies and child advocates to help police those who are supposed to be guarding these vulnerable children should be the next order of business for lawmakers in Sacramento. Source: <http://www.desertsun.com/story/opinion/editorials/2015/10/24/our-voice-privacy-law-foster-care/74402810/>

FOX10 News Investigates PART 1: Saving Youth Foundation Posted: Oct 29, 2015 7:18 PM PDT Updated: Oct 29, 2015 7:19 PM PDT By Renee Dials, FOX10 News Anchor BioEmail.Connect.Biography.renee.dials@fox10tv.com The sleeping quarters of children in the Saving Youth Foundation. Three people affiliated with the facility have been charged with aggravated abuse. Also on the Web [Exclusive details on Mobile abuse investigation](#) MOBILE, AL (WALA) - Three people charged with aggravated abuse at a residential youth facility in Mobile will go on trial in a few months. MOREAdditional LinksPoll According to the Mobile County District Attorney's office it's the first time the owners of such a facility have been charged with felony child abuse in Mobile County. Supporters of Saving Youth Foundation say the church-based operation is responsible for positive changes in the lives of children in its care, but, the facility was shut down by DHR, and a police investigation led to criminal indictments that allege dozens of kids were subjected to physical and emotional abuse for profit. More than 30 children, most of whom were brought to Mobile from out-of state were removed from Saving Youth Foundation in March when the Alabama Department of Human Resources shut down the facility amid allegations of abuse. Owners John Young Junior, William Knott, and Aleshia Moffett were indicted by a Mobile County Grand Jury on 24 charges of aggravated abuse. The indictments allege children were kept in isolation for unreasonable periods of time, placed in unreasonable restraints, forced to do excessive exercise, and even denied prescription medication. The felony charges are new, but the allegations involving the church-based operation and the three defendants are not. "I was terrified at this point and then I said no I won't, and then he hit me in the head, the first time, and then he hit me in the head again after I stopped and surrendered." That's what teenager Madison Litsky told Miami reporter Bob Norman in 2013. Litsky said Pastor Young hit her so hard in the face she almost passed out. Another teen, William Vargas, said he was attacked by William Knott when he couldn't keep up with the exercise. "So after he started choking me he threw me on the floor, and when I was on the floor he punched me on the side of the head," William Vargas said. Those are just some of the allegations reported while the facility was located in Prichard, and called Restoration Youth Academy. "Punching them in the face, punching them in the stomach repeatedly. They would put them in isolation in their underwear and leave them for several days," Michelle Simmons said. FOX10 News Reporter Renee Dials talked to Simmons at her home outside Atlanta recently. Simmons said she didn't find out about the alleged abuse until after she removed her 15-year-old son from the facility. "I just think he was afraid of what the consequences would be," Simmons said. Simmons said her child's arm was broken by another teen at the boot camp. Simmons found out about the injury three weeks later when her son came home for a visit. The hospital report indicates the teenager said he didn't tell anyone until a few days earlier. But, Simmons believes the staff at the boot camp knew about the injury. "What they would do is if he acted up or did something they would come and pull his arm or poke him in the arm for punishment," she said. "As I stated we intend to plead not guilty to all charges, and they have hired me for the representation of their defense, thank you. Bye," Defense attorney Marcus Foxx said. Foxx did not have much to say about the current charges against the three defendants, following a court hearing in September. Young has repeatedly denied the allegations of abuse. This is what he told FOX10 News shortly after police raided SYF in March. "I don't really blame the kids. They want their freedom. They want to go smoke their pot and go out on the streets and go on Facebook and everything and a facility like this is a controlled environment," Young said. Even though the facility is now shut down church members say they still support their pastor and the former boot camp facility. "Because I know that the facility was run to help children hands down. Children would come here one way, they would leave differently," Lakeshia Peters said. "I know he's putting forth every effort that he has, every resource that he has available. He's an awesome man of God," Marquis Jacobs said. "These letters that you see right here were letters that were sneaked to me by the boys," Charles Kennedy said. Former Prichard Police Captain Charles Kennedy has been trying for years to bring attention to what he called a serious threat to children he discovered long before the boot camp changed its name and moved to Mobile. "It is one of the most frustrating things that I have had. I was a police officer for many, many years, and this is probably one of the most frustrating things that I have ever dealt with in law enforcement," Kennedy said. Kennedy is glad the recent investigation has resulted in criminal indictments. "There's been this three year lack of action that finally, finally something was done," he said. The three defendants are scheduled to go on trial in February. Saving Youth Foundation is the new name for the same group that started out in Prichard under another name, Restoration Youth Academy. It appears one of the defendants got his start with teen boot camps in another state. Learn more about that in Part 2 of our special FOX10 News investigation. All content © 2015, WALA, Mobile, AL. (A Meredith Corporation Station). All Rights Reserved. Read more: <http://www.fox10tv.com/story/30386115/fox10-news-investigates#ixzz3q704ezca>

FOX10 News Investigates: Part 2: Saving Youth Foundation Posted: Oct 29, 2015 7:20 PM PDT Updated: Oct 29, 2015 7:20 PM PDT By Renee Dials, FOX10 News Anchor BioEmail.Connect.Biography.renee.dials@fox10tv.com. The sleeping quarters of children in the Saving Youth Foundation. Three people affiliated with the facility have been charged with aggravated abuse. MOBILE, AL (WALA) - Three people accused of abusing children at a residential facility in Mobile are headed to trial. The new allegations stem from a long history of controversy surrounding the operation and its owners. MORE Additional LinksPoll An application that was filed in 2013 to establish the Saving Youth Foundation as a non-profit corporation in Mobile. The application is on file with Probate Court in Mobile, and the Secretary of State in Montgomery. It's the only document FOX10 News was able to locate for the residential facility for troubled teens. One of the SYF leaders recently indicted for alleged abuse was personally named in a federal lawsuit involving another boot camp facility in Mississippi. That was just before he came to the Alabama gulf coast to open up a similar business with the other two defendants. "He started choking me. He picked me up from the floor and started choking me. He started stomping me on my back. I still have nightmares about it every night," William Vargas said. Vargas told Miami television reporter Bob Norman he was beaten by drill instructor William Knott. The alleged abuse happened at the Christian based facility that was then called Restoration Youth Academy. Knott has been the focus of complaints from other teens. It apparently started at another facility in Lucedale, where Knott worked. The Bethel Boys Academy and the dormitories that once stood on land on Mill Street Extension in Lucedale, Mississippi are now gone, but the people in the surrounding community still remember the controversial facility and, its chief drill instructor, William Knott. "Bathrooms, shower houses, they had rec rooms, everything was built right here. We just tore all these slabs up back in the winter," Lee Gibson explained. Gibson said the Bethel Academy closed about 10 years ago. He doesn't know if the allegations of abuse were true, but he does remember the tough drill instructor. "They was kind of rough on them," Gibson said. Another neighbor Donnie Barry said kids often ran away from the home. Sometimes they ran to nearby homes including his. "They wanted somebody to help them, the guy was mean to them you know. But, you couldn't get involved with it, personally you couldn't get involved," Barry said. The allegations in Mississippi resulted in a federal lawsuit against the academy and William Knott. In 2006 a judge issued a 900 thousand dollar judgment for the boy, who according to the civil complaint was the victim of torture. A few years later Knott along with John Young opened RYA in Prichard. The operation moved to Mobile in 2013. Mobile County Health Department officials say the owners never received the required clearance from the health department to serve food. There is no city license on file for SYF. City spokesperson, George Talbot told FOX10 News the facility might not need a license if it was under DHR for example. But, DHR said SYF was not affiliated with the state agency. And in fact, it was DHR that shut it down and removed the children in March. While the workers at state run facilities are licensed and accredited, Young told a Miami station that didn't apply to his business. "Because we're a Christian based program, we're not required to have a state license with our program," Young said. But a state official told me even church run facilities are required to file for exemption, which according to the State Department of Revenue, SYF has not done. I also checked with the IRS which said it had no record of any exemption for the business. "I thought I was doing the right thing for him, you know," Michelle Simmons said. Simmons said she paid more than a thousand dollars a month to keep her son in the facilities care. She says she didn't find out about the alleged abuse until she took him out last year. "I had no inclination anything was amiss there," she said. But Lakesha Peters said the allegations have not shaken her faith in Saving Youth Foundation, or its pastor who is now charged with abuse, along with two others. According to Peters one of the teens removed from SYF has been back since the facility was shut down. "He came back to tell Bishop Young what an impact he made on his life. It was like a Tuesday night bible study, not just on Sunday. It was a Tuesday and he came back on Sunday, and we've seen him ever since then," Peters said. John Young, William Knott, and Alesha Moffett are all scheduled to go on trial in February. The teen residential facility that was shut down in Mobile is not the only one to come under criticism in the country. We'll take a look at what's being done in other areas to protect children from potential institutional abuse in part three of our FOX10 News investigation. Read more: <http://www.fox10tv.com/story/30386154/fox10-news-investigates-part-2#ixzz3q715aor2>

Youth group leader sentenced on child porn charges [NEXT STORY Baltimore Ravens' safety Matt Elam suspended](#) Text Size: [ASmall Text](#) [AMedium Text](#) [ALarge Text](#) File photo Photos A 63-year-old Cockeysville man who is a youth group leader at a local church is charged with possession and distribution of hundreds of thousands of pornographic images of extremely young children. BALTIMORE —A Baltimore County youth group leader who pleaded guilty to child porn charges in July was sentenced Monday. [Cockeysville man enters plea in child porn case](#) A 63-year-old Cockeysville man who was a youth group leader at a local church pleaded guilty Tuesday to distribution of child pornography. [More Baltimore Co. man charged on child porn charges](#) A 63-year-old Cockeysville man who is a youth group leader at a local church is charged with possession and distribution of hundreds of thousands of pornographic images of extremely young children. [More](#) A federal judge sentenced Gregory Wayne Gibson, 63, of Cockeysville, to five years in prison followed by 20 years of supervised release. Gibson must also register as a sex offender. For the past several years, Gibson was a volunteer youth group leader at a church in Baltimore County, working with children ages 9 through 18. Gibson also assisted with childcare at his wife's unlicensed home day care, which included infants. Authorities said Gibson put videos on a file-sharing program that depicted girls engaging in sexually explicit conduct. Authorities said they searched Gibson's computers and other equipment and found more than 260,000 images and videos of minors engaging in sexually explicit conduct. Prosecutors said that officials found child erotica and images and videos depicting infants and toddlers engaging in sex acts with adults, including images and videos depicting bondage and other acts. Source: <http://www.wbal.com/news/youth-group-leader-sentenced-on-child-porn-charges/36057654>

How N.Y.'s Biggest For-Profit Nursing Home Group Flourishes Despite a Record of Patient Harm The state's "character-and-competence" reviews are supposed to weed out operators with histories of violations and fines—but regulators don't always act on the full story. by Allegra Abramo and Jennifer Lehman, special to ProPublica, Oct. 27, 2015, 8 a.m. Charlie Stewart lost most of his leg to a wound that turned gangrenous during a 2013 nursing home stay. (Allegra Abramo for ProPublica) Charlie Stewart was looking forward to getting out of the nursing home in time for his 60th birthday. On his planned release day, in late 2012, the Long Island facility instead called Stewart's wife to say he was being sent to the hospital with a fever. When his wife, Jeanne, met him there, the stench of rotting flesh made it difficult to sit near her husband. The small wounds on his right foot that had been healing when Stewart entered the nursing home now blackened his entire shin. "When I saw it at the hospital ... I almost threw up," Jeanne Stewart said. "It was disgusting. I said, 'It looks like somebody took a match to it.'" Doctors told Stewart the infection in his leg was poisoning his body. To save his life, they would have to amputate above the knee. Stewart had spent about six weeks recovering from a diabetic emergency at Avalon Gardens Rehabilitation & Health Care Center on Long Island. The nursing home is one of several in a group of for-profit homes affiliated with SentosaCare, LLC, that have a record of repeat fines, violations and complaints for deficient care in recent years. Despite that record, SentosaCare founder Benjamin Landa, partner Bent Philipson and family members have been able to expand their nursing home ownerships in New York, easily clearing regulatory reviews meant to be a check on repeat offenders. SentosaCare is now the state's largest nursing home network, with at least 25 facilities and nearly 5,400 beds. That unhindered expansion highlights the continued weakness of nursing home oversight in New York, an investigation by ProPublica found, and exposes gaps in the state's system for vetting parties who apply to buy shares in homes. State law requires a "character-and-competence" review of buyers before a change in ownership can go through. To pass muster, other health care facilities associated with the buyers must have a record of high-quality care. The decision maker in these deals is the state's [Public Health and Health Planning Council](#), a body of appointed officials, many from inside the health care industry. The council has substantial leverage to press nursing home applicants to improve quality, but an examination of dozens of transactions in recent years show that power is seldom used. Moreover, records show that the council hasn't always had complete information about all the violations and fines at nursing homes owned by or affiliated with applicants it reviewed. That's because the Department of Health, which prepares character-and-competence recommendations for the council, doesn't report them all. The department's assessments of Landa and other owners of SentosaCare homes have routinely found that the facilities provided a "substantially consistent high level of care"—the standard owners must meet to receive council approval. Yet the agency's assessments in 15 separate ownership applications since 2013 did not mention at least 20 federal fines paid by the group's homes, records show. In more than a dozen cases, the department reported "no repeat violations," even when a SentosaCare home had been cited multiple times for the same serious deficiency. Many of the nursing home deals ProPublica reviewed received a go-ahead despite rules saying they "shall not be" approved when facilities have repeat violations that put residents at risk. Under a narrow interpretation of the rules, however, the department still recommends approval if violations aren't strictly identical or were promptly addressed. SentosaCare's owners or associates weren't the only applicants to get incomplete vetting, but the council has had repeated opportunities to scrutinize their records. Landa, Philipson or relatives bought shares in a dozen homes in 2013 and 2014, records show. Advocates for nursing home patients say that instead of a backstop, New York's approval process has become a rubber stamp. "The law establishes mechanisms for at least a moderate review of an applicant's character and competence," said Richard Molloy, director of the Long Term

Care Community Coalition in New York. “The failure to provide complete information on a provider’s past performance fundamentally undermines the review process.” Mollot’s group published a recent report saying the Health Department has one of the [nation’s lowest rates](#) of citing nursing home operators for deficiencies in care. New York is also among [a minority of states](#) that don’t mandate minimum staffing ratios, even though research shows a strong link between nursing staff and residents’ well-being. Charlie Stewart with his wife, Jeanne, and their cat, Maris. (Allegra Abramo for ProPublica) Thirteen of SentosaCare’s homes (though not Avalon Gardens) have Medicare’s bottom score for nurse staffing. Inspection reports also show that at least seven residents have wandered away from the SentosaCare affiliated facilities in recent years — including one who froze to death in 2011. Inspectors and prosecutors have found that staff falsified records in some cases. Dozens of patients at SentosaCare homes have experienced long delays before receiving necessary care; some ended up in hospitals. The Stewarts said the staff at Avalon Gardens showed “no sense of urgency” when they complained about missed meals, soiled sheets and unanswered call bells. Even though nurses dressed the wound on Charlie’s leg daily, and a doctor checked it each week, no one warned them about its worsening condition, the Stewarts said. Dr. Kris Alman, a retired endocrinologist who reviewed Stewart’s medical records and photographs at ProPublica’s request, said that the two quarter-sized lesions on his foot when he was admitted to Avalon Gardens could not have “become what it did overnight.” That the condition “progressed as far as it did, with him coming in septic and needing an above-the-knee amputation, was inexcusable,” Alman said. Landa’s attorney and business partner, Howard Fensterman, declined to comment on Stewart’s case for reasons of patient privacy. Fensterman defended Avalon Gardens and other SentosaCare facilities, however, saying that when inspectors have found problems, the homes quickly addressed them and secured state approval of correction plans. Fensterman also said that SentosaCare does not have “ownership or control” over the facilities in its network and only contracts with them to provide administrative and rehabilitation consulting, regulatory advice and purchasing services. Records show, however, that Landa and Philipson, or family members, have ownership stakes or directorships in nearly all of SentosaCare’s facilities. Fensterman also co-owns 14 nursing homes with Landa in several states, including one SentosaCare home. Fensterman is a former member of the state health council, as is Landa, who entered the nursing home business in the late 1980s and emerged as one of the sector’s biggest players over the next decade. Landa, Philipson or family members now hold stakes in at least 33 nursing homes in New York and an equal number in nine other states. In 2013, the latest year for which state data is available, homes under the SentosaCare umbrella paid the company more than \$11.5 million for financial, staffing and other services, and spent nearly \$630,000 with Fensterman’s law firm. The nation’s [\\$137 billion](#) nursing home industry has made major improvements since the landmark 1987 federal Nursing Home Reform Act imposed mandates to combat abuse and neglect. But the industry, which draws heavily on [taxpayer funding](#) via Medicare and Medicaid, still struggles to provide safe care for many. One-third of Medicare patients suffered preventable harm within a month of being admitted to nursing homes for short-term rehabilitation, according to a 2014 [study](#) by the Department of Health and Human Services’ inspector general. The harm cost Medicare \$2.8 billion for hospitalizations alone in 2011, the study estimated. New York spends about [\\$13 billion each year](#) on the state’s 627 nursing homes, which collectively care for more than 100,000 residents. The Department of Health is charged with day-to-day oversight of safety, but patient advocates say the agency lacks the staff and expertise to do the job adequately. SentosaCare homes, which took in nearly \$538 million from Medicare and Medicaid in 2013, aren’t the only facilities in the state with repeat violations and low staffing, and several of the company’s homes have above-average ratings on Medicare’s [Nursing Home Compare](#) web site, which rates them with one to five stars. (State-by-state inspection reports can be searched on ProPublica’s [Nursing Home Inspector](#), which also lists deficiencies by severity level.) But federal data through August shows that 11 of SentosaCare’s homes exceeded the state average of 24 violations over the past three years, and three had double that number. SentosaCare’s New York Nursing Homes Medicare rates nursing homes on a scale of 1 (bottom performers) to 5 stars (best). Here are ratings for the homes [currently listed as part of SentosaCare’s network in New York](#). [See what’s in the ratings](#). Home City Beds Overall Score Health Inspection Nurse Staffing Quality [Avalon Gardens Rehabilitation & Health Care Center](#) Smithtown 353 2 1 4 2 [Bay Park Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation](#) Bronx 480 2 2 1 5 [Brookhaven Nursing and Rehabilitation Center](#) Far Rockaway 298 3 2 2 5 [Eastchester Rehabilitation and Health Care Center](#) Bronx 200 4 4 3 3 [Forest Hills Care Center](#) Forest Hills 100 4 4 1 5 [Garden Care Center](#) Franklin Square 150 2 2 1 5 [Golden Gate Rehabilitation and Health Care Center](#) Staten Island 238 4 4 2 2 [Grace Plaza Nursing and Rehabilitation Center](#) Great Neck 214 4 4 2 4 [Little Neck Care Center](#) Little Neck 120 5 5 1 5 [Nassau Extended Care Facility](#) Hempstead 280 2 3 1 4 [New Surfside Nursing Home](#) Far Rockaway 183 2 2 1 5 [Park Avenue Extended Care Facility](#) Long Beach 240 5 5 1 5 [Parkview Care and Rehab Center](#) Massapequa 169 1 1 1 4 [Pathways Nursing & Rehabilitation Center](#) Niskayuna 112 4 3 4 4 [Rockville Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation Center](#) Rockville Centre 66 3 2 4 4 [Seagate Rehabilitation and Nursing Center](#) Brooklyn 360 3 4 1 4 [South Point Plaza Nursing & Rehabilitation Center](#) Island Park 185 1 1 1 2 [South Shore Rehabilitation and Nursing Center](#) Freeport 100 4 3 2 5 [Spring Creek Rehabilitation and Nursing Care Center](#) Brooklyn 188 1 2 1 2 [The Grove at Valhalla Rehabilitation and Nursing Center](#) Valhalla 160 4 4 3 4 [The Hamptons Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing](#) South Hampton 280 3 3 2 2 [Throgs Neck Extended Care Facility](#) Bronx 205 4 5 1 4 [Townhouse Center For Rehabilitation & Nursing](#) Uniondale 280 1 3 1 1 [White Plains Center for Nursing Care](#) White Plains 88 3 2 4 4 [Woodmere Rehabilitation and Health Care Center](#) Woodmere 336 1 1 3 4 Sources: [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services data as of Oct. 1, 2015](#); [Nursing Home Inspector](#) The most critical nursing home deficiencies are known as “[immediate jeopardy](#)” violations — incidents or conditions that have caused or are likely to cause the “serious injury, harm, impairment, or death” of patients. Less than 6 percent of all New York homes were cited for four or more immediate-jeopardy violations in recent years. By comparison, Avalon Gardens was cited for 10 immediate-jeopardy violations in the three years ending in August, the third-highest number in the state for that period. Two other SentosaCare homes — Woodmere Rehabilitation & Health Care Center and South Point Plaza Nursing and Rehabilitation Center — each have been cited for four. Elopements — where residents leave the premises without the knowledge of a home’s operators — have been a repeat problem for Avalon and Woodmere, where SentosaCare co-owner Philipson has been listed as longtime managing partner. Two days before Thanksgiving in 2011, a group of Woodmere residents walked to a nearby school for a holiday lunch. When aides took a head count, one of the 19 residents, a 55-year-old with dementia named Dennis Buckham, was missing. Buckham wasn’t found until four days later, face down on a Brooklyn sidewalk, frozen and without a pulse. He died of cardiac arrest and hypothermia, according to the chief medical examiner’s report cited in the Department of Health [investigation](#). Fensterman said Woodmere overhauled its policies and procedures, and that the state signed off on an official plan of correction. Two years later, however, a 64-year-old Woodmere resident with schizophrenia left a secure unit 10 times over three months. Staffers found her in the basement and at the front door, but according to the state’s report, the home did not investigate, change her care plan or conduct a doctor-ordered psychiatric evaluation. About a month later, the woman walked past a security guard and was found in the road. Fensterman said no harm resulted, the home fired the security guard who let the resident slip out, and the state again approved a correction plan. Residents also wandered from Avalon Gardens in 2011 and 2013, state [inspection reports](#) show. In all, at least seven residents wandered away from SentosaCare facilities between 2011 and 2014, according to state inspection reports. The reports also document dozens of cases of delayed treatment at SentosaCare homes. At Woodmere in 2012, staffers failed to promptly send four patients to the hospital, two of whom died. Two years later, a resident at Parkview Care and Rehabilitation Center in Nassau County [suffered from a collapsed lung](#) for four days while staff failed to check results from a chest X-ray or assess his breathing or vital signs. Fensterman said that each SentosaCare home is distinct. “There is no pattern of delayed treatment among facilities,” he said, “as each facility cited had separate issues, which in no way relate to each other.” He said the Health Department found the incidents to be isolated and that all were corrected. On multiple occasions, state inspectors discovered that staff at SentosaCare facilities tried to cover up lapses in care — allegedly [lying about elopements](#) or the failure to spot bedsores, for example. After a 2012 investigation by New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, the administrator of The Hamptons Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing, a SentosaCare home in Suffolk County, pled guilty to falsifying records after a resident wandered away and was found walking on the highway five hours later. The administrator was sentenced to a \$2,500 fine and probation. In June, after another [investigation](#) by Schneiderman’s office, four Woodmere nurses were arrested for falsely signing off on forms saying they had checked on a resident who fell three times in a week and ended up hospitalized. Three pleaded guilty to misdemeanors; the fourth case is pending. Researchers and patient advocates say that insufficient staffing is one of the biggest contributors to poor outcomes for nursing home residents. The issue is important enough that the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) tracks staffing and has determined that [less than 4.1 hours](#) of total daily nursing care per long-term resident increases the risk of bed sores, weight loss and other types of harm to patients. “Direct bedside nursing home staff is probably the most important factor in nursing home care — end of story,” said Dr. Michele Bellantoni, clinical director of geriatrics at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. Only three SentosaCare homes meet the 4.1-hour threshold, however. Six provide less than three hours of daily nursing care per resident, according to data the facilities self-report to CMS. Fensterman said CMS’ overall staff ratings are not a good measure for comparing homes because they don’t reflect the different nursing needs of homes’ patients or high scores on other quality measures. As an example, he cited [Park Avenue Extended Care](#), another SentosaCare facility, which CMS rated with one star on staffing but five stars for health quality, which

tracks data such as how often patients get bedsores or infections. On the other end of the scale is Avalon, with nearly 45 percent more complaints and double the number of complaint-related citations per 100 beds than the averages found in New York homes. In its most recent inspection, this past June, Avalon was cited for 21 deficiencies. Among them: Eight residents received medications up to three hours late because the facility did not have sufficient nursing staff. Tom Bennett, 60, spent about a month in short-term rehabilitation at Avalon Gardens in 2013. Obesity and a back injury made it impossible for the Long Island man to get out of bed. In an interview, he said he didn't receive regular sponge baths and sometimes sat in his own feces for hours because no one was available to help. "They were all over-worked. They were telling me, you know, we just don't have enough help to take care of everybody," Bennett said. "And you can hear the buzzers going off constantly — meep, meep, meep, meep. And the aides are just like running from room to room to room." Fensterman declined to comment about Bennett's situation. State records list SentosaCare partners Landa and Philipson as co-owners of Avalon Gardens, each with an interest of more than 30 percent. In 2013, the home reported paying \$1 million to SentosaCare for services and \$90,000 to Fensterman's firm. Although New York doesn't mandate minimum staffing ratios, federal law says homes must have "sufficient staff" to "attain or maintain the highest practicable physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being of each resident." Patient advocates say that vague standard is one reason that the state rarely cites homes for insufficient staffing. Health Department officials, in response to an email asking about the agency's citation rate, also noted the lack of specific minimum staffing rules. Avalon Gardens and a second SentosaCare home, South Point Plaza Nursing and Rehabilitation Center on Long Island, were among only 29 cited specifically for insufficient staffing in the past three years. Patient advocates say lack of staff is one of the most common complaints from residents and that state inspectors should be following federal guidance, which instructs them to look for staffing issues "whenever quality of care problems have been discovered." Advocacy groups and the [state's biggest nurses' union](#) have pushed for mandatory staffing ratios, and "[safe-staffing](#)" bills have been introduced in the New York Legislature for at least a decade, according to the office of Assemblyman Richard Gottfried, D-Manhattan, the health committee chairman. Hospitals and nursing homes have objected, saying the mandates [would be too costly](#). Mollot said that while legislating a staffing floor would help, the key is whether the Health Department does more to police the problem. If a new staffing law "just becomes another requirement that's not enforced," he said, "what good is it?" When nursing home ownership changes hands in New York, character-and-competence reviews are supposed to provide an important checkpoint. State law gives the Public Health and Health Planning Council the power to bar new owners or directors based on the compliance record of any facility they are "affiliated" with. "If some bad actor wanted to buy a new nursing home," said Susan Regan, a lawyer who spent 18 years on council, "we could say no." Except the council seldom says "no." ProPublica's review of Health Department and council records did not turn up any nursing home ownership applications within the last five years that were rejected because of lapses in patient care. In most cases, the council — 24 volunteers appointed by the governor — follows the department's recommendations. Although the department's reviews summarize past violations and fines at an applicant's related facilities, they typically conclude there is a "substantially consistent high quality of care." Regulations say applicants "[shall not](#)" receive such a finding if a facility's violations were "recurrent or were not promptly corrected." But the council doesn't always get a look at the complete record. Thanks to home [purchases](#) and shuffling of [ownership shares](#), Landa, Philipson, their family members and other owners of SentosaCare facilities have come up for council reviews a dozen times since 2013. In addition to omitting mention of at least 20 federal fines paid by SentosaCare homes, the department's reviews reported "no repeat violations" a dozen times when there had been multiple citations for the same problems. Since 2011, Woodmere has been cited and fined several times for the same class of violations that put residents in immediate jeopardy, including giving unnecessary medications and failing to protect residents from falls. The home paid more than \$80,000 in federal fines, which are shared with the state. In 2013, the federal government also temporarily halted payments for new admissions at Woodmere, a stiff penalty for homes with ongoing problems. None of those actions was noted in character-and-competence summaries provided to council members on at least three occasions in 2013 and 2014, when Landa, Philipson and others associated with Woodmere applied to buy shares of other nursing homes. Instead, the [department wrote](#) that Woodmere had "no enforcements" or made no mention of the home. In each case, the department recommended approval, and the council voted in favor without any objections. Records list Landa as a director and Philipson as the managing partner of Woodmere. Fensterman, who served on the council from 2010 until 2014, recused himself from votes involving business partners and clients. When SentosaCare's South Point Plaza was [part of reviews](#) in 2013 and 2014, the department also said it had "no repeat enforcements," even though the home had been cited and fined more than once for residents having pressure sores. Although three state fines were noted, an additional \$90,000 in federal fines and one Medicare payment denial were not included in the reviews. Asked about the omissions, the department initially said its character-and-competence process includes federal investigations and fines. In a later statement, it said federal fines are not currently included, but that its policy is being reviewed. The agency began listing them in council papers in February, it said in an email, but only "for informational purposes." A review of dozens of health council applications shows that the department doesn't always flag serious violations if there was no state fine, or if the amount isn't finalized. The state did not settle \$18,000 in fines for elopements at Woodmere and Avalon until last month, more than two years after the incidents. Recent character-and-competence reviews did not mention pending fines or report that the elopements had occurred. About a year ago, the department began appending copies of its website pages on citations and quality ratings to council review documents. A list of deficiencies and their severity isn't always included. Concerning what it counts as a repeat enforcement, the agency said that while some violations may fall in the same category, they are not necessarily the same. That is consistent with its reviews, which sometimes note that violations were not "identical." Mollot said it was "extremely alarming" that violations and fines might be omitted. In interviews, three former or current council members expressed uncertainty about what standards apply in character-and-competence reviews. With dozens of projects and ownership changes to vote on at each monthly meeting, council members must rely on the department's information to do their jobs. For many of her years on the council, Regan chaired the establishment committee, which reviews applications to buy or build facilities. Members would often ask for more details about applicants' histories, she said, "but what you do about it is difficult." Operators argue that they have paid their fines and corrected deficiencies, she said, or that repeat violations were not connected. "I would argue, you know what, if you're in business to find every opportunity to game the standards, and do the minimum, and give the shoddiest care you can possibly give while still getting out from under the deficiency, it should raise a question of whether you should hold a license," Regan said. Arthur Levin, a current establishment committee member, said that he and others are increasingly asking the Health Department for information about quality of care, not just violations, especially for dialysis centers. Levin is director of the Center for Medical Consumers and the council's lone representative from a patient group. "At the very least, let it be the basis of a question to an applicant: 'What are you going to do to do better?'" Levin said. Three years ago, the council [recommended changes](#) to character-and-competence reviews as part of a regulatory overhaul requested by Gov. Andrew Cuomo. Among the proposals was one to give the department and council more discretion to disqualify applicants for patterns of violations across multiple facilities affiliated with an applicant. "When a proposed owner or trustee presents affiliations with a health care facility or agency that has a pattern of, or multiple, enforcements, or a sub-standard quality record, there should be a presumption of disqualification which may be rebutted in limited circumstances," says the recommendation, which is still on the shelf. Recent versions of the safe-staffing bill would [expand character-and-competence](#) reviews to consider not only staffing but worker safety violations like those that resulted in 13 [citations](#) and \$24,600 in fines to Avalon Gardens in 2013. In his short stay at Avalon Gardens, Charlie Stewart remembers waiting for hours for help getting from his bed to the toilet. One time, when no one answered the call bell, he started yelling, he said. Still no one came. Eventually he decided to crawl across the floor to the bathroom rather than soil the bed. "When you need help and it's not coming, you know, your reality changes immediately," said Stewart. "It's not nice feeling helpless. And several times in that place, I gotta say, I felt like I was helpless." On multiple occasions, Stewart said, no one brought him dinner, even though he needed to eat regularly because of his diabetes. His wife, Jeanne, said she thought pain medications were making him forgetful. But he kept calling. "I might have been drugged, but I know I wasn't fed, 'cause I'm starving," he recalls telling his wife. "I felt more could have been done sooner," Jeanne said of her husband's care. "And it just shouldn't have gotten as far as it did." (Allegra Abramo for ProPublica) Fensterman said privacy laws prohibited SentosaCare from responding to specific questions about Stewart's care. Jeanne said she called the Health Department while Charlie was still at Avalon to complain about the missed meals and lack of help getting to the bathroom. When a representative finally called back to follow up on her complaint, she told the caller she was sitting next to her husband in the hospital as he recovered from an amputation. A few weeks later, she said, a letter arrived saying the state hadn't substantiated the initial complaint. Furious, Jeanne threw it away. Today, Stewart is learning how to walk up stairs on his prosthetic leg. Jeanne limits the hours in her job at a grocery store so she can care for her husband. She still finds the episode difficult to talk about. "I felt more could have been done sooner," she said of her husband's care. "And it just shouldn't have gotten as far as it did." Charlie Stewart agreed. "That's what I sincerely wish — that this doesn't happen to anybody else." Allegra Abramo is a freelance writer and photographer living in Seattle. Jennifer

Lehman is a writer living in New York City. Source: <http://www.propublica.org/article/new-york-for-profit-nursing-home-group-flourishes-despite-patient-harm>

Senate Bill Would Overhaul Florida's Foster-Care Placements to Child-Centered Approach [FlaglerLive](#) | October 27, 2015 Where next? (Rianne van de Kerkhof) A bill aimed at reducing instability for foster children has started to move forward in the Florida Senate and would require the child-welfare system to match kids with their best placement options — rather than, as critics charge, the first beds that are handy. Sponsored by the Children, Families and Elder Affairs Committee, the bill (SPB 7018) would require the use of a process to determine which settings — from relatives or friends to foster families or group homes — offer abused children the best chance to recover and thrive. Under the bill, the Florida Department of Children and Families would work with privatized community-based care lead agencies to create what's called a continuum of care for foster kids, with options ranging from adoption by close relatives to being placed in therapeutic group homes. In part, the bill would ensure that an array of services — such as intervention, domestic-violence counseling and mental-health and substance-abuse treatment — would be available to keep maltreated kids from having to leave their family homes in the first place. "Right now, group care is the luck of the draw," said Carole Shaffer, who is with the San Francisco-based Youth Law Center and leads Florida's Quality Parenting Initiative. "If you come in at a certain time of the day or night and they can't reach a foster parent, then you go into a group home. And you do not come out of that group home ever, unless you're unified (with biological parents) or the group home ejects you." Of teens who leave foster care without families, according to the Children's Home Society of Florida, 33 percent will be homeless within three years and 60 percent will have babies within four years. Half will be unemployed, while 66 percent will be high-school dropouts. The committee bill would require that foster homes, group homes and other placements demonstrate that children are recovering from trauma while in their care. That provision was already in the works before news reports alleging that several South Florida group homes allowed drugs, prostitution, gangs and truancy — on the taxpayers' dime. "Whether you're a group home or a regular home, there are going to be certain expectations," said Sen. Nancy Detert, a Venice Republican and a member of the committee, told The News Service of Florida. "We're not looking to put them out of business. We just want to make sure the good ones do well and the bad ones go out of business." Click On: [Senate Bill Would Overhaul Florida's Foster-Care Placements to Child-Centered Approach](#) [Gail Wadsworth: Florida's Court Clerks Spotlight Domestic Violence Awareness Month](#) [Florida's Foster Children Are Still Being Medicated Without Proper Oversight](#) [Florida's Foster Care System Loosening Up Restrictions While Extending Eligibility to 21](#) [5 Years After 7-year-old Gabriel Myers's Suicide, Psychotropic Drugs Still Overprescribed in Foster Care](#) [Sunburned Child at Flagler Camp Exposes a Florida Paradox: Paddling Is OK, Applying Sunscreen Is Not](#) [Lawmakers Again Refuse to Extend KidCare Coverage to Children of Legal Immigrants](#) The bill represents a different approach from a group-home measure that Detert proposed for the 2015 session. That measure was aimed at eliminating the use of shift workers at group homes in favor of the use of a more family-style model with house parents. It followed a report by the Legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, which found that roughly 11 percent of Florida children who are removed from their families are placed in group homes rather than with relatives, friends or foster families. Group homes cost the state nearly \$81.7 million for approximately 2,200 children in 2013-2014 — more than \$37,000 per child. In comparison, the state rate for foster families who care for children aged 13 to 17 is \$527 per month, or \$6,324 per year. The report also found that 57 percent of Florida group homes use shift workers, who some children's advocates said are less likely to develop positive relationships with the youngsters in their care. Detert's bill died during the spring session, but it led to a work group by the Department of Children and Families and the Florida Coalition for Children, which lobbies for group homes as well as community-based care lead agencies. The new bill has received cautious indications of approval from those players, including Shelley Katz, chief operating officer of the Children's Home Society of Florida, which represents a number of group facilities. "While there are still many elements of the bill that we think warrant further discussion, the focus on the need for a continuum of services beginning with services to support families and maintain children safely in their homes through a variety of out-of-home placements is aligned with the reality that our children come with a wide range of challenges and there is no 'one size fits all' solution to meeting the needs of at-risk, abused and neglected children," Katz wrote in an email. The measure unanimously passed the Senate committee last week, but as yet has no House companion. "We do see it going in the direction that the department's going, that our secretary is an advocate for," said Janice Thomas, the Department of Children and Families' assistant secretary for child welfare. "And that is that children be placed, initially, in the best placement. ... What's best for the child and what their needs are — that's what's included in this bill." —Margie Menzel, News Service of Florida Source: <http://flaglerlive.com/86842/foster-care-overhaul/>

NY agency to protect the disabled rarely brings charges In this Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2015, photo, the Northeast Parent and Child Society is seen in Schenectady, N.Y. The group home was recently investigated by New York's Justice Center regarding the alleged physical and psychological abuse of a 12-year-old boy by caretakers at the home. Mike Groll AP Photo By MICHAEL VIRTANENAssociated Press [Linked In](#) [Google+](#) [Pinterest](#) [Reddit](#) [Print](#) [Order Reprint of this Story](#) SCHENECTADY, N.Y. In a video he made with his PlayStation, a 12-year-old developmentally disabled boy in a group home points to his swollen right eye and says, "Mom, this is what it looks like. ... He slammed me." His camera keeps rolling as his adult caretakers enter his room, where they can be heard but not seen on the video. One calls the boy "stupid ass," and another warns: "I'm gonna kill a kid and you might be the one I kill. ... You want me to f--- hurt you, boy?" The recording ends with the boy looking again into the camera, on the verge of tears, whispering, "Mom ... I'm scared." That was last year, and to date, no one has been prosecuted. New York's Justice Center, the state agency created to hold caretakers accountable, investigated and said it substantiated allegations the boy had been physically and psychologically abused. But a judge refused to sign off on charges. In fact, an Associated Press examination of misconduct complaints against caretakers in New York found that only a small percentage — a disturbingly small one, according to some activists — are prosecuted. Since the start of 2014, the Justice Center — established to protect the 1 million disabled, addicted, mentally ill and young people getting state care — has received more than 25,000 allegations of abuse and neglect by caretakers and substantiated about 7,000 of them. But just 169 cases, or less than 2.5 percent, have resulted in criminal charges. Of the 132 allegations that involved deaths, the center has substantiated 34 cases so far but has prosecuted only one. The figures, obtained by the AP from the Justice Center and through Freedom of Information requests, have some critics questioning whether the agency is fulfilling its mandate to obtain justice for those who often can't speak up for themselves. "That's not a very good record of success," said Harvey Weisenberg, a former state assemblyman who co-sponsored the legislation creating the Justice Center but has been disappointed by the way it has turned out. The Justice Center's executive director, Jeff Wise, defended the agency's record. "The Justice Center directly investigates or reviews the investigations of all allegations of abuse and neglect and when supported by the evidence holds staff accountable for their actions," he said in a statement. But he said many instances of misconduct "fall short of a criminal offense." For example, inadequately supervising a patient, improperly restraining someone, failing to make sure a person is properly cleaned, or not giving medication on time can constitute abuse or neglect but is not necessarily a crime. The Justice Center said about 13 percent of the substantiated allegations were for physical abuse, or about 900 altogether; 1 percent for sexual abuse; and 61 percent for neglect, mostly for improper supervision. Justice Center officials also said that the administrative standard of proof they use to substantiate misconduct allegations — a preponderance of the evidence — is lower than the standard that must be met to convict someone in court: beyond a reasonable doubt. And they said they have meted out punishment short of prosecution, such as putting 163 people on a hiring blacklist because of serious or repeated acts of mistreatment and requiring more than 20,000 corrective actions by state and nonprofit providers. National experts say New York is not the only state with relatively low prosecutions in such cases. "These cases, unfortunately, are rarely prosecuted," said Kathleen Quinn, executive director of the National Adult Protective Services Association. "These are people that are invisible in the larger world." Experts note that mistreatment allegations can be hard to prove because caretakers are reluctant to testify against each other and because cases often rely on victims with intellectual or physical disabilities that don't make for good witnesses. "They're not all winnable," said Nancy Alterio, executive director of a similar oversight agency in Massachusetts, the Disabled Persons Protection Commission. "That's one of the challenges — when they report, they're not believed." Nevertheless, the Massachusetts agency reported 155 prosecutions in fiscal 2014, more than New York's 95 for a similar period, in a state with less than one-third the population. Alterio said her agency was able to achieve that through agreements with the state's 11 district attorneys. And she said that prosecuting difficult-to-prove cases can at least put suspected homes and caretakers on notice that they are being watched and let victims know they're believed. Mary Lee Fay, executive director of the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services, said New York's real issue is: "What are they doing to increase those numbers? How are they working with district attorneys and others where they really can deliver prosecutions?" The Justice Center for the Protection of People With Special Needs was created in mid-2013, pushed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo following a New York Times series on horrific abuse cases that had been handled internally without charges. "We

will not allow people in the care of New York to be abused. Period," the governor said at the time. Among the tools at the center's disposal: a statewide hotline and a staff of 429, including investigators and seven prosecutors empowered to bring criminal cases against caretakers, even when local prosecutors decline. While Justice Center officials refused for privacy reasons to discuss the 12-year-old boy or any other cases that have gone unprosecuted, they have announced charges they did file. They include a Westchester County mental health counselor charged with raping a client, and four workers from a Long Island group home accused of encouraging two mentally disabled men to fight for their amusement. In the lone prosecuted case that involved a death, a nurse admitted sleeping on the job at a group home in suburban Syracuse, leading to the death of a 25-year-old disabled man who received inadequate oxygen overnight. Tanya Lemon pleaded guilty last year to endangering the welfare of a disabled person, lost her nursing license and was sentenced to 90 days in jail. Michael Carey, an advocate for the disabled even before his autistic son was smothered to death by a caretaker in 2007, accused the Justice Center of minimizing cases to protect the state from lawsuits. He criticized the finding that just one person was charged in connection with a death. "Isn't it suspicious?" Carey asked. "Where are the other negligent deaths if this Justice Center was actually just?" Among those who say they are still waiting for justice is the mother of the boy who made the video on his PlayStation at the Northeast Parent and Child Society group home in Schenectady. The video is now part of a federal lawsuit brought by the mother that contends he was assaulted repeatedly over five days by the staff. In one instance, he was choked with the power cord to the very game he used to make the video, according to the lawsuit. In letters to the boy's mother a year later, the Justice Center said it substantiated the allegation that a staff member restrained the boy with excessive force, "which included elbowing and/or striking him on his face, which resulted in a swollen and/or bruised eye." The center didn't conclude the boy was throttled with the electrical cord, but did find that a staff member improperly restrained him, including putting him "in a one-person prone restraint while he had a cord around his neck." Schenectady County District Attorney Robert Carney said city police twice drafted a misdemeanor warrant in the case, alleging endangerment of an incompetent person. City Court Judge Robert Hoffman declined to sign either one, the second accompanied by the video, finding the case was "inconclusive," the prosecutor said. "That pretty much ended it," Carney said. Calls to the judge were not returned. The mother, who is not identified by name in the lawsuit and spoke on condition of anonymity to protect the identity of her underage son, is seeking unspecified damages on behalf of the boy, who she said has been diagnosed with schizophrenia and autism. Her attorney, Robert Santoriella, said the beatings continued days after the boy quietly slipped his mother the PlayStation with the video, even after she called the Justice Center and the Schenectady police and a local TV station had aired the footage. The mother said the boy, identified in court papers only as R.W., has been moved to another facility and hasn't been the same since the beatings. Once active and playful, he now just stares out the window for hours at a time, she said. A telephone listing for the man listed in court papers as the boy's chief abuser could not be found. Staff members at the home said he doesn't work there anymore. Eugene White, spokesman for Northern Rivers Family Service, which runs the home, said the allegations are "undoubtedly disturbing," don't reflect the nonprofit organization's culture, and were "thoroughly investigated" by the Justice Center. He would not give specifics. Read more here: <http://www.bellinghamherald.com/news/article41676039.html#storylink=cpy>

Teen program dismantled Phoenix House moves some services to Rhode Island Gov. Maggie Hassan toured the Phoenix House in Dublin Tuesday. [Purchase photo reprints at Photo Finder »](#) Gov. Maggie Hassan toured the Phoenix House in Dublin Tuesday. [Purchase photo reprints at Photo Finder »](#) Gov. Maggie Hassan toured the Phoenix House in Dublin Tuesday. [Purchase photo reprints at Photo Finder »](#) Gov. Maggie Hassan toured the Phoenix House in Dublin Tuesday. [Purchase photo reprints at Photo Finder »](#) Gov. Maggie Hassan toured the Phoenix House in Dublin Tuesday. [Purchase photo reprints at Photo Finder »](#) Gov. Maggie Hassan toured the Phoenix House in Dublin Tuesday. [Purchase photo reprints at Photo Finder »](#) Gov. Maggie Hassan toured the Phoenix House in Dublin Tuesday. [Purchase photo reprints at Photo Finder »](#) By Benji Rosen Monadnock Ledger-Transcript Wednesday, October 28, 2015 (Published in print: Thursday, October 29, 2015) [Share on email](#) [Email Print](#) 2 Comments [Share on twitter](#) [Share on facebook](#) [Share on gmail](#) [More Sharing Services 8](#) The Phoenix House Academy in Dublin, the sole state residential treatment center for adolescent substance abuse, is closing its Dublin program. The company will move the 12 beds to its Rhode Island facility by Nov. 16, according to New England Regional Clinical Director Jayson Pratt. The Academy, a three- to six-month residential treatment program for teens aged 13 to 18, is on the campus of the Phoenix House in Dublin, which serves residents aged 18 to 25 in a separate 32-bed facility. After Nov. 9, the 12 adolescent beds will be made available to the 20 people currently on a wait list for treatment, according to Pratt. The Phoenix House New England operates treatment facilities in New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Massachusetts. In New Hampshire, the organization oversees the Academy in Dublin, an adult residential program on the same campus in Dublin, an outpatient treatment center in Keene and a sober living home in Northfield. While the substance abuse community in the Monadnock region considers whether it is a move in the right direction, the state says other services it provides or plans to expand on will address adolescent need in the Granite State. There are 24 state-certified psychiatric residential treatment centers for youth that offer substance abuse programs, said Eileen Mullen, an administrator at the Division of Children, Youth and Families. The Phoenix House Academy, however, is the last center in state designated solely for substance abuse. The decision to relocate the program to a Phoenix House facility on Wallum Lake in Rhode Island was based, in part, on a dwindling number of referrals from the state. While DCYF can use up to 6 of the 12 beds at the Phoenix House for adolescents it refers, DCYF is filling only one of those beds now, choosing instead to refer teenagers to psychiatric residential treatment centers that treat comorbid disorders, said Mullen. Another reason for the relocation is financial — the Phoenix House loses money on Medicaid patients. "We are still invested in delivering services. We just have to find the right combination of services to meet [adolescent] needs and also have responsible business models," said Pratt. The Academy had three residents as of Wednesday afternoon. All three are expected to complete the program by Nov. 9, said Pratt. Senior Director for Substance Misuse and Behavioral Health for the Governor's Office John Wozmak, otherwise known as the state's Drug Czar, said Wednesday that this is the "right move." "We don't have adolescents on waiting lists. We do have adults on waiting lists for treatment beds," he said. Wozmak said the state is working with the Phoenix House to open at least three intensive outpatient service programs for adolescents in regions most affected by substance abuse. Wozmak said the most current research suggests structured, intensive outpatient programs are more beneficial than a 30-day residential program. Polly Morris, formerly of Monadnock Voices for Prevention, but now with CADY Inc. of Plymouth, was disappointed the Phoenix House will relocate these beds, but she agreed with Wozmak, that it's better to serve wait listed adults than leave beds unfilled. Mary Drew of Monadnock Drug Abuse and Alcohol Prevention wasn't sure. "We're already in a very dark light," said Drew, about New Hampshire and its substance abuse problem. "It's a sad move." When Gov. Maggie Hassan visited the Phoenix House in Dublin Tuesday, she advocated reauthorizing Medicaid reimbursements to support programs interested in expanding. "There is a need here," she told Pratt and other Phoenix House staff. "Not a lot of parents want to send their kids to Rhode Island." Source: <http://www.ledgertranscript.com/news/19204559-95/teen-program-dismantled#>

Man claims family member locked out of Alief group home in rain [Small Text](#) [Medium Text](#) [Large Text](#) [Print](#) Man claims family member locked out of Alief group home in rain SALIEF, Texas - The state is investigating an Alief group home after a man claimed their sister was locked out and put out in the rain over the weekend. "I got a call Sunday from a police officer saying he found my sister overnight in the rain in her hospital gown," Michael Little said. Michael Little's sister, 51-year-old Quenta Little, is schizophrenic and had been living at Angel Personal Care group home for about a month. But Sunday she ended up 23 miles away in Northwest Harris County. Michael Little said he was stunned by what the owner told him happened. "She admitted that she had been put out the home, locked out in the rain," Michael Little said. The house manager told Channel 2 that's not what happened. "She gets in that state of mind you can't hold her, she'll break out of doors, windows and she fights, and we're not allowed to restrain anyone," Anthony Arthur said. "She could have come in at any given moment but she went on, she's a drifter and when she goes into those rages, she's gonna go." Michael Little said his sister has never wandered away before. He's just grateful to the officer who found her. "I really think you saved her life, I appreciate that," Michael Little said. He has moved his sister to another facility. Adult Protective Services is now investigating. He has moved his sister to another facility. Adult Protective Services is now investigating. Source: <http://www.click2houston.com/news/man-claims-family-member-locked-out-of-alief-group-home-in-rain/36109518>

Document: Youth jail guard sexually abused teen inmate [12 News](#), Phoenix 8:57 a.m. MST October 29, 2015 Patrice Dawson's initial appearance at Maricopa County court. Court documents obtained Thursday say Patrice Dawson, then a corrections officer at the **Adobe Mountain School** youth corrections facility in Phoenix, engaged in sexual acts with a juvenile inmate. [As we reported Wednesday](#), Dawson was fired after allegations of "sexual misconduct." An arrest report says the victim is a male inmate over the age of 15. Dawson was booked on suspicion of sexual abuse, sexual conduct with a minor, and unlawful sexual conduct by custodian. She's eligible for conditional release on a \$2,500 bond, court documents say. Source: <http://www.12news.com/story/news/local/valley/2015/10/29/document-youth-jail-guard-sexually-abused-teen-inmate/74798170/>

New victims come forward after operator of boys home arrested Man arrested on multiple child molestation charges Posted: Oct 30 2015 02:20AM PDT Updated: Oct 30 2015 05:42PM PDT RICHMOND, Calif. (KTVU) - One day after KTVU reported a convicted sex offender was operating a group home for teenage boys, more alleged victims have come forward. Barry Dugar, 50, was arrested in Richmond Wednesday on multiple charges of child molestation. According to authorities, he molested at least three victims on several different occasions. On Friday, police told KTVU at least two more alleged victims had come forward. [Sponsored Links](#) [Grand Canyon University The Benefits of STEM Education and Earning a STEM Degree](#) [Grand Canyon University Undo Fortune.com The results of the 2015 Fortune 500 CEO survey are in... Fortune.com](#) Undo Dugar is a known sex offender who is registered on the Mega's Law website. On Friday, Richmond police were still trying to determine how he was able to operate a group home for teenage boys without authorities knowing. New victims come forward after operator of boys home arrested News Known sex offender who ran boys home arrested in Richmond One day after KTVU reported a convicted sex offender was operating a group home for teenage boys, more alleged victims have come forward. Dugar also worked with students at John Kennedy High School. "Two victims from Kennedy High School reported that their guardian at their transitional home had sexually assaulted them," said Richmond Police Sgt. Matt Stonebreaker. According to an official with the West Contra Costa School District, Dugar was allowed to be on campus to oversee students that he was listed as a guardian. Dugar was on campus for athletic games, practices and study hall. The district said Dugar was not affiliated with the district in an official capacity and has since been banned from school sites. Dugar's previous offenses include annoying or molesting a person believed to be under 18 years of age and committing lewd or lascivious acts with a child under 14 years of age. Richmond Police say Dugar was convicted in 2009 and served time at San Quentin. Police have not released the name of the group home, but said Dugar also operated a transitional home for the homeless or people who were recently released from jail. The transitional facility is called TRUPP, or The Remember Us Peoples Project for. On Friday, the non-profit group, Prisoner Reentry Network, listed TRUPP has one of its projects on its website, but the link had been taken down by Friday afternoon. KTVU called Prisoner Reentry Network, but they had no comment. "He doesn't have a license with the state of California, Contra Costa County or the city of Richmond. So we're taking that very seriously right now, because we don't know how he's able to operate," said Stonebreaker. Related Stories [Reported Lyft kidnapping a 'misunderstanding'](#) [Halloween at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Native Americans sue over hwy 101 Caltrans project Pedestrian killed in Milpitas identified as SJ man](#) Police said Dugar did not disclose his occupation when he registered as a sex offender. KTVU tried to contact Dugar at the address listed on the Megan's Law Registry. The person inside the home shut the door. The area where Dugar lives is less than a 30 second walk to an elementary school. Some wonder how a registered sex offender can live in the area. According to police, as long as you're not on supervised parole or probation, you can live anywhere you want as long as police know where you are. "If you're a registered sex offender you do have to register once a year on your birthday within five days of your birthday. That's all you have to do at this point," said Stonebreaker. Police say the victims in this case have been removed and are now in a safe home. Dugar is out on bail and has a restraining order to stay away from the boys group home. Richmond police say if there are more victims out there, they want to hear from them. Source: <http://www.ktvu.com/news/41093783-story>

FOX10 News Investigates: Part 3: Saving Youth Foundation Posted: Oct 30, 2015 2:26 PM PDT Updated: Oct 30, 2015 2:29 PM PDT By Renee Dials, FOX10 News Anchor [BioEmail Connect Biography renee.dials@fox10tv.com](#) By Photojournalist: Franz Barraza [The sleeping quarters of children in the Saving Youth Foundation. Three people affiliated with the facility have been charged with aggravated abuse.](#) MOBILE, AL (WALA) - FOX10 News continues our investigation into a teen residential facility and its owners now accused of abuse. The allegations that led to the indictments and arrest of three people in Mobile this year are similar to allegations that have been brought against other institutions over the years. Some of those closest to the issue are trying to get lawmakers to take notice. MOREAdditional LinksPoll The recent indictments and arrests of three people in Mobile charged with abuse at a church run residential facility for troubled teens is being followed by a group on the other side of the country. Jodi Hobbs started the organization, Survivors of Institutional Abuse. She says it's something she knows about personally. "I myself was sent to a reform school that was raided and shut down by the FBI in 1991," Hobbs said. Hobbs calls institutional abuse a nationwide problem. "They're not qualified nor trained, don't have a degree, nor license to use this behavior modification method, and a lot of times it's misused and it turns into to severe trauma and psychological abuse," she said. Saving Youth Foundation which was formerly Restoration Youth Academy was shut down in March amid allegations of abuse. Not everyone believes the charges. "All of this will soon blow over, and I believe that God already has it worked out," Marquis Jacobs said. But, some teens were making allegations against the facility long before its owners were arrested. This is what two teenagers told Miami television reporter Bob Norman in 2013. "I was terrified at this point, and I said no I won't, and then he hit me in the head," William Vargas said "I witnessed a boy being beaten by William," another teen said. Former Prichard Police Captain Charles Kennedy said he's been trying to expose the facility for years. "To me this is more important to me than my pension. Because this had to do with the lives and safety of children," Kennedy said. Kennedy said he's not against all residential youth facilities. "I have no ax to grind against boot camps, church run operations, or church run residential schools if they are run under supervision. If we know who is there, who is operating it?" Legislation was introduced in congress this summer to address the issue. Hobbs wants citizens to contact their representatives to voice their support. "It would require them to have licensure. It would require them to have skilled staff, an educated staff, it would require them to have a therapist, a licensed therapist present," Hobbs said. But, Alabama Congressman Bradley Byrne doesn't believe it's an issue for Congress. "I think that we already have laws on the books at the state level to make sure that if somebody abuses a young person that they are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, so I would expect us to enforce existing state law, I don't know that this is an area where the federal government should get involved," Byrne said. Byrne said similar legislation has failed in the past. When SYF was shut down earlier this year owner John Young denied allegations of abuse, and defended his co-owners including William Knott. "He used to be a marine drill sergeant and he has a way of trying to get boys minds back in line...People can make allegations but if it's true and charges were brought against him, he would go to jail," Young said. Young, Knott and Aleshia Moffett are all now charged with aggravated abuse, and they've all pleaded not guilty. The three defendants are scheduled to go on trial in February 2016. Source: <http://www.fox10tv.com/story/30386175/fox10-news-investigates-part-3>

Foster father is accused of molesting children in his care [Local - Home Foster father is accused of molesting children in his care [Small Text Medium Text Large Text Print Tweet](#) Harry Clark SPRINGFIELD, Mo. - A foster father from Springfield is accused of repeatedly molesting children who were placed in his care. Greene County prosecutors on Friday charged Harry Clark, 56, with first-degree statutory rape, two counts of first-degree statutory sodomy, and first-degree child molestation; the first charges involve a child under age 12 and the fourth one involves a child under age 14. More from KSPR.com [Arkansas AG launches focus on domestic violence initiatives Missouri school administrators: too much emphasis on... Springfield mom fighting back after son was bullied Man faces 5 to 15 years in prison for fatal drunken crash Waynesville woman wins \\$250K on new Missouri Lottery game](#) In asking a judge for a \$75,000 bond, prosecutors wrote this: "Multiple children have disclosed instances of abuse at the hands of the defendant while in his care as a foster parent from 2012 - 2013. The primary victim in this case describes being abused on a daily basis while in his care. Once the children were removed from the defendant's care in 2013, the defendant is reported to have driven by their new residence on multiple occasions. Based on this behavior, it is a concern that the defendant poses a continued danger to the victims in this case now that charges have been filed." A Springfield police detective wrote in the probable cause statement that the investigation started in August two years ago when allegations surfaced that Clark had abused children who were, at the time, approximately ages 14, 12, 9, 5, and 7. The children lived with Clark and his wife from April 2012 to Aug. 1, 2013. The children were interviewed at the Child Advocacy Center in August 2013, the detective said, and "no disclosures were made at the time by the children, and an interview was conducted later with Harry Clark with no admissions made." On Aug. 27 of this year, Greene County sheriff's deputies went to the home where the children now live, after being adopted. The deputies heard "allegations regarding physical and sexual abuse against Harry Clark." The children's adopted mother told deputies that Clark "drove by their house for several weeks following their removal from the Clark household," according to the probable cause statement. The children were interviewed again at the Child Advocacy Center on Sept. 16 of this year. One girl, now 7, "discussed Harry locking her in the garage area and placing duct tape over her hands and mouth. She mentioned a 'dream' but upon further questioning for clarification by the interviewer, (she) stated, 'It was something that really happened. I tried to pinch myself to make it a dream, but it wasn't happening.' (She) said Harry also used rope to tie around her legs and body while she was seated in a wooden chair. She then said Harry would kiss her and she would try to move away from him in the chair. (She) thought she was 4-years-old at the time," the probable cause statement says. A girl who is now age 14 told interviewers that "she had been shopping for underwear and Harry called her into his room to check and make sure her bra fit properly. (She) stated Harry grabbed the collar of her shirt and placed a hand down the shirt, touching her breast on the top of the bra. (She) stated Harry made a comment sexual in nature to her, and she then left the room. (She) thought she was 12-years-old at the time." A girl who is now 11 years

old "described sexual abuse perpetrated upon her by Harry in a closet there. After entering the home, Harry would abuse (her) throughout the course of her time inside the Clark residence. (She) disclosed Harry taking her into his bedroom or her bedroom and locking the door before removing her clothes and placing her on the bed. When she asked him to stop, Harry told her, "No," and further explained he needed someone to do it since his wife "could not keep up with him or whatever." (She) described other times when it would occur in the kitchen or living room area if no one was home," the probable cause statement says. The third girl described being sexually abused "every day and more than once in a day" and said Clark showed her pornographic videos, took some videos of her and then would show the videos to her. The 11-year-old girl said her abuse occurred to her between the ages of 7 and 9. On Thursday, a detective talked to Clark after police executed a search warrant at his home. "During the interview, Harry made no admissions regarding the abuse against any of the children," the detective wrote in the probable cause statement. If Clark is convicted, he could receive prison sentences between 10 years and life (30 years) for statutory sodomy and statutory rape, and between five and 15 years for child molestation. He was in the Greene County jail on Friday afternoon. Online court records do not list a defense attorney for him. Source: http://www.kspr.com/news/local/foster-father-is-accused-of-molesting-children-in-his-care/21051620_36159740

Foster parents sue for subsidies Associated Press INDIANAPOLIS – The American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana has filed a lawsuit on behalf of two foster parents against the director of the Indiana Department of Child Services' Central Eligibility Unit over adoption subsidies. The lawsuit was filed Thursday on behalf of Lyons residents David and Julie Arthur, who act as foster parents for three grandsons, the Indianapolis Star reported. The couple claim the state agency violated federal law by calculating the adoption subsidy without considering "circumstances of the adopting parents and the needs of the child being adopted," according to court records. The Arthurs say they want to adopt their grandsons, who are 6, 3 and 2 years old. The couple say the boys have "profound disabilities," but that they can't pay for services needed. Medicaid covers the boys' medical needs. Their grandparents receive \$145.72 per day as licensed foster parents to help offset the boys' extensive needs. If the Arthurs adopt the boys, they would get \$52 per day under the Department of Child Services' "final offer" for adoption assistance payments. The couple say it would be "impossible" to "adequately and appropriately care for the children" at that amount, according to the lawsuit. The lawsuit seeks to have a judge force the department to negotiate. "We're not trying to get rich," David Arthur said. Source: <http://www.journalgazette.net/news/local/indiana/Foster-parents-sue-for-subsidies-9638227>

Mother of Severely Abused Toddler Speaks Out, Says She Warned Foster Agency | NBC Bay Area Mother of Severely Abused Toddler Speaks Out, Says She Warned Foster Agency A mother is speaking out, saying she tried to warn Santa Clara County social workers her daughter was being severely abused while in foster care. She says she took over 100 photos documenting the girl's wounds during supervised visits. By [Vicky Nguyen](#), [Michael Bott](#) and [Mark Villareal](#) [View Comments \(1\)](#) | Email | Print Mother of Severely Abused Toddler Speaks... Link Embed Email Copy Close Link to this video Copy Close Embed this video [Replay](#) More videos (1 of 9) «» A mother is speaking out, saying she tried to warn Santa Clara County social workers that her daughter was being severely abused while in foster care. She says she took over 100 photos documenting the girl's wounds during supervised visits, but says she was ignored when she tried to show them to social workers. Investigative Reporter Vicky Nguyen reports in a story that first aired October 30, 2015. (Published Saturday, Oct. 31, 2015) A mother is speaking out and sharing photos with the NBC Bay Area Investigative Unit documenting unthinkable abuse suffered by her 4-year-old daughter while she was in foster care. The woman, whom we are identifying as "Ana" to protect her daughter's identity, has filed a lawsuit accusing the Santa Clara Department of Social Services of ignoring multiple reports of abuse for months, until her daughter nearly died. It is one of two lawsuits now filed on behalf of the little girl. The accusations reflect what may be a much larger series of problems within the DSS regarding how the agency responds to abuse reports, which were highlighted in a [county audit from 2013](#) and a [2015 civil grand jury report](#). Ana says she took more than 100 photos depicting the abuse of her daughter during court-ordered supervised visits, but social workers refused to look at them. But Ana wasn't the only one who tried to report the ongoing abuse of her daughter. Court records show others tried to sound the alarm, including the child's preschool teacher. "I wish somebody [did] something and social services pays for what happened to my daughter," Ana said. This photo provided by the alleged victim's mother shows an injury she says was inflicted by the child's foster guardians. Photo credit: NBC Bay Area According to a 2013 audit issued by the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, there were likely many other cries for help that went unanswered during that same period. The audit found the County wasn't answering 41 percent of the calls to the emergency child abuse hotline, about 7,000 calls each year. Although a 2015 civil grand jury report found the number of child abuse calls going unanswered is down to 11 percent, high turnover at the department and rising caseloads for social workers continue to be an issue. That means slower response times and less one-on-one time between social workers and foster children. Experts say that creates trust barriers and decreases the likelihood a child will report abuse or neglect. While DSS reported the number of answered hotline calls goes to 93 percent when they factor in returned voicemails, Santa Clara County Supervisor Dave Cortese says he's not satisfied. Cortese was the chair of the county committee that ordered the 2013 audit of DSS. "I don't think any member of the board will be satisfied with anything less than 100 percent responsiveness to those calls and immediate responsiveness to the actual needs of the children and families," Cortese said. How to Help Foster Children CASA associate and legal director Phil Ladew explains how you can volunteer to be a "Court Appointed Special Advocate" and make a difference for foster children. (Published Thursday, Oct. 29, 2015) Phil Ladew has seen both sides of foster care system. He's the legal and associate director of California CASA, a non-profit that works to expand and support the network of court appointed special advocate programs in the state. But Ladew also grew up in the foster system, a personal history that drove him to devote his career to improving outcomes for the state's most vulnerable children. He's seen a lot, and knows spotting abuse can be tricky for social workers. "It can be very difficult, actually," Ladew said. "You're dealing with judgment and you're dealing with people who can hide the abuse." But, when children don't see the same social worker on a consistent basis, Ladew says spotting patterns of abuse becomes even harder. "If you have a high caseload it can be very challenging to spot the things you should be spotting," Ladew said. While social services has hired more call center workers to staff the hotline, director Robert Menicocci said at an October hearing there are currently 50 vacancies for social workers and caseloads are high. Investigative [Near Death of Foster Child Sheds Light on Flawed System](#) "The caseload has been in the low-to-mid-20s, but through this transition right now, this peak that we're having of the turnover and such, it has gotten into the higher 20s, and that's obviously of great concern to us," Menicocci said. "We think a number that is certainly lower than that is much more effective." Menicocci said recent studies have shown that a caseload in the 15-to-20 range is ideal. Menicocci and other social workers named in the lawsuit declined interviews with NBC Bay Area, and the agency refused to answer even basic procedural questions not related to Ana's case. Lori Medina, director of the Department of Family and Children, also did not respond to any emails for information. In addition to the issues with the child abuse hotline, the civil grand jury report found that surrounding counties had more robust systems in place to respond to voicemails left on the hotline. "If a social worker cannot reach the caller, for confidentiality reasons, the social worker does not leave their number," the report states. "The Grand Jury was told the social workers do not make a second attempt to return the call. In comparison, the Grand Jury was told by both Alameda and San Mateo County three or four attempts are made to return voicemails." Ana says social services should have done more for her daughter. Despite multiple reports, despite social workers seeing visible injuries on the child and despite photos of injuries Ana says she tried to show them, social workers left her in the home of her abusers until it was almost too late. "The first time I talked to the social worker and tried to explain to her and tried to show her the picture, she [didn't] want to see it, she [didn't] want to look at it," Ana said. Ana's daughter ended up in the hospital in critical condition last year, with bites, burns and bruises covering her body. The child's guardian, half-sister Krystal Paredes, is now facing torture charges that could potentially send her to prison for life. Others in the home are charged with felony child abuse for allegedly being complicit. [Near Death of Foster Child Sheds Light on Flawed System](#) Despite multiple reports of abuse, a 4-year-old child suffered for months, nearly dying from blood loss and trauma while in foster care. Records obtained by NBC Bay Area reveal the Santa Clara Department of Social Services recorded numerous complaints about the injuries from caregivers, relatives and teachers before taking action. Investigative Reporter Vicky Nguyen reports in a story that first aired October 29, 2015. (Published Thursday, Oct. 29, 2015) Ladew says we may never change the abusive behavior of some individuals, but we have room to grow as a society when it comes to the care of our most vulnerable. "We know there's evil in the world," Ladew said. "People are going to abuse children. But once we know about it as a society, once we discover it, once we receive a phone call, what do we do?" Ana says in the case of her child, social services didn't do enough. "I feel like my hands are tied," she said. "My hands are tied. I feel like nobody can help me." San Jose attorney Robert Mezzetti is representing Ana in the civil case against the county. He says agencies like the Department of Social Services are supposed to provide a safety net for the vulnerable. In this case, he says the safety net failed. "You want to have faith in those people because those people have been trained," Mezzetti said. "Those people have been supervised, hopefully in the correct way, and you feel that it's a safety net. And when that safety net fails, it's devastating to everybody. It's devastating to society in general." [We Investigate: More from NBC Bay Area's Investigative Unit](#) As for Ana's daughter, she's recovering from the trauma she suffered in the foster system, and Ana hopes they will be

reunited soon. Mezzetti said their lawsuit will expose the flaws in the system and hopefully lead to significant changes. "Without exposing this type of behavior, without exposing this type of failure, the law doesn't change and neither does the procedure," Mezzetti said. Cortese said DSS leaders are expected to detail progress and change since the 2013 audit at the next Finance and Government Operations Committee meeting November 12th at 2 pm at 70 West Hedding Street in San Jose. Source: <http://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/Mother-of-Severely-Abused-Toddler-Speaks-Out-Says-She-Warned-Foster-Agency-338989182.html>

A.G. Schneiderman Announces Convictions Of Two Former Group Home Workers For Endangering The Welfare Of Developmentally Disabled Residents Of A State-Run Group Home

Former Direct Service Assistant At Melville Estates Group Home Found Guilty After Trial; Other Pleads Guilty
Schneiderman: I Am Committed To Protecting Our Most Vulnerable Citizens, Including The Developmentally Disabled, From Abusive Caregivers
 HAUPPAUGE – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman announced today that James P. Brown, Jr., a former Direct Service Assistant at the state run group home Melville Estates in Melville, was found guilty of violently punching a 53 year-old, severely impaired, intellectually disabled resident of the home in the face in February 2014. Melville Estates is a group home for developmentally disabled adults in Melville, NY. In a separate prosecution arising out of Melville Estates, Alley Chambers admitted that in February 2014 while he was employed as a Direct Service Assistant at Melville Estates, he punched a 56 year-old, profoundly intellectually disabled adult in the face while the resident did nothing other than sit in a chair. Both Defendants were removed from the state payroll and are awaiting sentence. "These acts of abuse by health care workers on the disabled and other vulnerable members of our society will not be tolerated," said Attorney General Schneiderman. "My office will continue to aggressively pursue and prosecute those individuals who prey upon our defenseless and infirm citizens." Attorney General Schneiderman thanked the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) and the New York State Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs for their assistance in conducting the investigations. Brown, 33, of Farmingdale, was convicted of Endangering the Welfare of an Incompetent or Physically Disabled Person in the First Degree, a class E felony, after a bench trial before Supreme Court Justice William Condon in Suffolk County Court in Riverhead. Chambers, 21, of Brentwood, pled guilty to Endangering the Welfare of an Incompetent or Physically Disabled Person in the Second Degree, a class A misdemeanor. The case was investigated by Special Investigator Stephen Clarke and Special Investigator Greg S. Muroff with assistance from Deputy Chief Investigator Kenneth Morgan. The cases are being prosecuted by Special Assistant Attorney General Lara Merchant of the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU) Hauppauge Regional Office. Jane Zwirn-Turkin is the Regional Director of the Hauppauge Regional Office. MFCU is led by Acting Director Amy Held and Assistant Deputy Attorney General Paul J. Mahoney. The Criminal Justice Division is led by Executive Deputy Attorney General Kelly Donovan. Source: <http://www.ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-convictions-two-former-group-home-workers-endangering>

Racialized and Gendered Violence Permeates School Discipline Monday, 02 November 2015 00:00 By [Connie Wun, The Feminist Wire](#) | News Analysis
 font size [decrease font size](#) [increase font size](#) [Print](#) 58 Email In 2011, Jada Williams, an eighth-grade student in Rochester, New York, wrote an essay based upon her reading of Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass. She compared her own experiences with the educational system to the nineteenth-century prohibitions against slaves learning how to read and write. In the words of Douglass, if he [the enslaved] knew how to read, "there [would] be no keeping him." In Williams' view not much had changed. Although she was living in a "different era and there were different people," things were still the same - "the same old discrimination still resides in the heart of the white man." She placed these teachers and her life at one end of the continuum and Douglass' on the other. A century after Douglass, instead of being barred from being taught literacy skills de jure, Williams experienced a de facto ban from learning how to read and write. She was in school, but the classrooms were filled with white teachers who were unwilling to teach, tedious worksheets, poor classroom management, and frustrated students suffering from either boredom or confusion. For white teachers to be able to be in a position of power to dictate what I can, cannot and will learn, only desiring that I may get bored because of the inconsistency and the mis-management of the classroom and remain illiterate and ignorant; or better yet distracted because some children decide to misbehave because they don't understand, and (sic.) ashamed to ask for help.^[1] In this essay, she executed an impassioned and brave indictment of her white teachers for denying her and her peers access to a decent education. After illustrating the similarities, Williams wrote a call to action as her conclusion, one that encouraged her peers to hold teachers accountable and to become active learners. Williams received two different responses to her essay. The Frederick Douglass Foundation, a conservative organization, awarded Williams their first Spirit of Freedom award. By contrast, her teachers and administrators disciplined her, instead of considering Williams' analysis or perhaps investigating the validity of her argument as she hoped. What ensued is emblematic of what many children of color experience today. Almost immediately, the staff labeled Williams a "problem" and "angry." She received D's, although prior to the essay she had consistently earned A's. She received disciplinary threats and actions for behaviors such as "laughing in class." This harassment finally forced her to transfer to another school. Eventually, Williams was pushed out of the district altogether. Although Williams' essay may have been exceptionally poignant and candid, her experience with school discipline is not anomalous. Disciplining Violence Throughout the United States, students of color, particularly Black and Latino youths, are more often suspended, expelled, policed, and arrested than their counterparts.^[2] Contemporary discipline policies, called zero-tolerance policies, were initially created to prevent students from bringing guns or weapons to school. Today, students are increasingly being suspended for behavioral "problems" such as truancy and disobedience. These experiences of being criminalized, disciplined, and punished by school authorities negatively impact the students' academic trajectories, life chances, and subjectivities. Unsurprisingly, Black and Latino youths are disproportionately represented in school discipline data. Their numbers mirror the disparities in incarceration rates. Scholars and activists have examined prisons as violent institutions. For instance and most recently, sociologist Beth Richie argued that prisons help to produce, and are sites of, violence against women of color.^[3] Motivated by what has been called the "school to prison pipeline" (the theory that schools funnel children into prison), more activists, scholars, and researchers are examining the problem of racial disparities in school discipline numbers. The federal government has begun to intervene in school districts alleged to racially discriminate in discipline policies. Alternative school discipline/violence prevention practices and programs have been developed in order to curtail overreliance on suspensions and expulsions. A number of these programs provide conflict resolution training, life skills development, and counseling services to marginalized youths. Other strategies include restorative justice programs that teach students about communication and accountability. Many of these alternative programs focus on teaching "at-risk" youths how to manage their feelings more effectively by employing "positive" mediums such as poetry or jobs skills development. The logic behind these violence prevention strategies, it seems, is that if children of color learn how to manage their behavior and feelings better, it is less likely that they will be disciplinary problems. While it is valuable that these programs may serve to alleviate tensions between youths, when done without a political purpose, these can have the effect of policing children's feelings and temper a kind of rage that is actually necessary to incite political resistance. Under a neoliberal context, which favors criminalization and incarceration over social welfare services and policies, support for discipline reforms can be considered a necessary shift in social and political priorities. Unfortunately, these violence prevention reforms are problematizing the children instead addressing a systemic problem. Under traditional school discipline policies, most students get into trouble for nonviolent behaviors and as a result of racial biases.^[4] Most of the efforts and even the popular ethos of society are more inclined to locate the problem with the children, their lack of guidance, their parents, their tempers, their culture, and their socio-economic status. Instead of implicating the social, political, and economic contexts that may propel children to act out or the racial/gendered phobic impulse to characterize the child as a problem and then legitimize punishing her, the child is the problem. Disappearing Violence Few if any current discipline reform strategies identify school discipline policies and violence prevention policies as instruments of structural and institutional forms of violence. Even fewer examine racial and gendered violence as dimensions of the policies. By focusing the gaze toward students, other forms of violence are obfuscated including the violence sanctioned by the schools and enacted by law enforcement. For instance, despite beatings and murders committed by police officers who have been deputized to assist with school discipline, school violence prevention and discipline policies, even when reformed, do not generally highlight police as instruments of violence.^[5] Discipline policies that target sexual harassment have not examined the explicit forms of sexual harassment performed by those that are authorized to regulate and discipline young people. According to the National Economic and Social Rights Initiative (2007), a 14 year-old female student reported that a 'security guard accused [her] of having a knife... They took [her] to a room and made [her] take off [her] shirt and pants to check [her] bra. They didn't call [her] parents or let [her] talk to a teacher [she] knew. [She] didn't have a knife just like [she] told them' (23). Neither does violence prevention include efforts to address other forms of harassment, including sexual harassment, that students receive almost every day from some of their teachers and other faculty. Put differently, as we focus on the problem of the student something disappears from our framework: In a society that is shaped by racial and gendered violence, schools, including their teachers, officers, and policies, have long been

afforded the discretion to punish, police, and harass students of color. If there are students of color to police then the job implicitly includes this function. Whether the teachers and other staff consciously or unconsciously know or actually do it, they are authorized to perform this duty. In other words, alternative violence programs that do not center the problem of society replicate the violence of the zero tolerance. What gets missed in the student-focused disciplinary approach is a structural concern: Many groups of color exist within a context where their lives simply do not matter. Little credit is given to the child who is trying to understand and navigate through this reality. Instead, when a child finds the words to aptly describe what she experiences, as in the case of Williams, she faces hostility from her teachers and administrators. Racialized and Gendered Violence At the same time that these communities of color are criminalized, disciplined, and punished, their various experiences with violence often fail to qualify as "violence." Instead, sometimes the violence they experience simply does not matter. For example, although nearly 40 percent of all missing persons in the United States are people of color (33 percent of those missing are Black), [6] critics report "that most media attention is reserved for white women." [7] In particular, the layers of violence to which girls of color are subject, [8] especially those who are labeled defiant or problematic, are unintelligible and negligible. Many of the young girls of color, those who are formally and informally labeled as problems, are vulnerable to multiple layers of violence - institutional, state, and interpersonal forms of violence. These forms of violence are not limited to welfare policies, hyper-surveillance, and mass incarceration; they include sexual assaults and murders by community members, partners, and strangers. [9][10] There is also the violence of the social order that positions them to be the receptacles for racist and misogynistic projections. These fantasies are foregrounded in anxieties and insecurities that extend far beyond the girls and anything they could have possibly done wrong. Some young women of color, particularly Black girls, are rendered intolerable because they are imagined to embody the set of morals, ethics, and needs that threaten the sanctity of White civil society. Among a number of offensive characterizations, the girl of color can be perceived as too angry, defiant, despondent, and critical. She is also imagined as a subject that illegitimately takes from society, its institutions, and good people. At the same time as she extracts resources from society, she is ungrateful for its generosity. Other times, she is too private, foreign, alienating, and unapproachable. She is dispensable. She simply does not play well with White people. She is a problem. The impulse to characterize her in these scathing terms complements the drive to neglect her, rendering insignificant the complexities of her existence and needs. Little or no attention is paid to her life, what it means or entails. Generally speaking, discipline policies and violence prevention reform are not meant to recognize these girls' lives. They often invisibilize the girl of color whose life and subjectivity are affected by the interlock between layers of violence. Instead, discipline policies and their alternatives steer the gaze away from a society that sanctions and performs racial and gendered violence. Society and its schools compulsively organize around containing, disciplining, and reforming the girls of color it has problematized and criminalized. This is done in order to legitimize the hegemony of the social hierarchy and its institutions. Williams' story illustrates the need to examine racial disparities in school discipline policies. However, because her story is not anomalous and mirrors a historical and structural condition, the discipline policies and the efforts to reform them have to be contextualized beyond this moment. The problem is with an atemporal coercive society shaped by racial and gendered violence, which authorizes teachers, administrators, and other faculty, including law enforcement officials, to police, harass, and punish those it deems a problem. In order to address the problems with school discipline policies and their effects, perhaps we should start with examining the racial and gendered forms of violence that undergird them. Notes: [1] http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/05/jada-williams-student-allegedly-harassed-for-essay_n_1321926.html [2] While Black youth make up 17 percent of the student population, they are 37 percent of the students who are penalized by suspensions and 43 percent of the students expelled (Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection 2012) [3] See Sudbury, J. Global lockdown : Race, gender, and the prison-industrial complex. New York: Routledge and Richie, B. (2012). Arrested justice : Black women, violence, and America's prison nation. New York: New York University Press. [4] Ferguson, Meiners [5] In Oakland, Raheim Brown, a 20 year-old Black male was shot and killed by an Oakland Unified School District police officer. [6] <http://blackandmissing.org/statistics/> [7] <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2012/01/getting-more-to-care-about-missing-black-women/> [8] For the sake of this essay, I use this term to include cis and trans gendered females of color. I currently use "woman of color" even though I am working examining the politics of "women of color." I believe that a more nuanced analysis of this term is necessary, one that includes scales of differences within and between groups of Black and non-Black women of color, including the racialized ways in which gender is understood, performed but also denied and prohibited. [9] http://articles.cnn.com/2010-07-07/justice/grim.sleeper.arrest_1_lonnie-david-franklin-serial-killer-case-family-members?_s=PM:CRIME [10] <http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/07/where-are-canadas-missing-native-women/> Source: <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/33481-racialized-and-gendered-violence-permeates-school-discipline>

Mental Health Bill Caters to Big Pharma and Would Expand Coercive Treatments Friday, 06 November 2015 00:00 By [Oryx Cohen](#), [Truthout](#) | Op-Ed font size [decrease font size](#) [increase font size](#) [Print](#) 58 Email Rep. Tim Murphy (R-Pennsylvania), right, and former House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) during a news conference about the Affordable Care Act at the Republican National Committee headquarters in Washington, October 23, 2013. (Gabriella Demczuk / The New York Times) On its surface, the mental health reform bill introduced by Congressman Tim Murphy of Pennsylvania looks promising. Murphy is the only licensed psychologist in Congress, everybody agrees that our mental health system is not working, and we would all like to help families in crisis. On closer inspection, however, the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act ([HR 2646](#)) - commonly known as the "Murphy Bill" - appears to cater more closely to the desires of pharmaceutical companies than to the actual needs of people in psychological distress, perhaps because of Murphy's connections to key lobbyists. Murphy's financial supporters include the American Psychiatric Association, psychiatric hospitals and the National Rifle Association, and his [campaign contributors](#) include no less than nine pharmaceutical companies and a law firm that represents Big Pharma. The bill was marked up Wednesday in the House Energy and Commerce health subcommittee and passed by that subcommittee, [despite strong objections from almost all the Democrats on the full committee](#). The next step is for the full Energy and Commerce Committee to vote on moving the bill forward, followed by the House vote. A timetable has not yet been set. Although the bill is gaining momentum, there is substantial opposition, so passage is still uncertain. If the Murphy Bill is passed, psychiatric hospitals and pharmaceutical companies will reap huge financial benefits as a result of increased hospitalization and forced treatment. One way the bill will do this is by creating a financial incentive for states that implement "assisted outpatient treatment": court-ordered treatment (including medication) for people whom a judge deems as living with "severe mental illness" and unlikely to willingly take prescribed psychiatric medications. Psychiatric hospitals would also benefit from the bill's proposed elimination of the "Institutions for Mental Diseases exclusion," which currently makes mental health institutions ineligible for funding through Medicaid. By enabling psychiatric hospitals to access this funding, the Murphy Bill could usher in an unprecedented era of re-institutionalization, going against the recommendations of the [Supreme Court's Olmstead decision](#), which asserted in 1999 that people with mental health issues have the right to be in the least restrictive setting possible. If passed, the Murphy Bill will lead to large-scale re-institutionalization in hospitals for longer periods of time for people who now generally have the right to live in supportive communities of their choosing. The Murphy Bill threatens the recovery and community integration practices that current consumers of mental health services and survivors of coercive psychiatric interventions have worked so hard for over the last 40-plus years to create for those most in need. In particular, the bill would dismantle the federal [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration](#) (SAMHSA), which actively funds and supports important efforts to rebuild the community and family life of people dealing with mental health issues through non-medicalized institutions such as peer-run respite (short-term crisis centers managed by people living with mental health concerns and available to "self-referred" individuals seeking to avoid hospitalization through support from peers). SAMHSA also supports suicide prevention initiatives, trauma-informed practices, [Emotional CPR](#) (an educational program aimed at teaching people how to assist others through an emotional crisis), [Wellness Recovery Action Planning](#) and much more, all of which would suffer if SAMHSA were dismantled. The bill would also threaten people's rights by weakening [state "Protection and Advocacy for People with Mental Illness" organizations](#), which offer rights protections, and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, making it easier to force people into treatment. Murphy and his supporters criticize opponents of the bill for being "against families." They fail to acknowledge that families are not united in support of this bill. While the national headquarters of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) has come out in support of the bill, many local NAMI affiliates are against it. Activists who identify as current consumers of mental health services or survivors of psychiatric interventions are frequently approached by desperate family members who are looking for alternatives to coercive and institutional responses to mental health crises. We are finding ways to include families because rebuilding strong family connections can be essential to recovery. Community-Based Solutions to Mental Health Crises Rosey Padgett in Prescott, Arizona, recently contacted the [National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery](#) because her son Nick was trapped in the mental health system. Currently, he is in the Arizona State Hospital. "Nick has been placed in mental hospitals approximately 30 different times over the past seven years," Padgett says. "He has been court ordered and placed in many different group homes. All of the group homes have made his behavior worse due to being forced into these situations when these homes are not an environment for healing. No wonder so many people with

emotional and mental distress commit suicide: They feel dead inside and hopeless from being forced to take medications that make them feel horrible." What has worked for Nick is connecting with other peers and having tremendous family support. A woman from the local Hearing Voices Network has begun visiting with him and providing peer support, as they are both voice hearers. He is doing so much better that the doctors at Arizona State Hospital are talking about releasing him in a few months. Nick's story is similar to the stories of others around the country who are languishing in and out of hospitals. Often it is not what is happening in those hospitals that helps people reestablish a life; it is the family and community support they have once they leave the hospital. Murphy Bill proponents point to a lack of institutionally or medically directed mental health treatment as being a primary cause of the alarming rise of violent acts such as school shootings and suicide. However, when we look at this argument closely, it falls apart. This argument overlooks the fact that the link between mental health conditions and violence is minuscule, as many studies have shown. Mentalhealth.gov, a website run by the federal government, says: The vast majority of people with mental health problems are [no more likely to be violent than anyone else](#). Most people with mental illness are not violent and only 3 to 5 percent of violent acts can be attributed to individuals living with a serious mental illness. In fact, people with severe mental illnesses are over 10 times more likely to be victims of violent crime than the general population.... When economist [Richard Florida](#) took a look at gun deaths and other social indicators, he found that higher populations, more stress, more immigrants and more mental illness didn't correlate with more gun deaths. But he did find one telling correlation: States with tighter gun control laws have fewer gun-related deaths. We should probably be doing more questioning of the treatments themselves. For example, many antidepressant medications, such as Paxil, that are commonly prescribed to young people, have [a black box warning](#) that they can increase suicidality among teenagers. We all want to see violence and suicide go away, but passing legislation that imposes increased mental health screenings and forced treatments (including psychiatric medication) on unwilling individuals is neither an ethical nor an effective way to accomplish this, especially given the risk of medications backfiring. Standing Up for Peer-Run Recovery Perhaps Murphy and supporters of his bill should ask those of us who have lived through extreme emotional distress for ideas and possible solutions. Thus far, the many activists who share the concerns I have outlined here have been denied a seat at the table in congressional discussions of the Murphy bill, despite the recommendation made in 2003 by the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, which said that transformations of the mental health system should be led and informed by consumers of mental health services. What would survivors of extreme emotional distress say if we were at the table with Congressman Murphy? Many of us would say that our mental health crises occur when we feel alone, abused and generally isolated from the rest of the world. We would thus raise our concern that, rather than reestablishing social connections, the current mental health system often disconnects us even more and leads us to a lifelong dependence on the system itself. Let's take Dan, who as an adolescent contemplated shooting up his middle school. It wasn't medication or therapy that prevented this terrible potential tragedy; Dan says it was talking to his friends at school and playing Dungeons and Dragons that grounded him and gave him hope. In other words, peer support. What would have happened if Dan had been flagged as a result of a mental health screening? He likely would have been removed from his social circles and placed in an institution, perhaps becoming permanently dependent on the system. Dan is now a part of a peer-run recovery community called the [Western Massachusetts Recovery Learning Community](#). He has his own place to live, a job, friends and a life, and is starring in the documentary [HEALING VOICES](#). The Recovery Learning Community helps people to establish much-needed social connections and gain a sense of belonging. This community is there when Dan needs it, and he doesn't need a diagnosis or a referral to attend the many support groups and wellness activities: the strength of places like the Recovery Learning Community is that they are integrated and open part of the broader community and not separate from it. But if the Murphy Bill passes, places like this might cease to exist. By requiring expensive clinical oversight and unprecedented congressional control over federal grants, the Murphy Bill targets consumer-run organizations and peer specialists, making it likely that national consumer-run organizations will be shut down, severely restricting what [peer specialists](#) can do and posing a threat to local peer-run organizations such as the Recovery Learning Community. Critics dismiss many opponents of the Murphy bill as being "anti-medication," but in fact many of us take medications and have found them useful. Our philosophy is that people should have accurate information to make informed choices, including the choice to use alternatives to medications. With the increase in violence and suicide and the alarming fact that people in the public mental health system die an average of 25 years younger than the rest of the population, shouldn't researching and supporting alternatives be a priority? Current consumers of mental health services and survivors of psychiatric interventions are willing to share our knowledge and expertise. Is anyone willing to listen? Source: <http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/33557-mental-health-bill-caters-to-big-pharma-and-would-expand-coercive-treatments>

A.G. Schneiderman Announces Convictions Of Two Former Group Home Workers For Endangering The Welfare Of Developmentally Disabled Residents Of A State-Run Group Home Former Direct Service Assistant At Melville Estates Group Home Found Guilty After Trial; Other Pleads Guilty (Long Island, NY) Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman announced today that James P. Brown, Jr., a former Direct Service Assistant at the state run group home Melville Estates in Melville, was found guilty of violently punching a 53 year-old, severely impaired, intellectually disabled resident of the home in the face in February 2014. Melville Estates is a group home for developmentally disabled adults in Melville, NY. In a separate prosecution arising out of Melville Estates, Alexy Chambers admitted that in February 2014 while he was employed as a Direct Service Assistant at Melville Estates, he punched a 56 year-old, profoundly intellectually disabled adult in the face while the resident did nothing other than sit in a chair. Both Defendants were removed from the state payroll and are awaiting sentence. "These acts of abuse by health care workers on the disabled and other vulnerable members of our society will not be tolerated," said Attorney General Schneiderman. "My office will continue to aggressively pursue and prosecute those individuals who prey upon our defenseless and infirm citizens." Attorney General Schneiderman thanked the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) and the New York State Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs for their assistance in conducting the investigations. Brown, 33, of Farmingdale, was convicted of Endangering the Welfare of an Incompetent or Physically Disabled Person in the First Degree, a class E felony, after a bench trial before Supreme Court Justice William Condon in Suffolk County Court in Riverhead. Chambers, 21, of Brentwood, pled guilty to Endangering the Welfare of an Incompetent or Physically Disabled Person in the Second Degree, a class A misdemeanor. The case was investigated by Special Investigator Stephen Clarke and Special Investigator Greg S. Muroff with assistance from Deputy Chief Investigator Kenneth Morgan. The cases are being prosecuted by Special Assistant Attorney General Lara Merchan of the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU) Hauppauge Regional Office. Jane Zwirn-Turkin is the Regional Director of the Hauppauge Regional Office. MFCU is led by Acting Director Amy Held and Assistant Deputy Attorney General Paul J. Mahoney. The Criminal Justice Division is led by Executive Deputy Attorney General Kelly Donovan. Source: <https://www.longislandexchange.com/press-releases/a-g-schneiderman-announces-convictions-of-two-former-group-home-workers-for-endangering-the-welfare-of-developmentally-disabled-residents-of-a-state-run-group-home/>

Family searches for cause of daughter's death in group home | www.wftv.com Family searches for cause of daughter's death in group home 1 5 2 19 ORANGE COUNTY, Fla. — Local family members said they just watched what would have been their daughter's 13th birthday pass and they are still trying to find out why she died in a group home. At the time Kencia Derat's death wasn't considered suspicious, so there was never an official autopsy. But her family called Channel 9's Jeff Deal when the family's own doctor found some things it said raised serious questions. The family said the girl was sexually abused before she died. Family members told Deal they believe it happened while she was living in the group home. "Words are not able to describe the pain and confusion that they're grappling with," family attorney Zachary West said. Kencia had cerebral palsy and in 2012 was moved into a group home in Sorrento operated by Betty's Home & Health Services. In late September she was found unresponsive in the home and later died at Florida Hospital Waterman. Hospital records show a call was made to the Medical Examiner's Office, which at the time denied taking the case. The death certificate indicates she died of natural causes: cardiac arrest related to her cerebral palsy. But the family, still looking for answers, hired a private forensic pathologist to do an autopsy. He found what the family believes was abuse. "Which, in his extensive experience, was strongly suggestive of sexual abuse," West said. The family blames the group home and is threatening a lawsuit. "This is an attempt by the family to try to harm this wonderful, wonderful company," group home attorney Lisa Augspurger said. Augspurger said she believes there's no merit to the claims and said the home has a flawless record in state inspections. Now the Medical Examiner's Office has reopened the case. They are waiting on forensic test results to come back to determine if there was any foul play in Kencia's death. The Lake County Sheriff's Department said there is not yet a criminal case; it is considered an open death investigation. Augspurger said the group home is ready to challenge any lawsuit related to her death. Source: <http://www.wftv.com/news/news/local/family-searches-cause-daughters-death-group-home/npHHc/>

Group home for teens has lease terminated after not paying rent Posted: Nov 06, 2015 3:47 PM PST Updated: Nov 06, 2015 4:00 PM PST By Adam Murphy Email Connect adam.murphy@cbs46.com By Rodney Harris Email Connect rodney.harris@cbs46.com DEKALB COUNTY, GA (CBS46) - A group

home for displaced teens that was the subject of more than [two dozen police calls](#) has had its lease terminated after not paying rent. MOREAdditional LinksPoll
[Residents complain after police called to halfway house 28 times in 6 months](#) Neighbors are complaining that lax supervision by the operators of a metro Atlanta halfway house are putting others in danger. The halfway house for troubled teens is located on Fellowship Road in Tucker, just northeast of Atlanta, and police have been called to the property 28 times in the last six months for various types of disorderly conduct. Dylan Goldman installed security cameras around his home after the nearby halfway house moved to his neighborhood a couple of years ago. "There's no accountability over there and the problem I have is my personal safety and the safety of my dogs," Goldman said. There have been numerous disorderly juvenile calls, person armed calls and even a call about an assault. Neighbors have become accustomed to seeing the police. "Oh, it's regularly, it's all the time," said Goldman. "I would say at least once a week. A construction worker said he was shot in the elbow with a BB gun while working on property behind the halfway house. A DeKalb County police report indicates that officers had been called to the home two days before that incident in reference to teens shooting at people with BB guns. CBS46 went to the halfway house in search of an explanation. There was only one supervisor on site and she didn't want to address the concerns. "There's nobody doing anything about this," Goldman said. We contacted **Vision Youth Services**, who manages the home, and we were told we would hear from someone in charge later. Copyright 2015 [WGCL-TV](#) (Meredith Corporation). All rights reserved. [Continue reading >>](#) Police were called to the group home in Tucker 28 times in six months for disorderly conduct, people armed and even an assault. DeKalb County Housing Authority CEO Pete Walker said the housing authority owns the property on Fellowship Road, but Vision Youth Services manages the group home. The housing authority terminated the lease on Oct. 29 because management failed to maintain and pay for utilities and defaulted their payment agreement by not paying nearly \$10,000 in rent. "We did choose to terminate the lease agreement with them and that's going to be effective Jan. 2 because we wanted to give them time to move the kids somewhere else," Walker said. Walker responded to a [CBS46 investigation](#) after learning about all the police calls to the group home from [our report](#), which aired after the group home's lease was terminated. "I apologize to the neighborhood for this happening because I had no idea this was happening," said Walker, who expressed concern about the lack of adequate management at the group home. When asked if any information on the home was ever brought to his attention, Walker said, "Not at all. The first time I ever heard it was from you." "If you said three times this happened, I would say, Okay, that's a real problem," said Walker. "But 28 is completely unacceptable." We also learned that police had been called to the home after a man in the neighborhood said he was shot in the elbow by a BB gun. A police report indicates that officers had been called to the home two days earlier in reference to teens shooting at people with BB guns. "We have not heard anything about any source of disruption in the neighborhood, which would have been a violation of the lease had we known," said Walker. We spoke with the owner of Vision Youth Services and she said they have paid rent in full and this is all a misunderstanding. We checked back with the housing authority to clarify and we were assured rent has not been paid and the lease has been terminated. Read more: <http://www.cbs46.com/story/30459120/group-home-for-teens-has-lease-terminated-after-not-paying-rent/#ixzz3qrUf2smP>

So many children in foster care seeking stability and permanence Placement with relatives not always an option Finding adoptive homes is a challenge Help by adopting, supporting adoptive and foster-care families, relatives or emergency-care facilities By Eva M. Guzman Special to the Star-Telegram [LinkedIn Google+ Pinterest Reddit Print Order Reprint of this Story](#) Every child deserves a loving and enriching home environment. Every child deserves joy and the opportunity to grow up happy and healthy. In some homes, however, childhood experiences are far from what they should be, and removal of children due to abuse has become a sad fact of life. Yet, no matter how abusive or chaotic the circumstances, separation from home and family can be extremely traumatic for a child. To help ease the distress of separation, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services looks for relatives to care for children rather than placing the child in a foster home or an emergency shelter. Unfortunately, placement with relatives is not always an option. Based on my experience as a judge and chair of the Supreme Court Children's Commission, I can say without hesitation that for children in foster care, the term emergency aptly describes their reality. During a recent trip to Corpus Christi, I was blessed with the chance to visit The Ark, an emergency shelter that provides placement and critical care services for children removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect. When I arrived at the shelter, I met several toddlers who happily played in a clean and safe environment. A sweet 3-year-old girl immediately ran up to me and asked, "Can I have a hug?" It warmed my heart to wrap my arms around her and give her a loving embrace. Another child ran up to me for a hug, followed by another and then another. A few minutes and several hugs later, I was overwhelmed by the affection emanating from these dear children. Despite enduring pain and loss that many of us could never comprehend, they were open-hearted and eager to experience the kindness of a hug, even from a stranger. I remain inspired by their resilience and ability to connect with others during a time of crisis and vulnerability in their lives. Naturally, I left The Ark wondering about the fate of each child I met. Would they return home to their families or join the approximately 31,000 children currently living in our state foster care system? Far too many children grow up in foster care in Texas without ever obtaining stability and permanence in their home lives. What if you and your community could change that? In 2014, more than 6,500 Texas children were in foster care available for adoption. Finding adoptive homes is a challenge for our state's child welfare agency, especially for older foster youth. Even young adults who have aged out of foster care long to be adopted or to connect with relatives — to find a forever family. Every November, our nation celebrates Adoption Awareness Month to bring attention to the plight of children in foster care and to encourage families to open their hearts and homes to children who live with uncertainty about their futures. To adopt a child from foster care is to chart a new course for that child. This November, let us be mindful of the extraordinary opportunity we each have to change a child's life for the better. And let us greet that opportunity with open minds, loving hearts and a commitment to making a difference in the lives of others. Whether it be through adoption or support of adoptive families, foster parents, relatives or emergency-care facilities, we can work together to achieve a brighter future for children in need. The [Children's Bureau](#) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has more information. Justice Eva M. Guzman is on the Supreme Court of Texas. Read more here: <http://www.star-telegram.com/opinion/opn-columns-blogs/other-voices/article43517055.html#storylink=cpy>

My Turn: Arizona foster care is still broken Fred Klein, AZ I See It 3:06 p.m. MST November 6, 2015 My Turn: We've decided that foster care is a law-enforcement matter rather than the social-services problem it is. The new Department of Child Safety has been tasked to better protect Arizona kids. (Photo: Pat Shannahan/The Republic) For the last 10 years I've been a member of a Foster Care Review Board, one of more than 50 in Maricopa County. The boards' charge is to advise the juvenile courts that oversee the foster-care system, mainly to ensure that cases move toward resolution and not become stuck in the bureaucratic maze. Our monthly hearings, usually involving 20 or more children, are open to all participants, mainly biological parents, foster parents, Department of Child Services case managers and, sometimes, the kids themselves. They give us a look into Arizona's foster care system most citizens lack. My take-away from this exposure is anything but encouraging. Recent state-instituted changes, including the rebranding that took place under Governor Brewer and the top-level-executive overhaul initiated by Gov. Doug Ducey, have brought no recognizable improvements in a badly overburdened system. [AZCENTRAL](#)
My Turn: DCS is just rearranging deck chairs for kids The brunt of responsibility for DCS functioning still falls on the case managers, many of whom are just a year or two out of college. They typically have caseloads of upwards of 60 children whom they must visit monthly and whose health and educational progress they must monitor. They also have to keep in touch with the (sometimes many) adults involved in each case, sit through court appearances that sometimes drag on for hours because of delays and lawyer wrangling over scheduling, fill out the acres of paperwork their agency demands and, yes, show up at FCRB hearings. It's no wonder they're often at wits' end, wondering if there are better ways to make a living. The snafus don't end there. Parental drug addiction is the main cause of child removal in Arizona, and the families involved almost always are poor. Babies who are born drug addicted commonly have continuing medical, developmental and behavioral problems that must be dealt with by a state welfare system that is itself underfunded and overburdened. [AZCENTRAL](#)
Arizona foster care system critically short on families Children whose parents are suddenly removed by death or incarceration must stand in line to get the counseling they need to help cope with their losses. Extra educational services such as tutoring or custom instruction commonly are required for kids whose chaotic home lives didn't permit regular school attendance; those are the kinds of things usually sacrificed when school budgets are tight. Because of a lack of available foster homes we've increasingly seen children as young as 7 being placed in dormitory-style group homes with scant parental oversight. Problems are greatly exacerbated when the lone parent in a home has untreated mental-health issues. Publicly financed care in this area is especially hard to come by, leaving many children's cases in limbo until mom or dad can get the help they need, or not. Chances for family reunification or adoption often fall by the wayside while this process plays out. [AZCENTRAL](#) **Suit details kids' troubled time in foster care** Foster care typically gets public attention only when a so-called scandal is involved, such as in 2013 when it was reported that thousands of reported instances of child abuse or neglect had gone uninvestigated. That revelation came as no surprise to anyone in or near a system that was (and still is) swamped by a burgeoning case load triggered by the Great Recession. In early 2014 Gov. Jan

Brewer changed the agency's name from Child Protective Services to the current DCS and chose a new director to head it. He didn't last much past November's gubernatorial election. Greg McKay, the director picked by Gov. Ducey, stands out mainly for his 20-year record as a Phoenix police officer. Abruptly changing agency heads rarely is a good idea, and whatever his other qualifications, McKay's appointment signaled mainly that the new governor sees foster care as a law-enforcement matter rather than the social-services problem it is. Fred Klein (Photo: handout) That's not a positive message. Saying that a problem is complex and deep-seated usually is a way of saying it can't be solved anytime soon. That's especially true in a state that isn't known for generously financing social services. Gov. Brewer's reorganization reportedly involved the addition of some 200 new case-manager posts, but from most accounts that was like buying a size-six shoe for a child whose feet had grown from a five to an eight. Putting another couple hundred case workers on the job would help immediately, as would beefing up the other services foster care needs to succeed. Fred Klein is a freelance writer who has lived in Scottsdale the last 18 years and has been a foster-care review board member since 2005. He was a newspaperman for 46 years. Source: <http://www.azcentral.com/story/opinion/op-ed/2015/11/06/arizona-foster-care/75296952/>

DSS screens out child abuse reports that don't merit investigation [Lauren Sausser](#) [Email @laurenmsausser](#) Nov 7 2015 7:00 pm x The South Carolina social services agency received more than 1,300 allegations of "out-of-home" child abuse and neglect last year, but its team of investigators opened fewer than 400 investigations, new data shows. Online To read the original "Warehousing Our Children" series, go to postandcourier.com/group-homes. Some reports were sent to law enforcement agencies for investigation. Others were "screened out" because they failed to meet the criteria for abuse or neglect, as defined by state law. Taron Davis, deputy director in the child welfare services division for the Department of Social Services, said the agency was not equipped to drill down into the data to provide more specific information about 994 abuse and neglect reports that were not investigated. She did not know how many abuse allegations were handled by police or simply closed because they did not merit investigation. "Just because we're not taking action, doesn't mean another entity isn't taking action," Davis said. "It really varies case by case." Agency spokeswoman Karen Wingo said in a prepared statement that DSS receives allegations on a wide range of issues, "a number of which do not rise to the level of abuse or neglect, even if all of the allegations were true." For example, she wrote, the team that investigates out-of-home abuse at DSS may receive a tip that a child was bitten by a playmate at day care. The report could be accurate but it doesn't meet the criteria for abuse. The new 2015 fiscal year data, published on [the agency's website](#), resembles data from previous years. During the 2014 fiscal year, the department received 1,055 out-of-home abuse or neglect referrals but investigated only 431. In 2013, it received 760 referrals but investigated only 399. Most of the investigations launched by DSS in 2015 involved out-of-home abuse or neglect allegations in foster homes, group homes or psychiatric institutions for children. Investigators rarely found enough evidence to support the claims, their numbers show. For example, the agency opened 104 investigations into abuse or neglect in group homes and institutions last year but determined only eight cases were "indicated or founded." Investigators also found evidence to prove 14 cases of abuse or neglect in child day care facilities and 25 cases of abuse or neglect in foster homes. The agency provided the names of group homes and institutions where it opened investigations last year. But DSS would not disclose where it determined abuse and neglect had been committed because the results of those investigations are protected by state law. The [recent Post and Courier](#) series "Warehousing our Children" determined it is nearly impossible for the public to know where children have been abused or neglected. Meanwhile, South Carolina sends its youngest foster children into group homes and institutions at a higher rate than any other state in the country, even though best practices indicate most children thrive with families, not in residential, congregate care settings. The state spends millions of dollars a year on these facilities, but taxpayers cannot evaluate where children are kept safe. The newspaper's series reported that child welfare experts have expressed long-running concerns that the embattled social services agency doesn't sufficiently investigate child abuse allegations inside these facilities. "I think transparency is a problem. They'll say they don't have the staff to do it," said state Sen. Katrina Shealy, R-Lexington, a member of the DSS Oversight Committee. "They don't have enough people to follow up on all those complaints. They've requested more staff. We've given them the money to hire more staff and they haven't filled the positions." Fourteen positions are funded for the team that investigates out-of-home abuse and neglect at DSS. There are currently two vacancies. Camden attorney Robert Butcher is particularly concerned that the agency discards reports alleging child-on-child sexual abuse inside group homes and foster homes. "It's not investigated ... because it's not an adult that's harmed a child," Butcher said. "And they don't have to track it." The [state law defining child abuse and neglect](#) includes offenses ranging from abandonment and malnourishment to sexual and mental abuse. It does not specifically mention child-on-child sexual abuse. "If we receive a report of sexual abuse that is child-on-child sexual abuse, we don't necessarily screen those out," said Davis, the deputy DSS director. For example, she said, if an adult is responsible for the welfare of a child and fails to protect the child from child-on-child sexual abuse, the case may warrant investigation. Butcher represents a Greenville man who filed suit last month against DSS in Richland County. The man, a former foster child named K.C. in court records, alleges the agency failed to protect him from sexual abuse in various group homes and foster homes. In an [interview with The Post and Courier](#) earlier this year, K.C. said he was sexually active with his sister and other foster children between 1999 and 2004. He contends the state agency continued to place him in homes with his sister and other children even though his caseworkers knew that they engaged in sexual activity with each other. They should have been separated and treated for their behavior, he said. K.C. served time in a Department of Juvenile Justice facility for raping his sister. He went back to prison as a young adult for fondling a child. "(K.C.), as someone who was sexually acting out (as a child), should have gotten the treatment and isolation that he needed, so he wouldn't have ended up in the DJJ system," Butcher said. "That's the problem. We're socializing people into the adult system by not treating them when they're children." State officials do not discuss pending litigation. Reach Lauren Sausser at (843) 937-5598. Source: <http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20151107/PC16/151109476/1177/dss-screens-out-child-abuse-reports-that-don-x2019-t-merit-investigation>

Terrorizing Students: The Criminalization of Children in the US Police State Wednesday, 11 November 2015 00:00 By [Henry A. Giroux](#). Truthout | Op-Ed font size [decrease font size](#) [increase font size](#) [Print](#) 179 Email (Image: [Jared Rodriguez / Truthout](#)) Violence has become the problem of the 21st century. This claim is indebted to W. E. B. Dubois' much quoted notion that "The problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of color line."^[1] For Du Bois, racism was one of the most pressing problems of the time and could not be understood outside of the gross inequities of wealth, power, opportunity and access. What he did not anticipate was the degree to which the violent character of racism would come to define the 21st century on a national and global level. What he described as a ruthless ideology and attitude of racist hostility would later mutate in the new millennium into a raw display of police brutality and state terrorism, camouflaged under the guise of an alleged post-racial society. [To read more articles by Henry A. Giroux and other authors in the Public Intellectual Project, click here.](#) As brutalism comes to shape every public encounter, democratic values and the ethical imagination wither under the weight of neoliberal capitalism and "post-racial" racism. Giving way to the poisonous logics of self-interest, privatization and the unfettered drive for wealth, US society reneges on the social contract and assumes the role of a punishing state. ^[2] Under the regime of a predatory neoliberalism, compassion and respect are viewed increasingly with contempt while the spectacle of violence titillates the multitudes and moves markets. A free-market mentality now drives and corrupts politics, destroys social protections, celebrates a hyper-competitiveness and deregulates economic activity. All human activities, practices and institutions are now subject to market principles. Public goods such as toll roads, libraries and schools are privatized as the very idea of the common good becomes an object of disdain. ^[3] Consequently, under such circumstances, governing principles such as equality, justice and fairness begin to disappear from the discourse of politics. As politics is emptied of any sense of social responsibility, the apostles of casino capitalism preach that allegedly amoral economic activity exacts no social costs, and in doing so, they accelerate the expanding wasteland of disposable goods and people. ^[4] One consequence is a vast and growing landscape of human suffering, amplified by a mass-mediated metaphysics of retribution and violence that more and more creeps into every commanding institution of US society, now serving myriad functions such as sport, spectacle, entertainment, and punishment. The neoliberal machinery of social death increasingly extends its reach across US society, dissolving the bonds of sociality and undermining social obligations. One outcome is the proliferation of neglect, exploitation and suffering among diverse populations, including poor and uneducated middle-aged whites, who are dying prematurely and unnecessarily in an epidemic of substance abuse, suicide and poor health. ^[5] Neoliberalism's unbridled social Darwinism, elimination of social provisions and culture of cruelty forces people out of Medicaid, pushes millions into poverty and eliminates social protections. ^[6] Alain Badiou rightly calls those who run our current political system a "regime of gangsters." ^[7] These so-called gangsters produce a unique form of social violence. According to Badiou, they: Privatize everything. Abolish help for the weak, the solitary, the sick and the unemployed. Abolish all aid for everyone except the banks. Don't look after the poor; let the elderly die. Reduce the wages of the poor, but reduce the taxes on the rich. Make everyone work until they are ninety. Only teach mathematics to traders, reading to big property-owners and history to on-duty ideologues. And the execution of these commands will in fact ruin the lives of millions of people. ^[8] Increasingly, institutions such as schools,

prisons, detention centers, and our major economic, cultural and social institutions are being organized around the production of violence. Rather than promote democratic values and a respect for others or embrace civic values, they often function largely to humiliate, punish and demonize any vestige of social responsibility. Violence permeates and drives foreign policy, dominates popular culture and increasingly is used to criminalize a wide range of social behaviors, especially among Black people. [9] The punishment "creep" that has moved from prisons to other public spheres now has a firm grip on both schools and the daily rituals of everyday life. Violence functions as a brutalizing practice used by the state to squelch dissent, incarcerate poor people and people of color, terrorize immigrants, wage a war on minority youth and menace individuals and groups considered disposable or a threat. Not only does such violence destroy the conditions and institutions necessary to develop a democratic polity, it also accelerates abusive forms of punitiveness and control that extend from the prisons to other institutions, such as schools. In this instance, violence becomes the ultimate force propagating what might be called punishment creep. The punishment "creep" that has moved from prisons to other public spheres now has a firm grip on both schools and the daily rituals of everyday life. Margaret Kimberley captures one instance of the racist underside of punishment creep. She writes: "Black people are punished for driving, for walking down the street, for having children, for putting their children in school, for acting the way children act, and even for having children who are killed by other people. We are punished, in short, because we still exist." [10] Violence in the United States has always been defined partly by a poisonous mix of chauvinism, exceptionalism and terrorism that runs through a history marked by genocidal assaults against Native Americans, the brutality of slavery and a persistent racism that extends from the horror of lynchings and chain gangs to current patterns of mass incarceration, which subject many Black youth to the shameful dynamics of the school-to-prison-pipeline and unprecedented levels of police abuse. Violence is the premier signature of what Ta-Nehisi Coates calls "The Dreamers," those individuals and groups who have "signed on, either actively or passively, to complicity in everything from police shootings to real estate redline, which crowds blacks into substandard housing in dangerous neighborhoods ... The Dream is about the totality of white supremacy in American history and its cumulative weight on African-Americans, and how one attempts to live with that." [11] In part, violence - whether produced by the state, corporations or racist individuals - is difficult to abstract from an expression of white supremacy, which functions as an index for demanding "the full privileges of the state." [12] Police violence against Black people has become highly visible and thrust into the national spotlight as a result of individuals recording acts of police abuse with their cell phones and other new technologies. In the last few years, there has been what seems like a torrent of video footage showing unarmed Black people being assaulted by the police. For instance, there is the shocking video of Walter Scott being shot in the back after fleeing from his car; Eric Garner dying as a result of being put in a chokehold by a white policeman who accused him of illegally selling cigarettes; the tragic killing of Freddie Gray, who, after making eye contact with a police officer, was put in a police van and purposely given a jarring ride that resulted in his death; and the unbearable shooting of 12-year-old Tamir Rice for playing with a pellet gun in the snow in a park. All of these deaths are morally indefensible and are symptomatic of the deep-seated racism and propensity for violence in many police forces in the United States. Yet, as Jeah Lee observes, while such crimes have attracted national attention, the "use of force by cops in schools ... has drawn far less attention [in spite of the fact that] over the past five years at least 28 students have been seriously injured, and in one case shot to death, by so-called school resource officers - sworn, uniformed police assigned to provide security on K-12 campuses." [13] Increasingly, as public schools hand over even routine disciplinary problems to the police, there is a proliferation of cops in schools. There are over 17,000 school resource officers in more than half of the schools in the United States. [14] In spite of the fact that violence in schools has dropped precipitously, school resource officers are the fastest-growing segment of law enforcement. The Militarization of Schools In part, the militarizing of schools and the accompanying surge of police officers are driven by the fear of school shootings, particularly in the aftermath of the Columbine High School tragedy in 1999 and the massacre that took place at Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2013, both of which have been accentuated by the ever present wave of paranoia that followed the terrorist attacks of 9/11. [15] What advocates of putting police in the schools refuse to acknowledge is that the presence of the police in schools has done nothing to stop such mass shootings. While the fear of school shootings are overestimated, the fact remains that schools are still one of the safest places for children to be. Caught under the weight of a culture of fear and a rush to violence, many young people in schools are the most recent victims of a punishing state in a society that "remains in a state of permanent, endless war," a war that is waged through militarized policies at home and abroad. [16] Following Stanley Aronowitz, I think it is fair to argue that with "the breakdown of the mission of public schools ... today's authorities no longer offer hope" to this generation of young people. One consequence is that "under the doctrine of control they threaten punishment, which includes, although it is not necessarily associated with, incarceration." [17] Violence against young people in schools is a troubling index of the loss of faith in young people and the transformation of school from a source of social and economic mobility to despotic testing institutions for most youth, and repressive holding centers, primarily for youth of color. [18] The transformation of disciplinary problems into criminal violations has often resulted in absurd, if not tragic results. What has become clear is that cops in schools have not made schools safer. Erik Eckholm, reporting for The New York Times, stated that judges, youth advocates, parents and other concerned citizens "are raising alarm about what they have seen in the schools where officers are already stationed: a surge in criminal charges against children for misbehavior that many believe is better handled in the principal's office." [19] In Texas, police officers have written "more than 100,000 misdemeanor tickets each year" and many of these students "face hundreds of dollars in fines, community service, and in some cases, a lasting record that could affect applications for jobs or the military." [20] The transformation of disciplinary problems into criminal violations has often resulted in absurd if not tragic results. For instance, in 2009, in Richardson, Texas "A 14-year old boy with Asperger's syndrome was given a \$364 police citation for using an expletive in his classroom." [21] It gets even more ludicrous. A 12-year-old student in Stuart, Florida, was arrested in November 2008, for "disrupting a school function." The 'disruption' was that the student had "passed gas." [22] Similarly, a number of civil rights groups have reported that the presence of police in schools often "means more suspensions, which disproportionately affect minority students," according to an article in USA Today. [23] Many of the young people who end up in court are poor Black and Brown students, along with students with disabilities. As reported in The New York Times, "police-driven policies have not made schools more secure. But they do make children more likely to drop out and become entangled with the justice system. And they disproportionately affect minority and disabled children, who are more likely to be singled out for the harshest forms of discipline." [24] In one instance, an 8-year-old and 9-year-old in a public school in Kenton County, Kentucky, both with severe disabilities that made it difficult for them to follow classroom instructions, were handcuffed by a deputy sheriff for misbehaving. One child was writhing and crying in pain because of the handcuffs placed around his biceps since his wrists were too small. [25] Such acts are more than shameful, they also are symptomatic of a society that is waging war on many of its children. What must be recognized is that schools in general have become combat zones where it is routine for many students to be subjected to metal detectors, surveillance cameras, uniformed security guards, weapons searches, and in some cases, SWAT team raids and police dogs sniffing for drugs. [26] Under such circumstances, the purpose of schooling appears to be to contain and punish young people - especially those marginalized by race, class and disabilities - rather than educate them. For the many disadvantaged students being funnelled into the "school-to-prison pipeline," schools ensure that their futures look grim indeed, as their educational experiences acclimatize them to forms of carceral treatment. [27] There is more at work here than a flight from responsibility on the part of educators, parents and politicians who support and maintain policies that fuel this expanding edifice of law enforcement against the young and disenfranchised. Underlying the repeated decisions to turn away from helping young people is the growing sentiment that youth, particularly youth of color, constitute a threat to adults, and the only effective way to deal with them is to subject them to mind-crushing punishment. Students being miseducated, criminalized and arrested through a form of penal pedagogy in prison-type schools provides a grave reminder of the degree to which the ethos of containment and punishment now creeps into spheres of everyday life that were largely immune in the past from this type of state and institutional violence. How else to explain, as Judith Browne Dianis observes that, Across the country, young people are being arrested for behavior that used to be solved through a trip to the principal's office or the intervention of a counselor. In Florida, a 14-year-old was arrested and charged for throwing a pencil at another student and spent 21 days in jail. In New York, a 12-year-old was arrested for doodling, 'I love Abby and Faith on her desk.' In Chicago, 25 children, some as young as 11, were arrested for engaging in a food fight. [28] How many more images of young schoolchildren in handcuffs do we have to witness before it becomes clear that the educational system is broken? Schools are no longer reliable spaces of joy, critical teaching and support. Too many are now institutions of containment and control that produce pedagogies of conformity and kill the imagination by teaching to the test. Within such schools, the lesson that young people are learning about themselves is that they can't engage in critical thinking, be trusted, rely on the informed judgments of teachers and administrators and that their behavior is constantly subject to procedures that amount to both an assault on their dignity and a violation of their civil liberties. Schools have become institutions in which creativity is viewed as a threat, harsh discipline a virtue and punishment the reward for not conforming to what amounts to the dictates of a police state. How many more images of young schoolchildren in handcuffs do we have to witness before it becomes clear that the educational system is broken, reduced largely to a punishing factory defined by a culture of fear and an utter

distrust of young people? The School to Prison Pipeline According to the Advancement Project, schools have become increasingly intolerant of young people, imposing draconian zero tolerance policies on them by furthering a culture steeped in criminalizing often minor, if not trivial, student behaviors. [29] What is truly alarming is not only the ways in which young people are being ushered into the criminal legal system and treated less as students than as criminals, but the harsh violence to which they are often subjected by school resource officers. In a report published in Mother Jones, Jonathan Hardin, a Louisville Metro Police officer, in 2014 "was fired after his alleged use of force in two incidents at Olmsted Academy North middle school: He was accused of punching a 13-year-old student in the face for cutting the cafeteria line, and a week later of putting another 13-year-old student in a chokehold, allegedly knocking the student unconscious and causing a brain injury." [30] In a second incident that year, "Cesar Suquet, then a 16-year-old high school student in Houston, was being escorted by an officer out of the principal's office after a discussion about Suquet's confiscated cell phone. Following a verbal exchange, police officer Michael Y'Barbo struck Suquet at least 18 times with a police baton, injuring him on his head, neck and elsewhere." [31] Y'Barbo claimed that beating a student with a police baton was "reasonable and necessary" and "remains on regular assignment including patrol." [32] There have also been incidents where students have been shot, suffered brain injuries or have been psychologically traumatized. Jaeah Lee cites a young Black high school student in Detroit who, after a troubling interaction with a school police officer, speaks for many young people about the dread and anxiety that many students experience when police occupy their schools. He states that "Many young people today have fear of the police in their communities and schools." [33] If one important measure of a democracy is how a society treats its children, especially young children who are Black, Brown or suffer from disabilities, there can be little doubt that US society is failing. As the United States increasingly models its schools after prisons, students are no longer viewed as a social investment in the future. A deadly mixture of racism and violence in the 21st century has become increasingly evident in the attacks being waged against young people in American schools. If students in general are now viewed as a potential threat, Black students are regarded increasingly as criminals. One result is that schools increasingly have come to resemble war zones; spaces marked by distrust, fear and demonization. With more police in the schools than ever before, security has become more important than providing children with a critical education and supportive learning environment. As authority in many of the schools is often handed over to the police and security forces who are now asked to deal with all alleged disciplinary problems, however broadly defined, the power and autonomy of teachers and school administrators are weakened at the expense of the safety of the students. This loss of authority is clear in New York City where school administrators have no control over security forces who report directly to local police departments. In most cases, the disciplinary problems that take place in schools involve trivial infractions, such as violating a dress code, scribbling on a desk or holding a 2-inch toy gun. The assault on children in public schools suggests that children of color cannot view schools as supportive spaces where they can be given a quality education. Instead, schools have become sites of control, testing and punishment all too eager to produce pedagogies of repression, and more than willing to erect, once again, what has been called the school-to-prison pipeline, especially for youth of color. Roxane Gay is right in observing that, Black children are not allowed to be children. They are not allowed to be safe, not at home, not at pool parties, not driving or sitting in cars listening to music, not walking down the street, not in school. For black children, for black people, to exist is to be endangered. Our bodies receive no sanctity or safe harbor. [34] Police Brutality in the Classroom It is inconceivable that in an alleged democracy poor youth of color at all grade levels in the public schools are subjected to shameful criminal practices, such as being handcuffed and carted off to jail for minor incidents - and that such draconian practices could take place in a society that views itself as a democracy. Stripped of their public mission as institutions that nurture young people to become informed, critically engaged citizens, schools have become punishing factories all too willing to turn disciplinary authority over to the police and to usher students into the harsh bureaucracy of the criminal legal system. [35] Rather than assume responsibility for students, too many schools have abdicated on their authority and are more than willing to turn discipline problems, however trivial, over to the police. The results have been devastating for youth of color. As the Advancement Project points out: Across the United States many public schools have turned into feeder schools for the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Youths are finding themselves increasingly at risk of falling into the school-to-prison pipeline through push-outs (systematic exclusion through suspensions, expulsions, discouragement, and high-stakes testing). Yet, an even more direct schoolhouse-to-jailhouse track is transferring a growing number of youths to the penal system. In the name of school safety, schools have implemented unforgiving, overly harsh zero tolerance discipline practices that turn kids into criminals for acts that rarely constitute a crime when committed by an adult. No one is safe from zero tolerance - age, grade, past behavior, and disabilities are often irrelevant. And, although students of all races and genders are victims of this track, it is especially reserved for children of color - and males in particular. Schools have teamed up with law enforcement to make this happen by imposing a "double dose" of punishment: suspension or expulsion and a trip to the juvenile justice system. [36] One recent example of a particularly disturbing incident of police brutality was captured in a series of videos recorded at Spring Valley High School in South Carolina. Prior to the incident being filmed, a young Black student named Shakara took out her cell phone in class. The teacher asked her for it, and when she refused to hand it over, she was asked to leave the class. The teacher called the vice principal. Rather than attempt to defuse the situation, the vice principal called for a school resource officer. At this point, Officer Ben Fields enters the classroom. One of Shakara's classmates, Niya Kenney, immediately asked her classmates to begin filming because, as she put it, "I told them to get the cameras out, because we know his reputation - well, I know his reputation." [37] In what follows, one of the videos records the following: Officer Ben Fields approaches the young woman, appears to give her no time to stand up and proceeds to grab her left arm while placing his right arm around her neck; he then lifts her desk, pulls her out of her seat, slams her to the ground and drags her across the floor before handcuffing her. The video is difficult to watch, given the extreme and disproportionate violence used against this young Black woman. She was arrested, as was Kenny, who both filmed the incident and loudly protested the treatment of Shakara. Fields was fired soon afterwards, but incredulously, both students are being charged with "disturbing schools, a crime punishable by up to ninety days in jail or a thousand dollar fine." [38] After the incident went viral, information emerged indicating that Fields had a previous reputation for being aggressive with students, and he was viewed as a threat by many students who nicknamed him "Officer Slam." Moreover, he had a previous record of violently assaulting people. [39] The question that should be asked as a result of this shocking act of police violence against a young Black student is not how Fields got a job in a school working with children, but what kind of society believes that police should be in schools in the first place. Whatever happened to teacher and administrator responsibility? Sadly, it was a school administrator who called in the police at Spring Valley High School because the student would not turn over her phone. Even worse, when Sheriff Leon Lott announced his decision to fire Fields, he pointed out that the classroom teacher and administrator supported the actions of the police officer and made it clear that "they also had no problems with the physical part." [40] Both the teacher and administrator should be fired. This incident was in all probability a simple disciplinary problem that should have been handled by responsible educators. Students should not be treated like criminals. It is one thing not to assume responsibility for students, but another to subject them to brutal assaults by the police. Lawlessness runs deep in US society and has been normalized. Brutal attacks on defenseless children rarely get the attention they deserve, and when they do, the corporate media refuse to acknowledge that the United States has become a suicidal society willing even to sacrifice its own children to an expanding punishing state that protects the interests of the corporate and financial elite. [41] How else to explain the shameless defense of such a brutal assault against a young Black girl by pundits such as CNN's Harry Houck and Don Lemon, who implied that such violence was warranted because Shakara did not respect the officer, as if the beating of a Black child by a police officer, who happens also to be a body-builder who can lift 300 pounds, justifies such actions? This is a familiar script in which Black people are often told that whatever violence they were subject to was legitimate because they acted out of place, did not follow rules that in reality oppress them or simply refused to fall in line. Grassroots Resistance The other side of this racist script finds expression in those who argue that any critique of the police endangers public safety. In this dangerous discourse, the police are the victims, a line of argument recently voiced in different ways by both President Obama and by James Comey, the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The most vociferous and strident voices opposing any critique of police violence come from police unions. As William Boardman observes, "Two of the biggest police unions in the country are now on record in opposition to free speech. They are on record against constitutionally protected free speech that opposes the epidemic of police violence across America (more than 900 killed by police so far in 2015)." [42] This was particularly visible when film director Quentin Tarantino gave a talk criticizing police violence in New York as part of Rise Up October, three days of protest against police terror. While addressing a number of families whose members were victims of police brutality, Tarantino stated that, "I'm here to say I'm on the side of the murdered." [43] The backlash from major police unions was quick and severe, as the unions began calling for a nationwide boycott of his films. This repressive discourse not only refuses to recognize the growing visibility of police violence; it also shores up one of the foundations of the authoritarian state, suggesting that the violence propagated by the police should not be subject to public scrutiny. As an editorial in The New York Times pointed out, this "formulation implies that for the police to do their jobs, they need to have free rein to be abusive. It also implies that the public would be safer if Americans with cellphones never started circulating videos of officers battering suspects in the first place ... This trend is straight out of

Orwell." [44] Instead of putting police in schools, money should be spent on more guidance teachers, social workers, teachers, community intervention workers and other professionals. Educators, young people, parents and others concerned about violence in schools need to organize and demand that the police be removed from school. Not only is their presence a waste of taxpayers' money and an interference with children's education, they also pose a threat to student safety. [45] Instead of putting police in schools, money should be spent on more guidance teachers, social workers, teachers, community intervention workers and other professionals who are trained to provide a secure and supportive environment for young people. It is particularly crucial to support those social services, classroom practices and policies that work to keep students in schools. Everything possible should be done to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline and the underlying forces that produce it. At the same time, more profound change must take place on a national level, since the violence waged by the police is symptomatic of a society now ruled by a financial elite who trade in cruelty, punishment and despair. US society is broken, and the violence to which it appears addicted will continue until the current configurations of power, politics, inequality and injustice are eliminated. The increasing visibility of police brutality in schools and in the streets speaks to a larger issue regarding the withering of democracy in the United States and the growing lawlessness that prevails in a society in which violence is one of the few resources left to use to address social problems. The US is paying a horrible price for turning governance at all levels over to people for whom violence serves as the default register for addressing important social issues. As the movement for Black Lives has made clear, the Spring Valley High School case and others are part of a larger trend that has turned schools across the country into detention centers and educators into hapless bystanders as classroom management is ceded to the police. What we see in this incident (and in many others that have escaped national attention because they are not caught on cell phones) are the rudiments of a growing police state. Violence is now a normalized and celebrated ideal for how the United States defines itself - an ideal that views democracy as an excess or, even worse, a pathology. This is something Americans must acknowledge, interrogate and resist if they don't want to live under a system of total terror and escalating violence. Source: <http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/33604-terrorizing-students-the-criminalization-of-children-in-the-us-police-state>

Search Life and Death in a Troubled Teen Boot Camp A tragic accident exposes the dangers of an out-of-control billion-dollar industry By Jesse Hyde

November 12, 2015 In the darkness of early morning, 16-year-old Bruce Staeger lay splayed across his mattress, sleeping soundly for once. Most nights, he would smoke a blunt and crash, but not this one. Lately, his mother had been watching him closely. She and Bruce's stepdad had even installed a motion detector on the porch of their doublewide trailer to keep him from sneaking out at night. Around 4:30 a.m., his bedroom light suddenly flipped on. Bruce rolled over, blocking his eyes from the glare to find his mom sitting on the edge of the bed. "Bruce, do you remember what I told you a few days ago?" She said softly. "I would never make a decision that would hurt you." Sidebar [Trying to Fix America's Broken Juvenile Justice System](#) » Over her shoulder, two men in cowboy hats and Wranglers hovered near his bedroom doorway. Other kids, he would later learn, freaked out in this moment. They yelled, they swore, they swung wildly at the two strangers. But Bruce did none of this. He quietly got dressed as instructed. "You're going away with these men," his mom told him. "This is for your own good." The cowboys nudged him out into the cold morning air and loaded his things into the bed of a pickup. They headed west, towards the Black Range, a rugged and remote stretch of mountains in southern New Mexico. After a few hours of driving, one of the men put a black pillowcase over Bruce's head so he wouldn't know where they were going. The truck lurched and heaved as the paved road turned dirt. Eventually, Bruce would come this way again and see it all—the dry creek beds and narrow slot canyons, the craggy ridgelines and low-lying mesas that glowed red in the sun—but for now, his head hooded in darkness, he could see nothing. Bruce had been getting into trouble ever since his dad left six years earlier. A skinny kid with sloping shoulders, braces and a mild case of acne, he rarely went to school, spending his days smoking pot and skateboarding instead. A few months earlier, he had run away and holed up with some meth junkies. When he finally returned home, his mom said she didn't know what else to do for him. Apparently, this was her answer. Finally, they arrived at their destination: a camp known as Lockwood, a satellite location of Tierra Blanca Ranch, which for almost 20 years had reformed troubled youth. The camp's owner and director, a man named Scott Chandler, emerged from the truck, bowlegged with a slight hitch in his step. He lifted the hood from Bruce's head. "Hey guys," Chandler called out. "Come meet the new kid!" It took Bruce a minute to gain his bearings. He was in the mountains, above 5,000 feet, standing in a clearing surrounded by towering strands of pine. A thin plume of smoke rose from a cooking fire and two industrial grade Army tents loomed in the distance. Down by the creek, he could hear voices, high and reedy. Slowly, a dozen boys emerged, hard and lean, with haunted eyes. Their clothing was soiled and stained, their fingernails rimmed with dirt. The ones wearing orange, Bruce would soon learn, were trouble. The worst cases didn't approach at all; they were firewalled, which usually meant they couldn't speak to anyone except staff. Each looked Bruce dead in the eye and shook his hand firmly — something in their manner, though, both cocksure and skittish, unsettled him. Bruce had no idea the terrors and torment that awaited him at Tierra Blanca, some of the worst of it at the hands of the boys who now surrounded him. And he could never have imagined the decision to send him here would result in his death. A working cattle ranch spanning 30,000 acres in one of the most isolated regions of the country, Tierra Blanca promised to take unruly teenagers—drug users, drop outs, kids in and out of the court system—and reform them through "sound Biblical principles," exercise, hard work and discipline. The program operates on the fringes of what's known as the troubled teen industry, a booming business that generates as much as \$1.2 billion a year and takes in 10,000 to 14,000 kids and teenagers at any given time. For around \$100 a day, or the rough equivalent of prep school tuition, you could send your teen to Tierra Blanca to become the sort of raw-boned young man who answered "yes, sir" and didn't complain when asked to do the dishes. Bruce Staeger was on the path to "real change" before his death in 2013. Courtesy of Carla Campbell-Moffat When Bruce arrived in October of 2011, he had little idea how the camp functioned, what it would take to leave, or how long he'd be there. "There was no program, there was no handbook, there wasn't anything," says Nathan Bailey, who was at the ranch with Bruce. "As you became more trusted, more things were explained to you by the other guys. The only way you learned about the place was just a trickle of information." The aim of the program, several boys told me, was to break you down so what Chandler called "real change" could begin. Each day began early, typically at 7 a.m., with breakfast and Bible study or reading about historical leaders like Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. Tuesdays and Fridays a retired elementary school teacher known as Miss Allie came to the ranch and handed out assignments from teachers in the nearby town of Deming. Every other day, the 15 or so kids at the camp were put to work on the ranch, clearing land, chopping the firewood that Chandler sold in town, or building miles of fence to keep cattle from wandering off. To soften up the rocky ground for fence posts, the biggest kids ran the digger, an unwieldy contraption with sharp metal spikes, or they just used "ghetto dynamite," bullet cartridges stuffed with gunpowder, to blow the rock apart. "That's what we did every day, shit like that," says Gunnar Hatton, who was at Tierra Blanca with Bruce. "And then they'd say, 'Everyone put your tools down, it's time to run up and down the mountain, 10 fucking times with a 20 pound rock in your hands.' And then it was back to work. That's all we did, run and work." Exercises varied from grueling long distance runs to charging up a hill with a truck tire hoisted above their heads, a drill Chandler called "Halos." In between, boys were made to do up-downs, scissor kicks, push-ups and wall sits until their legs burned and their lungs were on fire. "The bigger you were and the stronger you were and the more you liked fucking up the little guys, the more powerful you were," says Hatton. Bruce tried to keep up, but he was out of shape. When he couldn't do exercises, staff encouraged the other boys to "help" him, which was code for either dragging him or "just a punch to the gut," another camper later told police. "The bigger you were and the stronger you were and the more you liked fucking up the little guys, the more powerful you were." If Bruce did what staff asked, and didn't give them any trouble, he could earn three points a day. Once he earned 60 points he could call home. Staff favorites who had accumulated enough points for good behavior were given "privileged status," which meant they could also go home for a visit, rent a movie (as long as it wasn't R-rated) or play on the Deming football team. Those who broke the rules or tried to run away were taken to a special closet full of orange clothing, assigned an outfit, and in some cases made to sleep, work and eat shackled and cuffed. (Chandler says this has only happened a "handful" of times when a boy was a danger to himself or others.) I talked to several boys who said they spent weeks in shackles, and one showed me scars on his ankles and wrists from times the cuffs and shackles cut into his skin until he bled. "Sometimes kids would step on your shackles just to fuck with you," he tells me. "I learned how to sleep with them on, do the dishes with them on, everything." To cope, some boys made a crude form of hooch out of canned fruit, bread and sugar, and tattooed themselves using ballpoint-pen ink and cactus needles. Others tried to run away. A boy named Jordan Almanza tried twice, once stealing a hacksaw to cut off his handcuffs and shackles, but every time Chandler and his staff hunted him down. "There was no way out," Hatton says. "You could either run and fucking die of dehydration, or just end it yourself." At first, Bruce was so timid the other boys had to look at his homework packet from Miss Allie to figure out his name. "He was hard to read," recalls Bruce's fellow camper, Nathan Bailey. "At times he would just stare off. He could go from being completely stoic, like nothing was getting to him, and then he'd just break down." As the months passed, though, Bruce began to open up. Laying in his tent at night, careful to make sure staff weren't listening, he talked about his ex girlfriends, the metal band he fronted back home and how much he missed his mom. "This shit really sucks," Bruce often said. "But I deserve it." In the spring of 2012, Chandler took Bruce and a group of other boys three hours east into the Sacramento Mountains to build fence line and turn rugged terrain

into a hunting camp for wealthy clients. Most of the boys, including Bruce, were in orange for breaking camp rules. Because they were in such a remote location, roughly 100 miles from ranch headquarters, there was limited electricity; much of the food was canned — "way past the expiration date," Hatton says — and stored in a horse trailer with a leaky roof. Another camper later told police that "rain would get in the pancake mix and it would mold, but it was the only food that was there so you just cooked it and fried the crap out of it and just ate it." (Chandler denies this. "I ate everything the boys ate and 90 percent of the time there were leftovers, which we fed to the dogs," he says. "They got plenty to eat.") Bruce was beaten and tortured by fellow campers for over a month in New Mexico's Sacramento Mountains. Don Smith/Getty One night, after a week of work, the boys were loading up to return to Tierra Blanca headquarters when Chandler realized his wallet was missing. After hours of searching, he became convinced one of the kids stole it. One by one, he and another staffer took them under a tarp beside the horse trailer, and strip-searched them. When the wallet still didn't turn up, he gathered them around his truck. "One of you stole my wallet," he said. "And this is your one chance to come forward and admit you did it." No one said anything. The next morning, Chandler told the boys they'd stay at the camp until the wallet turned up. Suspicions quickly fell upon Bruce; he'd been one of the last ones in the truck with Chandler before the wallet went missing. But Bruce insisted he didn't have it. Chandler slowly upped daily exercise to extreme levels and cut rations down to just rice, canned beans and tortillas. To turn the boys against Bruce, the staff sat him in a lawn chair, gave him water and forced him to watch the other boys do "Halos" up and down a steep rocky slope. When that didn't elicit a confession, Chandler and his staff started waking the boys up in the middle of the night to run. (Chandler says this only happened twice.) "We were already starving, and really the only thing we had left was sleep," Hatton says. "When he took that from us, it felt like we were losing our minds." The other boys tried to figure out why Bruce wouldn't reveal the location of the wallet. Some of them guessed it was a final stand against Chandler, to show he wouldn't break. But others began to wonder if he'd stolen it at all. At some point, Bruce reportedly told Chandler that he had taken the wallet and burned it. Either way, after a few weeks, several boys say that Chandler subtly suggested how to end the ordeal. As Hatton later told police, "He wanted Bruce beaten." Hatton says the beatings started off once or twice a week, but eventually escalated to every day. A group of four or five boys, usually the biggest, would take Bruce away from the camp and start interrogating him. "We'd tell him, 'You know what's about to happen,'" Hatton recalls. "And then we'd beat the shit out of him." Several boys say they'd beat Bruce in plain sight of ranch staff, something Chandler denies. The camp consisted of a cluster of tents near the mobile campers where Chandler and the staff slept. "They'd either just go in their trailers while it was happening or sit there right outside their trailers eating," says one of the boys who participated in the beatings. "They never once intervened." When beatings alone didn't work, the boys grew more inventive. They hung Bruce from the horse trailer from his handcuffs; lassoed him and dragged him across the dirt; and put him in a sleeping bag stuffed with cow shit and knelt on his chest. The worst of it, one boy told me, was the day they hogtied him to a pole by his cuffs and shackles and paraded him around camp like a pig on a stick, while other boys beat him. Eventually the boys decided the only way to end the ordeal was for one of them to die so authorities would shut down the camp. They drew lots to decide who would drink nightshade tea, derived from a poisonous plant, but staff discovered the plot before anyone could go through with it. Two weeks later, they met again. This time they decided they'd have to kill Bruce, but ultimately abandoned the plan. And then one day a staffer found the wallet in a five-gallon bucket of electrical wires. While Bruce never confessed to putting the wallet there, Chandler says he has never doubted that Bruce did it. Not that it mattered to any of the boys. After six weeks, their trip to the Sacramento Mountains was finally over. All the boys I talked to who participated in the beatings had trouble admitting what they had done to Bruce. "It's something I have a really hard time forgiving myself over," one former camper says. "I feel so guilty, not just for taking part in the beatings, but for wanting him to die. I still have nightmares from what we did to him." It's hard to know how many programs like Tierra Blanca operate across the country, but conservative estimates put the number in the hundreds. Some are tough-love boot camps; others are wilderness-based programs whose philosophies can vary from meditation and yoga to the most extreme versions of fundamentalist Christianity. Many of the programs share an outright disdain for traditional therapy and try to fly under the radar of state regulators. Despite an alarming report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) in 2007 that found "thousands of allegations of abuse, some of which involved death" at residential treatment programs nationwide, the troubled teen industry has flourished in recent years, especially in states with religious exemption laws. In Florida, which bans the inspection of private, faith-based facilities, there have been at least 165 allegations of abuse and neglect over the past decade. Children have complained of being pinned to the ground for hours, held in seclusion for days and made to stand until they wet themselves. Some have even been choked to unconsciousness. Girls have been forced to wave around their menstrual-stained underwear as chastisement for being "unclean." Conversion therapy for gay teens is a common practice at many of the faith-based facilities as well. Most troubling about the growth of the industry, advocates say, is that there's no proof any of it works. In fact, research highlighted by the GAO report suggests that tough love programs are actually counterproductive. "If you want to teach a kid how to get along better in the outside world, it doesn't make sense to completely isolate them and submerge them in this world with arbitrary rules and unpredictable and severe punishments and make them live in a constant state of fear," says Julia Graff, of the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law in Washington, D.C. "Most kids are worse when they get out." "If you want to teach a kid how to get along better in the outside world, it doesn't make sense to isolate them in this world with arbitrary rules — most kids are worse when they get out." In the past 15 years, as many as 86 kids have died in troubled teen programs. At least 10 kids have died at wilderness programs like Tierra Blanca, most of them because of starvation, exposure to the elements or pressing medical needs that went ignored. In one of the most highly publicized cases, a 16-year-old named Aaron Bacon was forced to hike without food for as many as 14 days and sleep for several nights in freezing temperatures in the canyons of southern Utah without a sleeping bag or blanket. When his body began to shut down, and he lost control of his bowels, the staff made him walk without pants. He died after just 20 days at the camp. "These programs are based on the premise that today's teens are so out of control and morally compromised that only the most extreme and harsh tactics can keep them in line," says Maia Szalavitz, who interviewed hundreds of kids who had attended tough love programs for her 2006 book, *Help At Any Cost: How the Troubled Teen Industry Cons Parents and Hurts Kids*. "And they think the answer is to isolate them, deprive them and eventually break them." The largest industry trade group—the National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs (NATSAP)—says that tough love programs like Tierra Blanca are outliers and not representative of the industry as a whole. The group requires its 166 member programs — which serve an estimated 6,000 kids, or about half of those in the industry — to be licensed or accredited, something programs like Tierra Blanca are notorious for resisting. "There's a lot of frustration about these sorts of programs because it's a black eye for the field as a whole," says the NATSP's spokesperson, Megan Stokes. "Programs using outdated tough love methods with no science, that's absolutely not what we're about." By the time Bruce arrived at Tierra Blanca, New Mexico's Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) had compiled a growing list of concerns about the ranch. In 2006, a father contacted CYFD to complain that his son had been kicked in the head by a staff member for "faking" a seizure. Two years later, a 16-year-old escaped with a satellite phone, until state police found him miles away trying to remove the shackles from his ankles. During visits, CYFD found that one staff member had no first aid training, another hadn't undergone a criminal background check and there were no written policies or procedures to explain the ranch's rules. There was also no working landline, meaning the only way anyone could communicate with the outside world was through Chandler's cell phone. "This is not an acceptable safety situation," a CYFD staffer wrote in an internal memo, "especially since [Tierra Blanca Ranch] is located in a very remote, rural area." To make matters worse, calls were monitored and letters were screened. "If I wrote, 'This shit is happening, they ran me until I was coughing up blood,' they wouldn't have sent it out," says Ryan Houghton, who was a camper at Tierra Blanca the same time as Bruce. "There was really no way to tell anyone what was going on." Before their next visit, CYFD informed Chandler that, among other things, he'd need to ensure that any vehicle used to transport kids had a fire extinguisher, a first aid kit and enough seat belts. Otherwise, CYFD warned, Chandler would be shut down. Bruce poses with his mom, Carla Moffat, at Tierra Blanca on his 18th birthday. Courtesy of Carla Campbell-Moffat Chandler said he was working to come into compliance with these requests when the state decided, in 2006, to re-classify Tierra Blanca as a wilderness camp. That meant the program would no longer fall under the state's purview. "I don't think anyone can explain why the state agreed to that," says Liz McGrath, Executive Director of Pegasus Legal Services for Children, in Albuquerque. "At that point, the state abdicated its responsibilities to oversee the ranch. There really was no one there to ensure the safety of these kids." (CYFD didn't respond to repeated requests for comment.) By the time Bruce was in elementary school, his family was coming apart: his dad left them when Bruce was 10 and his mom worked long hours at a hospital in El Paso. Bruce spent afternoons alone, playing video games, or riding his bike aimlessly around the neighborhood. "The kid never met a stranger," says his brother Eric, a 27-year-old at New Mexico State University. "He was a really fun, energetic kid, but he didn't really have anybody. He was pretty lonely." Bruce started skipping school when he was 12, and then fell in with a group of friends who seemed dangerous to his mom. At one point, they robbed her house, and from there Bruce's life unspooled in a classic archetype of teenage angst: black clothes, thrash metal, the musty odor of marijuana trailing him from his room. When the family moved to the trailer park outside Truth or Consequences, New Mexico, a flyspeck of a town known for farming and meth, in 2010, things got worse. One night the following summer, Bruce came home rolling on

ecstasy and shoved his mom. A few days later, he ran away from home; his mom and stepdad didn't hear from him again for two weeks. "I was worried he was going to end up in jail, or even end up dead," Carla Moffat says. "If he ran away one more time I didn't think I'd ever see him again. People don't understand how few options parents have in these situations." When Moffat heard about Tierra Blanca from a friend, she researched it online and found glowing testimonials from graduates. Even though she was already working 12-hour shifts, and paying for the program would require additional overtime, she felt like it was worth it. On the phone, Chandler explained how the program worked: she wouldn't hear from Bruce for several months and she couldn't visit without permission. "He told me, 'You're the parents, but we're his family now.' I asked him how we would reintegrate Bruce back into our family and he said, 'You don't. Because the problems that exist in the family will always exist in the family.' That should have been a red flag right there." Despite the violent episode in the Sacramento Mountains, Bruce began to adjust to the strict regimen at Tierra Blanca. By the fall of 2012, just months after the wallet incident, he earned certain privileges for good behavior. In the bunkhouse at Tierra Blanca headquarters, he now ate cornbread, beef stew and the occasional steak that Chandler's daughters cooked. His grades began to improve under Miss Allie too. All signs to Chandler that Bruce was on the path to "real change." "He was on my A team," Chandler says. "If there was a job to do that had to be done right, he was one of the first kids I'd pick. And that was a real cool thing to see, just knowing some of the things he was dealing with when he came in, some of the things going on in his life." When Bruce's mom and stepdad visited him, in the winter of 2013, he seemed like a different person. He had gone in with big gauges in his ears, but now he wore a black cowboy hat everywhere. Bruce also started attending a Baptist church in nearby Hatch with some of the other boys, often lingering in the chapel to talk with the youth leaders who played guitar. Eventually he asked one to baptize him. "The program seemed to be working," Carla Moffat says. "He looked happy. He was polite. He was calm. He had direction." In the meantime, pressure to regulate the ranch was mounting at the governor's office. In December of 2012, CYFD got a 27-page memo from the father of a boy who had gone to the ranch, alleging potential abuse and neglect. He included statements from boys who had contemplated suicide and at times felt like they were starving, along with details of an incident in which a staffer had allegedly beaten a 15 year old with a night stick for not completing exercises. Six months later, Pegasus Legal Services for Children sent a letter to the governor and the then-director of CYFD, alerting them that former participants had told police that "children are routinely hit, shackled, and handcuffed, deprived of food... and threatened by staff at Tierra Blanca Ranch if they make disclosures about abuse." Pegasus urged an investigation. And then tragedy struck. On the night of Sept. 22, 2013, Bruce and a group of boys were coming back from Chandler's parents' house after watching a football game when the boy driving, a recent Tierra Blanca graduate, took a curve on a dirt road too fast and rolled the truck. Because there weren't enough seats in the cab, Bruce had volunteered to sit in the bed of the pickup, and the crash ejected him. The remote location of the ranch and the spotty cell coverage delayed Bruce's arrival at the hospital, in part because calls kept dropping. Not long after being airlifted to a Level 1 trauma center in El Paso, Bruce died of massive internal bleeding. The crash was the last straw for CYFD and the governor's office. Less than three weeks later, state police raided the ranch, search warrant in hand, only to find no one there. State officials, believing Chandler had been tipped off and fled with the boys, issued an AMBER Alert. Chandler maintained that they were on a camping trip, and arranged to deliver 11 of the 13 teens to their parents (the other two were 18 and decided to return to the ranch with Chandler). A week later, Chandler and his wife, Colette, appeared on the Today show with Matt Lauer. "People don't understand...the type of kids we end up dealing with," Chandler told Lauer. "We care about kids. We want the kids to be safe. We want them to be successful." Colette and Scott Chandler appeared on the "Today" show after New Mexico officials raided the ranch. Pete Kramer/Getty When I visited Chandler this spring, he carried himself like a man under siege. He called the raid and what followed "the burn down," and seemed convinced the governor of New Mexico, Susana Martinez, had a personal vendetta against him. (The governor's office declined to comment.) He said his critics fail to recognize that he deals with kids who have criminal records and were violent with him and his staff. "You're only getting a part of the story," Chandler told me. "Some of the things these kids are saying, they're just flat out not true. You have to remember some of these kids are master manipulators, and a lot of them have some big credibility issues." Chandler speaks with a slight drawl, which depending on his mood can come across as friendly or slightly intimidating. When we stopped at a local Mexican restaurant for lunch, nearly everyone there seemed to consider him a close friend. Many Tierra Blanca graduates speak of him fondly; some consider him a mentor or surrogate father and still keep in touch, sending wedding invitations and birth announcements. Growing up in Central Texas, Chandler's parents had taken in teens from "broken homes" and he'd seen the difference it made in the kids' lives. After his dad allowed a wilderness program to operate on portions of his ranch in the late 90s, Chandler decided he could do it better, and cobbled together a "common sense" approach to reforming troubled teens. When I asked if a particular methodology governed the ranch, Chandler seemed amused. "People keep looking for a formula for our success, but it doesn't work like that," he said. "It's not something that's easy to replicate." Chandler says he doesn't practice what he calls the "medical model" of treatment. And while he's contracted with therapists in the past, he's never hired one on staff. "Our philosophy is you can replace the things drugs are trying to do with just work, exercise, get the endorphins going, you know, try and teach," he says. "We've become such a pill society, we mask our emotions. We don't just learn how to resolve a conflict, they have to have something else to control their emotions up and down." Fiercely individualistic, Chandler subscribes to a sort of libertarian idealism common in the West. Spend a few minutes with him and he's sure to bring up parental rights, which is his way of saying that the government has little to no business telling parents how to raise their kids. "People don't understand what we do," Chandler says. "We were trying to make productive citizens out of a group nobody cared about, and now we're getting burned at the stake. My family has been through so many lies, distortions and mischaracterizations." During my visit, we drove out to Camp Lockwood with his wife and two of his daughters (all of them help on the ranch), and Chandler introduced me to several program graduates still there. All of them disputed the allegations made in the lawsuits: namely, that staff had encouraged boys to beat Bruce. "This is all based on hysteria," a staffer and former camper named Tim Roberson told me. "If they had any evidence, why hasn't a single charge been filed against anybody? I've known the Chandler family for about six years and they are the most amazing family I've ever met. They've tried to help every person that's come through here, even those who are now trying to hurt them." Bruce died after being thrown from the bed of a pickup truck owned by Scott Chandler. Courtesy of Carla Campbell-Moffat That evening as we drove back towards town, I asked Chandler about some of the most troubling allegations against him. He didn't deny subjecting kids to intense exercise or cuffing them. And when I asked if a former staffer had used a night stick to punish a boy, Chandler said, "It didn't happen like that." But he strongly rejects allegations that he encouraged his kids to beat each other. Those who did, he said, were immediately disciplined. We drove in silence for a few moments, and then his wife spoke up from the back seat of the truck. "Let's just say this," she said of the incident. "Do you remember when you were a kid in the school yard and there was some kid out there who just drove everybody crazy and a few of the boys got together and just gave him a little dose of medicine?" "Yeah," I said. "Things like that happen sometimes," she said. As for Bruce, most of what happened was "out of earshot" and the exercises he imposed as discipline during that period were roughly similar to "what guys do in the military," he said. But he did acknowledge that sometimes "kids took matters into their own hands." (In a subsequent interview he denied ever being aware of other kids beating Bruce.) "If we had really done something wrong," Chandler said. "Would we really be sitting here two years later without a single charge filed against me or any of my staff?" Chandler's supporters, and there are many, are intensely loyal (after the raid, he says, a petition he prepared got over a 1,000 signatures). A half dozen graduates Chandler put me in touch with said the program literally saved their lives. One of them, Pecos Cook, today a 28-year-old oil field worker in North Dakota with a wife and two kids, described similar experiences to those now suing Chandler: grueling physical exercise, being so hungry he ate grub worms and staffers who enforced strict rules. And yet, Cook says, those very tactics made the program work. "At times that place was hell," Cook says. "But looking back on it, I needed it. There are certain types of kids where that's the only thing that's going to work." Other program graduates, now in adulthood, told me the same thing: that they went in adrift, with no work ethic or sense of purpose, and left with a sense they could do just about anything. "If somebody you love has a terminal illness, you're going to do whatever it takes to get them treated, and that's how I see the ranch," says Matt Griffoull, who sent two of his kids to Tierra Blanca. "These parents who are complaining now, they knew exactly what they were getting into. So I think some of the blame has got to fall on them." Last year, Chandler reached a civil settlement with the state, allowing limited oversight for one year. But he still faces a lawsuit from parents who say their children were abused at the camp. A criminal investigation sparked by the raid is still under review by the state attorney general's office. Their findings could determine the fate of the program. For now, however, Tierra Blanca is open for business. A week after Bruce died, his family and friends gathered for a memorial service at the church where he had been baptized. Many of those in attendance came from Tierra Blanca, including Scott Chandler. Afterwards, the boys from the ranch approached Carla and Jim Moffat and presented them a baseball they had all signed, a small way to memorialize the good times they'd had playing games on the ranch. When Carla realized the boy who was driving the truck during the accident hadn't signed the ball, she found him in the crowd and asked him to sign it. "I hold no malice for these kids," Carla says. "I see it as Animal Farm, or Lord of the Flies. It was that kind of environment where you had kids turned against kid. It wasn't their fault." The long-term answer, Szalavitz and other advocates say, is federal legislation that would put the industry under a uniform

standard. Former California congressman George Miller twice sponsored bills that would do just that, banning programs from withholding food, water and medical care "under the guise of discipline or therapy," and reserving the use of handcuffs, shackles and other physical restraints for emergencies. The bill also would have created a national hotline for kids to report abuse, but it was never signed into law. A similar piece of bipartisan legislation, introduced in July, is currently in committee. Earlier this year, I drove out to Truth or Consequences to meet with Bruce's mom, Carla. We sat on the porch of their doublewide, and she showed me the last of Bruce's possessions: the black cowboy hat he wore everywhere, the blue T-shirt he'd earned once he attained privileged status and the Bible he had marked up after his baptism. Bruce with his brothers from left to right, Brian, Kevin and Eric. Courtesy of Carla Campbell-Moffat Carla says the abuses Bruce suffered at the camp came out slowly, in emails and phone calls from different boys. Her husband Jim has asked her not to read some of the details. And while the incident that claimed her son's life was an accident, Carla says it's a direct reflection on the way Chandler runs the ranch, and his refusal to comply with safety guidelines suggested by the state years earlier. "It's a wonder no one has died out there before," Bruce's stepdad, Jim Moffat said. "There are kids who attempted suicide, kids who ran away in the desert, and it's in the middle of nowhere, kids who felt like they were starving to death. That place was an accident waiting to happen." Carla showed me the truck Bruce used to drive, and the horse Chandler had promised to give Bruce upon graduation. Instead, he gave her to the Moffat family, and Jim now makes a point of riding her as often as he can. "There's nothing I can do to bring him back, and honestly, there are days I don't know if I can go on," Carla said. "But if it can result in some kind of lasting change, if it saves another kid's life, maybe some good can come from all of this." Read more: <http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/news/life-and-death-in-a-troubled-teen-boot-camp-20151112#ixzz3rQXFggYD> Follow us: [@rollingstone on Twitter](#) | [RollingStone on Facebook](#)

Alone and at risk Set up to be safe havens, some group homes for the disabled have become remote "prisons," where residents are vulnerable to violence and neglect. Story by [Chris Serres](#) and [Glenn Howatt](#) • Photos by [David Joles](#) • Star Tribune NOVEMBER 9, 2015 — 12:00AM Advertisement: Replay Ad Ads by ZINC 'I BECAME LOST' Ashley Daly, who has bipolar disorder and is cognitively impaired, has attempted suicide seven times since she moved hours away from her grandparents. Late one night this summer, George Daly woke abruptly to the sound of the fax machine humming from the den of his tidy home near Minneapolis. It brought tragic news: Just hours earlier, on a desolate stretch of highway in northern Minnesota, Daly's granddaughter, Ashley, had slashed her wrist with a piece of glass and thrown herself in front of a speeding car. It was the seventh suicide attempt since Ashley, who has bipolar disorder and a cognitive impairment, was sent to live in a group home three hours away, on the wooded outskirts of Hermantown, Minn. "Ashley feels lost and abandoned," said Daly, who settled on the facility only after several others closer to the Twin Cities turned them down. "She has no place to call home in this world and this is her way of crying out for help." Each year, hundreds of Minnesotans with developmental disabilities and mental illnesses are uprooted from their families and sent to live in secluded group homes in remote parts of the state. Cut off from the communities they know, housed with strangers, they often fall deeper into anger and despair. Many, like Ashley, see violence and self-injury as their only means of escape. Minnesota's far-flung network of group homes is another sign of how it has fallen behind other states in the movement to integrate people with disabilities into mainstream life. Though designed as safe havens for people too vulnerable to care for themselves, group homes now leave thousands of adults isolated and vulnerable to neglect and abuse. A Star Tribune review of hundreds of public documents has found: • Minnesota relies more than any other state on group homes to house adults with disabilities, spending \$1 billion annually for about 19,000 people in more than 4,500 facilities. • While many group homes are safe and orderly, others are understaffed and chaotic. Each year, state regulators receive more than 700 reports of abuse, neglect, exploitation and serious injury at Minnesota group homes. In 2013, a federal judge became so alarmed at conditions facing group home residents that he appointed a special monitor to review their care. • Scores of Minnesota's group homes lie in remote rural settings, placing residents hours away from relatives who might assist with their care and check on their well-being. The Star Tribune analyzed records for more than 5,000 individuals and found that one-third were placed in group homes outside their home counties. Of these, hundreds live more than 100 miles from their home counties, often in small towns such as Hermantown in rural St. Louis County. • In dozens of interviews, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities said they were sent to group homes against their will, even when they were capable of taking care of themselves. "This feels like a prison," said Joshua Burt, 28, standing outside the Rochester group home where he was placed, against his wishes, six years ago. "This is not the place for me, but it feels like my life is outside of my hands." Erin Metzger, director of outpatient mental health at St. Luke's Hospital in Duluth, said she has seen dozens of patients cycle through local psychiatric wards and clinics after they ran away from group homes. "My heart breaks for these people," she said. "They're hundreds of miles away from their families and support systems, and that makes them sicker." In September, under pressure from U.S. District Judge Donovan Frank, Minnesota completed a plan that would give people with disabilities more say in where they live and raise the number living independently. But the increases are modest, and the plan does not call for closing group homes or reducing their state payments. FAR FROM HOME: Ashley Daly woke up to another day at her group home in Hermantown, Minn., three hours from her childhood home. 'Woods and swamps' Remote settings such as Hermantown not only place group home residents far from family and friends, they can contribute to neglect and violence. In 2010, a 44-year-old man with schizophrenia went missing after wandering away from his group home north of Duluth. A group of deer hunters discovered his bones two years later, decomposing inside his clothing in the woods. "People like to say these homes are in the 'community,'" said St. Louis County undersheriff David Phillips, as he drove by the woods where the man's remains were found. "But about the only community out here is woods and swamps." In Lewiston, a man with schizophrenia and a degenerative brain disease died after falling seven times in the kitchen of his group home. Despite sustained bruising and four cuts on his head, staff members said the 58-year-old man fell "for attention" and did not call for medical help, state investigators found. In a case last year, a 26-year-old man living at a group home in Princeton, Minn., was found dead on his bedroom floor after staff had lost contact with him for more than 44 hours. In some cases, residents simply run away, hoping that someone will move them if police take notice. VaLinda Henry suspects that's what drove her son, Troy Henry, 41, who was cognitively disabled and had schizophrenia, to wander off into the forest near Stillwater with a plastic bucket full of his personal belongings. Later that night, his body was found floating down the St. Croix River, with the bucket attached to his waist. Sheriff's deputies found what appeared to be the words "MY WILL" scrawled in the sand nearby. Just days earlier, Henry had called his mother, saying the group home wouldn't let him leave for a weekend with his two children, ages 13 and 15. "They treated my son like a prisoner," his mother said, sobbing. In far northern Minnesota, the consequences of isolation have reached crisis levels. Stuck for months or years, often among housemates with severe mental illnesses, many residents lash out at each other, turning these homes into small battlegrounds, according to county health officials and group home workers. "It's not right for human beings to live this way," said Cody Jakowski, a crisis responder at Stepping Stones for Living, a company that operates group homes near Duluth. "People aren't meant to be isolated like this." In St. Louis County, more than one out of every three 911 calls involve incidents at group homes, the sheriff's office estimates. "What is happening up here is brutal beyond belief," Phillips said. "It's like hundreds of little train wrecks dotting our landscape." Remote clusters Minnesota's reliance on group homes dates to the late 1970s, when it led the nation in shutting down large state hospitals that housed people with mental illnesses and developmental disabilities. The state encouraged small, private group homes as a more humane and cost-effective alternative, and subsidized them through Medicaid and other programs. Many of these early group homes sprouted up near the shuttered state hospitals, in outstate cities such as Faribault and Rochester. Soon, large for-profit operators began clustering group homes nearby, in rural areas where land was cheap and local resistance was minimal. Today, 62 percent of Minnesota's group homes are outside the Twin Cities metro area, state data show. The biggest cluster is in St. Louis County, where half the group home residents come from other parts of the state. Some local officials now refer to their county as the "State Hospital of Duluth." The result, some advocates say, is a system with the same misguided paternalism that "separate but equal" embodied during the civil rights movement a half century ago. "It's a segregated system," said Mark Nelson, division director of adult services in St. Louis County. "If you concentrated this many people of color in one area, there would be accusations of discrimination." Once this far-flung network emerged, it became self-perpetuating. County social workers typically recommended group homes as the only option, even for people with moderate cognitive problems, even in communities with services to support independent living. And though group homes were meant for people needing 24-hour care, such as patients with severe mental illnesses, many accept just about anyone with an intellectual or developmental disability. Records show that even clients who need just basic assistance with daily activities — like cooking meals or catching the bus — can wind up in group homes that cost up to \$80,000 per person per year. "We are spending hundreds of millions of dollars a year for 24/7 care for people who don't want it and don't need it," said Nancy Fitzsimons, a professor of social work at Minnesota State University in Mankato. "Minnesota fell in love with the four-bedroom group home model, and we got stuck." Closer look [SET UP TO FAIL: Tony peered nervously from behind the plastic blinds of his one-room apartment. He could hear a police siren in the distance, then some loud shouting, then a heavy silence.](#) Top state administrators and group home industry leaders acknowledged that many people who could be living independently are instead steered toward group homes. Clients are now being asked where they want to live, a process the state plans to complete by

the end of 2016. "There are people living in group homes who probably could live in other settings, but either don't know the options or don't trust the options," said Alex Bartolic, disability services director at the state Department of Human Services. "Everything has to change — our context and our way of coming at this." Closer look 'SET UP TO FAIL' Tony peered nervously from behind the plastic blinds of his one-room apartment. He could hear a police siren in the distance, then some loud shouting, then a heavy silence. "I wish I lived far, far away from this ..." he paused, searching for the right word, "sewer." [Read full story](#) Tony has a psychiatric disorder and has spent his adult life in group homes, trying steadily to get a place of his own. His attempt at independent living was cut short by the lack of therapy and job counseling, but he eventually found work on his own. 'Most people get to choose' Every so often, Joshua Burt stares out the basement window of his Rochester group home and imagines an elaborate escape. Burt sees himself packing a suitcase and then waiting for a rare moment, usually a Sunday afternoon, when shift changes sometimes leave him unsupervised. He imagines running to a nearby bus stop, using the neighborhood trees and bushes as cover. ESCAPE PLAN: Joshua Burt, who has a mild developmental disability, lives in a group home outside Rochester and often imagines running away. "I think about escaping two or three times a day," said Burt. "But where would I go?" Burt, who has a mild developmental disability, was never asked whether he wanted to live in a group home. The decision came, he said, on the day he and his siblings learned that their mother had lung cancer. "My brother came up to me and said, 'Mom wanted you in a group home,' and that was it," he recalled. Weeks later, Burt was told to pack his belongings from his mother's trailer in a mobile home park outside Rochester, then was taken to a group home he had never seen, to live with three strangers. "It seemed unfair," said Burt. "Most people at least get to visit the places where they live and choose who they get to live with." Burt works two part-time jobs — at a Wal-Mart and a Culver's restaurant — and aspires to get his own apartment. Then he wouldn't have to ask permission to have visitors or go on fishing trips with co-workers. But Burt gets just one chance a year to make his case, at a meeting that includes his county case worker, group home provider, and his older sister, who is also his guardian. At this year's meeting, Burt said, he was told he still lacked adequate "financial management skills." "I keep saying, 'I want out,' but no one listens," Burt said, after wrapping up a shift at Culver's. "How is it possible that I can work two jobs and take the bus here every day, but can't live on my own?" Video (05:29): Ashley Daly's grandparents grew too frail to handle her bipolar disorder and violent mood swings, so they moved her to a group home hundreds of miles away, a wrenching decision that still brings them to tears. Video (05:29): Ashley Daly's grandparents grew too frail to handle her bipolar disorder and violent mood swings, so they moved her to a group home hundreds of miles away, a wrenching decision that still brings them to tears. A pattern of scars No one ever asked Ashley Daly either. When her grandparents, who adopted her as an infant, decided they had grown too frail to handle Ashley's violent mood swings, they asked for help from the county. A social worker gave them a long printout of group homes, most located far away, that might accept Ashley. With little more than Google to guide them, George and Ruth Daly worked their way through the list. George asked each provider a series of 10 questions — "Do you have locked doors?" and "Do you involve them in the community?" — and jotted down plus or minus signs next to each one. The group homes with the most plus signs were typically in remote places, like Saginaw and Thief River Falls. Many had wait times of a year or more for a bed. When a provider from northern Minnesota finally called them with an opening, the Dalys were elated. Though it was a long way away, the couple hoped the remote location would keep their granddaughter safe. "You wouldn't run away, because you wouldn't know what direction to run," George said. A year later, the Dalys admit they underestimated Ashley's attachment to her family and childhood home. It was only after arriving in Hermantown that she began her suicide attempts, each one prompting a faxed report to her grandparents. More than a dozen deep, zigzagging scars line her forearms, marking the many times she has cut herself since arriving up north. On a recent morning, she staggered from her bedroom at the group home, spread out on a couch, and described how much she misses her grandparents' house and her pet terrier, Holly, who stayed behind. "I had a dream last night that I finally got to see Holly," she said. "Why has everyone abandoned me?" On long distance calls home, Ashley would ask her grandparents, "Why did you adopt me if you couldn't even finish the job?" The question hangs heavy over the Dalys, who now wonder whether they made a mistake by sending her so far away. They even considered shipping all her bedroom furniture up north to make her feel more at home. But, like thousands of other Minnesota families, they were beginners in a baffling system that seemed to offer no middle ground between keeping Ashley at home and sending her far away. "We did our very best with the options we had," Ruth Daly said, "and no one to help us." BEST FRIENDS: Ashley Daly and Holly the terrier were happy to see each other on a holiday weekend. Ashley Daly and Holly the terrier were happy to see each other on a holiday weekend. BEST FRIENDS: Ashley Daly's pet hamster, Muffin, comforts her. She bears the scars of many attempts to harm herself. Ashley Daly tugs on staff member Amber Johnson at a group home in Hermantown, near Duluth. HEADING 'HOME': Ashley Daly was excited about a weekend with her grandparents and her terrier, Holly. When she learned that she was moving to a distant group, where she was cared for by Amber Johnson, above right, she felt abandoned. 'I became lost' On the long drive back from the North Woods, Ashley Daly hummed the words to her favorite song, "Put Your Records On," from the back seat of her grandparents' sport-utility vehicle. Ashley's voice got louder and more animated as the family neared the suburban landscape of her youth — the day care center and the playground where she once walked her dog now spread out asleep on her lap. After a long, cold winter in Hermantown, in a group home that allowed her only 20 minutes of "alone time" each day, Ashley was brimming with excitement at spending Easter weekend with her grandparents in Minnetrista. George and Ruth have kept Ashley's bedroom exactly as she left it — walls painted with pink butterflies and windowsills lined with teddy bears. On the living room couch is the extra-thick security blanket that George and Ruth would gently wrap around Ashley when she would fly into one of her "rages" and needed to calm down. "Grandpa!" Ashley called out from the back seat. "Tonight, after we get home, can we watch the stars? Like we did when I was little?" "Honey, we told you this before," George Daly said, as he pulled into his neighborhood. "This is NOT your home. Your home is in Duluth." But attempts to make Ashley feel at home up north have not worked. In late July, she moved to a new group home in Duluth after the one in Hermantown determined it lacked adequate staffing to keep her safe. The new home is in a residential neighborhood, but Ashley said she's still lonely — she still misses Holly and staying up late watching episodes of "CSI" with her grandpa. Beneath Ashley's bed is a box full of the poems and essays she has written since middle school. Many reflect her sense of abandonment, including self-portraits showing her lying in a pool of blood or hanging from a noose. Among the assorted letters is one she wrote to herself on the October night her grandparents first dropped her off up north. "I became lost once I learned I was moving to Duluth," Ashley said, reading the letter. "I lost everything. Trust. Hope. Relationships. Friends. Family. ... I felt this was the end." Ashley leaned her forehead on the dining room table, exasperated, and added, "I just want to go home." chris.serres@startribune.com 612-673-4308 glenn.howatt@startribune.com 612-673-7192 Source: <http://www.startribune.com/Alone-and-at-risk-in-Minnesota's-group-homes/330695801/>

2 Rancho Cucamonga caregivers held in group home abuse investigation Detectives Looking for Additional Victims in Adult Caregiver Abuse Case On Friday, November 6, 2015, detectives from the Rancho Cucamonga Police Department in cooperation with other local and State authorities, served a Search Warrant at the Anyelir Home located on Lemon Avenue in Rancho Cucamonga. On Friday, November 6, 2015, detectives from the Rancho Cucamonga Police Department in cooperation with other local and State authorities, served a Search Warrant at the Anyelir Home located on Lemon Avenue in Rancho Cucamonga. [Joseph Serna](#) [Contact Reporter](#) Police are asking people to come forward who may know more alleged victims of two caregivers accused of abusing clients with disabilities at a group home in Rancho Cucamonga. The two caregivers, Marselyn Sihotang, 36, and Roselina Sihotang, 38, were arrested Friday after a former employee contacted state regulators and reported that clients there were being abused and neglected. The women worked at Anyelir Home, which provides rooms and care for people with varying levels of disabilities. Investigators visited the facility and said they found two victims of abuse, though neither person could communicate with authorities, police said. Detectives reviewed security camera footage that allegedly showed abuse. Authorities posted a 4-minute clip of the video on YouTube in hopes it would help bring to light additional abuse allegations. In the video, a facility client wearing slippers is seen walking laps around a couch while other people sit in chairs lining the walls. A person who appears to be a caretaker stands off to the side for a few laps then pushes the client in the back as the person passes by. The caretaker does this several more times. [See the most-read stories this hour >>Read the story](#) In footage from the same room during an evening shift, another person who appears to be a client is seen slowly getting up and walking toward the exit. A person who appears to be a caretaker, but not the same person from the earlier footage, is seen cutting off the client's path and shoving the client forcefully back toward a chair in the corner. The client eventually gets up and heads toward the exit again and for a second time, the caretaker cuts off the client's path. But this time, as the client turns and heads back toward the chair in the corner, the caretaker shoves the client in the back, sending the client tumbling to the ground and into the chair, which bounces to the side. Both women were arrested Friday on suspicion of dependent-adult abuse by a caregiver and have since been released on bail. A court appearance has not been scheduled. Anyone with information is asked to call detectives at (909) 477-2800. For breaking California news, follow [@JosephSerna](#). Source: <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-rancho-cucamonga-caregiver-abuse-video-20151110-story.html>

Bismarck Group Home Worker Accused of Rape [Small Text](#) [Medium Text](#) [Large Text](#) [Print](#) BISMARCK, N.D. - A group home worker in Bismarck is accused of raping a 15-year-old boy and threatening him with violence. 23-year-old Ethmonia Barclay has pleaded not guilty to felony corruption of a minor. She could face up to five years in prison if convicted. Police allege Barclay threatened to tell other staff members at **Charles Hall Youth Services** that the boy sexually assaulted her if he didn't comply with her demands. She also is accused of threatening to have relatives attack the boy. Source: <http://www.kvtr.com/news/local-news/bismarck-group-home-worker-accused-of-rape/36372610>

Protecting the vulnerable vs. civil rights Advocates say guardianship too often trumps the rights of disabled adults. Story by [Chris Serres](#) • Star Tribune NOVEMBER 12, 2015 — 12:00AM Minnesota law explicitly gives these individuals the right to associate with people of their choosing and to have privacy for visits. Yet advocates seeking to help the disabled live more independently say they are routinely barred at the door by group home supervisors or court-appointed guardians, who often exercise broad powers over their wards. As a result, group home residents can become virtual prisoners, said Maggie Treichel, an organizer for Self Advocates of Minnesota, a disability rights group. "There are people across this state who desperately want the chance to tell their stories, and they are being silenced," she said. Guardians and group home operators say they must protect vulnerable adults whose cognitive disabilities or mental illnesses can lead them to make poor decisions. But they acknowledge that balancing safety against individual liberties can be tricky. "Guardianship is the most intrusive tool we have available," said Anita Raymond, a social worker and board member of the Minnesota Association for Guardianship and Conservatorship. "And it's a tool that we as a society tend to overuse." During its six-month investigation, the Star Tribune was prevented by guardians from interviewing six people with disabilities, even though all had consented to interviews. One guardian said she feared her ward might say something critical about his group home and jeopardize his placement there. Another guardian prevented an interview with a woman with a mild cognitive disability, saying the conversation could cause her anxiety. Lawyers with advocacy groups say Minnesota should work harder to enforce the law that protects the disabled's rights. "You don't leave your First Amendment rights at the door when you become someone under guardianship," said Patricia Siebert, an attorney with the Minnesota Disability Law Center. "But unfortunately, those lines keep getting blurred." chris.serres@startribune.com 612-673-4308 [2 View Comments](#) [Read our comment standards](#) StarTribune.com welcomes and encourages readers to comment and engage in substantive, mutually respectful exchanges over news topics. Commenters must follow our [Terms of Use](#). Keep it civil and stay on topic. No profanity, vulgarity, racial slurs or personal attacks. Comments with web links are not permitted. Comments that violate the above will be removed. Repeat violators may lose their commenting privileges on StarTribune.com. Comments will be reviewed before being published. 2 comments [Get Livefyre FAQ](#) Log in/register to comment 4 people listening + Follow Share Post comment as... Custom HTML Preview Loading Newest | Oldest wandap12345ptsFeatured Nov. 12, 15 6:36 AM charlie112 Nov. 11, 15 at 1:45 PM stated: "This reporter ... and he uses derogatory words like segregated to disparage good people that have never forced anyone to attend any work program that they don't want to attend. Shame on Chris Serres." I have just spent a year fighting off a MN county from "forcing" my bright, articulate, emancipated son into one of these segregated work programs against his will. Kudos to Chris Serres and the Star Tribune for reporting such and shame on those who have a vested interest in the system for attacking Chris Serres and the Star Tribune. Report as inappropriateShare 1LikeReply This comment has been deleted apender5ptsFeatured Nov. 13, 15 8:08 AM @wandap1234 shame on us? It's not a good series. It's very slanted, does not tell the whole story. I've worked in the field for over 37 years, in about every setting, we still provide foster care. I've seen many changes in our system, and have no vested interest in maintaining the status quo. One size does not fit all, nor does one system. This is simply not a transparent series. It did not look at the big picture and tell all sides. People reading this do the... oh those poor people, think about it for a second, put the paper down and go on with their lives. This puts a few stories out there, and leaves countless more untold. More families should be fighting for their family members, too many do not and the "system" is left to pick up the pieces. Everyone is social services is in it for the Government money right, because it is so lucrative! Again, dig a little deeper, and tell the whole story..... not a great series Chris. Report as inappropriateShare LikeReply Show More Comments [Powered by Livefyre](#) Source: <http://www.startribune.com/protecting-the-vulnerable-vs-civil-rights/340341182/>

Coroner's jury: 'Punishment' shower death of Murray Center resident was homicide Patient choked while being given 'punishment' shower Case referred to prosecutor One employee fired; one remains on paid leave Opponents of the proposed closure of Murray Center waved signs during a public hearing. News-Democrat i By Brian Brueggemann bbrueggemann@bnd.com [LinkedIn](#) [Google+](#) [Pinterest](#) [Reddit](#) [Print](#) [Order Reprint of this Story](#) The death of a resident at Warren G. Murray Developmental Center in Centralia while being given a "punishment" shower has been ruled a homicide. A Marion County coroner's jury ruled Thursday night that the death of [46-year-old Todd Clementz](#) was a homicide. Clementz, a resident of the state-operated developmental center, was being given a punishment shower when he choked and died on March 30. According to testimony at a coroner's inquest Thursday night, a Murray Center employee was giving Clementz a punishment shower when Clementz began to choke. Clementz, who was deaf and blind, coughed up food particles and died. Witnesses at the inquest included Illinois State Police Special Agent Tom Hatley, who described the shower given to Clementz as a "punishment" shower. Marion County Coroner Troy Cannon said evidence suggests the employee had given punishment showers to residents on multiple occasions. "Basically, there are indications that the employee had done this kind of thing in the past with this resident — and other ones, as well, even before this took place," Cannon said. Basically, there are indications that the employee had done this kind of thing in the past with this resident — and other ones, as well, even before this took place. Marion County Coroner Troy Cannon The matter has been referred to Clinton County State's Attorney John Hudspeth, who could not immediately be reached for comment Friday. The [state Department of Human Services](#), in a prepared statement, said the investigation is continuing. Yesterday's hearing is part of an ongoing criminal process and IDHS will not comment on that process until it is concluded. Illinois Department of Human Services statement "The Illinois Department of Human Services responded promptly to a death in one of its facilities, initiated its own investigation, referred the preliminary results of that investigation to criminal authorities, and has been cooperating with those authorities ever since," the agency's statement read. "Yesterday's hearing is part of an ongoing criminal process and IDHS will not comment on that process until it is concluded. The department did take immediate action to put the individuals involved in this matter on administrative leave and will take further personnel actions as necessary in response to any criminal findings." DHS spokeswoman Veronica Vera declined to give the names of the two employees, who were placed on [administrative leave](#) shortly after the death. Vera said one of the two employees has been fired, while the other remains on paid leave. The coroner's jury was convened in Marion County, because Clementz was pronounced dead at St. Mary's Hospital, which is in the Marion County portion of Centralia. A coroner's jury has five possible rulings on manner of death: homicide, suicide, accident, natural or undetermined. Murray Center was the subject of months-long battle over a state plan to close some state-operated developmental centers and shift residents to private group homes. After employees, relatives of residents and community members mounted stiff opposition to the cost-cutting move, the state relented and decided to keep the center open. State Rep. Charlie Meier, R-Okawville, was a lead supporter of keeping the Murray Center open. He said the case is not a bad reflection on state-operated developmental centers. "It was Murray workers who questioned what happened and got this investigation going," Meier said. "If this would have happened in a group home, it never would have been known about — it would have been considered an accidental death." It was Murray workers who questioned what happened and got this investigation going. If this would have happened in a group home, it never would have been known about — it would have been considered an accidental death. State Rep. Charlie Meier, R-Okawville Meier, who attended the coroner's inquest, said testimony indicated that Clementz wanted to go to sleep, but the worker wanted Clementz to stay awake. A different employee had given Clementz a bath about 90 minutes earlier. Meier said the employee who gave Clementz the shower had been hired within the year prior, during the time when the Murray Center was scheduled for closure. Meier said he thinks the employee was not fully vetted and trained. Brian Brueggemann: [618-239-2475](tel:618-239-2475), @B_Brueggemann Read more here: <http://www.bnd.com/news/local/article44769120.html?storylink=cpy>

Oregon Lawmakers To Get An Update On State Foster Care Oversight By [Chris Lehman](#) • 23 hours ago Share [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Google+](#) [Email](#) Chris Phan Flickr Originally published on November 13, 2015 5:39 pm Listen Listening... 0:00 / Oregon lawmakers return to Salem Monday for a three-day series of meetings. One of the first items on the agenda is an update on the state's oversight of the foster care system. This after Oregon Governor Kate Brown removed the head of the state agency in charge of child welfare programs. That was less than two weeks ago. This transition in leadership comes after an investigation by Portland's Willamette Week newspaper that showed that top officials at Oregon's Department of Human Services turned a blind eye to financial problems and other neglect issues at a prominent foster care provider in Portland. Lawmakers will also take a first look at possible bills for the 2016 legislative session. Those include a possible hike in the legal age to buy tobacco products, and a possible increase in the state's minimum wage. Source: <http://kuow.org/post/oregon-lawmakers-get-update-state-foster-care-oversight>

The Gates teacher evaluation system in action—a costly and ineffective adventure in Hillsborough, Florida November 13, 2015 [Gates Foundation](#) by Carol Burris Executive Director, Network for Public Education and former New York principal (Part of this report first appeared in Valerie Strauss' The Answersheet as a guest blog by Burris) In 2008, Florida's Hillsborough School District received a [\\$10,000,000 grant](#) from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The initiatives in the grant included: the establishment of an evaluation system based 40% on student test scores; the inclusion of test scores in decisions to grant tenure and determine teacher career paths; merit pay, which is referred to in the grant as "pay for performance"; bonuses for principals and teachers who raise low performing students' scores; the use of data for hiring; and the use of "data dashboards" to make instructional decisions. By 2012, the Hillsborough district [had spent a whopping \\$28.4 million](#) on the grant's initiatives, using Race to the Top, additional grants, and district funds. District funds were 19% of all expenditures. \$3,224,000 was spent developing a value added model (VAM) to measure teacher performance by test scores. The \$24.8 million was considered a "lower bound" estimate by AIR, which studied the spending. Winning the grant was heralded as a reform in which a teachers union had cooperatively worked with a Superintendent, Mary Ellen Elia, to enact evaluation reform. In his book, [Class Warfare: Inside the Fight to Fix America's Schools](#), Stephen Brill describes Hillsborough union president, Jean Clements, as a union president who was "willing to embrace the Jeb Bush reforms rather than take a headline against them." Brill reported that Clements collaborated on the grant after being prodded to do so by the AFT [\[1\]](#). Elia wanted 50% of the evaluation to be based on test scores; Clements insisted that it not be more than 40%. The Gates grant, however was not popular with the rank and file teachers of Hillsborough. In 2012, thirty Hillsborough teachers went to Jacksonville, Florida to participate in a televised discussion on merit pay and the evaluation of teachers by test scores. The teachers complained about the effects that merit pay and evaluation by test scores had on their teaching. In December of 2014, the Hillsborough school board asked for a [review of the evaluation program](#) based on complaints. During that review, the once enthusiastic Clements voiced concerns. She told the School Board [that the system she helped put into place](#) is considered by teachers to be "demeaning and unfair" and that teacher voice and input has decreased. After Superintendent Mary Ellen Elia, who was the driving force in the partnership with the Gates Foundation, was dismissed by the district, [it was reported](#) in The Tampa Bay Times [that during the last four years of her tenure the district went on a "spending jag" using more than half of all of its over \\$300 million in reserves in order to pay costs such as \\$11.3 million for teacher peer evaluators, \\$6.1 million to teacher mentors and other cost overruns expected to reach a total of \\$50 million. The Gates Foundation, for its part, only paid 80 million of the 100 million that it promised the district through 2016, and will not pay the balance. The experiment is over. \[The district is dismantling the Gates teacher evaluation program\]\(#\) which was not only too costly but never achieved its goals—test scores for minority students are dismal, graduation rates are down, and the best teachers are not assigned to the neediest students. The Gates teacher evaluation grant was a costly, failed experiment. \[\\[1\\]\]\(#\) According to Brill, AFT President Randi Weingarten said that she was involved in the negotiations of the Gates teacher evaluation grants. Source: \[http://www.networkforpubliceducation.org/2015/11/the-gates-teacher-evaluation-system-in-action-a-costly-and-ineffective-adventure-in-hillsborough-florida/?can_id=d3ed0286effbf5f6c7a95c981a7dabcf&source=email-15-years-of-bill-gatess-experimentation&email_referrer=15-years-of-bill-gatess-experimentation&email_subject=15-years-of-bill-gatess-experimentation\]\(http://www.networkforpubliceducation.org/2015/11/the-gates-teacher-evaluation-system-in-action-a-costly-and-ineffective-adventure-in-hillsborough-florida/?can_id=d3ed0286effbf5f6c7a95c981a7dabcf&source=email-15-years-of-bill-gatess-experimentation&email_referrer=15-years-of-bill-gatess-experimentation&email_subject=15-years-of-bill-gatess-experimentation\)](#)

Boy who died at Lord of the Flies bootcamp November 17, 2015 11:32am Bruce Staeger - teen ranch death. Picture: Carla Campbell-Moffat. Emma Reynolds [news.com.au](#) Share [Share on Facebook](#) [Share on Twitter](#) [Share on Google+](#) [Share on Reddit](#) Email a friend TIERRA Blanca Ranch is advertised as the bootcamp where troubled youth can make "a new beginning". For Bruce Staeger, it was the place he would suffer and die. His mother and stepfather were like any desperate parents trying to help an out-of-control teenager. They had run out of ideas for how to save their 16-year-old from a vicious cycle of drug use, skipping school and running away, and the strict program on a remote New Mexico outpost was the last resort. Today, they have heard endless shocking stories about the camp, where teenagers reported being beaten, chained, handcuffed and starved by abusive leaders. Most disturbing is the punishment peers say they doled out to Bruce — a story straight out of Lord of the Flies. MOB MENTALITY After months of being broken down at the camp, the traumatised boys started bullying Bruce, they told Rolling Stone magazine. They say camp staff tacitly encouraged them to beat and abuse Bruce in gangs, or turned a blind eye. He was the perfect scapegoat. Several say they still have nightmares about their own vile actions. Bruce's death came in September 2013, two years after his arrival at the ranch, when he fell from the back of the camp owner's pick-up truck, which another boy was driving in the dark on a dirt road. The ranch was 64 kilometres from the nearest town with little mobile phone coverage, so it took some time to get help. Bruce died of internal bleeding in El Paso. The tragic accident marked the beginning of a major investigation into the ranch, which had been the subject of disturbing reports since 2006. In October 2013, local authorities began looking into allegations [teens were beaten by an ex-employee](#) and forced to wear leg shackles and cuffs for minor infractions of ranch rules, the Albuquerque Journal reported. Witnesses told police the staff member hit one boy with a "Kubaton" baton and another youngster was made to run all day and then shackled. Officers called to the ranch by a boy on phone he took from the site found a boy wearing restraints. Police reports also showed camp staff allegedly had groups of teenage residents beat another for being uncooperative. [New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez](#) said authorities were particularly concerned when they arrived to search the site and found nine boys and owner Scott Chandler missing. She said evidence found at the ranch appeared to corroborate some of the boys' claims, the NY Daily News reported. 'BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES' Chandler has repeatedly denied the accusations and said he was proud of his site's reputation for helping at-risk teens. "Most youth get on track to successful and rewarding lives outside the ranch," he said in a statement. He claimed he had simply been on a wilderness walk when the authorities turned up. Shortly after Bruce's death, he and wife Colette appeared on the Today show, where he admitted restraints might sometimes be used on boys "when we go into a detention centre to pick up a child that has been court-ordered before a judge or something to have him placed in our program." But he added, "that is actually very minimal of what we do." The Chandlers call themselves "cattle ranchers with a heart for God, and turning kids [sic] lives around", and claim their \$80-a-day youth program is run on "sound Biblical principles". They have been running the "tough-love" treatment for 20 years. In 2000, the ranch's website says, 104 pre and early teens visited for summer sessions funded by the National Institutes of Health, in partnership with a major university and New Mexico's second largest county. The Children, Youth and Families Department has also come under fire because it never followed up allegations that started in 2006, claiming the ranch was a "wilderness program" rather than a "residential program" and therefore not under its jurisdiction. HOGTIED AND DRAGGED IN DIRT A year after Bruce's death, his family filed a lawsuit against the program and the ranch's auto policy at [Santa Fe County District Court](#), local news station KOB4 reported. They alleged Bruce had been subjected to cruel punishments, including being forced to eat horse dung and having jalapeño juice poured in his eyes. They alleged the teenager was carried from a pole by his bound hands and feet, like a pig. "His death was the end result of a pattern of abuse and negligence," said the lawsuit. Several boys gradually approached Bruce's mother Carla Moffat to talk about their experiences, and what they did to Bruce. They described having to run up and down hills carrying truck tyres and rocks, and made to work and sleep in restraints that left scars. They said staff encouraged them to "help" out-of-shape Bruce, by dragging him or punching him in the gut, Rolling Stone reported. That's when the beatings started. Several boys admitted to hanging Bruce from the horse trailer, lassoing him and dragging him over the ground and putting him in a sleeping bag filled with dung and kneeling on his chest. Another family have now also sued, with James and Cheryl Morgan claiming their grandson suffered physical and emotional abuse and naming the CYFD as another defendant for not doing enough to protect kids on the ranch. Liz McGrath, executive director at Pegasus Legal Services for Children, told news.com.au: "We are very concerned that Tierra Blanca may be accepting minors to their program. It is critical that the State of New Mexico exercise its authority to license and oversee these types of programs to ensure that the kinds of abuses reported in the Rolling Stone article never happen again." CYFD said it wanted jurisdiction over such programs, with [secretary Yolanda Deines telling KOB4](#): "I just need to know we don't create a Lord of the Flies situation anywhere in New Mexico and as long as we don't have supervision for this kind of program, there's potential for that." TROUBLED TEENS INDUSTRY There are hundreds of extreme teen rehab programs like the one at Tierra Blanca across America. Many are unregulated and employ questionable techniques, often based on fundamentalist Christian ideas. Rolling Stone estimates the industry generates \$1.7 billion a year and has around 10,000 teenagers from around the world in its care at any one time. In 2007, the US Government Accountability Office found "thousands of allegations of abuse, some of which involved death" at residential programs. A shady transport industry has grown up around it, with parents often hiring "escorts" to forcibly take their offspring to US camps. Eddie Curry, from First Step Adolescent Services in Las Vegas, told the BBC [British families would pay up to \\$8000](#) to have him get their kids. "It's a wonder no one has died out there before," said Bruce's stepdad, Jim Moffat. "There are kids who attempted suicide, kids who ran away in the desert, and it's in the middle of nowhere, kids who felt like they were starving to death." While some speak of trauma, many of Chandler's graduates say the tough program turned their lives around. Bruce's mother hoped it would save him from an early grave — instead it sealed his fate. Source: <http://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/real-life/boy-who-died-at-lord-of-the-flies-bootcamp/news-story/58992ff03d62a937ac528e7378a07d76>

Camp for troubled teens closes Camp for troubled teens closes [See it in Print 12](#) Saved Save Article [My Saved Items](#) [Print](#) [Email](#) « [Buy Now](#) [Buy Now](#) [Buy Now](#) [Buy Now](#) [Buy Now](#) » × Close Ad [Buy Now](#) 111615-nws-custer001.JPG Sean Ryan, Journal staff The East Campus of the STAR Academy in the Custer State Park has closed its doors after nearly 50 years of use. The South Dakota Department of Corrections closed the camp and handed over the property to the state Department of Game, Fish & Parks. 2015-11-16T05:30:00Z Camp for troubled teens closes Tom Griffith Journal staff Rapid City Journal November 16, 2015 5:30 am • [Tom Griffith Journal staff \(5\) Comments](#) Related Galleries [East Campus of the STAR Academy closed](#) CUSTER STATE PARK | Down a gravel road a few miles southeast of Legion Lake, nestled amid the ponderosa pines and straddling a gurgling brook, the idyllic East Campus of the STAR Academy has closed. For nearly 50 years the campus, replete with handcrafted dormitories, classroom buildings, shops and a handsome chapel, served as the setting in which thousands of wayward young people could study forest management, learn a trade, undergo counseling, and gain perspective and guidance on what it would take to become productive members of society. “This was always the hidden jewel of juvenile corrections,” said Doug Herrmann, director of Juvenile Services for the South Dakota Department of Corrections. Herrmann was instrumental in the decision to close the camp and hand over the property to the state Department of Game, Fish & Parks, but he said he did so reluctantly. “It’s a great facility, and I started my career there in ‘85,” Herrmann said last week. “In closing it, I felt like I was losing a little something.” Authorized by the South Dakota Legislature in 1966 and constructed in 1967, the Youth Forestry Camp, known as Camp 1, taught forest-management techniques to troubled male teens. In 1975, Camp 2 was built, introducing more vocational-technical education, building trades, small engine repair and programs that assisted young men in transitioning back into the community, Herrmann explained. In 1996, juvenile girls were transferred from correctional facilities at Redfield to the East Campus in Custer State Park, while the Youth Forestry Camp and all the males were shifted to the STAR Academy’s West Campus south of the city of Custer. In early 2000, the two campuses were treating 218 14- to 18-year-olds, most sent there by the court system, Herrmann said. Today, due to a variety of factors, that number stands at 45, he said. “I’ve always said I don’t think juvenile corrections should be a growth industry,” Herrmann said. “Back then, when you looked around the country, there were an increasing number of kids entering the system. But, we got smarter at how we did intervention.” Herrmann credited the development of partnerships and programs for reducing the number of troubled teens sentenced to treatment facilities by the courts. “We’re just being more effective and having more success with the kids we do release back to the community,” he said. “We’ve put things in place — foster homes, individual living choices, transitional beds — and worked with places like the McCrossen’s Boys Ranch near Sioux Falls. Advertisement Play Current Time 0:00 / Duration Time 0:00 Remaining Time -0:00 Stream TypeLIVE Loaded: 0% Progress: 0% 00:00 Fullscreen 00:00 Mute Playback Rate 1 Subtitles subtitles off Captions captions off Chapters Chapters “We’re having better impact with youth earlier in the system and reducing recidivism,” Herrmann added. “These are the outcomes we always wanted.” On Nov. 1, the Department of Corrections turned over the East Campus to Custer State Park and consolidated programs for boys and girls at the West Campus. Herrmann said the move, under study for three years, would save the state about \$550,000 annually through economies of scale, reduced number of employees and combined food services and maintenance. About two weeks after the consolidation, STAR Academy Superintendent Jeff Haiar, who has been on the job 19 years, said his staff had encountered no problems in combining boys and girls programming at the West Campus. “It’s gone very well,” Haiar said. Custer State Park Superintendent Matt Snyder welcomed the exchange and said managers of the 110-square-mile park were studying potential uses for the facilities. “We’re still in the process of determining what we have and how we will use that in the future,” Snyder said. “The buildings are in decent shape. They’ve done a nice job of keeping up that whole campus. By the first of the year, we’ll have a direction on where we are going to go with this.” South Dakota’s most popular state park, which is on track to welcome 1.7 million visitors in 2015, is always in need of facilities, Snyder said. The park’s concessionaire, Custer State Park Resort Co., had already shown an interest in using a shop at the East Campus for a maintenance facility, while the dormitories may be converted to staff housing for the 60 to 70 seasonal workers hired annually by the park, or the same number of volunteers who assist each year, he said. Source: http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/camp-for-troubled-teens-closes/article_48282098-a61a-5800-8bc3-4255380388e8.html

What Education Policy Makers Can Learn From A ‘Failing School’ “How can someone make a decision about a school they’ve never even walked into?” That question is at the heart of Kristina Rizga’s terrific new book [Mission High](#): One school, how experts tried to fail it, and the students and teachers who made it triumph. Rizga uses her considerable journalistic skills—honed as the education writer for [Mother Jones](#)—to involve readers in the lives of students and educators at Mission High, a San Francisco public school with a proud history but a “failing school” label. The school, where Rizga spent four years as an embedded reporter, serves a student body of mostly low-income kids, many from households where the first language isn’t English, and which ranks among the lowest-performing 5 percent of schools in the country. Only 30 percent of the school’s students score at proficient or above on the state standardized tests in English, and only 40 percent score proficient in math. But in looking more closely at the school, Rizga discovered that other data—college acceptance and teacher retention—didn’t align with the school’s “failing” label. When Mission High principal Eric Guthertz welcomed Rizga into his school, she observed something that frustrates students, parents, and educators across the country: As these schools do everything in their power to serve their students, they continue to be judged as failures by a process that seems completely remote and disconnected from the school. As she walked the halls of Mission High, observed classes, and spoke with the students and their teachers, Rizga came to see a very different story about the school—one of committed educators and persevering learners doing all they can to succeed despite the judgments and prescriptions of policy makers. Recently, I spoke with Rizga about her experience at Mission High. Your point of view in this book is not at the 30,000-foot level like many other education books. You spent four years embedded in this school. Was that a deliberate decision you made, to be really at the ground level? Or did that just evolve? In my research as an education reporter, I always started in libraries and with books but felt what was missing were the voices of students and teachers. It’s impossible to get to the truth without those voices. When you remove those voices and talk about schools as abstractions and policy ideas, you create a recipe for ideological wars with no on-the-ground evidence supporting the positions. I felt that if I could follow the stories of students and teachers and learn what were their needs and what works for them, then I could get beyond the abstractions and the ideological war. Doesn’t that make your work just anecdotal? I get pushback on that. But I spent about half my time reporting from the schools, and in the other half, I read some 200 studies written by academics. I consulted with researchers, such as Linda Darling-Hammond, Larry Cuban, and others. There are three chapters in the book where I review nearly a hundred years of education history to give readers an understanding of why we have such a top down, one-size-fits-all policy for education, and why it’s been difficult to include the voices of people who are most impacted by the system. I looked at some of your earlier writings for Mother Jones from 2010 and saw you’re from Latvia. You described the schools you attended in that country as “Soviet-style schools.” Why didn’t you bring that up in the book? American education is so complicated I wanted to have a focus and not bring my personal background into it so much. That said, I remember upon landing in this country that one of the most shocking things to me was how unequal the funding is for schools. In Latvia, and just about every other Western and Asian country, public schools get equal funding, and schools that teach high numbers of low-income students get more funding. Whereas in the United States you have a school like Mission High, where the students are mostly low-income, that receives \$9,700 per student while in Palo Alto, one of the most affluent suburbs in the United States, schools receive \$14,000 per student. I found an elementary school in Sausalito, another affluent community, that receives \$33,000 per student. That’s a shocking fact for anyone who comes to this most powerful and wealthy country in the world, to see so much inequality. How did the inequality of funding affect the students and teachers you met at Mission High? It’s obvious to the teachers and students in that school. San Francisco is one of the wealthiest cities in the country and in the world. And when you first see Mission High, you see a beautiful building that is quite old and has seen decades of neglect. The beauty of the original structure reflects the past commitment California made to education, but now, some of the furniture hasn’t been replaced since the 1950s, it looks like. The school looks more dilapidated than my high school in Latvia looked, which is one of the poorest countries in the European Union. I still get pictures from my relatives in Latvia, and the children’s schools look 30 years ahead of what Mission looks like in terms of furniture and computers. Also, classes are larger, and teachers in Mission High work much longer hours than teachers in places like Palo Alto. Because the students at Mission High come from all over the world—from El Salvador, Guatemala, China—the teachers have to provide a lot more personal support before and after school, during lunch, over the weekend. And the classroom preparation takes so much longer too than it does when teaching in a school where the student population is relatively homogenous. Also, many of the students at Mission High come from some of the poorest neighborhoods in San Francisco. Their families are often under-resourced, and there tends to be instability. So students are dealing with home issues, and teachers have to address those personal issues before they can get to academics. That takes more time too. Despite all these extra hours, teachers at Mission High actually get paid \$10,000 less than a typical teacher in Palo Alto. So lack of resources and demands on teachers’ time are big problems at a school like Mission High. Why don’t policy makers get this? Educational policy is mostly driven by outsiders—philanthropists, politicians, business folks, and tech moguls. They tend to focus on things they know, such as organizational restructuring, management practices, data collection systems. They tend to ignore the

most important things about teaching and learning. Like what? So many things that happen at the classroom level are completely invisible to most people who aren't teachers. As the science teacher Rebecca Fulop, who I profile in my book, pointed out, most people feel they've spent enough time in classrooms to know what education is all about. But much of what goes into teaching and learning is invisible unless you're the actual teacher, such as the pace of the class, the variation in instruction, the grading and analysis of student work, the relationships with students. This is why it's so important to have teacher and student voices in the policy conversation, to make sure policies address these invisible issues. For someone who wanted to write a book that's above the "ideological wars," that sounds pretty ideological. After four years at Mission, I've spent enough time to know the importance of including the voices of teachers and students in policy conversation because they know more than any other academics, politicians, or philanthropists what works in the classroom. Nearly all the educators you portray approach their practice from a social justice frame. Isn't that pretty controversial? I can't speak about the history of a social justice teaching approach. I can speak about what I learned from the teachers at Mission High School. They all had awareness that schools can be set up as institutions that can replicate racist patterns in society, or they can be institutions that help reduce these racist patterns. At Mission they call it an anti-racist teaching lens. So where does academics fit in with correcting social problems? When the teachers at Mission School look at their work through an anti-racist lens, they look at the content and notice whether or not it recognizes that 95 percent of the students in their school are students of color. After students learn the standards in the canon, do they have opportunities to do their own research, and are they allowed to learn about things going on in society that they care about? When it comes to the craft of teaching, are teachers recognizing the needs of African American and Latino students? Are there patterns in grading that unconsciously reflect the race of the students? What support services are there in the school – student clubs, tutoring, help with college application, English classes for immigrant parents, and access to computers? Another thing you're adamant about in the book is that a copy-and-paste way of replicating education policies doesn't work—that you can't just take what has been effective at one school and assume it will work at another. Because the cultures of the schools may be very different. Nothing I learned at Mission High can be used as a top-down blueprint. But aren't there some main things that just about any school can learn from your experience at Mission High School? Yes, there are many important principles and ingredients at Mission High that others can learn from. First, the teaching in this school is student centered. Sure there are standardized tests, but the instruction is centered on the interests, experiences, and needs of individual students. That is the driving force, not the standardized tests. Second, there is an enormous focus on the craft of teaching. Both the administrators and the teachers make sure there is always time set aside to give teachers opportunities to plan lessons together and share knowledge with each other, which is so rare in other schools based on my conversations with other teachers around the country. Third, there is an intense focus on issues of race and equity. Teacher leaders at Mission High are always disaggregating school-based data—not just the standardized test scores, but data on absences, grades, referrals, and other school-based statistics—to identify gaps. They'll also look at qualitative information, interview teachers and students, look at lesson and unit plans, and student work to ascertain where students are struggling and what kinds of supports teachers need. This is the type of support teachers are generally thrilled to receive because it's respectful. It is based on relationships, not to fire them or give them a bonus. The teachers I met at Mission High in my four years there want to be successful. They are in this profession for very little money because they want to work with kids and help their students succeed. Source:

<http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/what-education-policy-makers-can-learn-from-a-failing-school/>

Involuntary Hospitalization of Drug Users Is Bad Policy Thursday, 19 November 2015 00:00 By [Susan Sered](#), Truthout | Op-Ed font size [decrease font size](#) [increase font size](#) [Print](#) 44 Email (Photo: [Hospital Bed](#) via Shutterstock; Edited: LW / TO) [This story could not have been published without the support of readers like you. Click here to make a tax-deductible donation to Truthout and fund more stories like it!](#) Massachusetts appears to be on the cusp of adopting legislation proposed by Republican Gov. [Charlie Baker](#) that would allow doctors to hospitalize drug users, involuntarily and without a court order, for 72 hours. Previously, the power to order involuntary commitment of drug or alcohol users lay exclusively in the hands of judges under a Massachusetts law known as [Section 35](#). At this time, few states give judges similar power to take away the freedom of individuals not accused of a crime. (1) Does allowing people to be forcibly confined really serve the interests of the addicted person? The plan to allow the involuntary commitment of drug users has received virtual across-the-board support. According to [press reports](#), the majority of Massachusetts' sheriffs and the association representing Massachusetts' district attorneys have come out in favor of the bill (H.3817). Hampshire County Sheriff Robert Garvey's comments represent the growing opinion that, "The governor's bill changes the attitude that addiction is not a criminal offense as much as it is a medical problem." Garvey's remarks are echoed around the country. For a variety of reasons - including a shift in [media portrayals of the race of drug users](#) - we are currently experiencing a cultural and judicial movement [away from criminalization and toward medicalization](#) of substance abuse. Massachusetts might well be the vanguard of this movement. Not only is Massachusetts a relatively "white" state at a time in which the new face of drug use is white, but also it is the first state to have passed the health-care coverage reform ("Romneycare") that later became the law of the land nationally ("Obamacare"). However, does allowing people to be forcibly confined in any space - whether it is a jail or a hospital - really serve the interests of the addicted person? And should the onus to fix social problems really be placed on physicians? Addiction Treatment and the Role of Physicians Having worked for the past decade with [criminalized women](#), most of whom struggle or have struggled with addiction issues, I am far from convinced that the governor, sheriffs and district attorneys have got it right. While recategorizing addiction as a medical rather than a judicial issue certainly sounds like a step in the right direction, giving doctors unchecked power to hospitalize people against their will opens the door for serious human rights violations. Our legal system, like that of other modern democracies, insists that an individual should not lose his or her freedom without the due process of law. A doctor, committing people without an opportunity for those people to be represented by counsel, will be asked to serve as both prosecutor and judge - a position that directly contradicts principles of US jurisprudence and places doctors in an uncomfortable and untenable position vis-à-vis their patients. Knowing that doctors have this power will, I fear, serve to discourage people who could benefit from immediate medical attention from seeking assistance. More broadly, the proposed bill puts the onus on physicians to fix social problems. There is no evidence whatsoever to indicate that three days of treatment will have lasting positive effects upon drug users. I understand that the motives behind the proposed bill are benign. However, I assume that the image of the doctor-patient relationship in the minds of the governor, sheriffs and district attorneys is most likely the kind of relationship they have with their own family doctors: a relationship in which the doctor knows each patient's history and family and has a good grasp of each patient's medical and social background. However, it is likely that the doctors who will be committing patients under Governor Baker's plan are emergency room doctors or hospitalists; that is, doctors who meet the patient for the first time at the encounter that leads to the commitment. Asking doctors to singlehandedly take away the freedom of patients they barely know is not a reasonable burden to place on doctors. I have great respect for doctors and I understand their frustration at treating patients for overdoses, only to watch these same patients walk out the hospital door immediately following stabilization. However, the bottom line is that there is no evidence whatsoever to indicate that three days of treatment will have lasting positive effects upon drug users. The three-day proposal, I assume, is based on the three-day commitment for psychiatric patients under Massachusetts General Law, Section 12, though, since no reason is articulated for the three-day idea it might just as easily (although perhaps subconsciously) follow the three days between the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. In any case, there is little to no evidence showing that coerced drug treatment is effective. (2) When patients are released after their three-day involuntary commitment, there is no reason to think that they will not return to their former drug use. In fact, having abstained from opiates for several days may set them up to overdose when they return to their former level of drug use, with a reduced tolerance for the drugs. (3) If a plan were in place to provide long-term, multifaceted support after the three days, I might have a different take on the proposal. But I do not see that Governor Baker's bill includes such a plan, or a way to fund it. As I've seen repeatedly among the women with whom I work, even the "good" rehab placements - that is, ones that last three or six months - usually end with people going back out into poverty, unemployment, scarce community support and often homelessness. These are sure recipes for sending them back into the drug use/detox cycle. A Gap in Standard US Medical Training We in the United States have great respect for physicians and we trust that their medical training is among the best in the world. However, addiction treatment is not a substantial part of most medical school curricula, and even in instances where doctors took a course (typically an elective) in the subject, given the rapidity with which the field of addiction treatment is progressing, their knowledge in the field may well be outdated. (4) I personally have spoken with physicians who know nearly nothing about Suboxone (a drug used to assist people recovering from heroin addiction) and have never administered a dose of Narcan (a drug used to treat heroin overdoses). Few hospitals in Massachusetts, and even fewer in other parts of the country, have more than one or two addiction medicine specialists on staff, which means that non-specialists will be tasked with the responsibility of deciding whether or not to commit patients who, in many cases, are seen as a nuisance or part of a "revolving-door" patient group. I know from having spoken with doctors around the country that they, like many politicians, tend to believe that 12-step programs like Narcotics Anonymous (NA) are effective in treating addiction when, in fact, there is no evidence showing that NA participation (and especially coerced participation) leads to long-term abstinence from drug use. (5) Indeed, I suspect that lying behind the proposed legislation

is the notion, propagated by 12-step organizations, that alcoholism and substance abuse are "diseases" that take over one's life, independent of social and structural conditions - and that people living with alcohol- or substance-abuse disorders lack the capacity to make sound decisions. (This is why they must turn themselves over to a "higher power.") How Race and Class Shape the Treatment of Drug Users I do not doubt that many doctors are thoughtful, fair and knowledgeable. But I do know that there is a sufficient history of medical abuses - including medical experiments on prisoners and on Black men (e.g. the [infamous Tuskegee syphilis experiment](#)) - which warrants that all medical research undergoes thorough vetting and oversight by ethics reviews boards such as the [institutional review boards](#). Crafted in the frenzied panic over opiate deaths in Massachusetts, Governor Baker's bill lacks a requirement for any sort of oversight. Decades of research show that doctors tend to treat patients differently depending on the gender or race or both of the patient and of the doctor. (6) Particularly when doctors are being granted full discretion in whether or not to subject individuals to confinement, this lack of oversight is troublesome. Crafted in the frenzied panic over opiate deaths in Massachusetts, Governor Baker's bill lacks a requirement for any sort of oversight. It certainly should raise eyebrows that the popular push to relabel addiction and send addicts to "treatment" rather than prison is taking place at a time when public attention has shifted from Black crack users to white opiate users. Still, redefining people as "sick addicts" rather than "criminal addicts" is not as significant a social shift as one may think. In both cases, they are labeled as flawed individuals who have failed to take responsibility for their own lives. In both cases, the onus for "deviance" lies on the individual rather than on the society that creates and sustains social and economic conditions that lead far too many people to feel that mind-altering and mood-altering substances are the best - or the only - means of making it through the day, the week or their lives. Of course, those people labeled as "addicts" or "drug abusers" are not all that deviant. Throughout the United States, the normative way for dealing with misery is through doctors' prescriptions for attention challenges, for anxiety, for depression and even for low libido. (7) The "epidemic" of opiate-related deaths is not spread evenly across white communities in the United States. In fact, the new attention to white opiate users exposes an important and seldom discussed reality of US society: class matters. The white opiate users in Massachusetts overwhelmingly come from [poor and working-class communities](#) - mostly non-urban - where good jobs are scarce and where young people see little hope of ever attaining the American dream. The criminalized women I have come to know over the past decade are, for the most part, poor and white, and they represent a tragic social trend. According to research published in 2014 by sociologist William Cockerham, "For the first time in modern history, the life expectancy of a particular segment of the American population - non-Hispanic white women with low levels of education and income living in certain rural counties - is declining." And the [same decline](#) is happening among white men. (8) Opiate use is one of the factors explaining declining life expectancies in impoverished white communities, but it is crucial that we understand that opiate use is a symptom of hopelessness, disaffection, powerlessness and marginalization. Unless we treat those social forces, we are deceiving ourselves if we think that allowing physicians to commit drug users for three days is going to do anything other than intensify those forces. Acknowledgments: I wish to thank Barak Sered M.D. for his expert advice and input into this paper. All opinions and errors are solely my own. Source: <http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/33719-involuntary-hospitalization-of-drug-users-is-bad-policy>

NZ adoption laws 'breach human rights' Updated at 11:17 am on 16 November 2015 [Share on Twitter](#) [Share on Facebook](#) [Share on Google Plus](#) [Share on Reddit](#) [Share on LinkedIn](#) [Share via email](#) Max Towle, Employment Reporter - [@maxbentleytowle](#) Fewer children are being adopted in New Zealand, and an adoption action group says the country's 60-year-old law breaches human rights and needs overhauling. Advocates say the present law breaches human rights, children's rights, and the Bill of Rights drastically needs an overhaul. Sitting in a small room filled with musical instruments, Wellington shop worker Peter Jamieson told of his adoption as a baby. "In 1967, when I was born, a family could walk into a ward with about 20 or 30 children and pick the one they wanted. "My parents, they chose me and I was brought up in a very nice, normal family... all through that I was told I was adopted." Peter Jamieson, who was adopted as a baby, said knowing about his history meant a lot to him. Photo: RNZ / Max Towle He's since reconnected with his biological mother and father, and said he was incredibly glad he did. "The time when I found my biological family, I was at a maturity level where it wasn't going to faze me," he said. "My whakapapa was really important to me - just knowing about my history meant a lot to me - I had felt detached and didn't know anything about where I came from." Parents who've adopted 'must be open with children' But [Unicef](#) advocacy manager Deborah Morris-Travers said many were not as lucky. Under the current law, when a child is adopted, a new birth certificate is drafted without any mention of the biological parents. "It's important for them to maintain contact with their birth family, but also, as they get older, to have more information about their cultural identity," Ms Morris-Travers said. "It's about the child's right to know who they are - New Zealand continues to have adoption law which breaches human rights." Ms Morris-Travers said Child, Youth and Family was generally good at telling parents that adopt to be open with children, but said there still needed to be a law change to enforce that. Dr Anne Else of the group Adoption Action, who has written about the history of adoption, said the law breached the Human Rights Act and the Bill of Rights Act. "The act is based on the premise that neither the adopted person, nor the birth family, would ever see each other again," Dr Else said. "It is entirely orientated around adult interests. The birth mother can sign a consent when the child is 10 days old, which is one of the shortest periods in the world." She said another problem was there was no requirement for a child to give consent to be adopted, even at the age of 17. Adoption laws criticised but no change yet There were 152 domestic adoptions last year, down 25 percent from five years ago, and many of those were people adopting family members. The number of applications for adoption also fell from 253 to 207 in that period. In 2000, the Law Commission published a report suggesting about 100 changes to the law, but to date, none have been imposed. In 2007, a Ministry of Justice paper to Cabinet stated there were legal and social reasons why adoption laws needed to be changed because it perpetuated discriminatory practice and created a system open to abuse. Three years later, a Human Rights Commission report highlighted the need to review adoption legislation as too many children were experiencing poverty and poor health, which resulted in poor outcomes in early childhood, which reached into later childhood and adulthood. Law Society family law chair Allan Cooke said the law lacked regard for children's cultural background and their heritage, which he said was important for Maori and Pasifika groups. "The other issue for us is there's no way for the voice of the children to be heard in the adoption when it goes through the Family Court," he said. Green Party MP Kevin Hague said the law was becoming increasingly irrelevant. "This is a law that dates from 1955 and effectively fossilises the attitudes and values of that time. It's legislation that desperately needs overhaul." Mr Hague has tried to push a bill updating the law for seven years, and had met with Justice Minister Amy Adams who he said was responsive to change. But the minister's office provided a statement which said "adoption law reform isn't currently on the Minister's work programme due to competing priorities for law reform in the justice sector". When asked to explain, a spokesperson said "there are other things on the minister's agenda that are more important right now". Adoption applications filed: 2010/11: 253 2011/12: 225 2012/13: 217 2013/14: 211 2014/15: 207 Adoption applications granted: 2010/11: 202 2011/12: 178 2012/13: 177 2013/14: 180 2014/15: 152 What's your adoption story? Contact max.towle@radionz.co.nz Source: <http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/national/289764/nz-adoption-laws-breach-human-rights>

2 Investigates: Local charity accused of helping itself... | www.wsbvtv.com 2 Investigates: Local charity accused of helping itself instead of children 51 11.6K 37 12.1K Related [View Larger](#) Noah's Ark Children's Care Home Sponsored Links [Developing local stories-Every Day 4-7pm](#) By [Jodie Fleischer](#) HENRY COUNTY, Ga. — When the Noah's Ark Children's Care Home opened its doors in the early 1990s, it did so as a residential group home with the mission of providing "a nurturing environment" for "state-confiscated children," [according to IRS filings](#). A Channel 2 Action News investigation found evidence that the group home [closed in 2010](#) but [continued to solicit donations](#) from the public, accepting at least [\\$658,000 in contributions from donors](#) in the years that followed. "There's no Children's Care Home, like no foster kids ... period," said Christy Cunningham, who worked as the Noah's Ark marketing director. The Noah's Ark name is best known around metro Atlanta for its animal sanctuary, which rescues and rehabilitates exotic animals. But tucked away on the same Henry County property is a [6,000-square-foot house that was once the Children's Care Home](#). The two charities share one address, one website and money, according to the whistleblowers. "You get into a really sticky situation when you start taking money meant for one non-profit and putting it into another," said Jo Crane, who worked as the charity's assistant controller. Crane, Cunningham, and former accountant, Jill Phillips-Lingen, approached WSB-TV to share what they observed while working at Noah's Ark. "It's not anything like they pretend they are," said Phillips-Lingen. All three women had access to the Noah's Ark records and say they were fired when they began to question discrepancies in the finances and personal spending by the Noah's Ark founding family. "There's no way that they can account for everything they spent," said Crane. "Because it's not spent where it should be." In 2011, Georgia's Department of Human Services sent [a letter to Noah's Ark](#) confirming that the Children's Care Home had closed "in response to financial failure." The charity's founder, Jama Hedgecoth, did help foster children for years, but [admitted in a letter](#) that the last foster child left her home in March 2010. "I freaked out. I'm like, 'Holy crap. I'm involved in a major, major scam,'" Cunningham recounted when she began working on the Noah's Ark website. As recently as last February, that website was [still soliciting and accepting donations](#) as the Children's Care Home. The same month, it changed its business name with the state of Georgia, but continues to use its original 501(c)(3) IRS exemption ID assigned to the children's home. State records show that nonprofit, now called Noah's Ark Children's

Sanctuary, has not been registered as a charity since 2012. "Absolutely, I think the state of Georgia should be investigating this organization," said Sandra Minuitti, who runs the watchdog website Charity Navigator. "That's a huge ethical breach. It could be a legal issue as well." Minuitti said she sees a number of red flags in the Noah's Ark financial records, particularly so many Hedgecoth [family members on both of the charity's boards](#). She also found it unusual that the children's home could have brought in so many contributions without any fundraising expenses. The charity's own [audits show](#) tens of thousands of dollars spent on things like groceries, utilities and even landscaping, since the last foster child left in 2010. Hedgecoth also [paid herself](#) roughly \$100,000 in Children's Care Home salary during that time; she also makes roughly \$65,000 each year from the animal sanctuary. Channel 2 investigative reporter Jodie Fleischer initially scheduled an interview with Hedgecoth, but her general manager Raymond Jordan, who had arranged the interview, tried to cancel it because of weather. When told the questions were regarding financial irregularities at the children's home, and that access to the animal sanctuary grounds was not necessary, he left a voicemail message claiming that Hedgecoth was suddenly getting on a plane to Haiti and would be unavailable for two weeks. Two days later, Fleischer spotted Hedgecoth and Jordan, at a gas station near Noah's Ark. "You can't tell me what happened to more than half a million dollars in the last five years?" Fleischer asked. "Nothing has happened to over half a million dollars, except it was spent on children," Hedgecoth replied, dismissing the allegations as trumped-up claims by disgruntled former employees. Hedgecoth admitted that five of the six kids [featured on her website](#) as "children of the Ark," are her own adopted children. Fleischer asked, "Besides your adopted children, who are the children living in that home?" "There's children we have rescued from another country that are medically fragile," replied Hedgecoth. [UPDATE: Charity watchdog website issues advisory for Noah's Ark](#) "Online, you say the money you're raising is going to abused and neglected children," Fleischer asked. "Absolutely," replied Hedgecoth. "Have you ever been to Haiti?" The sixth child featured on the website is Haitian. As of last summer, [he was being adopted by Hedgecoth's daughter](#). "Putting them out there as foster kids, and people are giving them money, I mean, once you adopt them, they're your kids. It's not up to everybody else to raise your kids," said Phillips-Linger. Hedgecoth claims that she pays for 100 percent of her adopted children's expenses and lifestyle, but admitted that they all live on the tax-free property. She says it is no longer a children's home, it is her home. [The latest IRS tax return](#) for the children's home charity lists a \$950,000 building as an asset, along with \$150,000 worth of equipment. "I have never misspent one penny, not one penny," said Hedgecoth. "And I can prove it." She may have to. Georgia's secretary of state's charities division opened an investigation after Fleischer inquired about the Noah's Ark records. The state plans to investigate both charities, based on the whistleblowers' claims. After Hedgecoth's interview, Noah's Ark changed its website to specifically say that it does not take in foster children through the state of Georgia. Source: <http://www.wsbtv.com/news/news/local/ch-2-investigates-donor-deception-local-charity-ac/npPi9/>

Oregon Governor Orders Independent Review Of State's Foster Care Oversight By [Chris Lehman - N3](#) • Nov 16, 2015

Share [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Google+](#) [Email](#) Matt Howry Flickr Listen Listening... 0:00 / Oregon Governor Kate Brown wants an independent review of the state's foster care system. It comes after the Willamette Week newspaper reported that the Oregon Department of Human Services [ignored warning signs at a prominent foster care provider](#) in Portland. The problems ranged from squalid conditions to poor financial management. Brown removed the leader of the agency this month and appointed Clyde Saiki in his place. Saiki told a panel of Oregon lawmakers Monday that the agency will double down on its efforts. "This commitment is the only way we can hope to provide the best service possible and ensure the safety of our foster children," he said. "We must do better. The children of Oregon deserve no less." Saiki said he supports the governor's call for an independent review. Some lawmakers say they'll introduce legislation next year aimed at increasing transparency at the Department. Source: <http://klcc.org/post/oregon-governor-orders-independent-review-states-foster-care-oversight>

Kansas Legislators Call For Scrutiny Of Foster Care Contractors By [Andy Marso](#) • Nov 18, 2015 Share [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Google+](#) [Email](#) Wichita police officer Brian White, left, talks with Ed Klumpp, a lobbyist for several law enforcement organizations, after the two testified at a hearing on the Kansas foster care system. Credit Andy Marso / Heartland Health Monitor The Kansas Department for Children and Families announced major changes to its standards for substantiating child abuse Tuesday. But lawmakers want more reform of a privatized foster care system they say is failing to protect children. DCF Secretary Phyllis Gilmore announced that the agency will begin using a "preponderance of the evidence" as the standard for substantiating a child abuse claim rather than the more stringent "clear and convincing evidence." The change comes after the [Wichita Eagle](#) and [Topeka Capital-Journal](#) reported on children who were injured or died after multiple reports of abuse. Gilmore noted that Kansas is the only state using the "clear and convincing evidence" standard. The change will make it easier for state investigators to place people suspected of child abuse on a registry that prohibits their employment at child care facilities. The agency also added a category between unsubstantiated and substantiated — "affirmed" — that will describe cases in which abuse or neglect are believed to have happened but not to a level severe enough to bring a substantiated finding. Prosecutors seeking to bring criminal abuse charges still will have to prove guilt beyond a "reasonable doubt," and only judges can remove the custody rights of children's legal guardians. The changes were announced during a hearing of a special legislative committee formed to vet the state's foster care system. The Capital-Journal's reporting focused on Mekhi Boone, a 4-year-old Hiawatha boy who was beaten to death after DCF and one of the state's foster care contractors placed him with his father. Kaddillak Poe-Jones, a Wichita infant who died in a hot car after [the foster parents she was placed with forgot her](#), also was mentioned in Tuesday's hearing. Privatized system questioned After Gilmore's announcement, legislators suggested the foster care system still needs a deeper look. Democrats pushed for an audit of the system in July, but it narrowly failed when [five Republicans voted it down](#). At Tuesday's hearing, though, the majority party members expressed serious concerns as well. "The kind of system we've created isn't working," said Sen. Julia Lynn, a Republican from Olathe. The foster care system has been privatized since 1997, and DCF now works with two contractors, KVC Behavioral Healthcare of Olathe and St. Francis Community Services of Salina. A subcontractor, Topeka-based TFI, handled Kaddillak's case, and DCF briefly [halted new foster care placements](#) with that agency after her death last year. In recent years the state has consistently set records for the number of Kansas children in foster care, topping 6,000 last year. Rep. Willie Dove, a Republican from Bonner Springs, expressed concerns that the numbers continue to burgeon under the privatized system. Lynn said she requested information from staff about the cost to dismantle the system and have the state take over again but was told it was difficult to calculate because the Legislature never fully funded it prior to privatization. The state currently pays the contractors about \$280 million annually. Lynn said the current contracts should be heavily scrutinized before they expire in 2017. Whether DCF stays with the current companies or enlists others, she said the next contracts should require more accountability. "We need to have in place measurables for our contractors," Lynn said. State agency also scrutinized DCF also faced scrutiny from legislators and law enforcement officials as the state agency that oversees the contractors. Rep. Erin Davis, a Republican from Olathe, expressed concerns that the state was not doing enough to track the school attendance of foster children. Ed Klumpp, a lobbyist who represents several law enforcement groups, said local police and county sheriffs get little help from DCF on calls involving foster children — especially after hours. A phone line that is supposed to be staffed 24 hours a day is frequently not answered late at night, he said, and even when it is, the help that can be provided outside the Topeka area is minimal. "When you go into a law enforcement conference and mention the DCF hotline, eyes roll," Klumpp said. "We've got to fix it." He said more foster parents need to be trained in de-escalation and conflict resolution techniques, so police are called in less frequently. Gilmore said her agency is short on trained social workers. "We continue to have issues of both recruitment and retention," Gilmore said. Lynn said blame should extend to the legislative branch as well, telling the committee that the Legislature had "lost a collective will" to protect the "weakest of the weak" in the state. Her comments were echoed by Rep. Mike Kiegerl, another Olathe Republican, who submitted written remarks. Kiegerl criticized legislative leaders for granting the special foster care committee only one day of hearings, after its members requested five days. "Children are not a legislative priority," Kiegerl said, "and this committee faces an impossible task to find solutions to intractable, long-term problems which finally culminated in the horrendous death of two children." Andy Marso is a reporter for KHI News Service in Topeka, a partner in the Heartland Health Monitor team. You can reach him on Twitter [@andymarso](#). Source: <http://kcur.org/post/kansas-legislators-call-scrutiny-foster-care-contractors#stream/0>

State agency shuts down another Hutto group home By [David Barger](#) Published: November 17, 2015, 5:44 pm Updated: November 17, 2015, 5:57 pm [Click to share on Twitter \(Opens in new window\)](#) [Click to share on Google+ \(Opens in new window\)](#) [86Share on Facebook \(Opens in new window\)](#) [86Click to share on Pinterest \(Opens in new window\)](#) Related Coverage [State shuts down Hutto group home](#) [State investigation: Hutto group home had numerous violations](#) HUTTO, Texas (KXAN) — A state agency has moved to decertify and terminate its contract with the operator of a Hutto group home, after it found multiple "serious" concerns, a spokesperson said. According to Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services records, the agency received multiple complaints about Assurance Care Inc.'s home at 202 Peaceful Haven Way. The series of complaints received by DADS since July alleged problems with nursing practices, quality of care, the living environment and patients' rights. The review of Assurance Care's contract is ongoing, said agency spokesperson Cecilia Cavuto.

Larry Eweka, CEO of Assurance Care, said he disputes the concerns noted by DADS. He has appealed the agency's decision to terminate the company's Home and Community-Based Services (HCS) contract. "The allegations, that is not true," Eweka said. HCS locations are typically homes in residential neighborhoods in which services for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities are provided. The homes can house one or more people, or they can be an individual's own home. The companies operating the homes receive payment through the state, which can range from an average of about \$2,500 to more than \$5,000, depending on the type of home and services provided, according to DADS. DADS listed the following issues as "concerns" at the Peaceful Haven home. Unauthorized use of physical restraint Unsafe living environment due to not resolving home maintenance issues (no hot water, missing lights) Falsely documenting medication administration records No RN monitoring use of medications Unlicensed, untrained staff use of psychotropic drugs without calling RN for approval Eweka disputed the concerns noted by DADS and said he did not receive reports of those problems. Assurance Care took over the Peaceful Haven Way location from a different provider a few months ago, Eweka said. According to records provided by DADS, the previous operator of the home was Michael Smith, former CEO of A Step Beyond. DADS [shut down his company in June](#). Smith is also a Hutto City Council member and the city's mayor pro tem. As Eweka's appeal is pending, DADS has stopped payment for all clients at all locations under the HCS contract. Assurance Care's HCS contract includes 18 other Central Texas locations, according to DADS records. Cavuto said, if necessary, local authorities would continue to offer choices of service for clients under Assurance Care's HCS contract, so they would not be without services. KXAN first learned about issues at the location from a concerned neighbor of the Peaceful Haven home. Johnny Rushing told KXAN he has seen clients living at the Peaceful Haven location digging in the garbage outside, and he saw one patient bang his head against a window until it broke. Rushing said his children "used to play outside all the time ... now they are scared." He said he had called adult protective services and DADS about problems at the home. Cavuto said that anyone with knowledge of problems at a group home should contact both [DADS](#) and Department of Family and Protective Services. DADS, she said, has the capacity to investigate contractual obligations of service providers. DFPS, which is under [Texas Adult Protective Services](#), has the authority to investigate abuse, neglect and exploitation allegations. Source: <http://kxan.com/2015/11/17/state-agency-shuts-down-another-hutto-group-home/>

--> **Easter Seals cited for not reporting sex assault at Wilson group home** Posted 6:53 p.m. Tuesday Updated 7:10 p.m. Tuesday [image: http://wwwcache.wral.com/asset/news/local/wral_investigates/2015/11/17/15116398/215407-sloane530-640x360.jpg](#) <http://wwwcache.wral.com/presentation/v3/styles/vendor/leaflet/images/marker-icon.png> [Find News Near Me Wilson, N.C.](#) — Easter Seals UCP has been cited by state regulators after managers of a group home it operates in Wilson didn't promptly report that a resident of the home sexually assaulted another resident. The group home on Tilghman Road houses up to six men with intellectual or developmental disabilities. On July 30, a staff member suspected a 49-year-old resident of assaulting a 66-year-old man. According to a report by the state Division of Health Service Regulation, the crime was never reported to police even though the suspected assailant confessed to raping the resident repeatedly. The man told staffers when questioned that the other man "did not want to have sex" and that he "tried to fight him off and make noises." The staffer who first discovered the abuse tried repeatedly to get help, but a supervisor told her she couldn't do anything until she spoke with a regional manager and that the man didn't have any money to pay for a doctor's visit. Two days later, when the staffer said scratches were still visible on the man's back from an assault, the supervisor allowed her to take the man to an urgent care clinic, where he was turned away because it wasn't equipped to handle a rape case and because the man couldn't pay, according to the report. The staffer then took him to a hospital emergency room, where police were called. Wilson police turned their findings over to local prosecutors who, according to police, decided not to file charges because of the suspect's "mental impairment." "(District attorneys) sometimes look at the criminal justice system and realize that the criminal justice system is ill-equipped to deal with anyone with significant disabilities or limitations," said Vicki Smith, director of Disability Rights North Carolina. Smith added that locking up an intellectually disabled person isn't necessarily the answer, especially if the person doesn't realize he or she committed a crime. "Did he have the capacity to understand consent and exploitation and power?" she asked. Smith cast a harsher eye at Easter Seals. "What did the staff do? How long did this go on, and what were there response?" she asked. Easter Seals Regional Director Jean Kenefick acknowledged that "an incident" occurred at the Wilson group home that was investigated but resulted in no criminal charges, but she added state and federal confidentiality laws prohibit her from elaborating. "Easter Seals UCP's first priority is the safety and care of the people we support, and we report and respond to all allegations as required by law," Kenefick said in an email to WRAL News. "Whenever an incident like this occurs, our staff carefully follow our policies and procedures designed to protect the well-being and privacy of those individuals. Our policies and procedures align with State and Federal guidelines." The suspected assailant has been moved out of the group home, and the staffer who first reported the abuse has been fired, according to the state report. Read more at <http://www.wral.com/easter-seals-cited-for-not-reporting-sex-assault-at-wilson-group-home/15116241/#1VJHxOk1911TfC1.99>

Department of Labor orders foster care firm to pay \$218,000 in back wages and fines [Paul Giblin](#), The Republic | [azcentral.com](#) 7:47 p.m. MST November 18, 2015 Breaking news.(Photo: The Republic | [azcentral.com](#)) Story Highlights Family Support Resources to pay \$218,000 in back pay and fines for overtime violations Phoenix-based firm shorted 98 employees at 24 facilities, the Department of Labor says The U.S. Department of Labor ordered a Phoenix foster-care housing provider on Wednesday to pay more than \$218,000 in back wages, interest and fines for unpaid overtime owed to workers. Federal investigators found that Family Support Resources Inc. shorted pay to 98 workers at 24 foster-care housing facilities across metropolitan Phoenix. Family Support, based at 8037 N. 43rd Ave., provides short-term and long-term residential housing for at-risk youth. The company receives funding from the state's Department of Child Safety. Officials determined company executives wrongly classified house managers and assistant house managers, who worked primarily as caregivers, as exempt from overtime pay. As a result, Family Support did not pay the workers overtime for working more than 40 hours a week. The practice violated the Fair Labor Standards Act, according to the Labor Department. Under the terms of a consent judgment filed with the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona, Family Support and owners Larry and Alta Douglas of Glendale, agreed to pay workers \$186,222 in unpaid minimum wage and overtime back wages, and \$1,946 in interest. The employer also will pay \$30,184 in civil penalties, bringing the total in wages, interest and fines to \$218,352. Some employees will receive more than \$5,000 in back pay, said Jesus Olivares, spokesman for the Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division in Phoenix, which investigated the case. The investigation covered the period from January 2012 to January 2014, he said. Larry Douglas died Nov. 10. He was 72. His wife, Alta, was not available for comment Wednesday. Family Support provides services to address a range of needs, including substance abuse, interpersonal skills, human sexuality matters, vocational skills, behavior management and more. "It is critically important for employers to properly classify their workers," said Eric Murray, director of the Wage and Hour Division's district office in Phoenix. "Shorting workers their hard-earned wages not only harms the workers and their families, but also harms other employers who are playing by the rules," he said in a statement. "We will remain vigilant in our enforcement of a fair day's pay for a fair day's work." The investigation showed that Family Support employees often worked 45 to 50 hours a week, but only were paid for 40 hours, Olivares said. "That, unfortunately, was not the proper way to pay these employees," he said. In general, most wage investigations are prompted by complaints from employees or competitive business executives, but Olivares declined to specify what led officials to investigate Family Support. The residential-care industry has been a priority for wage enforcement the past two or three years, and officials hope the case will serve as an example for others in the sector, he said. "Many of these employees work long hours taking care of children, the elderly, the ill, disabled loved ones, but unfortunately, many times they are not getting paid the full wage that is required by federal law for the hours that they work," Olivares said. Simply paying an employee a salary does not necessarily mean the employee is ineligible for overtime, according to the agency. To qualify for an exemption, employees generally must meet certain tests regarding their job duties and be paid on a salary basis at not less than \$455 per week. Job titles do not determine exempt status, according to the agency. Federal law requires nonexempt employees be paid at least the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour, as well as time and one-half their regular rates for every hour they work beyond 40 per week. The law also requires employers to maintain accurate records of employees' wages, hours and other conditions of employment, and prohibits employers from retaliating against employees for reporting violations, according to the agency. At Family Support, both house managers and assistant house managers supervise, evaluate and monitor the work of other staff members and clients, according to the company's website. FOR MORE INFORMATION The U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division offers assistance to employers to understand and comply with federal labor laws and to ensure that workers receive all wages they have earned. Information is available at 866-487-9243 and <http://www.dol.gov/whd>. "The information they give us, it will be kept confidential, so there is no reason for employers or employees to ever doubt calling us," agency spokesman Jesus Olivares said. Source: <http://www.azcentral.com/story/money/business/2015/11/18/departement-labor-orders-foster-care-firm-pay-218000-back-wages-and-fines/76005482/>

State lawmakers told of problems in foster care By John Lyon Arkansas News Bureau john@arkansasnews.com LITTLE ROCK — Caseworkers in Arkansas' foster care system are overworked to the point that they quickly burn out, an area director for the Department of Human Services' Division of Children and Family Services told a legislative panel Wednesday. "We're putting them in an impossible situation," Lisa Jensen of Fort Smith said during a joint meeting of the Senate Children and Youth Committee and the House Aging, Children and Youth and Legislative and Military Affairs Committee. Jensen is DCFS director for an area that includes Sebastian, Crawford, Franklin, Logan, Johnson, Scott and Yell Counties. She said more 900 children are in the foster care system in those counties, nearly 600 of them in Sebastian County alone. "Any day we have 20 to 40 kids that we're looking for placement for. We have to overload foster homes in order to have beds for our children so they don't sleep in the offices at night," she said. About one-third of the children can be placed within the seven-county area, but about two-thirds typically have to be placed in other areas across the state, Jensen said. The amount of travel involved in placing children in homes means that Jensen's caseworkers are working 60-hour weeks and sometimes not getting home until midnight or the early morning hours, she said. "They're burned out because of the hours that they work," Jensen said. She told the panel the burnouts lead to high turnover, which creates more problems. "We have such a high turnover rate that the families get reassigned," Jensen said. "They get reassigned to another worker who already has 30 cases on their workload. So then they get five or 10 more because somebody left, and now they have to try to learn the whole history of that case. Every time you change a caseworker, you start over." She said it would "help tremendously" if foster homes were more plentiful, but finding homes to take children is a challenge. One difficulty is a shortage of daycare, which she said has resulted in losing some foster homes in her area. "Sometimes it's just that we're over so over-burdened we can't meet their needs," she said. "We're not able to really support them as well as we could if we had more reasonable workloads." Cassandra Scott, DCFS director for an area that includes Arkansas, Ashley, Desha, Chicot, St. Francis, Lee, Phillips, Monroe and Drew counties, told the panel of similar problems in the Delta. She said there are more than 300 children in the foster care system in her area and about 47 foster homes, so workers travel across the state placing children in homes in other areas. Cecile Blucker, state DCFS director, said there are 4,599 children in the foster care system statewide, which is up from 3,200 in July, "so we're watching that number grow." DCFS conducts between 3,000 and 3,200 child welfare investigations monthly, she said. Turnover at the division is so high that 50 percent of caseworkers were hired within the past year, Blucker said. "When you look at the complexities of the child welfare cases coupled with the inexperience of new workers, that creates some challenges," she said. A report on Arkansas' child welfare system released in July found that between January and April, 22 children spent the night in a DCFS office because of limited placement options. The report contained a number of recommendations, including adding caseworkers and supervisors. Gov. Asa Hutchinson has said he will seek legislative approval to add about 200 positions over a three-year period. Source: <http://arkansasnews.com/news/arkansas/state-lawmakers-told-problems-foster-care-system>

Phoenix House Academy is now closed for good Adult substance abuse residential treatment program to continue in-state, while teens served outside of New Hampshire By Benji Rosen Monadnock Ledger-Transcript Wednesday, November 18, 2015 (Published in print: Thursday, November 19, 2015) [Share on email](#) [Email Print](#) 0 Comments [Share on twitter](#) [Share on facebook](#) [Share on gmail](#) [More Sharing Services](#) 2 The last teen to complete Phoenix House Academy has been released and the residential treatment facility is preparing to accept 18- to 25-year-olds currently on a waiting list, according to Jayson Pratt, clinical director for the New England region. Phoenix House Academy, a three-to six-month residential treatment program for teens aged 13 to 18, officially closed on Monday. It was the last substance abuse residential treatment center for adolescents in New Hampshire. The Academy was located on the same campus as Phoenix House's adult program. The Phoenix House New England relocated the 12 beds in the program to its facility in Rhode Island, said Pratt. Starting next week, the beds on the campus in Dublin will become available for 18- to 25-year-olds, expanding the capacity of the residential program for this demographic from 32 to 44, he said. The waitlist for 18- to 25-year-olds was at nine Monday and has been as high as 20 in late October. The teenage program, in comparison, had nine beds unfilled in October when the Ledger-Transcript first reported the Academy would close. John "Jack" Wozmak, the state's drug czar, and other substance abuse prevention professionals have said close the Academy is the "right move," and that it's better to provide treatment to 18- to 25-year-olds than it is to leave beds empty. Wozmak is the senior director for substance misuse and behavioral health for the governor's office, and is overseeing the governor's efforts to fight substance abuse. To compensate for the closing of the Academy, the Phoenix House and Pratt are working hand-in-hand with Wozmak to open four intensive, outpatient treatment programs for adolescents in regions most affected by substance abuse. Pratt said Tuesday he envisions these outpatient programs opening in Keene, Manchester and two other locations in the southern and northern parts of New Hampshire. Wozmak said the most current research suggests structured, intensive outpatient programs are more beneficial than 30-day residential programs, and emphasized the importance of enrolling an adolescent in a treatment program period. If an adolescent requires residential treatment, they can receive it in a nearby state. The decision to relocate the program to a Phoenix House facility on Wallum Lake in Rhode Island was based, in part, on a dwindling number of referrals from the state. While Division of Children, Youth and Families was able to provide referrals for up to 6 of the 12 beds at the Phoenix House for adolescents, DCYF chose instead to refer teenagers to residential treatment centers for behavior health that treat comorbid, or co-occurring, disorders, said Eileen Mullen, the administrator at DCYF. Another reason for the relocation is financial — the Phoenix House was losing money on Medicaid patients. Although the Academy was the last center in the state designated solely for substance abuse, there are 24 state-certified residential treatment centers for behavioral health for youth that offer substance abuse programs, said Mullen. The facility on Wallum Lake had 11 teenage boys enrolled in the program Wednesday, none of whom are from New Hampshire, said Pratt. The program has 20 beds exclusively for boys, with plans to expand to 40 and potentially become co-ed, said Pratt. The Phoenix House New England operates treatment facilities in New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Massachusetts. In New Hampshire, the organization oversees the Phoenix House in Dublin, an outpatient treatment center in Keene and a sober living home in Northfield. Benji Rosen can be reached at 924-7172 ext. 228, or brosen@ledgertranscript.com. Follow him on Twitter [@BenjiRosenMLT](#). Source: <http://www.ledgertranscript.com/news/townbytown/wilton/19532064-95/phoenix-house-academy-is-now-closed-for-good#>

Bill Would Limit Bad Group Homes, Improve Placement Options Howard Talenfeld, Daily Business Review November 18, 2015 | [0 Comments share](#) [share on linkedin](#) [Facebook share on twitter](#) [share on google+](#) Share With Email Thank you for sharing! Your article was successfully shared with the contacts you provided. [print reprints](#) For more than 15 years since the privatization of child welfare in Florida, the Florida Department of Children and Families has contracted with lead agencies like ChildNet and Our Kids of Miami-Dade/Monroe Inc. to operate the system of care that has all too frequently relied upon substandard, dangerous group home placements, and sometimes even placements in motels, hotels, shelters or offices. Read more: <http://www.dailybusinessreview.com/id=1202742766512/Bill-Would-Limit-Bad-Group-Homes-Improve-Placement-Options#ixzz3s6CLhyvd>

Tuckahoe group home worker lied about woman's injury Michael D'Onofrio, medonofrio@lohud.com 5:57 p.m. EST November 19, 2015 Kimm Thompson (Photo: Submitted) 1 CONNECT [TWEET](#) [LINKEDIN](#) [COMMENT](#) [EMAIL](#) [MORE](#) A state worker has been convicted of a fraud charge in connection with the abuse of a disabled woman at a Tuckahoe group home, officials said. Kimm Thompson, 50, was accused — [with two other employees](#) — of injuring the developmentally disabled woman at a group home at 1A Ridge St. on Oct. 9, 2014. The three women were accused of slamming the disabled woman's foot in a van door, then lying to cover it up. The group home is operated by the state Office for People with Developmental Disabilities. Thompson, of Albany, was found guilty by a Westchester County Court jury Thursday of offering a false instrument for filing, a misdemeanor, for lying in her reports about the woman's injuries, according to the Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs, another state agency. Monsurat Dindi (Photo: Submitted) She was acquitted of a felony count of endangering the welfare of a vulnerable person. The jury failed to reach a verdict and a mistrial was declared on a second endangering count. No new trial date on that charge has not been set. Thompson was fired after the incident. She is scheduled to be sentenced on the false-instrument charge Feb. 16 and faces up to a year in jail. The two other women charged in the incident were Monsurat Dindi and Maxine Smith, both of the Bronx. Maxine Smith (Photo: Submitted) Both [pleaded guilty in White Plains in April](#) to offering a false instrument. Dindi, 54, also pleaded guilty to second-degree endangerment and was sentenced to five years probation. Smith, 44, three years probation. Source: <http://www.lohud.com/story/news/crime/2015/11/19/state-worker-lying-disabled-woman/76069716/>

How Prison Reform Could Turn the Prison-Industrial Complex Into the Treatment-Industrial Complex The private prison industry is exploiting prison reform efforts by shifting from brick-and-mortar carceral facilities to outsourced social services. By [Michelle Chen](#) [Twitter](#) Today 11:42 am [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Email Print](#) A California parolee wears a GPS tracking device on his ankle as he speaks to his parole officer. (AP Photo / Rich Pedroncelli) With one in 45 adults on probation or parole and one in 100 behind bars, America looks like a nation of captives. From a business perspective, though, it's a captive market. [Ad Policy](#) Yet prison reform is [gaining political currency](#). Both [Republican and Democratic federal and state lawmakers have sought](#) to soften sentencing

policies and reduce the overall use of incarceration in criminal policy, and to facilitate “second chances” for the formerly incarcerated as they transition into work and family life. Yet, while politicians ostensibly seek more humane alternatives to incarceration, those being released will never quite leave prison behind. Not just because individuals will bear criminal records, but because the entire prison industry has already captured their communities on the outside. Reform initiatives like rehabilitation and employment programs focus on making “corrections” less punitive. But they maintain the political framework of “redeeming” bad people, rather than dismantling antisocial systems. According to [investigative research by American Friends Service Committee](#) (AFSC), the private prison industry is exploiting prison reform efforts by shifting from brick-and-mortar carceral facilities to [outsourced social services](#). In other words, many of the dollars expected to be “saved” from shuttering prisons may simply be funneled into privatized “[alternatives to incarceration](#)” like parole programs and halfway houses. These operations are often run by the household names of the prison business—they’re simply moving from behind bars to the so-called “treatment-industrial complex.” According to AFSC’s research, the corporatization of prison reform is an outgrowth of a [long-standing trend of prison privatization](#)—corrections authorities contracting to outsource services such as food or long-distance calls home. Efforts to “decarcerate” may reduce some business for private prison companies. But carceral institutions and technology are being rebranded for the outside world and profits from these sectors appear to be on the upswing: There is growth potential in [halfway houses](#) and treatment centers—perhaps [minimally regulated](#) and financed on a per diem basis. In the pre-trial stage, there’s [demand for private probation](#) (used in poor communities to coerce people owing fees and fines for petty infractions) and [ankle-bracelet monitors](#) (shackled to thousands of detained migrants who’ve been released on bond). Most Popular 1 [What I Discovered From Interviewing Imprisoned ISIS Fighters](#) 2 [The Big Idea That Could Bring Disaffected Voters Back to the Polls](#) 3 [ISIS Wants You to Hate Muslims](#) 4 [There Is Only One Way to Destroy ISIS](#) 5 [The Crazier the Republican Candidates Sound, the More Popular They Become](#) But contrary to the rhetoric of privateers, private prison is a dirty business. Prison giants like Corrections Corporation of America are notorious for cost overruns, inadequate staff training, and abusive conditions. Meanwhile, the underlying structural injustice lies in the basic business model of profiting from oppression. The AFSC [argues](#), “The profit motive is inherently at odds with the stated purpose of ‘corrections’” because contractors “are financially dependent on the growth of supervised populations, providing a perverse incentive not to rehabilitate.” While prison alternatives are billed as “cost-efficient” compared to conventional incarceration, particularly by conservatives, Dalit Baum, director of AFSC’s Economic Activism Program, warns that “the talk about reducing costs is what got us into problem to begin with, which is privatization.” But, she adds, the [unforeseen collateral damage](#)—[recidivism](#), [abuse](#), and [economic losses for communities](#)—should serve as an object lesson that a system can’t be relied on to remedy the social ills that prison produces. GET THE LATEST NEWS AND ANALYSIS DELIVERED TO YOUR INBOX EACH MORNING [SIGN UP!](#) Ethical questions may also surround prison-related rehabilitation services. For example, many convicted on drug charges undergo mandatory regimented therapy. While treatment is favorable to strict incarceration, [radical anti-prison activists say](#) such programs, sometimes steeped in rhetoric of “personal responsibility” and self-discipline, tend to promote conformity and undermine the potential for solidaristic activism. Could imposing corporate-controlled rehab ultimately discourage the treatment population from developing an organic political consciousness? Should rehabilitation be rooted in communities, or managed by a company that prioritizes obedience over social action? Democratic governance is also eroded by the prison service industry’s invasion of the public sector, AFSC argues. If the justice system is to operate in the public interest, Baum says, “we do believe that it is the state’s authority and very, very grave responsibility to deal with the justice system, that it should not be given to the hands of profiteers.” Another area where the prison-linked industries will continue to profit is more indirect—the unique role of large corporations as a liaison between the mainstream economy and the political economy of prisons; they monopolize business within and outside the prison gates. [Consider the multinational 3M](#), maker of Post-Its and surveillance technology. An incarcerated person may be surveilled at his facility constantly by taxpayer-funded 3M tracking devices. He might manufacture [license plates in prison factories](#), which are supplied by 3M’s reflective coatings. Post-release, if he manages to pass the background check, he might land a job at a 3M warehouse, joining a workforce infamous for its links to the prison-industrial complex as well as labor and environmental violations in the mainstream economy. And both in and out of prison, the company extracts profits from commercialized social control. On principle, reducing incarceration is necessary and just. But some activists fear private-sector solutions might pervert prison reform into a neoliberal variation of convict leasing, in which industry and state collude to “redeem” society’s undesirables. If the price of “reentry” is a softer state of unfreedom, the formerly imprisoned remain bonded to a hegemony of state and corporate control. And as consumers and workers, they’re still locked into “free-market” economy that perpetuates capitalizing on repression. “Living in capitalism as we do, we often do feel like there’s very little for us to do against big corporations and big systems of control like this,” Baum says. But now that there is political momentum for a policy overhaul, “our responsibility as activists is to use this moment of opportunity in order to propose some real alternatives.” Rejecting corporate solutions, grassroots groups can work toward long-term community-led decarceration by fostering social inclusion. Community groups can champion [post-release voting](#) and [employment rights](#) or [develop restorative justice programs](#) that elevate reconciliation over harsh punishment to reduce recidivism. Although Big Business wants to capture public reinvestments in prison “alternatives,” communities recover the real social cost of mass incarceration by reclaiming the whole criminal-justice system so its policies serve the public good, not private gain. Source: <http://www.thenation.com/article/how-prison-reform-could-turn-the-prison-industrial-complex-into-the-treatment-industrial-complex/>

Pa. medical driver accused of sexually assaulting teen girl on way to hospital Medical van driver Scott Weimer, 26, of Altoona, will stand trial on charges that he sexually assaulted a troubled 13-year-old girl he was transporting to a voluntary mental health commitment in western Pennsylvania earlier this month. (screen shot/WPXI) [Print Email](#) By [John Luciew](#) | jluciew@pennlive.com The Patriot-News Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#) on November 20, 2015 at 7:02 AM If true, the allegations represent the ultimate violation: A medical driver transporting a troubled 13-year-old girl on her way to a voluntary mental health commitment stands accused of sexually assaulting the girl, [WPXI in Pittsburgh reports](#). Now the defendant, Med-Van Transport driver Scott Weimer, 26, of Altoona, will stand trial in the case. And it is not just the world of a troubled teen against the driver. WPXI reports that a police officer in Allegheny County saw the vehicle pulled over on a road around 4:30 a.m. and witnessed Weimer and the victim putting on clothing. All this, as the medical driver was taking the girl from Johnstown Hospital to Southwood Psychiatric Hospital in Upper St. Clair on a voluntary mental health commitment earlier this month, WPXI writes, adding: According to investigators, Weimer asked police if “he would be in trouble if he had sex with her in the van.” Meanwhile, the girl was described by police as being “lethargic” and “unable to care for herself” at the time. After waiving his preliminary hearing Thursday, Weimer will face charges including statutory sexual assault at trial, WPXI reports. Source: http://www.pennlive.com/news/2015/11/pa_medical_driver_accused_of_s.html

Sent to US for Drug Rehab, Puerto Ricans Endure Humiliation at Unregulated Centers Wednesday, 25 November 2015 00:00 By [Adriana Cardona-Maguigad](#), Truthout | Report font size [decrease font size](#) [increase font size](#) [Print](#) 41 Email Melissa Hernandez says she has been able to find at least 100 men and women who were sent from Puerto Rico to unregulated rehab homes. She has been able to connect some of them with certified drug addiction services in Chicago. (Photo: Bill Healy) [Do you want media that's accountable to YOU, not to corporate sponsors? Help publish journalism with real integrity and independence - click here to donate to Truthout!](#) Erick walks slowly toward a gas station on the corner of a busy intersection on the Lower West Side of Chicago. He grabs a stock of paper towels that hang from a dispenser below the windshield wipers near the gas pumps. He walks unsteadily: Every time he takes a step, he winces while placing his hands on his stomach. I ask him if he is OK, but he shakes his head “no.” As he tells me his health condition is deteriorating, he lifts his shirt to show me the scars associated with what he thinks is a bacterial infection. Erick knows who I am. I often see him panhandling at another nearby corner. [I interviewed him](#) soon after I released an investigation last April that aired on [WBEZ Chicago Public Radio](#) and [NPR's "This American Life,"](#) exposing a practice in which drug users from Puerto Rico were sent by Puerto Rican authorities to unregulated rehab centers in Chicago and other cities across the United States. Under a program called De Vuelta a la Vida run by the Puerto Rican state police and other programs run by municipal agencies in Puerto Rico, hundreds of Puerto Ricans have come to Chicago expecting to enter comprehensive, high-quality rehab centers with excellent doctors, nurses and even swimming pools. Instead they end up in unregulated, crowded homes. The places are known as “24-hour groups” - rehab homes where people struggling with addiction find themselves sharing overcrowded rooms, sleeping on dirty mattresses or on the floor, and facing routine humiliation as part of a protocol supposedly intended to keep them on the path to sobriety. People taken to these homes are required to stay there for up to 90 days and are subjected to a “tough love” approach that includes intense group therapy sessions, verbal abuse and insults from peers and “padrinos” (godparents) - the leaders of the groups. Feeling deceived by the false promises, many like Erick have left these “rehab” to venture out on the streets of an unfamiliar city. The night I saw Erick, the temperatures were dropping and a windy rainstorm was on its way. I asked whether he would rather be back in one of those rehab centers instead of being in the cold. But he quickly said no. “The way they treat you there might help others, but it doesn't help me,” he said slowly heading back to the corner

where he had been panhandling all day. Many former drug users defend the 24-hour rehab groups, arguing that the hardcore therapy, name-calling and long group sessions serve as eye-openers that in turn help them realize the damage they have caused themselves and their loved ones. But for others like Erick, the tough treatment is too much to bear, especially since many of them already have been victims of abuse, have mental health issues and have experienced trauma caused by their own addictions. And there is no denying the broken promises: People are being led to the United States for sorely needed comprehensive treatment - and presented with neglect and abuse. Connecting Drug Users to Adequate Services Melissa Hernandez volunteers her time during the week to deliver infection control supplies, food and clothes to drug users who came all the way from Puerto Rico looking for drug rehab treatment and are now living on the streets of Chicago. (Photo: Bill Healy) The stories of the Puerto Rican drug users who are still wandering the streets of predominantly Latino neighborhoods across Chicago have angered elected officials, service providers and even residents who want to establish a network of services to help this new population. One of them is Melissa Hernandez, a mother of two, dental assistant and former IV drug user who said she has been outraged ever since she first heard the story. Since May, Hernandez has been walking through Chicago neighborhoods such as Back of the Yards, Little Village and Humboldt Park, looking for drug users that were sent from Puerto Rico to the 24-hour rehab homes, aiming to assist them in finding real support. Drug users from Puerto Rico come to Chicago thinking they will get quality care, but instead end up in rehab homes with no medical professionals in sight. I met her at a Dunkin' Donuts a few months later near Humboldt Park, a largely Puerto Rican neighborhood on the city's west side. She was on the phone talking about a person who needed drug addiction services. She had a heavy pile of papers tucked inside a folder crammed with notes, telephone numbers written all over the cover. She was speaking firmly, making sure the person on the other line would respond to her request to find immediate drug rehab services for the drug user she was trying to help. Hernandez's family is from Puerto Rico, too. Although she grew up in Chicago, her Spanish has a slight Puerto Rican accent. Her warm personality makes her well-suited for the job she has set out to do: She is working to kick-start a program called the Puerto Rico Project, geared toward supporting drug users who've been sent from Puerto Rico to unregulated drug rehab homes - many of whom are now homeless. On Monday and Friday nights, she visits the places where she knows she will find her clients and delivers food, infection control materials and clothes. During the day, while her kids are in school and before her work shift begins, her outreach continues. Once she finds the men and women she is looking for, she completes an intake form, gets their full stories and connects them to services. She begins by asking how they came to hear about the program, while in Puerto Rico. "I ask them, who they talked to ... who picked them up, how long did they wait, what group they went to, what was their experience in the group, what happened to them," she said. So far she has identified about 100 men and women from Puerto Rico who are wandering the streets of Chicago while battling an addiction. But even as she tries to build a network of services for drug users, securing full access to those services has been challenging, Hernandez said. Some of the men and women she serves, she said, are stuck in the cycle of their addiction - and even when she shows up willing to take action and connect them to services, it's not always that easy. "Some guys have even said to me, 'Melissa, I am gonna be really honest with you, I am really, really sick. I am gonna try to get some money, I am gonna panhandle and once I am feeling better, I'll call you,'" she said. Being a former drug user herself, Hernandez understands how hard it is to break the cycle of addiction and endure the physical and emotional symptoms associated with quitting. She understands that people often waver over whether they want to commit to recovery. "I guess a major challenge is just going back and forth and staying on top of it, telling them that there is help and professional services," Hernandez said. Some people Hernandez meets have clearly been traumatized by their experiences at the 24-hour rehab groups. She showed me pictures of two men, one who had his eyebrows shaved and another one who had his head shaved. Both incidents happened as a form of punishment for relapsing in two different 24-hour rehab groups, Hernandez said. And there are other sad stories. "We actually had one young kid who ended up in the UIC [University of Illinois at Chicago] psych ward," she said. "He was here since August and he was led to one of these groups. He ended up leaving - they took his government documents and I guess when he ended up leaving, he couldn't find a job, he couldn't get an ID, he had nothing. He tried to kill himself, didn't know what to do. It's sad but it's a story I hear all the time." The many stories that Hernandez and I have heard are all too similar. Drug users from Puerto Rico come to Chicago thinking they will get quality care but instead end up in rehab homes with no medical professionals in sight. Many times their IDs and important documents are stolen or lost there, and once they walk out of the groups they find themselves in the streets, alone, many times in the middle of winter, without identification or prospects for work or housing, and with a strong addiction to feed. Take Manuel, a man I got to know during my initial investigation. When I met him he was panhandling in the corner of a predominantly immigrant neighborhood just two weeks after he arrived. The 24-hour rehab home he was sent to is called Segunda Vida (Second Life), and it's a dilapidated gray brick building on the South Side of Chicago. Manuel, like the other residents, had to sit through long hours of group therapy, endure insults and stomach the so-called "tough love" approach. However, after three days, he'd had enough: He walked out, alone and without his documents. Manuel was finally able to get his birth certificate, Puerto Rican ID and medical records back after I accompanied him to Segunda Vida with an audio recorder in hand and refused to leave without the papers. Manuel was sent to Chicago by the Puerto Rican police. He was suffering from a severe health condition, and he needed medicine and constant medical attention. Manuel also has serious mental health problems that have been getting worse since he arrived in Chicago. He has been arrested multiple times and complains that he is often harassed by local police who know about his addiction and don't want to see him panhandling in high-trafficked streets. Other Puerto Rican drug users in the area have similar complaints about the police. "I have been hospitalized six times due to my health issues, I have been in the psychiatric hospital three times, I have been dealing with depression," Manuel said. When he is not in jail, he lives in an empty house with six other Puerto Ricans who came to similar rehab groups and are now on the streets. "And believe me, I am afraid of the winter," he said. "There comes that white monster again." Last time I saw Manuel, he had been rushed from a halfway house where he was under house arrest with an electronic ankle monitor to an emergency room due to complications with his liver. He also spent several days under psychiatric care because he threatened to kill himself multiple times. "When I am done here, I don't want to go back to the streets, I don't want to experience what I went through last year," he told me. Looking to Puerto Rico for Answers Melissa Hernandez is kick-starting a campaign (or organization) to help Puerto Ricans who came to Chicago looking for drug rehabilitation treatment, but instead found themselves in unregulated 24-hour groups run by former addicts. (Photo: Bill Healy) Hernandez has been working closely with Illinois State Sen. William Delgado (D-2), one of the elected officials who has vowed to investigate the unregulated rehab homes and work with authorities in Puerto Rico to establish an adequate referral system for those seeking rehab services in the future. With Delgado's support, Hernandez has connected with other service providers and participated in meetings and strategy sessions to figure out how to serve the people who have been funneled into these group homes by government officials, service agencies or family members. Hernandez said she is collaborating with at least six licensed rehab agencies in Chicago, including Rincon Family Services, Haymarket, Lake Shore Hospital, New Vision and Health Care Alternative Systems. Those agencies are working with her to identify and assist drug users from Puerto Rico in need of help. "We have been fortunate to save many of these folks with our own services, despite our own deficit," Delgado said. Aside from connecting drug users to services, Delgado said he's been trying to communicate with Puerto Rican government officials, but so far it has not been an easy task. One of his main goals has been reaching out to the municipalities that he knows were involved in sending people struggling with addiction off the island. One city that has particularly caught his attention is Bayamon and its program called Nuevo Amanecer. Delgado said the mayor of Bayamon, Ramón Luis Rivera Cruz, and the director of Nuevo Amanecer, Gladys Cintron, have ignored his many requests to discuss the impact of sending drug users to unregulated rehab homes in Chicago. Many of the people who were sent to Chicago say Cintron connected them to the rehab homes; sometimes, the municipality of Bayamon pays for a one-way plane ticket to Chicago. I have made several attempts to speak with Cintron and the municipality of Bayamon about the referral strategies that are being implemented by Nuevo Amanecer. On April 24, after repeated requests, I received an email from the municipality of Bayamon stating, "The program Nuevo Amanecer only uses homes that have been certified and legally established in Puerto Rico and in the United States." The statement said that once the patients are placed in a program, they are monitored either through social networks, via telephone and or visits to the center. But some of the drug users that Hernandez or I have interviewed say Gladys Cintron sent them to the unregulated 24-hour rehab homes. Erick is one of them. Hernandez said she met with Cintron during her short visit to Chicago last October. Cintron wanted to find the drug users whom she had referred under Nuevo Amanecer and are now on the streets. She wanted to offer them a ticket back to Puerto Rico, Hernandez said. According to Cintron's Facebook page, she visited several 24-hour groups. She posted a note on Facebook saying that she toured several streets in Chicago looking for her "children," as she calls the drug users in the program. In her post, Cintron wrote that she was happy to learn that none of her "children" were living on the streets, and posted pictures of her with other men outside of some 24-hour group homes. I called her to ask about the visit, but she declined to comment, adding that she had already met with Hernandez to discuss her motives. According to the April statement from Bayamon, the municipality has sent 40 people to Chicago. In the last decade, the Puerto Rican police De Vuelta a la Vida program said it has transported 758 people to the mainland of the US for treatment. Of those, 120 were sent to Chicago. From 2007 to 2013 the municipality of Juncos said it sent 259 drug users to other cities in the US, and 56 of them were referred to Chicago.

The municipality of Caguas said it has only referred 25 people in the last three years. But service providers are skeptical about those numbers. In some parts of Puerto Rico, the practice of sending drug users off the island for treatment has been in place for years, and so far there has been no comprehensive review of those practices by any state agency or municipal organization. Senator Delgado said he has been in communication with the agency that oversees drug addiction programs in Puerto Rico, which is known as ASSMCA (Administración de Servicios de Salud Mental y Contra la Adicción), but no concrete action has yet been taken. He also said he has been in contact with Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart to further investigate what is happening on the Chicago side of the equation. "I am working with County Sheriff Tom Dart to review and to recommend any legal course of action that needs to be taken here in Chicago to assure people are not trapped in uncertified, unsafe conditions and that they have a chance to get real services to live a successful and decent life," Delgado said, adding that he is concerned about possible elements of human trafficking, welfare fraud and ID theft happening as part of the 24-hour group system. Abdon Pallasch, the director of public affairs for the Cook County Jail, didn't provide any specific details about the investigation, but said his agency is trying to identify drug users from Puerto Rico who wound up in jail for retail theft and other related small violations in hopes to fast-track them out of jail and into rehab under a new ["rocket docket" law](#). But there are some challenges when trying to identify and connect these drug users to rehabilitation services, Pallasch said. "Most of the guys aren't there long enough for us to get up and run a tally of the people who have come through the jail and have been part of the deceptive unlicensed clinic scheme, but the infrastructure is there for these guys to get the help they need if they are willing to stick with the program." Pallasch said the jail has identified eight individuals sent from Puerto Rico to Chicago group homes who have been in and out of the Cook County Jail system, costing the jail and taxpayers about \$88,000 in a period of two years. [Last May, Dart asked the federal government](#) to investigate the issue of the group homes, and filed a fraud report with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) warning that the agency could have possibly been funding De Vuelta a la Vida and Nuevo Amanecer. The 24-Hour Group Homes Persist Unregulated 24-hour group homes have existed in Chicago for decades, subjecting drug users to long hours of required group therapy and, in many cases, to insults, humiliation and mockery. Some of those groups are newer than others and some are part of larger networks - like [the International Movement of 24-hours](#), with locations in Chicago and other cities in the US and also in other countries including Mexico, Colombia, and even Spain. Other groups spring up now and then. In many cases former drug users come together to start their own rehab homes and provide a space where people struggling with addiction can eat, sleep and receive long hours of group therapy for several months. They make their own rules, borrow concepts from Alcoholics Anonymous and many times bring the tactics they've learned in other 24-hour rehab homes. The members in many of these groups take pride in their sobriety and the fact that they have helped other addicts with their addictions without the assistance and guidelines of any government agency. They survive on donations and contributions made by current and former members. Individuals who have lived and received group therapy in these group homes also said that in some cases eligible participants are taken to the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) offices to apply for a LINK (food stamps) card. The card is then used to buy food for the entire group. The persistence of these groups demonstrates the existence of a huge, largely unmet need in Chicago: accessible around-the-clock services where drug users can find shelter, food and a community of peers. Segunda Vida, the group where Manuel and many other drug users have been referred to by the Puerto Rican authorities, was founded by former members of a group called Vida, a 24-hour rehab home located across the street from an elementary school on the South Side of Chicago. In 2006, a man fatally stabbed another man with a kitchen knife at Vida during a group-counseling meeting that was going late into the night, according to a [Chicago Tribune article](#) and police records. The same news article said the perpetrator later admitted in a videotaped confession that the man he stabbed was "being overly hard on him" during the group therapy session. Shortly after that, Vida closed its doors. In addition to the stabbing incident, nearby neighbors and school officials complained to local authorities that students were being harassed by the men who lived in the building and often hung out on the corner smoking cigarettes. After Vida closed, some members continued on with Segunda Vida and others moved on to start their own groups or simply joined existing ones. Some of the Puerto Rican drug users whom I have talked to know each other well in and outside of the 24-hour groups. Many have attended the same groups in the South Side and have sat through long hours of testimony and group counseling together. They know each other's lives, their struggles, their addictions and how far they are willing to go to get drugs. The padrinos (godparents) know the lives of many drug users as well. They have been sober longer than the people they work with. They don't have formal training, and their knowledge of how to deal with addiction comes from the streets. While some group participants develop strong and long-lasting relationships with the padrinos, others complain about the padrinos berating, insulting and yelling at them. The persistence of these groups demonstrates the existence of a huge, largely unmet need in Chicago: accessible around-the-clock services where drug users can find shelter, food and a community of peers. The number of people seeking treatment - or simply seeking a place to live, as a drug user far outweighs the available resources, and people are desperate. The "tough love" approach and the long hours of group sessions used at the 24-hour groups have helped some drug users stay sober. They even hold annual events where they celebrate each other's sobriety. But others do a few months of group therapy, leave and relapse again. Recently, at a group called Blanco y Negro (Black and White) on the South Side, a man stood in front of a small crowd to share his testimony. He was wearing jeans and a bright green shirt. He was tall and handsome and had a strong Puerto Rican accent. He talked about how he lost the past 10 years of his life struggling with his heroin addiction. His testimony was full of guilt and disappointment. "I got curious and I finally tried heroin, and I ended up marrying her," he said, also discussing his experiences with homelessness and the pain he caused to his family. He said he regretted the times when he walked away from the 24-hour group, adding that regardless of the rough treatment he experiences there, Blanco y Negro is still the one place he can call home until he finally gets back on his feet. "I was doing good for a while, when I was in the group, but when I left the group whatever I acquired I tossed it in the garbage," he said, adding that God keeps telling him to stay in the group, because that's where he can truly get the spiritual strength that he needs to keep fighting his addiction. My recent investigation focused on two 24-hour rehab groups where many Puerto Ricans were being sent - Segunda Vida and El Grito Desesperado (The Desperate Scream). After being in the spotlight for a few months, Segunda Vida took its small logo down from the grimy second-floor window where it had been displayed. But the group is still up and running. Leaders have denied any mistreatment, ID theft or use of members' LINK cards. Its members said they are just a support group, providing a place where addicts can live and receive group counseling. They also said hundreds of drug users have found sobriety thanks to the group. El Grito Desesperado closed down one of its sites and is now operating in one location along Cermak Road in Chicago. That rehab group also took down its signs. The Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse said it has inspected several sites. The agency has categorized these 24-hour groups as AA support groups, saying they "are not subject to the oversight and regulations that rehabilitation and treatment facilities are. If there is a criminal allegation, that is subject to the jurisdiction of law enforcement authorities, or in the case of building code or zoning violations, subject to the jurisdiction of the City of Chicago." The statement went on to say that, "a license is required through [the division] in order to operate an addiction treatment facility." In the past, several city departments have said they don't have any jurisdiction over this matter either. In the meantime, some 24-hour rehab groups like Blanco y Negro still advertise themselves as rehabilitation centers that offer psychotherapy and treatment to Spanish-speaking people for neurosis, traumas, bipolar disorders and depression, along with addiction. And although these centers continue to use rough tactics and remain largely unregulated, they are fulfilling a shortage of treatment options available for people struggling with drug addictions. Even though drug users know they may be subject to verbal abuse and humiliation at these centers, some continue to seek them out because the doors of these rehab homes remain open at a time when many more formalized centers are inaccessible. Source: <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/33787-sent-to-us-for-drug-rehab-puerto-ricans-endure-humiliation-at-unregulated-centers>

Foster care, abuse -- Laquan McDonald's tragic life **Protesters march after shooting video released** **NEXT STORY** **Arrest in killing of Tyshawn Lee** **Text Size: [ASmall Text](#) [AMedium Text](#) [ALarge Text](#)** CNN Photos CNN (CNN) — In death, Laquan McDonald has countless defenders, people who want justice for him. They know him as the teenager in a police dashboard camera video who is seen walking away from a police officer who, in the span of 15 seconds, shoots him 16 times. [What to know: Laquan McDonald case](#) Protesters took to the streets of Chicago after police released a graphic dashcam video showing an officer shooting 17-year-old Laquan McDonald. Here is what you need to know about the case. [More](#) In death, many see Laquan as another black person killed by a cop. While an attorney for Officer Jason Van Dyke argues that his client was justified, crowds of outraged protesters chant and march. They are demanding that the right thing be done for Laquan, 17. But in life, very few people apparently protected him. Laquan was hurt over and over again by those who were closest to him, according to a timeline of his life that CNN obtained from Veronica Resa, a spokeswoman with the Illinois Department of Children & Family Services. When Laquan was 3, child welfare officials took him from his mother, Tina Hunter. DCFS found evidence to support allegations he had been neglected. Less than two weeks before Christmas in 2000, the state of Illinois was granted temporary custody of Laquan and welfare workers placed him in a foster home. Sometime in 2000, the state's child welfare department conducted an investigation into alleged abuse of Laquan happening in that foster home. The department did not provide CNN with information on the outcome of that probe, but he was removed from that foster placement. On February 19, 2001, Laquan was placed

in a relative's home. The department did not say who that person was or how he or she was related to Laquan. The boy remained in that home for barely seven months before the state moved him again on September 17, 2001, to the home of his great-grandmother. On May 8, 2002, Laquan was returned to his mother. Though spokeswoman Resa did not provide a specific reason why the mother regained custody, Resa told CNN, "DCFS's number one goal is to always try to reunite a child with a parent if at all possible." But, giving the child back to his mother resulted in more pain for Laquan. In June 2003, when he was 5 years old, the state determined that his mother's boyfriend was abusing him. Laquan had cuts, welts and bruises. Once again, Laquan was placed in a foster home. On Wednesday, CNN sought a response from Tina Hunter regarding the information that the Department of Children & Family Services provided. Attorney Michael Robbins declined to comment and said that she would not be available for any interviews. A home with his grandmother In July 2003, Laquan was sent once more to his great-grandmother's house. After five years there, she became his legal guardian in January 2008. Maybe 10-year-old Laquan had a good life then. Maybe he was still young enough that he could have started to heal. He stayed with his great-grandmother for five more years. She died in the waning days of summer in 2013. Laquan was 15. In the middle of January of the following year, he was arrested on suspicion of possessing marijuana and detained at a juvenile justice center. Ten days later, Laquan was handed back to state care, and for nearly five months he languished in that center until May 2014, when he was released and moved back in with his uncle. Two months before Officer Van Dyke shot Laquan to death on Chicago's Southwest Side in October 2014, the teen, still a ward of the state, had started attending Sullivan House, an alternative school for students aged 16 to 21, said principal Thomas Gattuso. He described Laquan as outgoing, jovial, talkative and funny. The teenager was considering playing basketball and wanted to get his life on track, Gattuso said. Laquan showed up to school everyday and demonstrated commitment to his classwork. The principal said he wasn't sure whether Laquan ever talked about his home life or his family. 'We have a tragic ending' Between Laquan's death and when the footage of his shooting was released this week, the city of Chicago agreed in April 2015 to pay \$5 million to McDonald's mother. Over the summer, freelance journalist Brandon Smith filed a lawsuit pressing the Chicago Police Department to release the dashboard camera video. A judge found in Smith's favor and ordered that the video be released by November 25. Even Chicago Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy acknowledged this week that Laquan had a very difficult life. "We have a tragic ending to -- unfortunately -- a tragic life of a young man, who was betrayed on a number of different levels," said McCarthy. On Tuesday, attorneys representing Laquan's mother and his uncle released a statement. "We [the family of Laquan McDonald] deeply appreciate the outpouring of love and support for Laquan. This is a difficult time for us. As we have said in the past, while we would prefer that the video not be released we understand that a court has ordered otherwise. "We ask for calm in Chicago," the statement continues. "No one understands the anger more than us. But if you choose to speak out, we urge you to be peaceful. Don't resort to violence in Laquan's name. Let his legacy be better than that." Source: <http://www.wdsu.com/national/foster-care-abuse-laquan-mcdonalds-tragic-life/36661426>

Town hall focuses on link between foster care, sex trafficking - Wave Newspapers Town hall focuses on link between foster care, sex trafficking November 25, 2015 Written by: [Amanda Anderson, Contributing Writer](#) U.S. Rep. Karen Bass and state Sen. Isadore Hall III were among the elected officials who spoke at a town hall meeting Nov. 21 on the exploitation of children in the foster care and child welfare systems. (Photo by Daniel Castillo) Category: [Lead Story](#), [West Edition](#) [permalink](#) Tagged under: [child prostitute](#), [county Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas](#), [Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey](#), [Los Angeles County Probation Department](#), [Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department](#), [Michelle Guymon](#), [National Foster Youth Institute](#), [Sheriff Jim McDonnell](#), [U.S. Rep Janice Hahn](#), [U.S. Rep. Karen Bass](#) [Don Wanlass](#) LOS ANGELES — The sexual exploitation and abuse of children in the child welfare system and what can be done to prevent it was discussed by elected officials and representatives of the National Foster Youth Institute Nov. 21 at a town hall meeting. U.S. Reps. Karen Bass and Janice Hahn, county Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and state Sen. Isadore Hall III took part in leading the conversation. "This is really about all underage girls and boys who are involved in sex trafficking and the majority of them happen to be in foster care," Bass said. "I think this was a critically important event to hear about what's happening in our community to girls as young as 9 years old who are involved and caught up into sex trafficking," she added. "Our basic responsibility is to make sure that every child is safe. However, nearly 60 percent of the children who were arrested on prostitution charges in Los Angeles County spent time in the foster care system. Preventing this link between foster care and sex trafficking is a key part of the conversation." The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department recently announced that it would no longer use the term "child prostitute," because young girls forced into prostitution are actually the victims of rape. County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas also spoke at the town hall meeting on the exploitation of children in the foster care and child welfare systems. (Photo by Daniel Castillo) "Our children are not for sale," Ridley-Thomas said. "Children are lured and trapped. Once they are in and are committed to the subculture of exploitation, there are deeper levels. It is a moral crisis with true consequences in the lives of these children. "I intend to do everything in my power to address this problem and help these young people leave conditions that absolutely no one should endure," Ridley-Thomas added. It is estimated that in Los Angeles County, 3,000 children are victims of trafficking. The average age for a person to enter that life is between 12 and 13 years old. Sex trafficking also has become a highly lucrative business run by many street gangs. The National Foster Youth Institute, which convened the town hall meeting at the Founder's Church of Religious Science in Koreatown, aims to reform and strengthen the child welfare system and improve outcomes for foster youth. "Real change will happen when we involve the community," said Michelle Guymon, director of child trafficking in the Los Angeles County Probation Department. The Nov. 21 meeting came the day after law enforcement officials and prosecutors met downtown to coordinate efforts aimed at reducing child sex trafficking. "With this summit and the work of our local prosecutors' offices, we want to send a clear message to human traffickers and buyers of child sex that we know they exist and we are after them," Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey said. "I hope we also send a clear message to the victims of human trafficking, who are still in bondage, that we care about them and are looking for ways to help free them." Also last week Los Angeles County Sheriff Jim McDonnell announced the formation of a human trafficking task force aimed at providing relief to the hundreds of men and women ensnared by sex traffickers each year. The unit will include personnel from the Sheriff's Department, the FBI, the District Attorney's Office and other agencies and focus on bringing stiffer prosecutions against traffickers and johns who interact with minors, McDonnell said. California is a hot spot for human trafficking. The National Human Trafficking Resource Center's hotline has received more than 2,000 reports of human trafficking cases in California since 2012, the most of any state. The hotline has received 477 reports of trafficking cases in California so far in 2015, more than twice the number reported in Texas, the state from which the hotline received its second highest number of calls. McDonnell said he hopes the task force will allow law enforcement to provide better access to relief resources for trafficking victims. Roughly 85 people from various law enforcement and social service agencies will be assigned to the task force, officials said. Bass was happy with the Nov. 21 town hall. "There are new ways for people to report abuse; there are trainings for people so that they know how to recognize [sex trafficking]," she said. "But the really good news is that we met some leaders in the community and county here who have been making some very significant gains. So now there are programs and places for people to go and there are ways for us to address this." City News Service contributed to this story. Source: <http://wavenewspapers.com/town-hall-focuses-on-link-between-foster-care-sex-trafficking/>

Authorities: Health aide had sex with boy, 17, in group home | Lights and Sirens Authorities: Health aide had sex with boy, 17, in group home November 28, 2015 | Filed in: [crime](#), [PAHOKEE](#)— A 26-year-old health care aide was arrested last weekend after she allegedly engaged in sexual activity with a 17-year-old in a group home where she was working. Authorities arrested Tykea Lasjara Alexander, of Pahokee, Saturday in connection with a sexual battery investigation that began in March. She was released the same day on \$10,000 bail. According to the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office, Alexander had sexual relations with a 17-year-old boy in a group home where she was assigned to provide care. Deputies say the boy told them he and Alexander flirted with each other for several weeks and traded text messages. But an unidentified witness told deputies he walked into the room and saw Alexander and boy having sex, a sheriff's arrest report said. When deputies spoke to Alexander, they report she denied having a sexual relationship or communicating with the teen more than once. Deputies monitored a call between Alexander and the teen, the report said. During the call, they report she admitted to deleting text messages, photos and a call log between her and the teen. Source: <http://crime.blog.palmbeachpost.com/2015/11/28/authorities-health-aide-had-sex-with-boy-17-in-group-home/>

State foster care reform ends group homes By Karen de Sá, Bay Area News Group Posted: 11/29/15, 4:58 PM PST | Updated: 4 days ago [0 Comments](#) Vowing to raise its most traumatized children in committed family homes instead of residential facilities, California will soon stop warehousing kids in group homes where they often languish for years because the foster care system has found no other place for them to live. Under a new law taking effect in January, the state's Department of Social Services will begin a multiyear plan to replace privately run group homes with "short-term residential treatment centers" where youth will mostly stay no more than six months. "In theory, and in all our hopes, this will be a revolutionary change in the way foster care operates in our state," said Kyle Sporleder, policy director for the leading foster youth advocacy group California Youth Connection. "But like with many, many large reform efforts, we all kind of have to wait with bated breath." Success of the plan — already three years in the works and now involving 25 full-time state employees

— relies heavily on finding enough family homes equipped with the skills to care for the state's most troubled youth. Will Lightbourne, director of the California Department of Social Services, is leading the reform effort backed by his department. He anticipates that the more than 5,800 foster youth now living in group homes — an alarming 1,000 for more than five years — could drop below 2,000 once the new law takes full effect. "What we have to have is children and youth nested in a family," Lightbourne said. "That has to be a core goal." Youth in group homes tend to have greater emotional and psychological needs than most foster kids. They are among the most likely children in foster care to have been moved multiple times, often with few lasting connections to family or trusted supports outside of the parade of professionals who govern their lives. The new legislation aims to treat children's specific challenges, such as trauma in youth who have been sexually exploited or the effects of clearly diagnosed mental illnesses. With indefinite stays no longer an option, social service workers will begin planning to place a child back in a family home as soon as he or she enters residential treatment. Almost \$18 million is already budgeted to expand, recruit and retain the ranks of foster parents and relatives who will receive special training and additional 24-7 support to care for youth now in group homes. An additional \$30 million ensures that relative caregivers receive the full state foster care rate. Play Current Time 0:00 / Duration Time 0:00 Remaining Time -0:00 Stream TypeLIVE Loaded: 0% Progress: 0% 00:00 Fullscreen 00:00 Mute Playback Rate 1 Subtitles subtitles off Captions captions off Chapters Chapters Foreground Background Window Font Size Text Edge Style Font Family Advertisement So far, there is widespread support for the law from Assemblyman Mark Stone, D-Scotts Valley, to eradicate group homes, from the governor to the Legislature and groups representing foster youth and the group home industry. But the plan could take years to make a difference in the lives of the roughly 62,400 children now in California's foster care system. Despite long-standing difficulty recruiting enough foster homes, the plan relies upon vast new reserves and better trained foster parents and relative caregivers who will be patient and loving enough to care for youth even through rough times when they may act aggressively or try to harm themselves. What's more, many details of the new law have yet to be finalized — such as precisely how individualized mental health care will be delivered to children in family homes. Currently, there are 333 private agencies running a total of 1,022 licensed facilities in the state for foster youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, as well as for developmentally disabled children, whose group home care will not change under the new statute. The San Jose Mercury News investigation "Drugging Our Kids" found that foster youth in group homes are the most likely to be prescribed excessive amounts of psychotropic medications, with more than half receiving court-approved prescriptions. Many of these drugs are commonly used to sedate troubled kids, often for the convenience of group homes, rather than any proven therapeutic benefit. Meanwhile, youth in group homes continue to suffer far worse outcomes than foster children raised with relatives or foster parents. Studies cited in a recent state report show they have higher rates of school dropout and arrest. Roughly two out of every three failed to attain basic proficiency in either English or math. Then, there are the emotional consequences. "If you're living in a group home, that's not a normal family, and it will give you the message, 'Maybe I don't belong in a normal family' — they're not normal situations," said Sporleder, who raised his two siblings in the foster care system. "It makes them feel like they don't belong in a family setting — that they will never fit in anywhere but an institution." Many group homes are not expected to meet the new, higher-level standards of care under Assembly Bill 403 and could go out of business. Others are expected to adapt to the new treatment requirements, or to expand their programs to offer home-based services — wrapping care and treatment around kids in family homes, rather than moving them around in search of a residential facility. Stone's legislation joins three other foster care bills taking effect in January to curb excessive use of psychotropics. The bills step up oversight, monitoring and training about drugs that are too often used for behavior management, rather than the mental illnesses for which they are designed, leaving kids to suffer debilitating side effects. "One of the biggest impacts that we're going to have on reducing the use of psychotropic drugs is getting kids out of group homes," said Stone. "Put a kid in a family, and that family is much, much less likely to resort to chemical restraints. It gets kids into situations where there is a commitment to their future." Contact Karen de Sá at 408-920-5781. Source: <http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/social-affairs/20151129/state-foster-care-reform-ends-group-homes>

Florida health care aide arrested for having sex with teen in group home: cops BY [David Boroff](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Monday, November 30, 2015, 12:06 PM A A Facebook Twitter Reddit Email 14 Comments Share Print Share this URL Palm Beach Sheriff's Office Tykea Lasjara Alexander of Pahokee allegedly flirted with the teen for several weeks and exchanged text messages with him. A 26-year-old Florida health care aide was busted for having sex with a 17-year-old boy in a group home where she was working, authorities said. Tykea Lasjara Alexander of Pahokee allegedly flirted with the teen for several weeks and exchanged text messages, [the Palm Beach Post reported](#). A witness told cops that he saw Alexander having sex with the boy, according to the paper. Alexander denied having a sexual relationship with the teen, but she admitted to deleting text messages and photos during a phone conversation with him that was monitored by cops, the newspaper reported. She was released on \$10,000 bail. dboroff@nydailynews.com Source: <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/crime/florida-health-care-aide-arrested-sex-teen-article-1.2450333>

Morgan Hill mentor to troubled youth accused of sexual battery on teen A mentor to troubled youth has been arrested for sexual battery on a teenage boy and now police want to know if there are more victims. By [Lilian Kim](#) Monday, November 30, 2015 11:18PM MORGAN HILL, Calif. (KGO) -- A mentor to troubled youth has been arrested for sexual battery on a teenage boy and now police want to know if there are more victims. Police say the suspect worked with as many as 10 kids at a time, which is why they believe more victims may be out there. Morgan Hill police say 45-year-old Patrick Dauphin has been working with kids for more than a decade. Most recently, he served as a mentor to kids on probation, which is why they say his sexual battery arrest involving a 17-year-old boy is especially disturbing. "We often times tell youth to reach out to counselors and facilitators, to be open and honest, to work through their problems and it's very disturbing that this one male juvenile did and then in the end he was a victim," said Morgan Hill police Sgt. Carson Thomas. Morgan Hill police were first contacted by the boy's parents, whose son alerted them that Dauphin inappropriately touched him. In a statement, Dauphin's employer, Unity Care, says he has since been "terminated" and that "this is the first time in the organization's 22-year history that a Unity Care employee or volunteer has been arrested for an allegation of misconduct involving youth." Marie Christy Chade, Dauphin's housemate, has known the suspect for more than six years and doesn't believe the charges. "I think somebody's out to try to hurt him. I think it's deliberately mean," Chade said. Dauphin used to care for her husband and now rents a room from her. "Very caring. You know, gives his whole heart to any of the projects, or things that he's working on," Chade said. Investigators are trying to determine if there are other victims. Anyone with information is urged to call Morgan Hill police. Source: <http://abc7news.com/news/morgan-hill-mentor-to-youth-accused-of-sexual-battery-on-teen/1104841/>

Ex-youth counselor sentenced to prison on teen sex charges Monday, November 30, 2015 - 1:59 PM Image by: Davis County Sheriff's Office FARMINGTON --- Keldon Severn Cook, 29, was booked in the Davis County Jail on three counts of forcible sodomy on Thursday, April 16, 2015. [Loretta Park Reporter](#) FARMINGTON — A former Brigham Young University-affiliated youth counselor received four prison sentences for having sex with a teenage boy in Bountiful. "What you did was not only illegal, but morally wrong," said Judge Michael Allphin at the sentencing hearing Monday, Nov. 30 for Keldon Severn Cook, 29. Cook pleaded guilty in October to one count of attempted sexual exploitation of a minor and three counts of unlawful sexual conduct with a 16- or 17-year-old, all third-degree felonies. RELATED: [Ex-youth counselor pleads guilty to Bountiful teen sex charges](#) Allphin sentenced Cook to serve four terms of up to five years at the Utah State Prison. He said the sentences could run concurrently. He gave Cook credit for time served in the Davis County Jail. A 17-year-old boy told police he had a sexual relationship with Cook, whom he met when he was 14 while attending **Especially for Youth**, according to court documents. EFY is a week-long religious seminar sponsored by the BYU Division of Continuing Education, according to the BYU website. Cook had been employed with Granite School District as an assistant cheerleading coach at Alta High School last school year, but is no longer employed with the district, officials said. Before he was sentenced Monday, Cook read a statement from a yellow-lined piece of paper. His hands shook as he unfolded the statement and he broke into tears more than once while reading it. "I'm embarrassed and ashamed," Cook read. "I'm full of regret. I'm so sorry for all the pain I've caused ... I'm humbly asking for forgiveness from all those I've hurt." Cook also said his church and BYU should not be blamed for his actions. He is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and attended BYU, where he was a cheerleader. Cook's attorney, Melanie Cook, said her client, who has no previous criminal record, "made a mistake." The attorney said Keldon Cook had plans to become a teacher "and because of this, he will not be able to go forward with those plans." She said Keldon Cook thought the age of consent was 16. Keldon Cook chose not to have a preliminary hearing or a trial because he knew "this process can be painful for the victim and the family." He also "wanted to keep it quiet and outside of the media," Melanie Cook said. Deputy Davis County Attorney Cristina Ortega said Keldon Cook met the victim at EFY in 2011. He kept in contact with the teen through Facebook and when the boy turned 16 he turned to Cook for help. "This was a young man who had some issues and the defendant took advantage of him," Ortega said. The Standard-Examiner does not publish the names of victims of sex crimes. Ortega said the victim told investigators Cook said what happened between them "was acceptable, but in

the next breath the defendant told the victim he could get into trouble.” Ortega said Cook admitted in his presentence report that he has had 30 to 40 other sexual partners and she believes Cook poses a risk to reoffend. “Your sexual activity from the time you encountered this victim until you were arrested was pretty reckless,” Allphin said, referring to the presentence report, which is a private document. Allphin also said that as he read statements written by Cook in the presentence report, “it seems you fault the young man who is the victim. I need to remind you, you are 12 years older than this young man.” You can reach reporter Loretta Park at lpark@standard.net or at 801-625-4252. Follow her on Twitter at [@LorettaParkSE](https://twitter.com/LorettaParkSE) or like her on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/LorettaParkSE). Source: <http://www.standard.net/Courts/2015/11/30/Ex-youth-counselor-sentenced-to-prison-on-teen-sex-charges>

Feds Open Investigation into Troubled Portland Foster Care Provider By [Nigel Jaquiss](#) Updated 2 days ago The federal government is investigating Portland foster care agency Give Us This Day. On Nov. 13, the Office of Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services served a sweeping [subpoena](#) on the Oregon Department of Human Services, demanding documentation of the agency's payments to Give Us This Day from Jan. 1, 2007, until now. The feds are seeking documentation of licensing, complaints and details of the care provided to each of the thousands of children Give Us This Day served. As WW [reported this fall](#), public records and former employees have long provided evidence of troubles at the foster care provider. The Oregon Department of Justice says those problems [included the theft or diversion](#) of \$2 million in the past five years, much of it by director Mary Holden. A lot of that money originally came from the feds—which is why they are asking questions now. Oregon DHS officials declined to comment. Source: <http://www.wweek.com/2015/12/02/feds-open-investigation-into-troubled-portland-foster-care-provider/>

Worthington residential center for children with behavioral problems will close | The Columbus Dispatch Worthington residential center for children with behavioral problems will close. Fred Squillante | Dispatch Resident Audrey Kaune, 17, plays Scrabble with stabilization technician LaTasha Kinlocke at the Elijah Glen Center in Worthington on Thursday. As her teenage daughter grew older and stronger, Kelly Meara was effectively housebound. Audrey's rages spared no one. “She would not leave and she attacked everyone who came in the house,” Meara said. “I had to wear a helmet.” Obtaining short-term, residential treatment for older children with severe autism and behavioral problems is often impossible for Ohio families, and Meara struggled for years before she finally found a place for 17-year-old Audrey in August. Relief was short-lived. The new, 14-bed Elijah Glen Center — the only program of its kind in central Ohio — is closing at the end of the month after being open for less than a year. Not enough families could get the insurance coverage they needed, whether through Medicaid or private plans, to pay for the care, founder Marla Root said on Thursday. The only option left for some was to relinquish custody in hopes that their county Children Services agency would pay for the residential treatment, Root said. The Elijah Glen Center, on the Worthington campus of the autism agency Step by Step Academy, charges an average of \$850 a day. Private insurers generally limit the length of stay at such centers. Medicaid pays for the medical and behavioral components of care, but not the residential part. Surrendering children to secure treatment is a terrible choice for parents, Root said. “It's scary. They didn't understand why that had to happen.” State and federal legislators know that the need for intensive behavioral-health treatment is devastating many families and triggering unnecessary child-welfare cases. According to the Public Children Services Association of Ohio, six in 10 children in the custody of county agencies in 2013 were there for reasons other than abuse or neglect. “I'm pretty down,” Root said. “We have families waiting to get in. How can it be that we're closing?” In Ohio, a joint legislative committee on multi-system youth — those who need services through more than one system, such as developmental disabilities and mental health — is to study the systemic problems and make recommendations for improving care. And at the federal level, advocates say, legislation could soon be introduced in Congress that would allow federal foster-care money to be used to help families who are at risk of relinquishing custody to get treatment for their children. “Residential treatment for children with behavioral health conditions is important but expensive,” said Mark Mecum, executive director of the Ohio Association of Child Caring Agencies. “The family is often on the hook.” Root went through the nightmare with her son Elijah, now 19 and the center's namesake. He is 6-foot-8, has severe autism and went through a period of aggressive behavior. Because there was no crisis-residential program available, Elijah had to be treated at a state developmental center geared toward adults with developmental disabilities. He now lives in a group home. Even when insurance coverage does work out, options are scant. “The need is so great, but there are no places,” Meara said. “There are even fewer who take adolescents who are in this type of crisis.” Her family's insurance company stopped paying for Audrey's residential treatment at the beginning of November. Because the teen, who initially was hospitalized at Nationwide Children's Hospital, still needed more help, Meara recently made the difficult choice to surrender custody to Franklin County Children Services. The decision feels more bitter now. The agency has been helpful, Meara said, but has the authority to determine Audrey's placement — possibly in another county or state — after the Elijah Glen Center closes. “We had found this help, and it's being taken away, and it's just stunning,” said Meara, who lives on the Far North Side, just 4 miles from the center. “I just don't know what to say.” Audrey doesn't mean to cause anguish for her family and two younger brothers, her mother knows. The girl can't easily convey her feelings. “It's like a very primitive way to express her unhappiness,” Meara said of the outbursts. “I know she's not doing it on purpose. I know that.” But that doesn't make it any easier for the Mearas, and many other families, to manage sometimes-violent teens at home. “Our boys know, when Audrey gets upset, that they run to their rooms and lock the door,” she said. “So much of the focus goes to her.” prince@dispatch.com Source: <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2015/12/03/elijah-glen-autism-center.html>

Program at Long Beach Unified aims to keep children out of juvenile hall, probation camps By [Sarah Favot](#), Los Angeles Daily News Posted: 12/06/15, 5:02 PM PST | Updated: 9 hrs ago [#Comments](#) The Los Angeles County Department of Probation has launched an educational program for Long Beach Unified School District students who are on probation or at risk of entering the system at Beach High School. A Juvenile Day Reporting Center operated by the probation department opened in September. The partnership is set to be formalized Tuesday by the Board of Supervisors via a memorandum of understanding between Long Beach Unified and the probation department. The program is an alternative for children who might be placed in juvenile hall, a group home or camp. Probation Department Deputy Chief Reaver Bingham said the students receive programming that is tailored to them and includes academic study, cognitive behavioral therapy, pro-social behavior training and mental health services. After school they receive drug counseling and life skills training from the Probation Department and attend field trips on Fridays. The program is designed for 25 to 30 students. About 12 students are now enrolled. Rather than moving from classroom to classroom, as is the case in a traditional high school setting, the students are taught in the same room by the same teacher for the entire day. Bingham said this allows students to be more focused. A probation officer also supervises the classroom. Each student is provided transportation to and from school, as students can encounter problems with law enforcement when they skip out on school. “These are kids that never went to school or hardly ever went to school who now come to school on a daily basis because they have no choice,” said Hania Bocklen, who runs the program for the Probation Department. The students also have exhibited behavioral problems, she said. “They're considered medium- to high-risk, but in reality they're just kids,” Bocklen said. “I call them my kids. They're super awesome kids.” Bingham said the program is geared toward prevention because many of these students are at-risk for re-offending. “Our desire is to curb or stem that trajectory,” he said. Ultimately, the goal is to move these students back into a traditional high school setting, Bingham said. Many of the students need to make up for credits they've lost. The program can also be for youths who are not on formal probation but who can enter the program through an agreement with the child's parents and the school district. Advertisement Probation Chief Jerry Powers said in a memo to the supervisors that the program is in compliance with a federal Justice Department settlement that requires the department to provide community-based treatment services rather than rely on juvenile halls, group homes and camps. Bingham said similar programs operate in East Los Angeles, at Lynwood High School and through an after-school program at the Zev Yaroslavsky San Fernando Valley Family Support Center in Van Nuys. Bocklen praised the district for providing the classroom space, a teacher and lunches for the students. The agreement between the county and the school district is nonfinancial. A spokesman for Long Beach Unified did not respond to several requests for comment. Source: <http://www.dailynews.com/general-news/20151206/program-at-long-beach-unified-aims-to-keep-children-out-of-juvenile-hall-probation-camps>

Richland County Sheriff's Department Should End Programs That Humiliate Children Plus: Muschamp ... Really? By [Free Times Readers](#) Wednesday, December 9, 2015 14 Share 0 Tweet 0 Share 0 Pin 0 Share 0 Mail 0 Share The video of a Spring Valley school resource officer grabbing a student, flipping her desk over and dragging her across the room led to nationwide outrage and to the termination of the officer. But this video is troubling not only because of the way that the officer brutally assaulted a helpless student but also because it is the tip of the iceberg in terms of the ways that the Richland County Sheriff's department treats children. While Richland County's school resource officer program has rightfully come under fire and is currently under federal investigation, there has been less attention placed on the other questionable programs within the department's Youth Services Division. Richland County has pioneered several “diversion programs” that claim to help troubled pre-teens and teens but in effect punish, humiliate and harm children. One of these programs is Camp

L.O.T.T., which stands for “Leading Our Troubled Teens” but also happens to be the last of name of Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott. Local news footage of the boot camp shows several Richland County deputies verbally assaulting and humiliating a group of boys — almost all African-American — until some of the boys are clearly shaken and distraught. Another youth program within the department is known as R.E.A.D.Y. (Richland County Educating And Detering Youth) highlighted in the A&E television program Beyond Scared Straight. In this program, parents pay a \$10 fee to have their children — some as young as 11 — transported in shackles, suited in a prison jumpsuit, and locked in an adult holding cell for the night. Like Camp L.O.T.T., the purported goal of the R.E.A.D.Y. program is to scare children into curbing behaviors that may land them in jail in the future. By stationing its officers in Richland County schools, the sheriff’s department helps create a perverse demand for its programs. Often after a school resource officer arrests a student for a low-level offense in the school, the departments offers the student an opportunity to participate in its scared straight program in lieu of pressing charges. While the sheriff’s department may intend to help troubled youth, humiliating and terrifying them is not the way to help them. Extensive research has shown that boot camps and scared-straight programs are the least effective programs in preventing crime. In fact, several studies have found that sending children to boot camps and scared straight programs actually increases the likelihood that they will have future involvement with justice system. Instead of operating these harmful and ineffective programs, the Richland County Sheriff’s Department should partner with proven programs in schools and communities that successfully divert young people from the court system and help them grow into successful and law-abiding adults. Effective community-based programs hold students accountable for their actions while also teaching them to resolve conflicts and contribute to their communities. Restorative justice, teen courts and mentoring programs are much better alternatives to police in schools, boot camps and scared-straight programs. In order to prevent more incidents like the one at Spring Valley High School, Richland County should remove police officers from its schools and prioritize investing in community programs that work to keep kids, schools and communities safe. Mishi Faruquee National Field Director, Youth First Initiative New York Muschamp ... Really? Please say it ain’t so, Gamecock Nation. Our esteemed athletics director had 60 days and a near-unlimited budget to find a new Head Ball Coach, and the best he could do is find another Florida hand-me-down? Really? Muschamp is young, energetic and full of defensive acumen — but he also could not win consistently in a state with some of the best football talent in the country and was summarily fired by Florida barely two years ago for not being able to win the big game. Is this what Carolina needs to rebuild its dilapidated program? I fear time will prove Ray Tanner should have stuck to coaching baseball where he knew how to produce winners, and that University of Houston Coach Tom Herman was indeed worth whatever it would have taken to secure him — and will always be the big fish that got away. Oscar Ott
Columbia Source: <http://www.free-times.com/news/richland-county-sheriffs-department-end-programs-humiliate-children-120915/>

New Report Shines A Light Into The Charter School Black Box Charter schools are now the most rapidly growing form of schools in the nation’s education system, but [surveys show](#) Americans generally don’t understand what charters are even if they tend to favor them. Are these schools public? Are they private? Who really runs these schools, and how do they take in and spend money? According to [charter industry reports](#), more than 500 new public charter schools opened during the 2014-15 school year enrolling an estimated 348,000 additional students, representing a four percent growth in the number of operating public charter schools and 14 percent growth in public charter school students. There are now more than 6,700 public charter schools enrolling about 2.9 million students nationwide. But [in-depth investigations](#) conducted in communities where these schools proliferate find that government officials who have to deal with the impact of charters generally are perplexed about the “business model” driving these schools. And public school parents who send their children to these schools generally know very little about the financial machinations that support the schools’ operations and staffing. So little is known about how charter schools are organized and operated that they’re often referred to as a “black box.” A new [policy brief](#) from the National Education Policy Center pries at the lid of the charter school black box to shine a light into these institutions and reveal how charter schools blur the line from what it means to be a “public school” and, by their very design, expand opportunities to profiteer from public tax dollars and privatize public assets. The brief “The Business of Charter Schooling: Understanding the Policies that Charter Operators Use for Financial Benefit” delves into the many ways the design of charter schools complicates any analysis of the flow of money into and out of these schools. The authors Bruce Baker and Gary Miron — university professors from Rutgers and Eastern Michigan, respectively — detail how the very structure of the charter school business introduces new actors into public education who skim money from the system without returning any benefit to students and taxpayers. In one of the more bizarre schemes the authors examine, charter operators will use third-party corporations to purchase buildings and land from the public school district itself, so taxpayer dollars are used to purchase property from the public. Thus, the public ends up paying twice for the school, and the property becomes an asset of a private corporation. In other examples, charter operators will set up leasing agreements and lucrative management fees between multiple entities that end up extracting resources, which might otherwise be dedicated to direct services for children. These arrangements, and many others documented in the brief, constitute a rapidly expanding parallel school system in America, populated with enterprises and individuals who work in secret to suck money out of public education. Charter Schools Aren’t Really ‘Public Schools’ The first secret of charter schools that keeps their financial workings hidden and their funding prone to exploitation is that they aren’t really public schools, despite what charter advocates say. As Baker and Miron explain, charters generally aren’t subject to the same disclosure laws that apply to state operated entities and public officials, especially when the governance bodies for these schools outsource management services to for-profit management firms, as is increasingly the case. As the brief explains, outsourcing school operations to private entities has the potential to make transparency laws — for open meetings, public access to records, and financial disclosures by public officials and state operated institutions — subject to court interpretation. Courts across states have offered mixed opinions as to whether and to what extent to apply transparency laws to charter schools, their authorizers, operators, and governing boards. Further, the public-private arrangement of charter schools often place new limits on the constitutional (and some statutory) protections that are customarily guaranteed to school employees and students in state operated institutions. These important differences between charter schools and traditional public schools are not generally understood or appreciated by even the most knowledgeable people, which is why charter advocates put so much energy and resources in [marketing their operations](#) as “public” schools. How The Charter School Gravy Train Works Just as the complexity of public-private governance emerging in the charter sector complicates analysis of these organizations’ legal rights and responsibilities, it also complicates analysis of how money flows into and out of these schools. Because education management organizations do not report relevant, detailed, and comprehensive expenditures in the same format or with comparable documentation as public districts, charter operations can spend money in ways that would generally be impermissible in public institutions. The types of controversial expenditures in charter schools — what the NEPC brief calls “excess costs” — include bloated executive salaries, wildly inflated administrative fees, acquisitions and transfers of buildings and property, and “asset hoarding” where school supplies and materials purchased with public tax dollars are retained in private holdings. Most troubling of the charter school excess costs documented in the brief are the various forms of financial arrangements that steer vast sums of public money designated for education to private investors and their firms. In one such financial arrangement, charter operators will use independent, though often closely affiliated, private nonprofit or for-profit entities to acquire long-term debt that ultimately must be paid for by the public. In these arrangements, the third party entity repays investors by charging the charter operator exorbitant lease payments — a cost that is ultimately charged back to the public taxpayer. Yet, this lease payment, the brief notes, “doesn’t need to be approved by local taxpayers.” This arrangement also leads to excess debt service expenses where financial transaction and loan interest costs divert money that had been used for education into the financial industry. Remarkably, the brief notes, these debts generally will not mature until after the year 2040, way beyond when the authorization of most charters will have to be renewed. In another questionable financial scheme, taxpayer funds are used, without voter approval, to purchase a property from the taxpayers themselves, for someone else — the charter school operator or the education management company. In other words, “the taxpayers are buying the facility a second time, albeit from themselves, but the result is that these taxpayers will no longer own it. Worse, in the process of transferring the property, taxpayer dollars have subsidized substantial fees and interest to various parties. The icing on the cake is that the federal government has spent federal taxpayer dollars to stimulate these transactions.” As Charters Gain Financially, Students And Schools Lose Educationally In addition to their financial wheeling and dealing, charter schools also “enhance revenues,” as the authors phrase it, by engaging in practices public schools would never get away with. “Some charter schools have been found to condition continued student enrollment on parent volunteer activities,” the brief documents. “Others have been found to charge exorbitant fines for student disciplinary infractions.” Charters also frequently engage in a “head count” game in which they inflate enrollments before a cut-off date in the fall and then retain money given to them by the district as students dis-enroll from the charter throughout the rest of the school year. Another revenue enhancement strategy frequently employed by charters is to avoid serving children with more severe, more costly disabilities. After charters have tapped all revenue enhancements related to students and parents, they go after teacher salaries and benefits. The brief documents how charter chains, such as KIPP, slash teacher personnel costs at the same time they spend more than what comparable public schools in their communities spend. Another charter chain, Harmony, cuts teacher expenses to

spend considerably more on the operating costs of the schools than what comparable public schools spend. Often, these lower personnel costs are accomplished by keeping a relatively inexperienced staff of teachers who frequently leave the school and are replaced by other low-cost, inexperienced teachers. Why Are We Doing This? What emerges from these revelations should be deeply concerning to government officials, public policy makers, charter school lobbyists, and others who advocate for more expansion of the charter sector. As the authors state, a "substantial share of public expenditure intended for the delivery of direct educational services to children is being extracted inadvertently or intentionally for personal or business financial gain, creating substantial inefficiencies." The outright unlawful costs of charter schools to the public are not a trivial matter. A recent [report](#) from the Center for Popular Democracy and the Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools uncovered over \$200 million in "alleged and confirmed financial fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement" committed by charter schools around the country. Authors of the report called their findings the "tip of the iceberg," because much of the fraud goes undetected. Reports of charter schools financial misconduct are now so numerous that it seems every day brings a new revelation of how these schools misappropriate and misspend public money. However, many of the financial arrangements and business opportunities discussed in the NEPC brief are legally permissible and entirely understandable from the point-of-view of charter schools and their operators. States and authorizers have given these institutions permission to do this. But authors of the brief ask us to consider whether "that which is legal is not necessarily ethical, or in support of the public interest." While charter schools can claim to be doing "a reasonably good job of satisfying parents and students," the authors contend, the academic results of these schools are mixed at best, and there is considerable evidence charter schools have acted to further racial segregation and privatization of our education system. Given their findings, Baker and Miron argue that as these public-private relationships have become increasingly complex and opaque, state charter laws have failed to keep pace. They propose reasonable recommendations for revisions of laws and financial reporting requirements and a tightening of the regulatory provisions for these schools. These revelations and the recommendations they lead the authors to constitute an invaluable service to all who care about our children's education. Source:

<http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/new-report-shines-a-light-into-the-charter-school-black-box/>

Foster parents 'were let down by back-up services' [0 Comments](#) CHILDREN'S Services did not offer enough support to foster parents and did not investigate concerns raised about children in care, a former foster carer has said. The woman, who was referred to as Miss B, told the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry that she fostered children for several years in the 1990s and early 2000s, but often felt unsupported by Children's Services. She said she raised concerns about some of the children's behaviour, but that nothing ever seemed to be done. Miss B was jailed in 2010 after being convicted of perjury and perverting the course of justice for tipping off a man accused of abusing one of the children – known as child A – in her care that the police were investigating him. However, during the hearing yesterday she continued to deny that she had tipped off the man, who was jailed for two years for sexual abuse of child A. Source:

<http://jerseyeveningpost.com/news/2015/12/08/foster-parents-were-let-down-by-back-up-services/>

Nurse describes harsh conditions inside group home before fire 1 day ago December 09, 2015 Dec 9, 2015 Wednesday, December 09 2015 Wednesday, December 09, 2015 10:31:08 PM CST in [News](#) Source: WBRZ By: [Trev Schmalz](#) Share: BATON ROUGE - A nurse described disturbing living conditions of people who were burned out of their group home earlier this week. The woman, who asked not to be identified, said people were barely being treated as human beings in apartment units in the 600 block of Donmoor. The apartment was rented out from its owner by an independent living agency. The agency's owner is identified as Cynthia Jackson on state business filings. "People's lives are in her hands, and obviously one has definitely slipped through the cracks," the woman, a nurse, said in an interview with WBRZ reporter [Brett Buffington](#) Wednesday night. On TV, the woman's face was hidden and her voice disguised since she worked as a home health nurse at the apartment complex. Lenard Grimes, a resident, died in a fire at the apartment complex Tuesday morning. Another person was severely injured. A [previous WBRZ Investigative Unit report](#) about the blaze uncovered fire officials also had concerns with the property. Inspectors found fire code violations and even questioned the conditions of the people who resided at the facility. "Codes for independent assisted living must be further researched," an inspector wrote in a violation report. The whistle blower interviewed on TV said there was a careless mentality about patient care. "I brought up my concerns several times... it was just discounted," she said. The woman claims people were living in cramped, one bedroom apartments and said sometimes, air conditioning was not working. The woman stopped seeing patients at the property before the fire but said she wanted to talk about what she felt were harsh conditions in the hopes of prompting some sort of high-level investigation. The fire department has not released a cause of the fire. Source:

<http://www.wbrz.com/news/nurse-describes-harsh-conditions-inside-group-home-before-fire/>

Grand Jury Indicts Unlicensed Care-Home Group In all, nine people face 53 charges in the running of about a dozen Snellville-area homes. Snellville, GA By [Doug Gross \(Patch Staff\)](#) December 11, 2015 [ShareTweetGoogle PlusRedditEmailComments](#) A Gwinnett County grand jury has handed down a 21-page indictment against nine people accused of running a ring of unlicensed personal-care homes. The homes were exposed in a [December 2 raid by Gwinnett County Police](#) and other law-enforcement agencies. Authorities say they discovered 12 homes in the Snellville area where people with a range of physical and mental illnesses were being housed. The residents often were receiving poor care, according to police, and in many cases were being forced to sign over their Social Security and other government benefits directly to the people running the homes. In all, nine people face 53 exploitation charges in the case. An attorney for the defendants [told the Gwinnett Daily Post](#) that the case is a "witch hunt." "I've already been receiving calls from people who have multiple family members in one of these facilities or have had them in the past, saying 'What can we do to help them out because they were great with my family?'" lawyer Jack Harrell said to the paper, after filing bond requests at the Gwinnett County Courthouse. Harrell said the homes were primarily run by Donovan Ricardo Coward and his mother, Dawn Cicelia Walker. He said they never intended to meet the strict standards of a personal-care facility, but instead were trying to run boarding houses for people who couldn't afford more upscale options. The December 2 operation stemmed from a May domestic-dispute call at one home, at 4126 Wrexham Dr. in Snellville. There had been an "extensive call history" at the home for medical and domestic issues and code violations and authorities began suspecting it was being run as an unlicensed care facility. Two suspects at that home [were charged with neglect of an elderly person](#) and the investigation that followed revealed other homes and suspects. Numerous people suffering from a range of mental and physical illnesses were being housed in the homes, according to the indictment. Police said the victims "are living in unsafe and unsupervised conditions and some have a diminished mental capacity." In addition to Coward and Walker, the people charged in the case are William J. Walker, Neonard Precious Kumassah, Sasha Chantel Alphonso, Stefani Amoi Walker, Yulanda Natasha Walsh and Reggie Benard McKenzie and Jacqueline Pamela Mitchell, who has not been arrested. Source:

<http://patch.com/georgia/snellville/grand-jury-indicts-unlicensed-care-home-group-0>

Report blasts Goshen group home, state agency over disabled teen's death Comment 2 By Associated Press recordonline.com By Associated Press Posted Dec. 14, 2015 at 3:30 PM Updated Dec 14, 2015 at 3:51 PM By Associated Press Posted Dec. 14, 2015 at 3:30 PM Updated Dec 14, 2015 at 3:51 PM Zoom » Social News By Associated Press Posted Dec. 14, 2015 at 3:30 PM Updated Dec 14, 2015 at 3:51 PM ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — A mentally disabled teenager who died while under state care in 2013 writhed in excruciating pain for months when a doctor ignored his rejection of a stomach feeding tube, according to a watchdog group that faulted the state's oversight agency for not substantiating neglect in the case. Disability Rights New York, which has the federal authority to oversee such care in the state, issued a highly critical report that was provided to The Associated Press before its release Monday. The report calls for a new investigation by the state's Justice Center, established two years ago to protect the 1 million disabled, addicted, mentally ill and young people in state care. The report underscores what other advocates for the disabled said of the Justice Center when the AP reported in October that its investigations have rarely resulted in criminal charges. The agency has received more than 25,000 allegations of abuse and neglect by caretakers since 2014, substantiated about 7,000 of them, with just 169 cases — or less than 2.5 percent — resulting in criminal charges. According to the Disability Rights report released Monday, the autistic, severely mentally disabled 18-year-old, identified as "M.H.," was being cared for at Dominican Hall in the Hudson Valley town of Goshen. It said the teen had been fed through a stomach tube that he became unable to tolerate in late 2012, leading to "consistent and excruciating pain" almost daily for about eight months. The facility's doctor, identified in the report only as "Dr. P," continued the same "ineffective" treatment and didn't assess him for three months before his death from peritonitis and sepsis at a hospital after a new tube attached to his intestine was inadvertently removed. The report said the Justice Center, which investigated the case, failed to substantiate neglect, didn't prevent the doctor from putting other vulnerable patients at risk and justified its inaction with a legalistic "smoke screen" by claiming it lacked jurisdiction for most of that time period despite having inherited the authority of its predecessor agency. The Justice Center said the teen's case largely predated its purview, which began when it became operational on June 30, 2013. M.H. was hospitalized shortly before that, and he died four days later. "We have no idea why the concepts of time and space did not figure into this organization's report," Justice Center spokeswoman Diane Ward said. The state agency said in a statement that it did a thorough investigation and concluded M.H.'s medical care "appeared to be inadequate and inappropriate"

by the group home's and two hospitals' doctors but that it didn't empower the Justice Center to substantiate abuse or neglect. The operator of the group home, Catholic social services agency Saint Dominic's Hall, said in a formal response that it disagreed with the report's findings and called M.H.'s death "tragic" but referred back to the Justice Center investigation. Saint Dominic's Home President Judith Kydon did not return calls to The Associated Press seeking further comment. Disability Rights' investigation, which included interviews with current and former Dominican Hall staff, found administrators failed to sufficiently supervise medical services, nurses and that other staff repeatedly reported frustration with the doctor's lack of accountability. It also said the staff reported being verbally reprimanded by the director for reporting concerns and felt their jobs were in jeopardy. Disability Rights said all failed to report neglect allegations to the state as required, which could have saved M.H.'s life, and they weren't pursued until after he died. Organizations like Disability Rights operate under federal authority in all 50 states and U.S. territories. The legal services group has federal funding and offices in Brooklyn, Albany and Rochester, with lawyers and advocates who provide free services to protect the interests of people with disabilities and ensure they aren't abused, neglected or subjected to unlawful discrimination. Source: <http://www.recordonline.com/article/20151214/NEWS/151219687>

Drugging Our Kids: California courts step up scrutiny of foster care use of psychiatric drugs By Karen de Sá kdesa@mercurynews.com Posted: 12/15/2015 11:19:07 AM PST [2 Comments](#) Updated: 12/16/2015 04:43:56 PM PST Driven by new legislation and a motivation to create more meaningful oversight, California's courts are calling for far more justification before judges authorize the use of powerful psychiatric drugs that are now too freely prescribed to foster children. The state's juvenile court judges have long had the responsibility for signing off on those prescriptions, but too often they fail to question requests for multiple medications at once, unapproved drugs and unproven regimens for very young children. The proposed new rules aim to turn these often blanket approvals into serious probing of prescribers and others who care for foster children, from social workers to foster parents and legal advocates. Sacramento Superior Court Judge Jerilyn Borack, who presides in juvenile court and helped craft the new rules, said the goal is to have judges approve medications for a foster child "as if this was their own child." The new procedures represent the first and most significant statewide response yet to a package of bills signed into law late last year by Gov. Jerry Brown to curb rampant use of psychiatric drugs in foster care. The problem received far-reaching response after "Drugging Our Kids," this newspaper's 2014 investigative series. Advertisement The newspaper found the foster care system often depends on antipsychotics and other mind-altering medications to manage children's behavior, not to address rare mental illnesses they are designed to treat. Under the new proposals, judges will probe deeper into a child's overall mental health care: If nondrug therapies have not been tried, why not? How are the medications expected to improve the child's condition? How is their sleep, and ability to engage in school? And, in a nod to children's rights to refuse the drugs: Did the child take the medication willingly, or was it a struggle? Indeed for the first time, children's input -- no matter their age -- would become more central to the courts' decisions. Children would not have to fill out forms. They could draw a picture, talk to an advocate, even speak to the judge directly about how they felt on psychotropics, and whether side effects could be overshadowing potential therapeutic gain. The current forms have "a lot of check boxes, and a lot of teeny-tiny lines that doctors may or may not write on, and we didn't feel that met the requirements of the new law," Borack said. "If we just give them a check box we are telling them we don't need much more than a yes or no." In contrast, she added, the expanded forms "will be a way to evidence how little information some of us got in the past, and how that is no longer adequate. The doctors say, 'Well, I'm the doctor. Just trust me and sign off on it.' " The public has until Jan. 22 to comment on the new proposed rules and forms now posted on the website of the Judicial Council of California, the policymaking body of the state's courts. A final decision will be made April 15, after a series of public meetings, with the new rules taking effect in July. California is unique in the nation for requiring juvenile court approval of all psychotropics prescribed to foster children. But in many counties, the approvals rarely provide a meaningful review of whether medications are appropriate or even safe. Doctors fail to fill out medication requests completely, and judges often approve medications they know very little about in terms of why they are needed and how they may be helping -- or harming -- the children. This newspaper found that over the past decade, almost 1 in every 4 teens in foster care receives psych meds, the majority prescribed the most powerful and untested variety, antipsychotics. Many of these drugs leave youths suffering from obesity, diabetes, uncontrollable tremors and severe lethargy while failing to treat the true causes of their emotional difficulties. The new court rules follow some of the provisions of Senate Bill 238, one of three new laws taking effect in January to better protect foster youths from unsafe medications. A fourth bill, requiring even more of the courts and physicians, did not pass this year but is set to be reintroduced next month. Under the new rules, doctors could no longer prescribe one drug after another with no explanation of whether they worked. They would be required to discuss specifically whether prescriptions alleviated symptoms. Social workers and probation officers would have to state specifically, in the next six months, what types of therapies "other than medication" the child is enrolled in. Critique of the proposals is expected to grow, as word gets out to physicians, caseworkers and others that they will be asked to do more to justify medications, as well as fill out more paperwork. Mark Edelstein, medical director of EMQ FamiliesFirst, a Campbell-based nonprofit providing mental health services to foster children, said that although he agrees with most of the Judicial Council's recommendations, he is concerned that forms for doctors will double in length from three to six pages. "Child psychiatrists are already in short supply, and requiring even more paperwork would give them less time to provide direct clinical care to foster youth, an already underserved population," Edelstein said. "This kind of administrative burden drives good doctors out of the public sector." But retired longtime Los Angeles juvenile court Judge Terry Friedman -- the architect of the 1999 California system that requires court approval for all psychotropic prescriptions to foster youths -- called the changes "realistic, balanced and smart." Together, Friedman added, "they will save countless kids from unnecessary and excessive medication while assuring that foster youth receive the drugs they truly need." State Sen. Holly Mitchell, D-Los Angeles, who authored the bill requiring the court changes, said in an emailed statement that necessary care should not be impeded through "red tape." But she remains hopeful that more accountability "will halt the practice of medicating for convenience the foster children we are supposed to protect and nourish." Contact Karen de Sá at 408-920-5781. Source: http://www.contracostatimes.com/breaking-news/ci_29256188/california-courts-propose-stepped-up-oversight-psychotropics-prescribed

UPDATE: Richland juvenile home official charged with sex with teen Juvenile home administrator charged with custodial sexual misconduct Mindi M. Stoker of Pasco allegedly had sexual relationship with 18-year-old felon Stoker pleaded innocent, released on \$20,000 bail The Twin Rivers Community Facility on McMurray Street in Richland, shown here in 1998, is for juvenile felony offenders who are transitioning back into the community. File Tri-City Herald i By Ty Beaver beaver@tricityherald.com [LinkedIn](#) [Google+](#) [Pinterest](#) [Reddit](#) [Print](#) [Order Reprint of this Story](#) The acting administrator at a home for juvenile felony offenders in Richland is charged with having sex at least once with an 18-year-old felon housed there. Mindi M. Stoker, 38, of Pasco, pleaded innocent Monday to one count each of first- and second-degree custodial sexual misconduct with the young offender. Investigators said she allegedly kept a "To do" list on her cellphone of the sexual experiences she wanted to have with the teen. The list also included helping the 18-year-old get back his gun rights and having his criminal record sealed. Stoker was released Monday from the Benton County jail after posting a bond on \$20,000 bail. She works at the Twin Rivers Community Facility, which helps offenders sentenced as juveniles to transition back into society toward the end of their sentences. A release from the state Department of Social and Health Services, which operates Twin Rivers through its Rehabilitation Administration, said Stoker has been placed on alternative assignment until an internal investigation is finished. "This is inexcusable for any of our staff, and especially intolerable for someone in a position of authority," said Assistant Secretary John Clayton. This is inexcusable for any of our staff, and especially intolerable for someone in a position of authority. John Clayton, state Department of Social and Health Services Twin Rivers is one of several facilities maintained around the state. The group home at 605 McMurray St. in north Richland has 15 beds for offenders. The Richland School District provides educational programs at the home but is otherwise not involved in its day-to-day operations and management. Information on how long Stoker has worked at the facility was not immediately available. Authorities learned of the alleged relationship between Stoker and the 18-year-old after the teen's roommate told staffers the two were having sex. That triggered an investigation by DSHS, Child Protective Services, the Washington State Patrol and Richland police. "We take these extremely seriously, especially in a custodial circumstance," Richland police Capt. Mike Cobb told the Herald. We take these extremely seriously, especially in a custodial circumstance. Capt. Mike Cobb, Richland police Stoker's victim initially denied having any inappropriate relationship with her, court documents said. But after being told he was not in trouble, the teen told a Richland detective the relationship with Stoker began about Oct. 20 when she took him on a trip to another juvenile facility, and they had sexual contact on the drive back. Stoker and the resident had numerous other instances of sexually touching each other since that time and had sex in a bathroom at Twin Rivers. Richland police said there are witnesses to some of the instances when the pair engaged in sexual contact. Investigators found 36 notes on Stoker's phone, including a "To do" list that listed numerous sexual acts and locations for sexual contact with a person with the initials that match the victim's initials. Richland police are still investigating and DSHS officials said they are cooperating with those efforts. A decision on Stoker's continued employment with the state

agency also is expected in a few days, DSHS officials said. Ty Beaver: [509-582-1402](tel:509-582-1402), @ [tybeaver](https://twitter.com/tybeaver) Source: <http://www.tri-cityherald.com/news/local/crime/article49747905.html>

Kids Get Hurt at Residential Schools While States Look On Some residential programs for kids have settled on better ways to handle children. But the best practices are almost entirely self-imposed, by [Annie Waldman](#) ProPublica, Dec. 15, 2015, 4:07 p.m. [0 Comments](#) [Print](#) [Print](#) Spur Reform in 2015 Support ProPublica's mission to expose abuses of power and corruption. David Sleight/ProPublica After slamming his fists into the wall until his knuckles dripped with blood, the raging teenage boy turned to a staff member and shoved him. The teen had recently been admitted to Youth Development Institute, a residential program for children with emotional and behavioral disorders in Phoenix, Arizona. Even the smallest incidents triggered his anger. Years ago, the response would have been swift and physical: The boy would have been forced to the ground and restrained until he grew calm, which sometimes could take up to 45 minutes. But this time, Sean Hennessey, a direct care staff coordinator, stepped in front of another staff member, sending him out of the room before the conflict could escalate. Hennessey stood at the door with his head down, avoiding eye contact, and calmly spoke to the boy. When tears rolled down the boy's face minutes later, Hennessey moved in and offered a reassuring side hug. "It's exhilarating when you've avoided a restraint," Hennessey told ProPublica, recalling the incident. "Pinning a kid to the ground until they stop fighting and start crying, it's barbaric if you think about it." Eight years ago, restraints occurred multiple times a day at Youth Development Institute. When children violently acted out, staff would hold them or even strap them down, and sometimes inject them with sedatives. Trish and David Cocoros, the directors of the program, said they hated relying on restraints, but assumed that if they stopped using them, more staff members and kids would get hurt. Then, in 2012, the program changed course after an industry expert visited and discussed alternatives to restraints such as the approach Hennessey used. Now, the program averages less than one restraint a month. Youth Development Institute is part of a growing group of residential programs nationwide attempting to improve their work with children in key ways. Eliminating restraints is just one example. Many programs are shortening children's stays, involving families more, and offering more rigorous classes. But best practices like these are almost entirely self-imposed. There are few federal requirements for residential programs involving children, and a patchwork of state regulation has left significant gaps: There is little to no monitoring of how well schools are teaching kids overall, no required national tracking of abuse and neglect allegations, and not even a comprehensive database of all programs. Efforts to bolster federal standards have drawn fire from some providers and industry groups, which have lobbied lawmakers. Legislation to modestly increase federal oversight has languished for years. As a result, for years, some programs have continued to thrive despite having long records of mistreating residents that has even, at times, led to injuries and deaths. (Read ProPublica's recent story about one for-profit company, AdvoServ, that has used its deep pockets and influence to [bully weak regulators and evade accountability](#).) Because of the wide latitude they're given, some programs still use extreme methods on children – including [forced labor or exercise](#), [electric shock](#) and restraint devices that include shackles and a wrap that resembles a [full-body straight jacket](#). Our recent story also detailed how AdvoServ workers at one campus used mechanical restraints [28,000 times in less than five years](#). (AdvoServ told us workers only use restraints as a last resort, "[when there is imminent danger](#).") At programs across the country, at least [145 children have died](#) from avoidable causes at residential facilities over the past 35 years, a ProPublica analysis of news reports found. At least 62 children died after being restrained, most often because of asphyxiation. The job of monitoring the wellbeing of children at the programs is spread across so many state and local agencies that kids can fall through the cracks. State education agencies, for instance, rarely take strong action. A ProPublica survey found that about half of the education departments didn't have the power to sanction such schools even if they discovered public school students were being mistreated. School officials in just seven of the 44 states that responded to the survey said they had levied penalties on or closed such a program in the last decade. "State agencies can certainly step up measures to hold all residential treatment programs accountable to high health and safety standards, but the reality is that most have not despite a rash of abuse allegations occurring in programs on their turf," Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., told ProPublica in an email. Schiff reintroduced a bill earlier this year that would require the tracking of abuse allegations lodged against such programs. Trish and David Cocoros, directors of Youth Development Institute in Phoenix, Arizona, are part of a growing group of kids' residential treatment facilities working to strengthen best practices in the face of lax national oversight. (Annie Waldman/ProPublica) Youth residential centers originated in the 1940s to fill a gap in the therapeutic spectrum: They are less restrictive than psychiatric hospitals and are often a last resort for overwhelmed families. They provide housing, treatment and, often, schooling to kids with a range of issues, from emotional disorders to substance abuse problems to profound disabilities like severe autism. They use a diverse array of approaches and include so-called "wilderness" programs, boot camps and other behavior modification centers. Public schools funnel roughly 18,000 kids per year into residential programs. Federal law entitles all children with disabilities to free public schooling but school districts sometimes pay private providers to educate students with severe impairments that local classrooms can't handle. Some of the programs provide 24-hour care and take children from across the country. Many of the programs are pricey, with total costs for some children soaring past [\\$350,000](#) per year. A host of other agencies, from child welfare to Medicaid, typically pay the rest of the bill for children's stays, each with their own standards for the programs. Despite the public funding, there is little data on residential schools. One federal database collects state data on abuse incidents, but [submission is voluntary](#). There is no required federal tracking of abuse allegations—and there is not even a nationwide list of all residential programs. One often-cited government survey, which is more than a decade old, estimates that there are at least 3,600 [facilities across the country](#), housing more than 50,000 children [annually](#). Ira Burnim, legal director for the Bazelon Center for Mental Health, believes that the current data gives an incomplete picture. "Our lack of information and data is very troubling," said Burnim. "To a certain extent, the residential treatment centers are out of sight, out of mind." Lawmakers have repeatedly called for changes amid reports of chronic abuse and neglect. A government report in 2008 found gaps in state regulation [increased the risk of abuse and neglect](#) at some youth residential programs. Some state agencies didn't visit programs often enough to make sure kids were safe and well-cared for, the report found. In other states, some programs, such as private boarding schools and religious treatment centers, are [exempt](#) from licensing and do not have direct regulation. The report also found state agencies did not routinely share negative findings on programs, or even inform other agencies when a program had its license revoked. A few industry groups support greater oversight and transparency. "Even if it means more regulation and paperwork, we have an obligation to support what would be best for the children," said Kari Sisson, executive director of the American Association of Children's Residential Centers. To help reinforce standards, some states and federal agencies require programs to obtain accreditation from professional standards groups, which generally have more requirements than state agencies. But the accrediting agencies have few tools to enforce compliance. "They do a lot of things well and they have a lot of good measures," said Robert Friedman, a clinical psychologist at the University of South Florida. "But they are not there that often." Unrestrained While evidence of abuse of the disabled has piled up for decades, one for-profit company has used its deep pockets and influence to bully weak regulators and evade accountability. [Read the story](#). What Happened to Adam It took one mother seven years to learn that the for-profit school she trusted with her son had strapped him down again and again, one time after not picking up his Legos. [Read the story](#). With few enforcement powers, some federal officials have focused on encouraging best practices. Dr. Gary Blau, the chief of the child, adolescent and family branch of the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, has led a campaign to promote changes at children's residential centers, such as eliminating the use of restraints. In 2006, Blau organized the first "Building Bridges" summit to bring residential program directors and community care providers together to discuss how to improve the standards of therapeutic care for youth. Although many facilities, like Youth Development Institute, were ready and willing to incorporate best practices, others were resistant to any kind of culture change. "There were residential facilities that had built fortresses around themselves," Blau said. "They kept kids in and kept families out." Since that first meeting, nearly 130 organizations have committed to the standards set by the Building Bridges initiative. Blau recognizes that there's only so much that persuasion can accomplish. "There's still a lot more work to be done," Blau said. For facilities that are resistant to change, "that's where I would look to state licensing and say that we need to include these principles in our licensing requirements." Aside from facilities, several states have also begun to formally adopt the standards as their own. Massachusetts, for example, has embedded the Building Bridges' guidelines into their licensing regulations, including limiting restraints. "The data made it impossible to walk away from," said Janice LeBel, the director of system transformation at Massachusetts' Department of Mental Health. When LeBel compared the psychiatric care of children and adults, the rate at which restraints were used was at least 4 times higher in youth facilities. "There was a moral imperative to do something about it." Under LeBel's watch, the state has reduced the use of restraints in children's psychiatric facilities by 89 percent. They are now implementing the reduction strategies across children's residential facilities and schools. But for reductions to happen across the country, LeBel said, national standards should be stronger. "There is great value to having local oversight, but it's important for there to be federal standards that drive service advancement," she told ProPublica. Industry groups and [providers](#) have at times aggressively sought to fend off federal regulation of their programs and worked to undermine stricter rules. "Lobbying against regulations is traditionally the posture of the providers," said Burnim of Bazelon Law Center. "They are not fans of regulation, and where they are supportive of regulation, it's in the service

of getting resources.” The National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs, also known as NATSAP, represents over 150 residential treatment programs and was one of the more prominent groups lobbying Congress on earlier versions of Schiff’s bill. Between 2008 and 2009, NATSAP spent \$220,000 lobbying Congress, according to [disclosure reports](#). “We are all for regulation, it just has to be the right kind,” said Clifford Brownstein, the executive director of NATSAP, which requires that its members be licensed and accredited. “We have found that, for a variety of reasons, issues can be dealt with best more locally.” While NATSAP has not actively lobbied since 2010, another member-based organization, the National Association for Children’s Behavioral Health, or NACBH, has [spent at least \\$100,000](#) since 2013 lobbying Congress on mental health bills, including legislation on residential program oversight, according to congressional disclosure reports. Joy Midman, executive director of NACBH, believes that “the field has been swiped with one broad brush.” Midman, who emphasized that the disclosed dollars spent by NACBH only show what bills her organization has paid firms to monitor and does not necessarily indicate lobbying, described the recent legislation as a “work-in-progress.” Additional reporting by Heather Vogell and Meral Agish. Source: <https://www.propublica.org/article/kids-get-hurt-at-residential-schools-while-states-look-on>

Georgia foster care death: Worker overlooked signs of abuse | www.myaic.com DFCS worker failed to investigate signs of child abuse Posted: 9:06 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 16, 2015 Email 2Facebook 937Twitter 74ShareThis 1066 EmailFacebookTwitterShareThis By [Craig Schneider](#) - The Atlanta Journal-Constitution Laila Marie Daniel, 2, in an undated family photo. (Family Photo) A state child protection worker and her supervisor failed to investigate injuries spotted on a 2-year-old girl in foster care, who police say later died of abuse, according to documents obtained Wednesday by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Moreover, the agency workers did not heed warnings about [Jennifer Rosenbaum, the child’s caregiver who is now charged in her violent death](#), according to the case summary by the state Division of Family and Children Services. The AJC obtained the summary through the state open records law. Related Gallery [Photos: Emotional bond hearing in foster child’s death case](#) The case summary details [a litany of errors by the agency that had removed Laila Marie Daniel from the care of her birth mother](#) and eventually placed her with Rosenbaum this summer. DFCS’ mission is to protect children, but in this case, the agency placed Laila in the hands of a caretaker who police say eventually beat, starved and killed the child. The case summary details a broken leg that Laila suffered while in Rosenbaum’s care. Rosenbaum told DFCS caseworker Samantha White that the injury occurred while the child was at a gymnastics class. Had White checked out that story, she would have learned that the child was not even enrolled in a gymnastics class, the summary said. “It was definitely a screw-up. That’s where the ball was dropped,” said Gina Banks, the girl’s maternal grandmother. Related Video [911 call released in McDonough foster child case](#) Banks, of Forest Park, said DFCS missed the red flags that could have saved Laila. Banks said the agency needs a thorough review, and that [Rosenbaum “swindled her way through the system and pulled the wool over everyone’s eyes.”](#) [White and her supervisor, Tamara Warner, have since been fired](#) for violating agency policies that require a review of serious injuries of children in foster care. [Coroner announces foster child’s cause of death DA reviewing staffer’s action in foster care case](#) [Woman charged with killing foster child released on bond](#) The case summary also pointed to warnings about Rosenbaum from a woman who had been the girl’s prior foster care mother. Patricia Lambert was caring for Laila before the girl was formally transferred to Rosenbaum’s care. The girl made several visits to Rosenbaum’s during that time, but Lambert told the agency that Laila came back with injuries. “She was concerned about their care and the supervision being provided by the Rosenbaums,” the summary said. The caseworker did not file a report on these injuries or investigate them, the summary said. [Laila Marie Daniel, 2, in an undated family photo. \(Family Photo\)](#) Laila Marie Daniel, 2, in an undated family photo. (Family Photo) Rosenbaum, charged with murder and child cruelty, [was granted a \\$100,000 bond Tuesday in Henry County Superior Court](#). Her husband, Joseph, charged with child cruelty, had earlier received a \$10,000 bond. Laila died Nov. 17, about five months after she was placed in the care of the Rosenbaums. The arrest warrant for Jennifer Rosenbaum said she killed the child by striking her in the abdomen “with such force the child’s pancreas was transected. The child was believed to enter shock due to the blood loss resulting from the injury.” The warrant noted that Laila was “injured about her body in its entirety,” suffering severe bruising on her back, legs, head and abdomen, and breaks of her legs and arms. The Rosenbaums also abused Laila’s sister, authorities said. Corinne Mull, the Rosenbaums’ attorney, said Laila died after Jennifer Rosenbaum performed the Heimlich maneuver and CPR when the child was choking on some chicken. Mull said [the force of the compressions may have caused the injury to the pancreas](#). Mull attributed Laila’s and her sister’s other injuries to either abuse prior to their stay with the Rosenbaums or the general bumps and bruises of childhood play. White and Warner were also fired because of problems with a background check on Rosenbaum. When DFCS places a foster child with a person, the agency is supposed to check whether the person has a criminal history or any accusations against them of child abuse or neglect. The agency also inspects the home to make sure it’s a safe environment. “We followed the standard background check, but it was not conducted as thoroughly as it was defined in policy,” said DFCS spokeswoman Ashley Fielding. She said the caseworker failed to screen Rosenbaum’s maiden name when determining whether she had a history of accusations of child abuse or neglect. Rosenbaum had no such history, Fielding said, so the check “would not have had an impact on the placement decision.” Source: <http://www.myaic.com/news/news/dfcs-worker-failed-to-investigate-signs-of-child-a/npmDr/>

Judge: Foster care system violates children’s rights Emily Ramshaw and Edgar Walters, The Texas Tribune 2:11 p.m. CST December 17, 2015 Judge: Foster Care System Violates Children’s Rights(Photo: Texas Tribune / Photo illustration by Todd Wiseman / Karolina Michalak / Felipe Hadler) [CONNECT](#)[TWEET 2](#) [LINKEDIN](#)[COMMENT](#)[EMAIL](#)[MORE](#) AUSTIN — A federal judge ruled Thursday that Texas has violated foster children’s constitutional rights to be free from an unreasonable risk of harm, saying that children “often age out of care more damaged than when they entered.” “Years of abuse, neglect and shutting between inappropriate placements across the state has created a population that cannot contribute to society, and proves a continued strain on the government through welfare, incarceration or otherwise,” the ruling states. “... Although some foster children are able to overcome these obstacles, they should not have to.” The class-action lawsuit, brought by the New York-based advocacy group Children’s Rights, Inc. in 2011 on behalf of children in long-term foster care, argued that Texas caseworkers are assigned too many children for them to effectively monitor and that kids are placed too far away from home into settings where they do not get appropriate care. In it, Children’s Rights asked U.S. District Judge Janis Jack, of Corpus Christi, to order the state to take steps such as hiring more qualified caseworkers and setting lower caseload limits. The lawsuit also called for the state to quit placing children with no special needs in more restrictive residential treatment centers and for better staffing ratios in group foster homes. In the ruling, which the state is expected to appeal within 30 days, Jack orders child welfare officials to “establish and implement policies and procedures” to ensure that foster children are protected, and appoints a “special master” to ensure compliance. That overseer will be chosen by the court but funded by the state. She also directs the state to stop placing certain foster children in unsafe placements like “foster group homes that lack 24-hour awake-night supervision.” Texas’ roughly \$1.2 billion-per-year Child Protective Services division, with about 8,000 employees, is one of the nation’s largest child abuse investigation and foster care teams. Independent child welfare advocates have said a ruling in favor of Children’s Rights could require significant changes at the agency, raising questions about whether state lawmakers would need to reconvene during a special legislative session to implement — and allocate money for — reforms. Source: <http://www.wfaa.com/story/news/local/texas-news/2015/12/17/judge-rules-that-texas-foster-care-system-violates-childrens-rights/77496760/>

Anchorage juvenile justice officer charged with sexual abuse of teen inmate, helping plan her escape [Jerzy Shedlock](#) December 22, 2015 Email [Print](#) Text Size-[A](#) [+A](#) A former juvenile justice officer at McLaughlin Youth Center has been charged with five counts of sex abuse of a minor and conspiring to help an inmate escape after an investigation into the officer’s relationship with a 16-year-old girl at the facility. The charges say Phillip Bigham, 47, resigned Nov. 24, the same day his superiors called a meeting where they questioned Bigham about outings he took with the teenage girl, an inmate at McLaughlin, to secluded areas like a tool shed and the school section of the building. “Bigham became visibly angry with the staff, left the room and returned a short time later with his letter of resignation,” the charges say. But Bigham kept his job for another week; he requested the time to gather his belongings and say goodbye. Related: [Former McLaughlin justice officer accused of sex abuse](#) Bigham worked at the facility for underage offenders for about four years and three months, according to the charges. Unit Supervisor Nicole Cuaresma told an Anchorage police investigator there were no issues with Bigham until he took a position with the Girls Treatment Center. After Bigham left the facility, the girl got letters from the Anchorage area despite having no relatives in the city, the charges say. A phone number had also been added to her call list as an alternative number for her father. The facility’s officials checked and determined the number wasn’t her father’s. The investigation heightened when McLaughlin officials searched the girl’s cell, discovering a letter with handwriting similar to Bigham’s, according to the charges. “Cuaresma stated that the letter talked about an escape plan and how (the girl) could get out of the building by obtaining the code from one of the other juvenile justice officers,” and further advice for how to find the code, the charges say. Bigham’s letter also informed the girl he had set up a room for her in his garage, which included hair dye and new clothes, according to the charges. The girl was at first reluctant to come forward with more

information but started helping with the investigation. Bigham worked as a kind of counselor for several in the Girls Treatment Unit, which serves inmates struggling with drug use, trauma and self-esteem, among other issues. The girl said Bigham began treating her differently in July by giving her candy and letting her use his phone and computer. Their relationship became more sexual in October, she said; she described three sexual encounters they had at the facility. The charges do not indicate how plans for the girl to escape were formulated, but she said she was supposed to try and get out on Dec. 13. She told staff she got scared and the plan fell through. On Dec. 18, Bigham was secretly recorded speaking with the girl on the phone, the charges say. The two discussed the best time for her to escape and where to meet up, as well as their sexual encounters. Anchorage police spokesperson Jennifer Castro said Bigham was arrested and jailed on Dec. 18. Related: [Former McLaughlin justice officer accused of sex abuse](#) Contact Jerzy Shedlock at jerzy@alaskadispatch.com or on [Twitter](#) Source: <https://www.adn.com/article/20151222/anchorage-juvenile-justice-officer-charged-sexual-abuse-teen-inmate-helping-plan>

Supporters Of New Law: Let's Find Homes, Not Group Homes, For Foster Kids [Bob Moffitt](#) Tuesday, December 22, 2015 | Sacramento, CA | [Permalink](#)
In this Tuesday, April 14, 2015 photo, Madison Rodriguez looks at her phone while standing by a window at Beachwood House, a group home for foster kids in Los Angeles. Jae C. Hong / AP This story is part of Capital Public Radio's series on new California laws that take effect on Jan. 1, 2016. A new law signed by California Governor Jerry Brown this year will require group homes meet treatment standards for foster children with histories of mental illness, sexual abuse or significant trauma. Homes that can not meet those standards will not be allowed to operate and children who do not need those services will not be allowed to stay in those homes. Democratic Assemblyman Mark Stone wrote the law and says it's part of an effort to get kids out of group homes and into family settings. "It is a major push away from the utilization of group homes and into more individualized care. That's the significant shift," he says. "There still will be some group homes. But, what we've done in this is limited the duration, turned them into more short-term, intensive care treatment facilities for those kids who need that." Studies cited in a Department of Social Services report from this year say increased time in group homes corresponds to higher rates of incarceration, lower levels of education, and lower employment. Stone says the department is already preparing for the new standards. "What the department is right now doing is going out to each county and finding out from them what resources they have available, what group homes they have, how they're going to be able to do this transition, what their inventory, if you will, is of resource families," he says. About 3,000 California children have been in group homes for more than a year. One thousand kids have been in group homes for more than five years. Source: <http://www.cpradio.org/articles/2015/12/22/supporters-of-new-law-lets-find-homes-not-group-homes-for-foster-kids/>

Henn. Co. Sheriff Investigates Sex Assault At Juvenile Treatment Center December 23, 2015 4:36 PM Filed Under: [County Road 62](#), [Hennepin County](#), [Hennepin County Home School](#), [Hennepin County Human Services](#), [Hennepin County Sheriff's Office](#), [Juveniles](#), [Minnetonka](#), [Nexus](#), [Sexual Assault](#) (credit: CBS) MINNEAPOLIS (WCCO) — The Hennepin County Sheriff's Office is investigating a report of a sexual assault at a county treatment facility for troubled teens. The assault allegedly occurred at the Hennepin County Home School on the 14000 block of County Road 62 in Minnetonka. The school is a state-licensed, residential treatment facility for juveniles who have been committed by the state. The sheriff's office says the incident happened within a program run by a private company called Nexus, who works with the county's human services office. The date of the incident and information about those involved have not been released. Nexus released the following statement on the investigation: "We are aware of the allegation and we are cooperating with all applicable authorities in their ongoing investigation within the scope of the medical privacy laws that govern these types of cases. Additionally, we are conducting our own internal investigation to get to the facts of this allegation. The safety of the youth in our care is always our highest priority, and our standard practice in these situations is to remove the staff in question from working with our clients until the investigation is completed. This protects both the youth and the staff in question." Source: <http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2015/12/23/henn-co-sheriff-investigates-sex-assault-at-juvenile-treatment-center/>

Prosecutor: Ex-group home workers convicted of endangering residents for encouraging fight | Fox News Prosecutor: Ex-group home workers convicted of endangering residents for encouraging fight Published December 24, 2015 [Associated Press](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Email](#) [Print](#) RIVERHEAD, N.Y. — Two former Long Island group home workers accused of encouraging a disabled resident in their care to attack another resident for their own amusement have been convicted. Newsday reports (<http://nwsdy.li/1OMHBWJ>) 30-year-old Erin McHenry was found guilty of two felony counts of endangering the welfare of an incompetent or physically disabled person, and 59-year-old Stephen Komara has been convicted of two misdemeanor counts. ADVERTISEMENT McHenry and Komara were among four workers fired by the Independent Group Home Living Program after cellphone footage taken by one of them showed a fight between two men under their care. Prosecutors say one man shoved a resident to the ground as McHenry encouraged the man to attack the other. The residents weren't injured in the 2013 fight. The pair will be sentenced on Feb. 22. Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2015/12/24/prosecutor-ex-group-home-workers-convicted-endangering-residents-for-fight/>

--> **Kansas lawmaker seeks end of privatized foster care system** Posted 4:57 p.m. today Updated 4:58 p.m. today 0 reactions More on this [The Topeka \(Kan.\) Capital-Journal](#) TOPEKA, Kan. — A Republican Kansas lawmaker is calling for an end to the state's first-in-the-nation privatized foster care system, as it nears its 20th anniversary with increasing scrutiny and a record number of children in foster homes. What do you think? Rep. Mike Kiegerl, an Olathe Republican, wrote a report titled "When Children Die We Must Act" in which he concluded that the mid-1990s privatization wasn't successful, the Topeka Capital-Journal (<http://bit.ly/1RxWskK>) reported. What do you think? "It grieves the author of this report who as an economist fervently believes in private-sector efficiency to categorically state that this program as currently in place ought to be eliminated. Perhaps another method of privatizing services could be studied," Kiegerl wrote. What do you think? His report was among more than 100 pages of documents provided to the Legislature's Special Committee on Foster Care Adequacy, which met for one day last month and hopes to get permission to meet again. What do you think? The Department for Children and Families, which oversees the state's foster care contractors, has been facing questions and criticism in recent months over the deaths of multiple children in the foster care system. What do you think? ADVERTISING The scrutiny intensified after a Topeka city councilman and his wife were charged in November with child abuse. The couple have 17 children, including multiple foster and adoptive children. What do you think? Kiegerl prepared his report before the couple, Jonathan and Allison Schumm, were arrested. The report notes that the state spends about \$283 million every two years on foster care, not counting payments to foster parents. What do you think? The report called caseworker turnover a serious problem that creates extra work for DCF employees, disrupts procedures and increases expenses. It concludes that contractors must have healthy profit margins in order to pay a CEO of one of the contractors \$650,000 a year. What do you think? In 1997, Kansas became the first state to privatize its foster care system, partly in response to a 1989 class-action lawsuit that accused DCF — then known as Social and Rehabilitation Services — of failing to adequately care for abused and neglected children. What do you think? DCF Secretary Phyllis Gilmore told lawmakers last month there are about 6,600 children in foster care in Kansas — a record high — and 2,826 licensed foster homes. What do you think? Senate Minority Leader Anthony Hensley, a Topeka Democrat, said he opposed privatization when the change was made and continues to do so. What do you think? "I believe it's been an abject failure, particularly in taking the best interest of children in mind. I believe too many decisions are made that are based on money," Hensley said. Read more at <http://www.wral.com/kansas-lawmaker-seeks-end-of-privatized-foster-care-system/15196494/#vX5kiLzGhou2GtPq.99>

Youth Villages Oregon plans to end residential services in Lake Oswego Created on Wednesday, 30 December 2015 16:43 | Written by [The Review | inShare](#) [Share](#) [0 Comments](#) Agency that cares for troubled youth says it will begin laying off 74 workers on March 1 Youth Villages Oregon alerted county officials Wednesday that it will stop offering residential services at its Christie Campus in Lake Oswego and begin laying off or transferring workers on March 1. LaTonya Pendleton, the managing director of human resources for Youth Villages, told the Clackamas County Workforce Investment Council that 74 employees would be affected at the facility, which is located near Mary's Woods and the Marylhurst University campus. Affected employees range from program managers and a charge nurse to teacher/counselors, night monitors and therapists. Some of the workers will be offered positions in other Youth Villages programs in Oregon and outside the state, Pendleton said. Youth Villages Oregon is one of two programs currently facing the loss of their state licenses to care for foster children and troubled teens. In early December, the Oregon Department of Human Services said it was working with the Oregon Department of Justice to draft "intent to revoke" letters to Youth Villages, which also operates a facility in Oregon City and a family intervention program in Redmond, and to Scotts Valley School, a therapeutic boarding program in Yoncalla, south of Eugene. As a result of a recent review, DHS spokesman Gene Evans said the state would stop placing foster children at Youth Villages programs in December and would move the children who were already there to other placements. But Connie Mills, manager of public relations for Youth Villages, told The Review on Thursday that 15 children were still receiving services at the

Christie Campus this week. "We are in the midst of finalizing an agreement with the state," Mills said, "but will be able to share information once it's finalized." Mills said that agreement could be finalized as soon as Thursday, but that negotiations could stretch into next week. Youth Villages established itself locally in 2011 when it merged with ChristieCare, an organization that served thousands of Oregon families since its founding in 1859, the same year Oregon earned statehood. The nonprofit provides residential treatment for youths with severe emotional and behavioral problems. It also provides intensive in-home support for children who might otherwise be placed in foster care, residential treatment, detention centers, hospitals or juvenile facilities. When the state announced the results of its review earlier this month, Mills said in a statement that Youth Villages took officials' concerns seriously and was making improvements to the program. "We have a long history of providing care for Oregon's youth who face some of the biggest challenges, and our commitment to caring for them is steadfast," Mills wrote. Source: <http://portlandtribune.com/pt/9-news/287249-164269-youth-villages-oregon-plans-to-end-residential-services-in-lake-oswego>

Former county home worker indicted Filed on December 30, 2015 by [Brad Dicken](#) 2 Comments ELYRIA — A former child care worker at the Lorain County Juvenile Court's Stepping Stone residential center has been indicted on charges he was involved in drug activity with residents at the group home for boys. Sean Justice Sean Justice, who now works for the U.S. Postal Service, was booked into the Lorain County Jail on Monday on two counts of conspiracy and a single charge of corrupting another with drugs. The 29-year-old was released Tuesday on bond. The charges come nearly two years after [Justice resigned from his county job](#) after being confronted by a court official about allegations he had been trading drugs with juveniles he was assigned to guard. Justice's lawyer, Paul St. Marie, said his client plans to fight the charges. "He may have used poor judgment on occasion, but nothing that rises to a criminal offense," St. Marie said. "He fully expects the judicial process will demonstrate the state's charges have no merit." The allegations against Justice that led to his resignation in January 2014 weren't the first time that he had been under scrutiny for allegedly engaging in drug activity at Stepping Stone, where he was hired as a relief worker in September 2012 and became a full-time employee in January 2013. In March 2013, a juvenile probation officer reported that a Stepping Stone resident had told his counselor that Justice asked him if he knew anyone willing to buy the painkiller Lortab, a Lorain County Drug Task Force report detailing the long-running investigation into Justice said. Source: <http://chronicle.northcoastnow.com/2015/12/30/former-county-home-worker-indicted/>

Out of Options, California Ships Hundreds of Troubled Children Out of State One 14-year-old boy's search for care takes him to Utah as his home state struggles to safeguard its most challenging children. by [Joaquin Sapien](#) ProPublica, Dec. 31, 2015, 12:24 p.m. 4 Comments Print Print Spur Reform in 2016 Support ProPublica's mission to expose abuses of power and corruption. Deshaun and Veronice Becton walk away from the Mount Pleasant Academy in Mount Pleasant, Utah. Short of options in his home state of California, Deshaun is now living in a Utah psychiatric facility. (Kim Raff, special to ProPublica) At 14, Deshaun Becton's life is a roadmap to California's faltering efforts to care for its most troubled children. Over more than a dozen turbulent years, he lived with a half-dozen foster families and in five different group homes. Now he is among the more than 900 children that California sends to out-of-state residential facilities, most of them in Utah, a ProPublica analysis shows. Each of these children represents a surrender of sorts: a tacit acknowledgement that California — the nation's biggest and, by some measures, richest state — somehow has no good answer for them. In the late 1990s, after a 16-year-old boy died from abuse at an Arizona boot camp, California pledged not to export its troubled youth to out-of-state group homes and juvenile detention facilities that didn't meet certain standards. The number of kids sent away plummeted. Today, however, the state is grasping for options anew. California has shuttered most of its secure facilities for youth and done away with almost all beds for children in psychiatric hospitals. It has moved to curtail the use of group homes, partly because, [as ProPublica has reported](#), several have melted down into chaos in recent years. Most recently, the state has adopted reforms meant to keep children in need of acute care as close to home as possible, pumping money into county programs to create new centers and recruit foster families. At the same time, California is sending more and more children to facilities out of state — some as far away as Florida. Indeed, the number of children sent from probation and child welfare agencies across the state has more than tripled since 2008. "What's happening in California is dishonest," said Ken Berrick, the founder of Seneca Family of Agencies, a major child services agency based in Oakland. "We're saying we don't want locked facilities here and we don't want group homes, so instead we're sending kids to Utah where we can't monitor them. What's that about? It's just wrong." There are signs that California has a limited ability to guarantee the health and welfare of the children it sends beyond its borders. For one thing, state officials struggle even to keep track of how many children they've sent away. They couldn't provide a total. Using several different sources of state data, ProPublica calculated that county probation departments in 2015 had some 235 children living out of state; child welfare agencies in 2015 had another 52 placed outside California; and local school districts had more than 600, including Deshaun Becton. California's Department of Social Services conducts occasional inspections of out-of-state facilities where California agencies have placed children. Earlier this year, records show, at a facility just over the Nevada border, California inspectors responded to a complaint that children were not being adequately fed. Days later there was a riot at the facility, with two of its buildings set on fire. Only afterward did the inspectors corroborate the complaint and begin removing children. In Colorado, inspectors worried in October 2014 that a facility housing California children was vulnerable to targeting by sex traffickers. It took a year before children were removed and California decertified the home. ProPublica sent DSS a list of questions concerning the hundreds of California children being cared for out of state, including why such placements were needed and how the state was ensuring the children remained safe. Michael Weston, a spokesman for DSS, sent a general response acknowledging that California had run out of options for many of the children but maintaining that DSS was meeting all of its obligations for monitoring and safeguarding the welfare of those sent away. Deshaun's long journey to find a safe and effective level of care has exhausted his parents and drained their finances. Lamont Becton, Deshaun's father, is a firefighter; Deshaun's mother, Veronice, is a registered nurse. They have met with dozens of experts, driven thousands of miles to rescue Deshaun from one facility after another, kept in touch with their son via Skype when he was assigned to a horse ranch in a remote corner of Utah. Through it all, they have repeatedly asked themselves a basic question: How can California not be capable of better for Deshaun? His problems — post-traumatic stress, mood disorders, violent outbursts — are significant. Yet can it really be best for troubled, vulnerable children like Deshaun to be sent to other parts of the country in pursuit of adequate supervision and treatment? "What I don't understand is why aren't there any options here?" said Veronice. "Is it really about the children? It's not. If it was, you'd want these kids to be near their families." The Bectons recognize the challenge Deshaun presents. He consumes a daily diet of anti-psychotic medications to control his behavior. He has tested his committed family's best efforts, and he has exasperated the staffs of group homes across the state. His care has cost, by a rough accounting, more than \$1 million to his home county and the state of California. The family has also experienced the risk of out-of-state placements firsthand. In May of 2012, Deshaun was sent to a home in Kansas where he was once restrained by staff, face-down, for nearly 90 minutes. Officials in Kansas soon recommended Deshaun be sent to Mount Pleasant Academy, a horse ranch in Utah, which advertises itself as specializing in children addicted to pornography. Officials at the ranch quickly realized it was an inappropriate placement for Deshaun, but before his parents could remove him, he wound up with scrapes and bruises from encounters with staff members. Just before Christmas, Deshaun entered a secure psychiatric facility in Utah, his third out-of-state placement. The Bectons have learned to limit their expectations. They wish mostly that he will be safe, and that he might make some small progress toward stability with the right combination of medication and therapy. "We can paint a picture to somebody that makes him look like a monster," said Lamont Becton. "Unfortunately, he came into this world with some issues that weren't necessarily his fault. But he is a great kid with a good heart. He's really just searching for love." Veronice and Lamont Becton have grown accustomed to living without Deshaun in their home in Antioch, California. (Jessica Dimmock, special to ProPublica) Deshaun's mother was 14 when she gave birth to him on Jan. 30, 2001. They spent their first night together in a hotel, and over the next several years mother and child bounced from emergency shelters to foster homes to the care of relatives. Court records show they ricocheted up and down the state, sometimes together, often apart. When Deshaun was three, a young couple considered adopting him. But medical records show he suffered "meltdowns that lasted hours," and frequently bit, kicked and screamed at those who came near him. The couple became overwhelmed. They eventually drove Deshaun to the Solano County Child Welfare office and left him. Enter, almost by accident, Veronice and Lamont Becton, a working class, African-American couple from Oakland and its suburbs. The Bectons had casually discussed adoption for years. They both came from supportive, two-parent, middle class families, and they were proud of the life they had started together, one of stability and faith. They had one son, but also a spare bedroom room in their newly purchased, three-bedroom home in Antioch. The couple first agreed to take Deshaun in as a foster child. When he arrived, all his possessions had been packed into a single trash bag. It wasn't much — some baby clothes and a stuffed animal. "I maybe lived in two places my entire life," said Veronice, who has been unable to shake the image of the trash bag. "And you know, when I would go visit my grandparents, I had my little luggage." Deshaun wasn't easy. He stayed up far later than had their older son, Jonah. He would scream and cry. But two months in, it did not feel like anything the Bectons could not manage. "At that point, there was no giving him back," Veronice said. "In my mind, we'd already adopted him." The ensuing weeks were something of a honeymoon. They had a party. There was cake and balloons and relatives.

Deshaun was giddy from all the attention. But as home life took on its long-term routines— shifts at the hospital for Veronica; commutes to the firehouse for Lamont; Jonah to school and sports practice— Deshaun quickly unraveled. The night terrors intensified. Jonah had asked to share a room with Deshaun, to embrace the role of older brother. But that arrangement disintegrated as Deshaun kept Jonah up all night, throwing toys, smearing feces on the bedroom walls, carving deep scratch marks into the sheetrock with his tiny nails. During the day, the Bectons did their best to treat him as a normal child. They got him in an art program, then pre-school, but soon the calls rang off the hook from teachers. He was disruptive. He would bite and kick his classmates. He's "not the right fit for this setting," the teachers would say, trying to be polite. A social worker told them Deshaun likely had something called "reactive attachment disorder," a condition that develops in children who've been abused or neglected in their early years of life. It often manifests in extreme, sometimes violent episodes. She gave the Bectons a photocopy of a book on the subject. "We were so naïve," Lamont said. By the time Deshaun was in kindergarten, his parents began the process of enrolling him in an "Individualized Education Program," a plan laid out by the school district for children who have special needs. By first grade, Deshaun had to travel to a school in Concord, a 30-minute drive. To get there, Deshaun boarded a bus each morning. He started fights, he spit on other children. He kicked the back of the bus driver's seat. Eventually the school district opted to take him to school privately, in his own van. "It was such a horrible feeling," Lamont said, bowing his head. "To rely on people to help you with your own child; to be dependent; I never thought I'd have to make sure someone else could get my kid to school." Jonah Becton has done his best to be an attentive older brother to Deshaun. (Jessica Dimmock, special to ProPublica) He and Veronica rattled off all the activities they experimented with to relieve their son of his boundless, often destructive energy: physical outlets like karate, soccer and football. "He liked to kick things," Lamont joked. They tried creative outlets like music, art and therapy of all kinds. They tried discipline, making him do community service when he misbehaved: cleaning up litter, scrubbing graffiti off walls at a nearby public school. The janitors grew to love the Bectons. Lamont kept a list of all the professionals they'd met over the years: teachers, psychologists, coaches, social workers, counselors, lawyers. A year ago, the list was close to 100. In 2011, the Bectons got a taste of what California then considered the latest, best answer for children such as Deshaun: wraparound care. A team of social service workers would come to the Becton home and tend to Deshaun directly. Soon there were five people, working in shifts, in and out of the home. The counselors were earnest and dedicated, but they struck the Bectons as young and inexperienced. "The only way I could explain it is, when you have an open, gaping wound, it's not time to put a Band-Aid on," Veronica said. "You're going to have to suture that wound and put pressure dressing on it." Wraparound care, she said, was like a Band-Aid and "we were like... hemorrhaging blood." California offered another option – a group home with trained staff and expert support. Soon enough, Deshaun was sent to a home in Davis. It was designated a Level 14, for the most challenging children. It had a campus and classrooms and dormitories. Psychiatrists and therapists would be on hand. The \$10,000 a month in costs would be borne by the family's home county. Deshaun arrived at the home, known as FamiliesFirst, in March 2012. The first weeks weren't easy. He missed home and told his parents so in regular phone calls. But over the next several months, he progressed. He forged bonds with a counselor and a social worker, he spent hours in the arts center and the Bectons noticed that his emotions had steadied. He could cool his temper using techniques his therapist had taught him. But FamiliesFirst came undone – quickly and disastrously. The staff was slashed. Children, including Deshaun, went missing for days or longer. The police were called hundreds of times – to save children or to arrest them. The home's demise was the focus of an [April 2015 ProPublica examination](#) – one that revealed a wholesale failure of care and protection involving the home administrators, government overseers and the local police. The Bectons felt the extent of that failure acutely on the evening of May 31, 2013. Veronica was preparing to go to dinner with a friend when she got a call from Audrie Meyer, the home's executive director. Meyer said Deshaun had fled the facility the night before and something terrible happened. He'd been "assaulted in the community," she said. The Bectons raced to reclaim their boy. They took his picture when they picked him up that night. He appeared traumatized, sullen and scratched up, his eyes badly bloodshot. The home eventually was closed, and Deshaun wound up back in Antioch. The search for California's next best solution got underway. "So how do you find a place?" Lamont asked. "You go to your laptop and you type in 'boys group home' and you go, 'Wow, those are lovely pictures.'" The Bectons say the approach of government agencies in finding the right fit for Deshaun has often felt as random and scattershot as theirs. Some of this, they accept, is a consequence of his distinctive profile: he exhibits some symptoms of autism, yet not in a manner severe enough to qualify him for some of the most advanced care. But some of it feels like a lack of consistency and coordination on the part of the authorities to properly diagnose and treat Deshaun. His mood swings do not result from a diagnosed psychosis, and yet for years he has been prescribed anti-psychotic medications. His evaluations by government screening panels can feel perfunctory, and his resulting placements determined more by the availability of a bed somewhere – anywhere – than by a considered strategy for success. A drawing done by Deshaun. With help, Deshaun's mother thinks his art skills could develop into a real talent. (Jessica Dimmock, special to ProPublica) And so Deshaun eventually landed at a facility called the Milhous Treatment Center in the foothills of Northern California's Sierra Nevada Mountains. The home serves 38 boys in six houses on a bucolic 1,000-acre ranch. The Bectons viewed the expanse of the campus as a selling point. They figured it might make it harder for Deshaun to run off. The home's administrators evinced confidence that they could help Deshaun with the right mix of therapy, schooling and recreation. But the administrators did not mention that Milhous had recently been in trouble with the California Department of Social Services for a string of violations. Records show that in 2010, the department found that a staff worker had allegedly molested a child resident on two separate occasions. In 2011, the facility was cited for filing late incident reports. In 2012, according to another report, the staff had strip-searched children. For each violation, the department demanded the home provide a "plan of correction" – a legally binding document that is meant to show how exactly a group home's staff will address specific violations. By January 2013, the home was late on one of those, too, forcing the state to take the rare step of financially penalizing the home. The problems did not end with Deshaun's arrival. Staff turnover contributed to Deshaun changing therapists four times. Veronica said that at the end of Deshaun's time there, the home had also lost its staff psychiatrist. As a result, Deshaun's monthly psychiatric consultations were provided over Skype with a doctor who lived in another state. In December 2014, Deshaun ended up fleeing. He disappeared with another boy for some four hours before he was found on the side of a highway wearing a T-shirt, shorts, and cowboy boots. In an interview, Milhous Children's Services Chief Executive Officer Dan Petrie defended the agency's overall record and its treatment of Deshaun. He said that Milhous had filed the overwhelming majority of its incident reports on time. Of the strip-searching incident, Petrie said the children had kept their shorts on during hunts for marijuana. It happened on a single occasion, he said, and the staff member been properly disciplined. Petrie said Deshaun had been "easily in the top 10 of the most challenging cases I have seen in my career." "Unfortunately," he said, "California is seriously lacking options for kids that need such intensive services." By the end of 2014, the Bectons were done with Milhous. And Milhous was done with Deshaun. The family hired yet one more consultant to plot out yet one more alternative. Under California law, public school districts must provide an education to all students who live in them. If a student has a mental health need that his home district can't meet, then the district must pay for that student's education elsewhere. That is how Deshaun was sent to Utah. Mount Pleasant Academy in Utah treats children with sexually aggressive behavioral disorders. (Kim Raff, special to ProPublica) Deshaun and nearly 600 other California children did not end up in Utah by accident. Today, there are an estimated 100 or more homes in Utah meant to care for and safeguard some of the country's most troubled children – more than any other state, experts say. California has contracts with 20 of them, and it sends them a range of children who have been through California's juvenile justice, foster care or special education systems. The niche industry traces its roots to homes founded and run by Mormons in the early 1970's. Many in the faith saw caring for disturbed children and their often desperate families as consistent with their mandate to do good works. "You find more of those people who are idealistic and willing to do this work within the Mormon population than you would have out in the world," said Dr. Robert Crist, a psychiatrist and a co-founder of the Provo Canyon School, one of the earliest Utah homes for troubled children. "The obligation to young men is to treat them fairly and teach them good principles." Roughly 40 of the facilities in Utah are members of the National Association for Therapeutic Schools and Programs, a national trade organization that represents such facilities in Washington, D.C. Trade group officials say all members must prove they employ well-qualified workers and are either licensed by their home state or meet voluntary accreditation standards. But trouble has erupted over the years at homes throughout Utah. Perhaps the most damning example involved a network of homes operated by a former worker at Provo Canyon. A lawsuit on behalf of 350 children against the network's founder, Robert Lichfield, had for years tarnished the entire industry. The 3,000 page complaint— built on testimony from nearly all 350 children and multiple depositions of current and former employees — accused Lichfield of hiring woefully underqualified workers who used cruel, sometimes violent methods of discipline, including long periods of solitary confinement or even beatings. For more than a decade, the suit wound its way through state and federal courts. More than one judge recused themselves. Ultimately, many of the claims in the suit were dismissed, and a settlement was reached on the remaining issues. "Frankly, I never thought we found a judge in Utah who was willing to deal with these hard and large issues," said Windle Turley, the attorney who filed the suit. In an emailed statement, Lichfield sought to distance himself from the troubled homes and discredit the complaints against him. "I did not operate the facilities as they were independently owned and operated," he said, adding that he believed the students "were

just looking for some free money” and “were very upset with being sent to the schools where they couldn’t do drugs or other inappropriate behaviors.” Many of the homes tied to Lichfield in Utah and across the country have been closed in the wake of scandal. Thomas Burton, a Salt Lake City attorney who has sued multiple Utah group homes on behalf of children who allege abuse in them. (Kim Raff, special to ProPublica) Spurred in part by these incidents, Utah’s legislature passed a bill in 2005 expanding the number and type of homes it would formally license and oversee. But efforts at adopting national standards that would be enforced by federal regulators have been defeated, in part by the work of the national trade association. Clifford Brownstein, executive director of the association, said the federal standards appeared aimed at punishing the worst actors in the business even when some programs are outstanding. “They haven’t been well thought out,” Brownstein said of the federal proposals. He said his members prefer working with state rather than federal regulators, he said. Diane Moore, director of licensing at Utah’s Department of Human Services, said the agency’s “primary focus” was verifying that “critical health and safety standards are met in order to protect the well-being of all residents” at the homes and facilities. “Regardless of who the players are, we license each facility to a set standard of criteria provided by state statute and rule,” she said. “We thoroughly investigate complaints and incidents using a unique set of criteria, and we utilize an appropriate level of corrective action for any rule violations that are found.” Thomas Burton, a Salt Lake City attorney who has filed 25 lawsuits against facilities in the state, said whatever regulations Utah has are clearly ineffective. Otherwise, he said, he wouldn’t have so much work. “There is no oversight,” Burton said. “When you look at the complaints from kids, you often see that the children are dismissed as inveterate liars.” At Red Rock Canyon, a facility in St. George, a worker pleaded guilty in 2014 to multiple counts of sexually abusing three teenagers in his care, one of whom was just 13. The facility did not properly report the abuse to Utah regulators or the police. But Utah has allowed the home to remain open, accepting Red Rock’s assurances that it would retrain its staff. It turns out the owners of Red Rock Canyon also run the horse ranch Deshaun arrived at last August. Both the home, Mount Pleasant Academy, and the Bectons realized almost immediately it was not a good fit. A month after Deshaun arrived, Veronice received a copy of notes recorded by his therapist. Except they were for another child. Meanwhile, administrators at the home concluded that Deshaun did not need treatment for issues of sexually aggressive behavior, something the home advertised itself as specializing in. What he needed, they wrote to the Bectons, was intensive, individualized care – something the home said it did not have the staff to provide. They suggested he be sent to Red Rock Canyon. It would be his sixth placement in three years. The Bectons asked for time. In October, the home’s staff informed the Bectons that Deshaun’s face had been scraped while he was being restrained – pinned down atop some gravel in the parking lot of the home. When Lamont visited that month, he was surprised by the severity of Deshaun’s injury. The scrape stretched from above his son’s eyebrow down beneath his cheekbone. In November, Veronice began arranging for Deshaun to come home for Thanksgiving. The trip never happened, and Veronice had to settle for a Skype session with her son on Nov. 23. When Deshaun’s face showed up on her computer screen, she saw the faint outline of a black eye. Deshaun, in his halting way, said it happened during a restraint triggered by a dispute he had with another student over a roll of duct tape. Veronice had to request a formal report, and when it came it said that Deshaun was out of control and had to be restrained. According to the report, Deshaun gave the black eye to himself. Veronice made plans to remove Deshaun immediately. And there was no way she was going to send him to Red Rock Canyon. Jerry Spanos says his Heritage School outside Provo is a model for how to care for troubled children. (Kim Raff, special to ProPublica) Utah is not bereft of what appear to be quality options. Jerry Spanos, a former Mormon missionary, is the chief executive officer of the Heritage School, a 19-acre residential treatment center set in a narrow valley that divides the outskirts of Provo from the snow-capped Wasatch Mountains. The campus is comprised of 11 gleaming 12-bed dormitories. There is a 627-seat performing arts center where students have performed The Wiz and West Side Story. There’s a rock-climbing wall, a soccer field, a basketball gym, a horse stable and a heated, indoor pool. Spanos’ staff includes 17 therapists and two psychiatrists. They are meant to get to know the kids as individuals: their triggers, their trauma, their history, their skills and their weaknesses. “I didn’t go into this because I wanted to make a ton of money,” Spanos said. “I did it because I wanted to help children.” There might have been better placements in Utah, but the Bectons’ first priority was just retrieving their son. Thus on Dec. 3, Veronice pulled up to the log cabin walls of the Mount Pleasant Academy horse ranch. The building is tucked at the end of a curling gravel driveway off a road that winds around a trailer park and an outcropping of trees. There was little evidence the staff was prepared to return Deshaun to his mother. Deshaun eventually ambled into a basement where his mother waited. He was disheveled and bleary-eyed. There was dirt in his hair, dust on his blue jeans and mud on his black parka. Veronice held Deshaun tight, and the two of them soon marched up the long, sloping driveway. They stopped at a nearby gas station so Deshaun could clean himself up. He used a restroom to change clothes while Veronice opened the trunk to organize a pile of jackets, sweatpants and gloves that lay loosely atop two half-full garbage bags: one carried a tangled of shirts, pants, drawings, and Star Wars books. Another mostly held dirty socks and video game cords. “I can’t believe this,” Veronice said, visibly distraught and hoisting the bag before her. “This is the way he came to me. And now here he is like this all over again.” A senior official with Mount Pleasant said he was eager to talk to ProPublica about the ranch and Deshaun’s stay, but over several weeks he did not make himself available. On the road, Deshaun opened up. “Mom, can I tell you something really amazing?” he asked, backing into a story about being allowed on a recreational trip as a reward for his recent good behavior. “That was the first time I ever had tears of joy in my whole life. I never had that feeling and it’s a great feeling.” Deshaun rambled on, his long tangents of thought sometimes leading to keen, surprising insights about himself and the world around him. He was remarkably self-aware and honest about his condition. Veronice has grown accustomed to these versions of Deshaun. He can be charming and funny and exceedingly polite. His imagination can be vivid, and Veronice over the years has marveled at his natural gift for art – he can make something remarkable out of almost anything, be it bottle caps or duct tape. “Mom didn’t really look that excited to pick me up,” he said to his father on a cellphone, cracking his family up. “The first thing I’m going to do when I get back home is take a warm bath.” Such moments make Veronice want to keep Deshaun home. “And that’s the thing,” Veronice said. “That’s been the most challenging piece. Because when he gets in a program, they go ‘This kid’s going to be a dream. And his family is involved?’ And then, you know...” “Every program he’s been in, he’s never graduated.” Veronice Becton hugs her son Deshaun outside a gas station. She had just retrieved him from his second out-of-state group home placement. (Kim Raff, special to ProPublica) More than 15 years ago, California was shaken by a tragedy that grew out of sending children out of state with little oversight to ensure their safety. On March 2, 1998, a 16-year-old from Sacramento named Nicholas Contreras died at the Arizona Boys Ranch, a “tough-love” boot camp in the desert. In the days prior, the camp’s staff had forced him to endure physical exercises so intense, in heat so extreme, that his body began to rebel against itself. He ultimately collapsed and succumbed to a respiratory infection. His chest cavity had swelled with two-and-a-half quarts of pus. California officials immediately demanded to know why a boy born in the state capital had been sent to Arizona as punishment for a juvenile offense. It turned out Contreras was one of roughly 1,000 California children in who had been sent to boot camps, juvenile detention centers and other programs in other states. California lawmakers quickly discovered the wave of children sent across state lines had been set in motion by two key factors: Juvenile justice judges and probation officials in the state’s 58 counties were appalled by conditions in California’s notoriously violent youth prisons. Sending California’s children out of state seemed safer. Also, it was often cheaper. After Contreras’ death, then-Gov. Pete Wilson signed a bill prohibiting California children from being sent to out-of-state facilities that permitted corporal punishment or barred parental visits. Wilson put the California Department of Social Services in charge of enforcing that mandate, and quickly California children were returned home. But now, the tide has been reversed and the reasons are familiar enough. California’s detention facilities grew so bad they have been all but eradicated. And its group homes proved such failures that the latest reform plan calls for drastically limiting them, as well. The plan pushes responsibility for troubled children back to individual counties, giving them some money to help fund alternatives, though it is unclear if that will be enough. Some counties, challenged to deliver individualized services to children at home, have come to see the financial appeal of sending away children caught up in the juvenile justice system or grappling with profound mental health issues. “We have had an influx of kids that have mental health issues like schizophrenia, or bipolar disorder, or are just highly aggressive. And unfortunately, we just don’t have a lot of facilities here that can handle what we have been seeing,” said Amy Jacobs, deputy probation officer for Stanislaus County in California’s central valley, which sent 16 children to out-of-state group homes this past year. “Lately, when we look to out of state programs, it’s usually because they offer more extensive mental health services,” she said. Representatives of California public school districts, which are responsible for the overwhelming majority of the out-of-state placements, also say it’s an option of last resort. But a last resort that’s being used plenty. No Place for a Kid to Go In Long Beach, California, a group home for troubled children sinks into crisis. [Read the story.](#) “We don’t want to send kids out of state,” said Beth Kauffman, director of psychological services at the Los Angeles Unified School District, the largest district in the state. “We try to find the least restrictive settings in our community first.” Kauffman said she’s managed to place fewer children out-of-state in recent years, but there are still some for whom she sees little choice. This past year, she sent away 56, mostly to Utah. The Department of Social Services currently bears some responsibility for monitoring the welfare of the state’s children once they have been sent elsewhere. But ProPublica’s reporting has showed the department often has trouble effectively monitoring the care of children in its own networks of homes and residential facilities. Even when homes are besieged by violence

and sexual assaults, regulators have appeared to move slowly and act indecisively. Parents and advocates worry that DSS will struggle to monitor conditions of homes in other states and a review of some recent incidents suggests such worries are warranted. The Rite of Passage Silver State Academy on tribal land in Yerington, Nevada, for instance, has been the site of four riots or major disturbances among residents in the last year. Six months before the first riot, California inspectors visited the facility and gave it high marks. They noted it had "a less tense and volatile environment" than in previous years. An inspector did not visit the home again until Feb. 19, 2015—a full six weeks after there had been violent clashes involving multiple students on back-to-back days in December 2014. The inspector showed up not to investigate the fights, but to find a resident who had complained he was not being adequately fed. By the time the official from California arrived, the resident had already been moved. Nine days later there was another riot. Described in one report as a "student rebellion incident," on the night of February 28, two buildings were set on fire and four workers at the home were injured. The California inspector did not return to the facility for another two weeks. In the meantime, he talked to three former students about the inadequate food claim. "All students stated with confidence that the amount of food is inadequate," said the final report, dated March 16—17 days after the buildings had been burned. Over the next several days, the inspector confirmed a number of other allegations: that the facility lacked enough well-trained staff and that those it employed had too often and too aggressively used restraints to subdue children. Rite of Passage officials did not respond to requests for comment. Michael Weston, a spokesman for the Department of Social Services, said the department acted responsibly in its oversight of the children at the Nevada home. He said that, because of an "enforcement action," the home's administration increased its ratio of staff to children. He said that by June 2015, the facility had reduced the number of children in its care from 120 to 50. Then, in August, it changed leadership. Today, DSS allows teen girls from California to be housed at the facility. Benchmark Behavioral Health systems operates this locked psychiatric facility in Bountiful, Utah. It is Deshaun's latest placement. (Kim Raff, special to ProPublica) Deshaun's latest out-of-state residence is a locked facility in Bountiful, Utah. The facility can house 84 children and is run by a company called Benchmark Behavioral Health Systems. The company's website advertises the facility as a place "high in the Rocky Mountains" that offers "progressive treatment in a beautiful, majestic setting." In reality, the facility is a pink stucco building sandwiched by Interstate 15 and a strip of auto repair shops and pawnshops. Earlier this year, a 25-year-old female mental health worker at the facility was charged with sexual assault for allegedly raping a 16-year-old resident. Benchmark officials did not respond to a request for comment. Kelly Criddle of the Utah Department of Health, which oversees the facility, said state law requires such psychiatric homes to be inspected at least once every five years, and that the Bountiful site had not been inspected by the state since March 2013. He said inspectors did not visit the facility to inquire specifically about the sex abuse charge, opting instead to accept documentation from the facility showing how it planned to address the issue. He said the health department decided the hospital administration did not violate any state laws because it properly responded to the incident. Back in Antioch, the Bectons stand at one more place of uncertainty and apprehension in a 12-year hunt for help. Their home is filled with evidence of the family's enduring devotion to Deshaun. Its walls are adorned with photographs of his smiling face. In one, he horses around with Jonah and Lamont. In another he wears his father's fire helmet. One photograph holds particular meaning. In it, Deshaun is wearing a Batman costume and is staring resolutely through a mask. There is a quote from Martin Luther King inscribed across his chest. It's drawn from a book of sermons published by King in 1963 called "Strength to Love." "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." The Bectons say they will not give up, but their optimism has been badly damaged. The best they can imagine for Deshaun is a life of modest independence and contribution. A simple job. A safe place to sleep. As for the next facility that might assist him in that pursuit, their hopes are even more modest. "I'm not looking for a perfect system for Deshaun," Veronica said. "If I did, I would lose my mind. There is none." Help us investigate: If you have experience with or information about interstate child welfare and juvenile detention, email Joaquin.sapien@propublica.org Source: <https://www.propublica.org/article/california-ships-hundreds-of-troubled-children-out-of-state>

Mother Seeks To Press Charges For Alleged Caretaker Abuse At Stillwater Facility Posted: Dec 31, 2015 12:54 PM PST Updated: Dec 31, 2015 4:12 PM PST By Aaron Brilbeck, News 9 Email_Connect_jen.billings@news9.net [Share this story on Facebook](#) [Tweet this story](#) [Plus one this story on Google Plus](#) [Email this story](#) Previous ImageEnlargeNext Image 1 / 1 STILLWATER, Oklahoma - A young man with Autism was taken to the hospital Thursday, after his mother says he was brutally beaten by his caretaker. Christopher Leverett, 26, was all smiles as he left the hospital after hours of tests. That's just his nature. But you could see the worry on his mother's face. She said Christopher was attacked by a caretaker in the Stillwater group home where he lived. "Now he flinches if I just raise my finger up just one time" Robin Drinnon said of her son, "And Lord knows what it's done to him inside and he can't tell me." The group home manager noticed the bruising Wednesday and, according to Drinnon, asked the staff "What happened to Christopher? And at that point Nick Butler said to her, I need to speak to you in the other room." According to Human Services documents, the caretaker, Nick Butler said Christopher "Hit me four or five times in the face, and I hit him back. I didn't mean to, and I didn't want to, it was just an instant reflex". There are bruises on both sides of Christopher's face though. Christopher doesn't like to talk about what happened. He just said he's sorry. But Christopher's mother said the guy who hit him is going to be sorry. She has called police and they are investigating. She also said the company that runs the group home also apologized, but, "I'm sorry doesn't fix it. It don't change the fact that someone hurt him. Chris can't take care of himself," said Drinnon. "I mean Chris trusted me to put him somewhere safe. And I honestly thought I had." Ron Hammock with Supported Community Lifestyles, the company that runs the group home, said Christopher has a long history of assaulting staff members, and that his caretaker simply snapped. Hammock said while he empathizes with the caretaker, the caretaker has been fired. Drinnon has taken Christopher to live with her. She wants to hire a lawyer but says she can't afford one now. A GoFundMe account has been set up to help her with legal costs. If you would like to donate visit: <https://www.gofundme.com/5tgbyb78> Source: <http://www.news9.com/story/30862846/mother-says-son-with-autism-was-beaten-by-caretaker-at-stillwater-facility>

Foster system abuses needs attention now - San Antonio Express-News Foster system abuses needs attention now Express-News Editorial Board Published 12:00 am, Saturday, January 2, 2016 Photo: BOB OWEN /San Antonio Express-News Image 1of1 Caption Close Image 1 of 1 Texas should not appeal a ruling that spells out the inadequacies of the state's foster care system. It should simply apply fixes. Here, retired Judge John Specia, Commissioner of Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, takes questions after speaking to CPS workers, at an office of the Children's Shelter, discussing the 2013 Child Protective Services statistics, and foster care redesign in 2014. Texas should not appeal a ruling that spells out the inadequacies of the state's foster care system. It should simply apply fixes. Here, retired Judge John Specia, Commissioner of Texas Department of Family ... more Photo: BOB OWEN /San Antonio Express-News Foster system abuses needs attention now 1 / 1 Back to Gallery A state appeal of a recent federal court ruling ordering the [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services](#) to overhaul foster care services in long-term state care won't change the facts. The system is broken and the problems need to be addressed now, not years down the road after all the appeals have been exhausted and another generation of foster children has aged out of the defective system. Texas must act without delay. Corpus Christi-based U.S. District Judge [Janis Graham Jack](#) ruled earlier this month that the state's current system for children in long-term care is unconstitutional. She cited the constant moving of children and their placement in unsafe places. The judge also took the state to task for its failure to hire enough people to handle the workload, improperly tracking abuse, child-on-child abuse and inadequately monitoring foster care facilities. It is not as if any of this should have come as a surprise to Texas and its [Department of Family and Protective Services](#). Recent Headlines [Your Turn: January 3 The Trump way — what Constitution? How a suicide bomber is made — a Pakistan story Foster system abuses needs attention now A third condition between urban and non-urban — aBroadway linear park](#) Jack does not mince words in her 255-page ruling about the horrid living conditions some of the state's most vulnerable residents have to endure. She describes a reality most of us cannot image in which "children have been shuttled throughout a system where rape, abuse, psychotropic medication, and instability are the norm." The judge has ordered the state to put an immediate stop to the placement of foster care children in unsafe places such as group homes that do not have someone awake and on duty 24-hours a day. There is much more that needs to be addressed. These problems are not new. Jack points out that the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services has for decades largely ignored reports that detailed the problems and possible solutions to those problems. It looks as if Texas taxpayers may be in for more of the same. A spokeswoman for the Department of Family and Protective Services told the Express-News the agency was disappointed in Jack's ruling and is reviewing its option. An appeal appears inevitable. This has all the appearance of the state simply not caring. And this is unacceptable. Prolonging the court battle serves no real purpose. Instead of spending money to continue to fight the lawsuit brought by Children's Rights, a New York-based advocacy group, the state should invest the funds to fix the problems plaguing the 12,000 children in permanent foster care. Time does not stand still for children in foster care. The system needs immediate fixing. Any judge who has handled child abuse and neglect cases will acknowledge the fact that children who remain in the system for long periods of time

often leave the system in worse condition than when they entered it. There are individualized efforts across the state to address the problem, but it is time for a uniform plan that looks at the bigger picture. In Bexar County, court officials recently announced the creation of a court program aimed at addressing the needs of children who find themselves in the justice system due to abuse and neglect. The goal is to reduce the number of children who end up in foster care by helping their parents tackle problems with mental health, drug and alcohol abuse and domestic violence — along with housing and employment issues — so families can remain intact. The local program is being made possible through the generosity of the [Baptist Health Foundation](#) and the [Katherine C. Carmody Charitable Trust of San Antonio](#), which have provided grant funding. Many communities are not as fortunate, and that is why it is important that the state step up and take responsibility for dealing with the broken system. Texas is notorious for exhausting all appeals before begrudgingly doing what the courts have ordered when it finds itself on the losing end of a class action lawsuit. The playbook merits changing. Failure to do so will only continue to have an adverse effect on the state's economic future. That's what is at stake here. Jack lays it out pretty clearly in her ruling. "Years of abuse, neglect, and shuttling between inappropriate placements across the state has created a population that cannot contribute to society, and provides a continued strain on the government through welfare, incarceration, or otherwise. Although some foster children are able to overcome these obstacles, they should not have to," Jack wrote. She is precisely right. The state needs a plan of action to address the problems within the foster care system sooner rather than later. The lives of too many children are at risk. Waiting around and doing nothing until another round of litigation comes to an end should not be an option. Source: <http://www.mysanantonio.com/opinion/editorials/article/Foster-system-abuses-needs-attention-now-6730597.php>

Methodist Children's Home to close Jayton facility Ministry cites declining number of children serviced at Sammy Baugh Foster Group Home
Posted: January 1, 2016 - 5:43pm | Updated: January 2, 2016 - 12:07am By [JOSIE MUSICO](#) A-J MEDIA JAYTON — Methodist Children's Home is closing its Kent County facility after nine years of operations. The Sammy Baugh Foster Group Home, located in a county-owned building that once served as a senior citizens center, served about 100 children since 2006. The ministry's decision to close that Jayton branch was in response to declining numbers of children served, spokesman Russell Rankin said. Its final weeks of operation saw only about three children. Methodist Children's Home is a Waco-headquartered, faith-based non-profit group. Rankin described the Sammy Baugh home as a partnership between his agency and Kent County; the county provided the building and Methodist its occupants. Young clients attended nearby Jayton schools. "From the beginning, both sides went into this knowing we would operate this as long as there was a need and as long as there was a beneficial endeavor," Rankin said. The agency worked with Child Protective Services, birth families and foster families. An optimal conclusion is for parents to work through the troubles that led to the separation with their children, then get them back. The Sammy Baugh home provided services in the meantime. "That's the ideal situation — for children to be reunited with their families in a healthy manner," Rankin said. Finding qualified new parents to formally adopt children from the program is considered another happy outcome. Others have left the program by graduating Jayton High and becoming legal adults, Rankin said. Kent County commissioners reviewed Methodist Children's Home's resignation letter and inventoried property left at the facility. "We were blessed with nine years of it," County Judge Jim White said. "We wished it could continue longer, but we realized that based on bureaucracy rules and regulations, it made it difficult to continue." Jayton is a tiny town about an hour and a half east of Lubbock. Certain health care and other services are limited, and no other major metropolitan area is much closer. While he misses the children and staff, White admits taking them to frequent out-of-town visits to doctors and counselors could be inconvenient. "We had over 100 children that came through it and blessed our community, and we hope that these children and these families realize the world is not entirely dysfunctional — that there's love out there for them," he said. josephine.musico@lubbockonline.com • 766-8796 Source: <http://lubbockonline.com/local-news/2016-01-01/methodist-childrens-home-close-jayton-facility>

A Primer on the Damaging Movement to Privatize Public Schools Friday, 08 January 2016 00:00 By [Marion Brady](#), [The Washington Post](#) | Op-Ed font size [decrease font size](#) [increase font size](#) [Print](#) 36 Email (Photo: [Abandoned School](#) via Shutterstock) When, about 30 years ago, corporate interests began their highly organized, well-funded effort to privatize public education, you wouldn't have read or heard about it. They didn't want to trigger the debate that such a radical change in an important institution warranted. If, like most pundits and politicians, you've supported that campaign, it's likely you've been snookered. Here's a quick overview of the snookering process. The Pitch Talking Points: (a) Standardized testing proves America's schools are poor. (b) Other countries are eating our lunch. (c) Teachers deserve most of the blame. (d) The lazy ones need to be forced out by performance evaluations. (e) The dumb ones need scripts to read or "canned standards" telling them exactly what to teach. (f) The experienced ones are too set in their ways to change and should be replaced by fresh Five-Week-Wonders from Teach for America. (Bonus: Replacing experienced teachers saves a ton of money.) (g) Public ("government") schools are a step down the slippery slope to socialism. Tactics Education establishment resistance to privatization is inevitable, so (a) avoid it as long as possible by blurring the lines between "public" and "private." (b) Push school choice, vouchers, tax write-offs, tax credits, school-business partnerships, profit-driven charter chains. (c) When resistance comes, crank up fear with the, "They're eating our lunch!" message. (d) Contribute generously to all potential resisters - academic publications, professional organizations, unions, and school support groups such as PTA. (e) Create fake "think tanks," give them impressive names, and have them do "research" supporting privatization. (f) Encourage investment in teacher-replacer technology - internet access, iPads, virtual schooling, MOOCs, etc. (e) Pressure state legislators to make life easier for profit-seeking charter chains by taking approval decisions away from local boards and giving them to easier-to-lobby state-level bureaucrats. (g) Elect the "right" people at all levels of government. (When they're campaigning, have them keep their privatizing agenda quiet.) Weapon If you'll read the fine-print disclaimers on high-stakes standardized tests, you'll see how grossly they're being misused, but they're the key to privatization. The general public, easily impressed by numbers and mathematical razzle-dazzle, believes competition is the key to quality, so want quality quantified even though it can't be done. Machine-scored tests don't measure quality. They rank. It's hard to rank unlike things so it's necessary to standardize. That's what the Common Core State Standards do. To get the job done quickly, Bill Gates picked up the tab, important politicians signed off on them, and teachers were handed them as a done deal. The standards make testing and ranking a cinch. They also make making billions a cinch. Manufacturers can use the same questions for every state that has adopted the standards or facsimiles thereof. If challenged, test fans often quote the late Dr. W. Edward Deming, the world-famous quality guru who showed Japanese companies how to build better stuff than anybody else. In his book, "The New Economics," Deming wrote, "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it." Here's the whole sentence as he wrote it: "It is wrong to suppose that if you can't measure it, you can't manage it - a costly myth." Operating the Weapon What's turned standardized testing into a privatizing juggernaut are pass-fail "cut scores" set by politicians. Saying kids need to be challenged, they set the cut score high enough to fail many (sometimes most) kids. When the scores are published, they point to the high failure rate to "prove" public schools can't do the job and should be closed or privatized. Clever, huh? The privatizing machinery is in place. Left alone, it'll gradually privatize most, but not all, public schools. Those that serve the poorest, the sickest, the disabled, the most troubled, the most expensive to educate - those will stay in what's left of the public schools. Weapon Malfunction Look at standardized tests from the kids' perspective. Test items (a) measure recall of secondhand, standardized, delivered information, or (b) require a skill to be demonstrated, or (c) reward an ability to second-guess whoever wrote the test item. Because kids didn't ask for the information, because the skill they're being asked to demonstrate rarely has immediate practical use, and because they don't give a tinker's dam what the test-item writer thinks, they have zero emotional investment in what's being tested. As every real teacher knows, no emotional involvement means no real learning. Period. What makes standardized tests look like they work is learner emotion, but it's emotion that doesn't have anything to do with learning. The ovals get penciled in to avoid trouble, to please somebody, to get a grade, or to jump through a bureaucratic hoop to be eligible to jump through another bureaucratic hoop. When the pencil is laid down, what's tested, having no perceived value, automatically erases from memory. Before You Write... If you want to avoid cranking out the usual amateurish drivel about standardized testing that appears in the op-eds, editorials, and syndicated columns of the mainstream media, ask yourself a few questions about the testing craze: (a) Should life-altering decisions hinge on the scores of commercially produced tests not open to public inspection? (b) How wise is it to only teach what machines can measure? (c) How fair is it to base any part of teacher pay on scores from tests that can't evaluate complex thought? (d) Are tests that have no "success in life" predictive power worth the damage they're doing? [Here's a longer list of problems](#) you should think about before you write. Perspective America's schools have always struggled - an inevitable consequence, first, of a decision in 1893 to narrow and standardize the high school curriculum and emphasize college prep; second, from a powerful strain of individualism in our national character that eats away support for public institutions; third, from a really sorry system of institutional organization. Politicians, not educators, make education policy, basing it on the simplistic conventional wisdom that educating means "delivering information." In fact, educating is the most complex and difficult of all professions. Done right, teaching is an attempt to help the young align their beliefs, values, and assumptions more closely with what's true and real, escape the bonds of ethnocentrism, explore the wonders and potential of humanness, and become skilled at using thought processes that make it possible to realize those

aims. Historically, out of the institution's dysfunctional organizational design came schools with lots of problems, but with one redeeming virtue. They were "loose." Teachers had enough autonomy to do their thing. So they did, and the kids that some of them coached brought America far more than its share of patents, scholarly papers, scientific advances, international awards, and honors. Notwithstanding their serious problems, America's public schools were once the envy of the world. Now, educators around that world shake their heads in disbelief (or maybe cheer?) as we spend billions of dollars to standardize what once made America great - un-standardized thought. A salvage operation is still (barely) possible, but not if politicians, prodded by pundits, continue to do what they've thus far steadfastly refused to do - listen to people who've actually worked with real students in real classrooms, and did so long enough and thoughtfully enough to know something about teaching. Source: <http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/34340-a-primer-on-the-damaging-movement-to-privatize-public-schools>

Report finds Mississippi foster care system still worsening Posted on [January 7, 2016](#) by [Daily Journal](#) in [News](#) By Jeff Amy Associated Press JACKSON – A new report finds that Mississippi's child welfare system continues to deteriorate, raising the stakes for state government's effort to stave off a federal judge from taking over the system. The report, covering the year that ended June 30, is the second in a row to find the state is backsliding in efforts to meet settlement obligations in a long-running Olivia Y federal lawsuit. The case is named after a then-young girl who was one of eight children who lawyers said had been abused because of the state's failures. Performance declined in all but one of 13 regions, and none met even half the 19 standards. "It's as if these children are out there in a forest or a desert with no kind of structure around them," said Marcia Lowry, one of the lead lawyers for plaintiffs in the case. Gov. Phil Bryant in December named former Supreme Court Justice David Chandler to lead the Division of Family and Children's Services, ordering the unit of the Department of Human Services to report directly to him. He also pledged to increase funding. "The governor understands that the system is broken and that drastic improvement must be made to avoid federal takeover," spokesman Knox Chandler wrote in an email. "Justice Chandler and Gov. Bryant will work tirelessly to ensure Mississippi's foster children receive the best care and comfort. They deserve nothing less." The report, by court-appointed monitor Grace Lopes, delves deeply into an infant who died five days after entering state custody in early 2015. The infant died while sleeping in bed with the foster parents, a prohibited practice. The foster parents' own child had died the same way earlier, and complaints about their care for two sets of foster children were received in 2014. The department placed the infant without inspecting the foster parents' new home, and didn't know the foster mother had lost her job and had been convicted of a crime. The report also faulted the state for how it handled the investigation afterward, saying files in the case were difficult to follow and a death review panel made recommendations without documenting how they would prevent a recurrence. "There does not appear to be any systematic way in which the DFCS responds to and reviews cases in which there is a fatality of a child in custody," wrote a consultant hired by Lopes. In the wake of the child's death, the department also disclosed that local officials weren't following rules on training foster families, and had pushed 132 foster families through one-day training sessions, instead of training them over weeks as required by state policy. The report said the system was pressured by a 26 percent increase in children in state custody from mid-2013 to mid-2015, placing "significant strain on the agency's understaffed workforce, contributing to a decline in defendants' performance." In Hinds, Harrison, Jackson and Hancock counties, 64 percent of caseworkers and supervisors carried a caseload that exceeded settlement mandates. In Mississippi's other 78 counties, 48 percent of caseworkers and supervisors carried a caseload exceeding requirements. Lopes said increasing populations don't bear all the blame. The monitor said the state has struggled with "demonstrable shortcomings" in management and accountability. Source: <https://djournal.com/news/report-finds-mississippi-foster-care-system-still-worsening/>

Foster care scandal deepens: 'Every single staff person has a criminal record' 1 / 3 DHS hearing Donna Keddy, the Oregon Department of Human Services' licensing and regulatory oversight director, testifies before a Senate panel looking at foster-care legislation on Nov. 16, 2015, at the Capitol in Salem. [Ian K. Kullgren | The Oregonian/OregonLive Print Email](#) By [Denis C. Theriault | The Oregonian/OregonLive](#) The Oregonian Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#) on January 09, 2016 at 7:04 AM, updated January 09, 2016 at 10:04 AM 2016 Oregon Legislature [Foster care scandal deepens: 'Every single staff person has a criminal record'](#) [Tip line for mass shootings: Key Oregon lawmakers ready to spend \\$1 million](#) [Battle lines drawn: Oregon's political fights loom over 2016 and beyond](#) ['Lack of food,' vulgar names: Abuse complaints at school for troubled teens](#) [Fed-up officials call for overhaul of Oregon Energy Department](#) [All Stories](#) Back in February 2009, the head of Oregon's child welfare programs emailed her boss with worries about Portland foster care provider Give Us This Day. "At a site visit last week, numerous concerns arose (on top of the fact that they aren't licensed) — the most serious of which is that every single staff person has a criminal record," Erin Kelley-Siel wrote to the Department of Human Services' director, Bruce Goldberg. "I know you've had extensive involvement in the past with issues concerning [Give Us This Day] — are you currently in discussions with them?" continued Kelley-Siel, who later [led the department](#) from 2011 to 2015. "I want to make sure our activities support yours. Thoughts or suggestions on how to proceed?" The department eventually stopped placing children at Give Us This Day — but not until almost seven years later, after allegations emerged that the provider had [misspent nearly \\$2 million](#) in state funding. Sen. [Sara Gelser](#), who's pushing for [tougher oversight of Oregon's child welfare system](#), released Kelley-Siel's email amid [hundreds of pages of records](#) in advance of a key legislative hearing next week on her proposals. The details revealed in those records show senior officials knew of significant troubles at Give Us This Day years earlier than previously reported. And they knew of problems in time to have avoided the money issues and allegations of abuse that arose later. The records also add to disturbing questions about state officials' willingness and ability to crack down on troubled providers. Just months after the 2009 discussions about Give Us This Day, department leaders announced a review of their handling of abuse cases — following high-profile allegations that caseworkers in Washington County had [ignored reports of abuse allegations for more than a decade](#). Oregon has paid millions of dollars in settlements involving abuse, in some cases fatal, over the past several years. Costly allegations: Click [here](#) to see a list of the state's 12 most expensive abuse settlements. "We need a very significant culture change," said Gelser, D-Corvallis, who's working up bills that would give officials more power to investigate abuse claims and close providers accused of neglect. "All of the right things were being said in public. But behind the curtain, decisions were being made to sacrifice the safety of kids," Gelser said. "That's not a red flag. That's a giant neon sign." Give Us This Day's financial troubles were first reported by Willamette Week in September. Later that month, [a former Give Us This Day employee](#) sat before the Senate's human services committee and said the provider failed to provide food and clean bedding, rewrote reports, tolerated mold and rodents, and let workers use improper force. Gov. Kate Brown ousted the Department of Human Services' interim director in November and announced a review of Oregon's foster care system. Brown later told lawmakers her review would focus on abuse investigations, licensing practices and how the department shares warning signs. An advisory group, including lawmakers and advocates, is set to meet for the second time this month, a spokeswoman for Brown's office said. Last month, after changes by Brown's handpicked human services director, officials [pulled kids from a Clackamas County provider](#). Youth Villages, amid complaints of supervision so poor that teenagers were allowed to engage in sexual contact. Youth Villages announced last month it was closing the residential program in question. Another provider, the Scotts Valley School south of Eugene, [received a letter from the state](#) that mentioned children enduring hunger, bedbug bites, vulgar nicknames such as "orphan whore" and punishment that involved silently facing a wall for 12 hours a day. Gelser said the latest documents on Give Us This Day, which she obtained in a public records request, put an exclamation point on her argument that state law must change to help stop further abuse. One of Gelser's bills would [tighten](#) licensing requirements and financial rules, and give regulators the power to suspend a provider's license over abuse claims and other safety violations. Now, providers can keep their license if they're "substantially" in compliance, even if regulators have repeatedly confirmed abuse and neglect. For example, messages sent between 2009 and 2014 show back-and-forth discussions over licensing, abuse complaints, worries about poor care and supervision, problems with cleanliness and hunger, and "concerns about financial management and cash flow." Despite those concerns, officials in June 2013 recommended keeping the state's contract with Give Us This Day — swayed by the provider's "willingness to take almost any child any time" and its "experience with children and families of color." Officials have repeatedly said they turned to Give Us This Day because it accepted troubled children other providers turned away. "That is not an acceptable reason," Gelser said Thursday. "Those decisions impacted the safety of every other licensed provider. It gutted the power and the authority of the licensing agency to actually hold providers accountable." Gelser warned of another possible hit from Give Us This Day: penalties over Medicaid fraud. On Nov. 13, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [issued a subpoena](#) for all state records dealing with Give Us This Day since 2007. Gelser said officials may have broken the law by paying Give Us This Day despite knowing "on multiple occasions" that it lacked a license. She said the inquiry could come with "a big bill" and, potentially, federal criminal charges. "I hope people are held accountable," she said. "Kids were hurt." — Denis C. Theriault dtheriault@oregonian.com 503-221-8430; @TheriaultPDX Source: http://www.oregonlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2016/01/foster_care_scandal_deepens.html

Boys group home closed after one year in operation 0 Tweet this to your followers! From To Compose your message 87 Boys group home closed after one year in operation Say something about this... - http://www.muskogee phoenix.com/news/boys-group-home-closed-after-one-year-in-operation/article_51c97b7f-d1ce-568a-b84b-ef13d4eb5d2f.html http://www.muskogee phoenix.com/news/boys-group-home-closed-after-one-year-in-operation/article_51c97b7f-d1ce-568a-b84b-ef13d4eb5d2f.html Story Print Create a hardcopy of this page Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) Posted: Saturday, January 9, 2016 12:44 pm **Boys group home closed after one year in operation** By Harrison Grimwood Phoenix Staff Writer Muskogee Phoenix A group home for boys, which was run by Muskogee County Council of Youth Services and was hotly contested in city council, closed down after one year of operation. The doors to Attollo Boys Group Home at 3900 Chandler Road closed its doors Dec. 18, MCCOYS Interim Director Cindy Perkins said. "We evaluated what programs we have, and we decided to reduce our child welfare residential programs that provide long-term care," Perkins said. "And we thought we'd focus our efforts on short-term residential services." Preceding the closure was an inordinate number of calls for police to the group home, mostly for missing persons, according to police reports. "Anytime someone would go AWOL, we had to call," Perkins said. For a three-month period starting in August, there were three runaway juvenile reports and two assaults. From about Nov. 6 to Dec. 7, there were 30 reports for missing or runaway juveniles, at least three assaults, one burglary and one report of vandalism, according to police reports. "It would take me awhile to calculate how many calls we have at Attollo boys home, but in general it's been two to three times a week for a while, sometimes less," Muskogee Police Department Public Information Officer Lincoln Anderson said. "The biggest issue with responding to a place repeatedly, especially in a situation such as that one, is that it isn't fixing the problem." The children and teenagers who were housed at the group home were either placed into other facilities or returned home, Perkins said. Back in October 2014, MCCOYS purchased the facility, a former church, under the impression it was zoned for commercial use. Former director of MCCOYS Mark Winters spearheaded the effort to rezone the property, which was voted down by the city council on Oct. 8, 2014. Source: http://www.muskogee phoenix.com/news/boys-group-home-closed-after-one-year-in-operation/article_51c97b7f-d1ce-568a-b84b-ef13d4eb5d2f.html

Miami foster group home under scrutiny for video of kids fighting Judge rips into child welfare providers for provoking "cockfight" Lawyers for other parents will attend Wednesday hearing called by judge Home operator, DCF say they are reviewing incident, safety protocols Judge Michael A. Hanzman has called a hearing on a group home where two foster children were encouraged to fight. Roberto Koltun El Nuevo Herald i By David O'valle dovalle@miamiherald.com [LinkedIn](#) [Google+](#) [Pinterest](#) [Reddit](#) Print Order Reprint of this Story A Miami group home for foster children is under fire after a video circulated on social media showing two 11-year-old boys in a violent brawl — egged on by the facility's adult supervisor as other kids cheered. "I saw a cockfight ... between foster kids," Miami-Dade Circuit Judge Michael Hanzman said in court last week, describing the video as showing the employee "provoking and encouraging violence" while "these two boys battled it out and beat each other up." In extraordinarily blunt language, the judge blasted Children's Home Society of Florida, a statewide company that runs 11 foster homes in Miami-Dade. Children's Home Society has a contract to operate the group homes through Our Kids of Miami-Dade, a nonprofit child welfare agency itself under contract to the Florida Department of Children and Families. "What is really sad is these kids are abused, abandoned and neglected. And then they get taken from their parents. They come in expecting refuge," the judge said. "And what they are subjected to is more abuse and neglect at the hands of ineptitude, and agencies who throw them in these group homes with incompetent people who stand around watching them have cockfights." The brawl led to one of the kids being beaten and then hospitalized against his will for psychiatric treatment. The Children's Home Society employee has now been fired while DCF investigates whether the episode amounts to child abuse. Another court hearing is to be held on Wednesday as lawyers for some of the parents of foster children seek to be included in the legal proceedings involving Children's Home Society group homes. There is reason "to believe that the incident in the case is not isolated, and that all of the children in the care of CHS are potentially in danger of similar abuse," Eugene Zenobi, head of the publicly funded Regional Counsel office, wrote in a motion filed to the court Friday. The two children — known only by their initials J.W. and N.L. — have since been moved out of the group home. The court motion filed by the Regional Counsel office said one of the kids was "severely beaten" during the brawl. "We are working in partnership with Our Kids to review the matter and provide solutions/improvements," Maggie Dante, the Southeast executive director of Children's Home Society, said in a statement to the Miami Herald. "The employee was terminated and did acknowledge that she did not follow our de-escalation protocols." A DCF spokeswoman said the agency is "working closely with Our Kids to make certain all necessary steps are taken to ensure the safety and well-being of the children." Jackie Gonzalez, the CEO of Our Kids, acknowledged the "troubling matters raised in court" and said all three agencies are "conducting a thorough review" of the incident. The judge's venting is nothing new. Over the past several years, Hanzman has repeatedly chided DCF and its contracted agencies for failing to provide proper services to children under state care. Much of his anger last week was directed toward Children's Home Society, the longtime private Florida child welfare agency that oversees 100,000 children in 67 counties. The agency made news in July when Microsoft awarded it \$7.2 million in grants to help train employees and disadvantaged youth with the latest technology. The judge made no decisions last week — although he hinted at one course of action. "Are you going to shut down this group home or do you want me to do it for you?" he angrily asked. Many of the details of the case, such as the location of the foster-care group home or the identity of the suspended staffer, have yet to be made public. Exactly how the video made its way to authorities remains unclear but Hanzman learned about the case Dec. 21 when J.W., who was supposed to receive Christmas gifts at a court hearing, missed the appointment because he was in the hospital. According to the testimony in court, J.W. at some point had apparently been "hit with a heavy object" thrown by the other child. Instead of stopping the fight, the staffer "told them, quote, 'Go ahead and fight it out,'" Hanzman recalled, according to a transcript of the hearing. The fight continued unabated as a ring of other boys cheered and hollered, even as the staffer summoned police. "I think that that person lost her composure," Dante said. "Oh she was very composed," the judge retorted. "She encouraged the kids to fight. She said, go ahead and fight, just don't use weapons. Let's have a fight. She circled everybody around. Got the kids all riled up." Said Dante later: "This one particular staffer is not a reflection of the work we do everyday with these children." After the staffer summoned police, officers committed J.W. against his will to a hospital for days for psychiatric evaluation under the state's Baker Act. Hanzman said the staffer clearly "lied to" officers about what happened. "This kid is going to be labeled as having a mental illness his whole life. Probably won't be able to get a job," he said. "All because you have a stupid, inept case worker at your facility that encourages 11-year-olds to engage in brutal violence and stands around watching and cheering." Hanzman also raised concerns about the group homes having enough staffers at each group home and that Children's Home Society reported the suspected child abuse first and only to DCF, not police. Source: <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/miami-dade/article54125210.html>

Foster Care Company's "Abnormal Level Of Lobbying" [Aram Roston](#) BuzzFeed News Reporter [Tweet](#) [Tumblr](#) [Stumble](#) [Bookmark it](#) [View this image](#) The for-profit company, Mentor, placed 2-year old Alexandria Hill with a troubled foster mother the firm had recruited and trained, who murdered her. Milam County District Attorney ID: 7742460 **A company under investigation by the powerful Senate Finance Committee for its practices in privatized for-profit child foster care has hired a phalanx of expensive and high-powered lobbyists and lawyers, including former staffers for the senators leading the probe.** One of the lobbyists, Josh Kardon, used to serve as chief of staff for Democratic Senator Ron Wyden (Oregon), the ranking member of the finance committee. Another lobbyist, Makan Delrahim, used to advise Republican Senator Orrin Hatch (Utah), the committee chairman. The for-profit firm markets itself as "The Mentor Network," though it trades on the New York stock exchange under the name Civitas Solutions. Senate staffers said the investigation is moving ahead and that the company's lobbying blitz won't affect it. Still, one staffer acknowledged that lobbying on this scale, though routine in fields such as defense contracting or banking, is rare in foster care, which few people realize is a profitable business to companies such as Mentor. "For this industry, this is an abnormal level of lobbying," he said. Hatch and Wyden first [signed a letter demanding information](#) from Mentor in June 2015. That came after a BuzzFeed News [series on a string of child deaths](#) and [abuses](#) at the foster homes run by Mentor. The series disclosed how the firm has turned the business of foster care into a cash cow, with double digit profits in some states. It's paid by states to place children, recruit and train foster parents, and even hire the social workers who are supposed to work with children and monitor foster parents. In one grisly case in Texas, Mentor had received multiple warnings that Sherrill Small should not be a foster mother. Yet Mentor placed two-year-old Alexandria Hill in her care. Small swung her by her feet into the floor, killing the little girl. In Maryland, at a grim Mentor foster home compound called "Last Chance Farm," foster children were serially abused by their Mentor foster father for over a decade, while the company allegedly ignored repeated red flags. Sarah Magazine, the company spokesperson, emailed BuzzFeed News a statement that read in part, "We appreciate the interest of the Senate Finance Committee in the important work done every day by our nation's foster care systems." However, the company's filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission show worries about the Senate investigation. "It is both costly and time consuming for us to comply with these inquiries," according to the most [recent Civitas Solutions](#) annual report. "It is possible that the inquiries could result in negative publicity or

other negative action that could harm our reputation.” A firm named Capitol Counsel [registered in November to lobby for Mentor](#), and listed Kardon, who worked with Wyden for 17 years, as one of the two lobbyists who would work on “Issues related to Title IV-E foster care contracts.” (Title IV-E foster care is federally subsidized.) Kardon is considered so close to Wyden that when he left Wyden’s office in 2011 to move to K street, the Oregonian said he had been the senator’s “alter-ego.” Kardon wrote in an email to BuzzFeed News that “when Mentor called I jumped at the opportunity to work with an organization dedicated to the cause of providing the best possible care for all foster kids.” Josh Kardon is seen in an undated Facebook photo. Facebook / Via [facebook.com](#) ID: 7749901 Samantha Offerdahl, a spokesperson for Wyden, said Kardon would not be able to influence the probe. “It doesn’t change anything from the committee’s standpoint. Senator Wyden worked with Senator Hatch to initiate the investigation and he’s continuing to doggedly pursue the facts until the investigation is complete.” The company also brought in a lobbyist with a past connection to Senator Hatch. It retained the lobbying firm Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck in July, shortly after the senators began their investigation. As a registered lobbyist for Mentor, the firm listed Delrahim, a former Justice Department official who also once worked as staff director of the Senate Judiciary Committee under then-chairman Hatch. Delrahim’s bio says he was a “principal legal and policy advisor” on judiciary matters to Hatch. [View this image](#) ; Makan Delrahim is seen in this file photo from 2000. Former advisor to Sen. Orrin Hatch. Retained as lobbyist by Mentor. Tom Williams / CQ-Roll Call, Inc. via Getty Images ID: 7749939 These services are not cheap: [For one three-month period, Mentor paid Brownstein Hyatt \\$100,000 for the services of Delrahim and another lobbyist](#). “I am proud of my and our firm’s relationship with MENTOR,” Delrahim said in an emailed statement to BuzzFeed News. “Like foster care agencies of all types, MENTOR has on rare occasions experienced serious incidents.” In her statement, Mentor spokeswoman Magazine wrote “We retained Josh Kardon and Makan Delrahim, both of whom have significant experience working with Congress—including the Senate Finance Committee—to help us communicate with the Committee.” A spokesman for the committee emailed a statement for both senators: “The Chairman and Ranking Member are determined to get to the bottom of what happened in a number of questionable cases where the health and safety of children in the foster care program might have been compromised by Mentor.” Among the elite lawyers Mentor has brought in to deal with the Senate, Magazine emailed, is Reginald Brown, who was an Associate White House Counsel under President George W. Bush. He is now a partner at WilmerHale, where [he oversees the firm’s “congressional investigations practice”](#). Brown declined to comment. Although Mentor got its start as a for-profit foster care company in the 1980s, it has expanded into other lines of business, such as group homes and caring for the developmentally disabled, and it uses the umbrella term “human services” to describe its business. And while the former Hatch and Wyden staffers were brought on board after Hatch and Wyden announced their investigation, federal lobbying is nothing new for the company. It has spent \$1.6 million on lobbyists since 2006. The firm’s filings with the SEC emphasize that almost all of its revenue for “human services” comes from state, local, and federal agencies. “To facilitate our ability to procure or retain government-sponsored contracts,” the firm wrote, “we rely in part on establishing and maintaining relationships with officials of various government agencies, primarily at the state and local level but also including federal agencies.” In 2014, the firm announced it was giving an award called the “Ripple of Hope” to Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, the independent who then chaired the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, and is now running for president. A spokesman says Sanders does not know Mentor and doesn’t remember receiving the award. Mentor has been doing some work with the VA, in a business where it tends to veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury. Source: <http://www.buzzfeed.com/aramroston/foster-care-company-hires-lobbyists#wl3QKvbg>

State Releases Investigation Log for Troubled Foster Care Provider Give Us This Day Documents show numerous and longstanding allegations of abuse and neglect. By [Nigel Jaquiss](#) Updated January 12 at 3:56 PM Published January 12 at 11:19 AM The Oregon Department of Human Services has finally released documents detailing more than a decade of complaints and allegations involving the now-defunct Portland foster care provider [Give Us This Day](#). DHS, which was responsible for funding and regulating Give Us This Day, previously refused to provide such information to WW, claiming allegations of abuse and the investigations into such allegations were not a public record. The agency’s position shifted after a [series of stories by WW and](#) other media about Give Us This Day and after Sen. Sara Gelser (D-Corvallis), the chair of the Senate Human Services Committee, filed a series of public records requests of her own. The [40 pages of documents released today](#) today show years of allegations and complaints, involving claims of physical abuse; sexual assault; various kinds of violence; lack of food; filthy living conditions; staff lacking training but possessing criminal records and a litany of other problems. Some of the allegations were sustained by investigators. Many were not, although the notable characteristic is how numerous and consistent the complaints have been since 2001. As long ago as May 2005, for instance, state officials, the Portland Police Bureau and Give Us This Day met because police service at Give Us This Day facilities and foster homes were so prevalent that DHS said calls to the police were reaching a “public nuisance” level. (That continued. Between 2005 and 2015, records show, police responded to Give Us This Day facilities more than 1,000 times). Give Us This Day promised to do better but in August 2005, the state responded to a complaint that a Give Us This Day staff member “with a serious criminal history, including sex offending, compelling prostitution of a minor, rape and possession of a weapon.” Give Us This Day fired that employee but overall problems continued. In an October 2005 letter, DHS issued Give Us This Day a stern warning “due to the high number of complaints and concerns received (over 30 in less than 12 months) regarding treatment of children in Give Us Day.” The Oregon Department of Justice finally forced Give Us This Day to cease operations last October, after finding the organization wasted or diverted more than \$2 million. The Senate Human Services Committee will hold its third hearing on DHS’ handling of Give Us This Day Thursday morning at 8 am. Source: <http://www.wweek.com/2016/01/12/state-releases-investigation-log-for-troubled-foster-care-provider-give-us-this-day/>

Oregon Militia Spokesman Says Foster Children Were Removed From His Home Brendan O’Connor Today 11:56am Filed to: oregon lavoy finicum oregon militia 55.0K 75728 Edit Invite manually Promote DismissUndismiss Block for gawker Hide Share to Kinja Go to permalink Oregon militia spokesman [Robert “LaVoy” Fincum told OPB](#) that the four foster children who had been living with him and his wife on their Chino Valley, Arizona, ranch have been taken away. “I hope people are seeing the sacrifices we’re making here,” he said. The rancher estimated that more than 50 boys, often coming from group homes, drug rehabs, and psychiatric institutions, have lived with them in the past decade. “My ranch has been a great tool for these boys,” Fincum said. “It has done a lot of good.” (Last week, Fincum traveled between the Malheur Wildlife Refuge, in southeastern Oregon, and Utah, as part of a press tour. “We went fast, and came back fast,” [he told OPB](#). “I doubt [law enforcement] even knew we were gone. Probably they did. But they were nice enough to let us go and come back.”) Actually, police have said [the occupiers are free to come and go as they please](#), which raises the question: Why do they need people to send them supplies, then? Advertisement According to Fincum, his wife Jeanette was caring for the children while he was busy in Oregon. He said a social worker removed the first of them on January 4th, just a few days after the occupation began, and the last was removed on January 9th. He blamed “pressure from the feds,” who “must have gotten to the governor, who told the state to get them out of there.” [From OPB](#): Sponsored That represents an enormous loss of income for the Fincums. According to a 2010 tax filing, Catholic Charities paid the family \$115,343 to foster children in 2009. That year, foster parents [were compensated between \\$22.31 and \\$37.49](#) per child, per day, meaning if the Fincums were paid at the maximum rate, they cared for, on average, eight children per day in 2009. “That was my main source of income,” Fincum said. “My ranch, well, the cows just cover the costs of the ranch. If this means rice and beans for the next few years, so be it. We’re going to stay the course.” Since then, Catholic Charities has increased payments for foster care significantly, but it does not itemize the dollar amount the Fincums were paid in subsequent years. Gawker could reach neither Catholic Charities nor the Department of Child Safety in Arizona for comment. “I want to show what my government is doing. You need to understand the cost being paid by many people,” Fincum said. Source: <http://gawker.com/oregon-militia-spokesman-says-foster-children-were-remov-1753460681>

Elite Rhode Island boarding school stayed silent on sex abuse cases for decades Some alumni have charged that St. George’s School hushed up the abuse to protect its lofty reputation. By and DENISE LAVOIE/The Associated Press Share 3 Comments Read Article MIDDLETOWN, R.I. — For more than a century, St. George’s School has been part of the pedigree of some of America’s richest and most influential families. Astors, Vanderbilts and Bushes have attended the exclusive boarding school, where students can go sailing, play on world-class squash courts or simply enjoy a sweeping view of the sea from the hilltop campus. But since at least the 1970s, leaders at St. George’s kept a secret. Dozens of former students say they were raped or molested by employees or schoolmates at the exclusive St. George’s School in Middletown, R.I., over the past 40 years. The charges began to come to light when a Boston Globe article reported on one of the alleged victims. The Associated Press Anne Scott, of Charlottesville, Va., left, and Katie Wales Lovkay, of Granby, Conn., right, who stated they were sexually assaulted at St. George’s School as students, face reporters at a news conference in Boston earlier this month. The Associated Press Search photos available for purchase: [Photo Store →](#) Dozens of former students have come forward to say they were raped or molested by employees and schoolmates over the past four decades. St. George’s acknowledged in a report it issued shortly before Christmas that it repeatedly failed to notify police and

child welfare authorities as required by law. The school's current leadership has characterized the abuse as a problem of the past and said it discovered the extent of the misconduct only recently. But many accusers have disputed that, and much of their anger has fallen on Eric Peterson, headmaster since 2004. Peterson was told in 2004, 2006, 2011, 2012 and 2015 about numerous allegations of abuse, according to interviews with alumni and documents obtained by The Associated Press. Many alumni are calling on Peterson to step down. Some want the entire board swept clean. "It's like a charade of arrogant exceptionalism that is endemic in the school, in the leadership of the school," said Hawk Cramer, an alumnus who says he was molested by the choir director in the 1980s and told Peterson about it in 2004. SILENCE PROTECTED REPUTATION? Some alumni have charged that the school's leaders hushed up the abuse to protect the reputation of St. George's, which was founded in 1896 and counts among its graduates the poet Ogden Nash, the late Sen. Claiborne Pell and Fox News commentator Tucker Carlson. The \$56,000-a-year Episcopal institution just outside Newport has about 400 high school-age students and a rich endowment of more than \$140 million. A spokeswoman for both the school and Peterson declined to comment on specific allegations, citing an independent investigation underway. St. George's previously issued a statement apologizing "for the harm done to alumni by former employees and former students." The statement added, "We also apologize that the way in which the school addressed these incidents has served to compound this harm." Separately, Rhode Island state police are looking into possible sex-crime charges and other offenses, including failure to report abuse. There is no statute of limitations on rape in Rhode Island. The problems at St. George's burst into view in mid-December, about a week before the in-house report was issued, when The Boston Globe reported the story of Anne Scott, who said she was repeatedly raped by athletic trainer Al Gibbs as a 15-year-old in the 1970s. She sued the school as "Jane Doe" in 1988. St. George's tried and failed to reveal her identity publicly and aggressively fought the case, even though her lawyer, Eric MacLeish, says evidence emerged during the lawsuit that Gibbs had assaulted four other girls. Scott dropped the case the following year, receiving nothing, and agreed to a gag order preventing her from speaking about it. More such allegations quietly piled up in following years. It was not until last spring that St. George's sent a letter informing the entire school community about possible sexual misconduct "many years ago" and asking graduates to report anything they knew. In November, the school reported allegations of abuse to the Rhode Island state police for the first time. MacLeish, a St. George's alumnus and a lead lawyer in the Boston Catholic Church sex abuse lawsuits, said he is aware of at least 40 people who say they were abused at the school and 12 alleged abusers, either employees or students. The most recent misconduct alleged dates to 2004. FIRINGS AND FORCE-OUTS The school did take some action over the years, firing or forcing out three teachers in the 1970s and '80s, according to its December report. They were: - Gibbs, who was fired in 1980 and died in 1996. The school acknowledged he raped or otherwise abused at least 17 students. It did not report any misconduct to child welfare authorities until 1989, in the course of Scott's lawsuit. The agency said it had no authority to act because the alleged victims were over 18. - The Rev. Howard "Howdy" White, who abruptly left in 1974 after a parent accused him of inappropriate sexual conduct with a student. The school said White abused at least three students. White refused to comment when reached by the AP. CHARGES NOT FILED - Franklin Coleman, the choir director, who was fired in 1988 after student complaints of molestation and other inappropriate behavior. The school said it did not notify child welfare authorities on the advice of its legal counsel. MacLeish said he has now spoken to six of Coleman's alleged victims. Coleman did not return messages seeking comment. Neither White nor Coleman has ever been charged. Both went on to other schools around the U.S. before retiring several years ago. One graduate said he was molested by Coleman in 1987 during an overnight trip to Boston. The man told the AP that he reported it to the school the following year, after he learned Coleman had asked another boy to sleep in his bed during a choir tour. The man said he spoke with Peterson's predecessor as headmaster, Charles Hamblet, and met with Peterson in 2006 to discuss the abuse. Both Hamblet and Peterson offered to pay for therapy, which he accepted. "This offer is an attempt to right a wrong," Peterson wrote to the man in a 2006 letter obtained by the AP. He added that the school's willingness to pay for therapy was "in no way an admission of responsibility." Dan Brewster, a 1974 graduate, went on to serve on the board of trustees in the early 1990s. He said that then-headmaster Hamblet and Howard Dean, a former board chairman and father of the 2004 Democratic presidential candidate, told him that in some past cases of teachers accused of abuse, the school would quietly let the educator go with a lump-sum payment, a nondisclosure clause and an agreement barring the faculty member from taking a job at another boarding school. Brewster said that when he asked why the school didn't notify parents and the authorities, the two men replied that teenagers might be dragged in to testify and that their parents might also bring an "avalanche of lawsuits" against the school. Hamblet and Dean are now dead. "I do believe they were honestly wrestling and did care about an obviously difficult issue. I also felt they came to the wrong conclusion," Brewster said. "It was because the prestige and the fundraising capacity of the school was more important than any one kid." ONCE AGAIN, POLICE NEVER NOTIFIED In the 2004 case, three students reported to then-Dean of Students Tim Richards that a teacher "was touching them in ways that made them uncomfortable," according to Richards' spokeswoman, Karen Schwartzman. Richards investigated and the teacher was placed on leave, but the authorities weren't notified. Peterson told Richards that he talked to outside legal counsel and was advised that the school was not required to contact authorities, the spokeswoman said. Another alumnus, Harry Groome, said he was raped by an upperclassman with a broomstick in 1978 in front of at least five students. In 2002, Groome said, he sent a letter to Hamblet describing what happened. Hamblet thanked him, but nothing else happened, Groome said. "I want this school to thrive in the future, but it cannot thrive until we flush out the bad, and Eric Peterson has got to go," Groome said. "This stuff can't go on anymore. It's ruined lives." Source: <http://www.pressherald.com/2016/01/21/elite-rhode-island-boarding-school-stayed-silent-on-sex-abuse-cases-for-decades/>

The hidden harms of the US foster-care system The hidden harms of the US foster-care system January 22, 2016 6.02am EST [Lenette Azzi-Lessing](#) Author [Lenette Azzi-Lessing](#) Associate Professor of Social Work, Wheelock College Disclosure statement Lenette Azzi-Lessing does not work for, consult, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organization that would benefit from this article, and has disclosed no relevant affiliations beyond the academic appointment above. Children in the U.S. foster care system can languish for years. Firestorms regarding child-protective systems have become sadly commonplace, occurring recently in [Massachusetts](#), [Colorado](#) and [Florida](#). Elected officials and the general public often don't pay much attention to child protection systems until a child dies in a family known to the state agency charged with protecting children at risk. Having worked - in both the programmatic and policy arenas - to improve the US child protective system for more than 25 years, I am sadly familiar with the pattern. When such tragedies occur, political leaders express [outrage](#). The media shines a glaring light on the various systemic holes through which yet another vulnerable child has fallen. Some may express outrage that the child wasn't removed from the dangerous home sooner and placed in foster care - the intended social safety net for children who are unable to live with their birth parents. However, such a sentiment ignores the fact that foster care harbors its own threats to the safety and well-being of vulnerable children. Children languish for years in foster care In 2014, [415,000 children](#) in the United States spent time in the foster care system. This system works best when used to provide nurturing, short-term care to vulnerable children until a family crisis can be resolved and they can return safely home, or until a child can be placed with a permanent adoptive family. For many children, however, foster care is anything but short term. The average length of time children spend in foster care is just over a year and a half. About 30 percent remain in temporary care for more than two years. [In 2014](#), 64,300 children had been stuck in the foster care system for more than 3 years, 28,000 of them for 5 years or more. Languishing in foster care harms children's wellbeing in a number of ways. The longer a child remains in temporary care, the more likely he or she will experience multiple placement changes and the disrupted relationships caused by such changes. Unfortunately, more than 40 percent of children placed in foster care are moved to a different foster home or care facility - such as shelter or group home - at least once during their first six months in state custody. More than [one third](#) of children who remain in foster care for one to two years experience three or more changes of placement, as do two thirds of those remaining in the system for two years or longer. Studies suggest that as many as 70 percent of placement changes have nothing to do with improving the wellbeing of the children moved. An investigation by Sigrid James in the [Social Service Review](#) found that the majority of changes are made to implement policy and system mandates, such as when child welfare workers fail to place siblings in the same foster home from the start, and are later forced to move the children into a single foster home to comply with federal mandates. Placement moves also commonly occur when children are initially placed in a short-term foster home or shelter, and must be moved to a long-term foster home. In addition to such policy compliance moves, children are also commonly removed from foster homes because the foster parents were found to be unprepared to meet their needs. A system with more appropriate foster homes and care facilities to meet the diverse and complex needs of the children in their custody could minimize these placement changes. The consequences of multiple moves Disruptions make it difficult for children to form the kind of stable attachments that undergird healthy social and emotional development. This is an especially grave concern for children ages five and under - by far the largest group of children in foster care - given the critical role that strong and stable early life attachments play in healthy human development. For children of all ages, multiple changes in placements often lead to severe, long-term behavior and [emotional problems](#). Frequent moves also contribute to other mental health problems and poor educational achievement, as children are shuttled from school to school. Moreover, each change in foster placement [decreases the likelihood](#) that a child will return home or

be adopted. Children are often bounced from one foster-care home to the next. [Pixabay](#) Bleak futures for those aging out This means that too many children get stuck in the system, having neither their biological family nor a permanent adoptive family. In 2014 alone, more than 22,000 young people, ages [18-20](#) were discharged from foster care and sent to live on their own. Nearly as many were released with only a legal guardian to provide them with supervision. What happens to youths raised in our chaotic and dysfunctional foster care system? The outlook for most is grim, given their histories of broken relationships and unstable educational experiences. They are [far more likely](#) to become teen parents, be chronically unemployed, and spend their lives in poverty [than other young people](#). Moreover, recent studies have shown that young adults exiting the foster care system are prime targets for predators running [sex-trafficking](#) rings. In a study of youths [held for prostitution](#) in California, for example, most had come from foster care. A lack of political will The problem is complex but not without ready solutions. Providing child protective agencies with sufficient funding to recruit, train, and support more high quality foster families would be a good place to start. Children are far less likely to be moved around when placed with foster families who are well prepared to meet their often challenging needs. More aggressive recruitment of adoptive families would help as well. So would hiring more social workers to ensure that children are placed in the most appropriate settings and to expeditiously move children out of foster care and safely return them to their parents or place them with adoptive families. Like other urgently needed repairs to the child welfare system, these measures require more funding to a system that typically takes a hit whenever state and federal budgets are squeezed. Changing this requires political will; the kind we only see, unfortunately, during a firestorm. Source: <http://theconversation.com/the-hidden-harms-of-the-us-foster-care-system-49700>

Experts: Punishments touted by Babeu are child abuse, torture [Dave Biscobing](#) 5:39 PM, Jan 26, 2016 5:55 PM, Jan 26, 2016 [investigations](#) | [babeu](#) Old IRS scam overwhelms Valley residents The ABC15 Investigators spoke to multiple independent experts about the abusive practices used at the DeSisto School in Stockbridge, Mass. KNXV The ABC15 Investigators spoke to multiple independent experts about the abusive practices used at the DeSisto School in Stockbridge, Mass. KNXV The ABC15 Investigators spoke to multiple independent experts about the abusive practices used at the DeSisto School in Stockbridge, Mass. For this video above, we interviewed a nationally-recognized teen psychiatrist, a leading author on the troubled-teen industry, and a prominent advocate for survivors of institutional abuse. Experts said the discipline discussed by Babeu and used at the school constituted "child abuse" and "torture" [SPECIAL SECTION: Abusing the Truth](#) None of the three have any ties to the DeSisto School or Babeu. The experts (bios below) reviewed the results of a [state investigation](#) that found widespread abuse at the school. They also watched video of Sheriff Paul Babeu discussing the treatment of students. The experts said the discipline discussed by Babeu and used at the school constituted "child abuse" and "torture." The experts also discuss the damage caused by these methods and the history of similar programs. We also recommend watching our [main story](#) and reading about the abusive practices used at the school before watching this video. Here are bios for the experts: Maia Szalavitz Maia Szalavitz is a journalist and author who has written extensively about the troubled teen treatment industry. Her 2006 book "Help at Any Cost: How the Troubled-Teen Industry Cons Parents and Hurts Kids" exposed the ineffective and dangerous practices that occur in residential treatment facilities. Szalavitz's book and research led to Congressional committee hearings and was used by the Government Accountability Office to conduct a [national investigation](#) into the abuse and death at residential treatment facilities. Dr. Mark Wellek Dr. Mark Wellek is a Phoenix-based psychiatrist, who specializes in the treatment of children and teens. He has been practicing for more than 40 years. Dr. Wellek is also the past president of the American Society for Adolescent Psychiatry. He was previously interviewed by [ABC15 in 2012](#) about the school. Jodi Hobbs Jodi Hobbs is an advocate who formed Survivors of Institutional Abuse, an organization that works "to help those affected by abusive treatment in behavioral modification type programs." Hobbs is a survivor of Victory Christian Academy, a youth treatment facility that once operated in Ramona, CA. According to Hobbs, VCA was raided and shut down by the FBI after scathing accusations of abuse were leveled against the proprietor. Source: <http://www.abc15.com/news/local-news/investigations/experts-punishments-touted-by-babeu-are-child-abuse-torture>

Family of teen victim files \$1.5 million lawsuit against Laurel Ridge [Sharon Ko](#), KENS 5 11:19 p.m. CST January 28, 2016 Laurel Ridge Treatment Center (Photo: KENS 5) [CONNECT](#)[TWEETLINKEDIN](#)[COMMENTEMAILMORE](#) SAN ANTONIO -- A local family has filed a \$1.5 million lawsuit against Laurel Ridge Treatment Center because it says the center failed to protect their daughter, who was sexually assaulted. 24 year-old Alexander Williams was arrested on multiple charges of sexual assault of a child. Investigators said he sexually assaulted the victim who was 14 years old at the time. The attorneys representing the victim's family said Williams's actions have had irreparable consequences. "Every time I talk to them it's too emotional. This has done mental damage. They have been devastated all throughout this," attorney Alberto Velazquez said. The attorneys said Williams was a former counselor at Laurel Ridge, where he accessed the victim's medical records. She has a history of disruptive behavior, self-esteem issues and deemed high-risk for sexual activity. "Knowing the child was vulnerable. There was no question about that. It was in the records, knew that he had the opportunity. He had the motive to do it," attorney Edgardo Baez said. "Not only did he gain access to medical records, he gained access personally to the child," Velazquez added. "Things that are overstepping his authority. You know, phone numbers, social media, things like that." Williams was suspended after the teen's father found out and contacted the treatment center. Williams was hired by the Bexar County Juvenile Probation Department as a residential treatment officer, despite being investigated by police. The probation department says Williams did not list the treatment center as a prior workplace. It says it would not have hired him if it knew about the investigation. Although the lawsuit can never change what happened to the teen, the attorneys representing the family said it will make sure Laurel Ridge is held accountable. Alexander Williams, Laurel Ridge (Photo: KENS 5) "Hurt them where it hurts them the most. It's a business and you hurt them in their pockets. But that doesn't do justice for the client. That's going to come with time. With counseling. With prayer," Baez said. Laurel Ridge sent a statement in response to the lawsuit: "Laurel Ridge Treatment Center, including its High Point campus, treats the safety of its patients as its number one priority. Upon learning of the recent allegation, Laurel Ridge contacted the appropriate authorities and state agency, and promptly removed its former employee from any further contact with the facility's patients. As the facility understands, the alleged incident occurred off campus and while the former technician was off duty. Due to the pending police investigation and associated patient privacy laws under HIPAA, however, the facility is unable to comment further at this time." Source: <http://www.kens5.com/story/news/2016/01/29/laurel-ridge-treatment-center-lawsuit-teen-alexander-williams/79500786/>

Four employees suspended at facility after teens escape Aaron Mesmer reports By: [Aaron Mesmer, FOX 13 News](#) Posted:Feb 02 2016 06:52PM EST Updated:Feb 02 2016 06:52PM EST 2 Reactions TAMPA (FOX13) - Four staff members at the juvenile detention facility in Tampa where two teenagers escaped were suspended Monday. 2 Investigators have said Anthony Bays, 18, and Anthony Cook, 17, ran away from the **Falkenburg Academy** off Columbus Drive by climbing through a hole that was cut in a chainlink fence. The teenagers remained on the run more than 48 hours later; authorities have not said whether there are any leads. [SG4S](#) Youth Services, a private company contracted by the Department of Juvenile Justice to oversee security, confirmed to FOX 13 that three youth care workers and one supervisor were suspended and an internal review is underway. Top fox13news.com Searches Apps Baby Snow Sex Calendar Cast Chipotle Clo Four employees suspended at facility after teens escape Local News Four employees suspended at facility after teens escape Four staff members at the juvenile detention facility in Tampa where two teenagers escaped were suspended Monday. In a statement, G4S spokesperson Monica Lewman-Garcia wrote: "Our initial investigation raises questions whether proper procedures were followed. Accordingly, four staff members (three youth care workers and one supervisor) have been suspended from duty..." Although rare, incidents can happen when working with at-risk and troubled youth. When they do, we work quickly to ensure that any necessary changes are fully implemented to help prevent a re-occurrence." The DJJ initially indicated law enforcement was immediately contacted about the escape. But, according to the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, the teens got away at about 9:15 a.m. and deputies weren't notified until 10:12 a.m., forcing them to begin a search nearly an hour later. A DJJ spokesperson said the department is investigating why there was a time lapse. G4S and the DJJ said they are also working on a "corrective action plan" to fix the mistakes that were made. Related Stories [Pinellas burglaries caught by surveillance cameras Gov. Scott discusses Zika readiness in Florida Skimmer found on Sarasota gas pump WATCH: Gator tussle caught on camera in Clearwater](#) Bays is from Georgetown, Georgia, while Anthony Cook, 17, is from St. Petersburg. Both were charged with grand theft auto. Crime Stoppers of Tampa Bay is offering a reward of up to \$3,000 for information that leads to the location and arrest of the two escaped juveniles. Anyone with any information regarding this case and who wants to be eligible for a cash reward is asked to call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-873-TIPS (8477), report anonymously online at www.crimestopperstb.com or send a mobile tip using the P3 Tips Mobile application, which is a free download for iPhones and Droids. Crime Stoppers must be contacted first in order to be eligible for a cash reward. Source: <http://www.fox13news.com/news/local-news/84041734-story>

Grace House to close its doors after 20 years Maddy Hayden, Carlsbad Current-Argus 4:59 p.m. MST February 1, 2016 The Carlsbad Current-Argus(Photo: File Photo) [CONNECT](#)[TWEETLINKEDIN](#) 4 [COMMENTEMAILMORE](#) CARLSBAD — After 20 years of opening its doors to troubled, adolescent boys,

Grace House is preparing to permanently close them. The group home was established in 1996 to treat boys ages 13 to 18 with educational, emotional, behavioral and social issues, according to their website. Melissa Roberts has been Grace House's executive director since it opened. She said the government's 10 percent cut to their daily costs that came eight years ago with the creation of the New Mexico Behavioral Health Collaborative began a pattern of losing money that they have been unable to stem. "There's a lot of demand for services and not a lot of money," Roberts said, adding that group homes have gone out of favor as a preferred method of treatment in recent years. Roberts also said "the mindset has been that they prefer to keep kids at home." For some of the children that live at Grace House, though, home may not be the best place for them. They may have friends or family that are detrimental to their treatment progress or abusive. "I think they're (group homes) important because not every home is safe," Roberts said. Some of the children have substance abuse issues or are involved with gangs, something the home serves to remove them from physically. Roberts said generally children are sent to residential treatment centers outside of their hometowns. Currently, Roberts said they are working on placing clients in group homes in Artesia and Hobbs, or possibly living back at home and receiving outpatient services. Once they are all placed, the Grace House will close. "I'm heartbroken," Roberts said. "I had really hoped that a group of people would grant us an endowment. We were never able to put that together." Roberts said there is a gap in funding. While there are plenty of grants out there for "brick and mortar" (new buildings or additions) and for the children, the money to actually sustain an operation are hard to come by. "Cars, insurance, food, clothes, washers, dryers, beds, computers, furniture, therapists, maintenance," she said. "It was costing us more than we had money for." Roberts said she felt honored to work at the Grace House and said it has been a pleasure to work with the community and Grace House staff. "I wish everybody who we've touched and have touched us all the best," she said. Maddy Hayden can be reached at 575-628-5512. Source:

<http://www.currentargus.com/story/news/local/2016/02/01/grace-house-close-its-doors-after-20-years/79659442/>

Boys home employee charged with sexual misconduct with teen at facility Matt Eloffson Crime and courts reporter | Posted: Monday, February 1, 2016 4:01 pm Shon Christopher Holton Shon Christopher Holton Dothan police recently arrested an employee at a local boys home facility and charged him with multiple counts of inappropriate sexual contact with a teenage boy at the home. Dothan Police Lt. Will Glover said police investigators arrested Shon Christopher Holton, 43, of Gordon, and charged him with 10 felony counts of custodial sexual misconduct. Glover said Holton worked for the Alabama Department of Youth Services as an employee for a local boys group home. "While he was working there he conducted inappropriate acts with a juvenile," Glover said. Glover said the victim was a teenage boy, who was inappropriately contacted on multiple occasions between February and June of 2015. Glover said some of the offenses occurred at the facility where the suspect worked, which was not identified, and some of the other offenses occurred at a local residence while some others occurred at other local Department of Youth Services facilities. Glover said the criminal charge of prohibited act (custodial sexual misconduct) is not commonly used. "This is the first time I've actually seen this type of charge," Glover said. Holton was taken into custody after his arrest and later booked into the Houston County Jail. Source: http://www.dothaneagle.com/news/crime-court/boys-home-employee-charged-with-sexual-misconduct-with-teen-at/article_55a41480-c92f-11e5-b0ef-6faf13fe08fc.html?mode=print

Foster care scandal: Bill requiring public reports on abuse clears Senate panel [Print Email](#) [Denis C. Theriault](#) | [The Oregonian/OregonLive](#) By [Denis C. Theriault](#) | [The Oregonian/OregonLive](#) The Oregonian Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#) on February 03, 2016 at 5:08 PM, updated February 03, 2016 at 5:53 PM [comments](#) SALEM — Oregon's foster care officials would have to produce public reports listing confirmed findings of abuse and neglect every three months under proposed legislation that emerged from a Senate panel Wednesday. [Senate Bill 1515](#), shepherded by Sen. [Sara Gelser](#), D-Corvallis, cleared the Senate's human services committee in a unanimous vote that came with praise and promises of urgency — offering a flash of bipartisanship in a legislative session that's otherwise been off to a tense start. Gelser spent months drafting the bill amid outcry over the Department of Human Services' handling of a provider named Give Us This Day. The provider closed last year amid accusations that it misspent more than \$2 million in state money and tolerated [more than a decade of child abuse](#). Beyond compelling officials to produce quarterly reports on abuse findings, the bill would add licensing inspectors for child-care facilities, give officials more power to shut down or take over troubled agencies, and treat the failure to pull children from unlicensed facilities as a crime. Oregon has nearly 8,000 children in foster care on any given day, many of them already victims of abuse or facing behavioral and emotional issues before coming into state care. "Could we hold off? We could," said Rep. [Duane Stark](#), R-Grants Pass, one of three House members who testified in support of the bill. He noted the difficulty in vetting such complicated legislation in a 35-day session, a major concern for Republicans this month in light of other that would increase the minimum wage and make changes to housing policy. "But the problem is children need that attention right now," he said. "I really hope we move that bill right now, so we get the positions in place right now, to get the licensing we need right now, to protect children right now. So they're not waiting." Gelser's bill joins an [outside investigation](#) of the Department of Human Services' child welfare system, ordered by Gov. Kate Brown. The review could take up to six months. Brown's policy adviser for human services, Dani Ledezma, joined Brown's interim human services director, Clyde Saiki, to show support for the bill. "Our caseworkers have some of the toughest jobs in the state," Saiki said. "We also have many caring and competent providers. But that being said, we still have the responsibility to provide the safest environment we can for our foster children, and we have to do better." After Saiki took over in November, department officials released thousands of pages of internal documents detailing abuse concerns at other providers and showing that top officials had known about Give Us This Day's problems since 2009. A 2014 log that tracked abuse reports at Give Us This Day since 2001, also released under Saiki's watch, revealed that several serious accusations, including sexual abuse, were repeatedly closed without full investigations. Gelser's bill, because it seeks money for two licensing inspectors, heads next to the Legislature's budget-writing committee. Oregon currently has just three inspectors who track some 200 licensed child-care facilities. The first quarterly compilation of abuse reports could come out as soon as this fall, Gelser said. The rest of the bill's provisions would take effect July 1. "This is meaningful, real and concrete change," Gelser said in an interview. "I'm so grateful for how hard people worked." — Denis C. Theriault dtheriault@oregonian.com 503-221-8430; [@TheriaultPDX](https://twitter.com/TheriaultPDX) Source: http://www.oregonlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2016/02/foster_care_scandal_bill_requi.html

Congresswoman Katherine Clark: Sheriff Babeu stonewalled abuse case while running boarding school [Dave Biscobing](#), [Shawn Martin](#) 6:31 PM, Feb 4, 2016 10:45 AM, Feb 5, 2016 [investigations](#) | [babeu](#) Vigilante crime-fighter helps nab crooks In an exclusive interview with ABC15, Rep. Clark said the case involving the DeSisto School is the most horrendous case she ever worked while representing the Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services for the Attorney General's Office. KNXV Copyright 2012 Scripps Media, Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. In an exclusive interview with ABC15, Rep. Clark said the case involving the DeSisto School is the most horrendous case she ever worked while representing the Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services for the Attorney General's Office. KNXV Pinal County Sheriff Paul Babeu obstructed and stonewalled a state child abuse investigation at a Massachusetts boarding school he used to run, according to a lead attorney on the case. In a stunning coincidence -- as Babeu runs for Congress -- the state attorney who handled the case is Congresswoman Katherine Clark. In an exclusive interview with ABC15, Rep. Clark said the case involving the DeSisto School is the most horrendous case she ever worked while representing the Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services for the Attorney General's Office. "It was really just a cesspool of really horrendous practices towards children," Rep. Clark said. "I think it's rather appalling to think that he is overseeing people with badges and guns, and that he thinks he is fit to run for Congress." Clark continued, "The things that went on at that school still really haunt me, and I think they should haunt him." **SPECIAL INVESTIGATION: ABUSING THE TRUTH** Before moving to Arizona and being elected sheriff, Babeu worked at the DeSisto School from April 1999 to August 2001, records show. During that time, [child care investigators opened a case](#) to stop abusive and inhumane practices and force the school to obtain a license. ABC15 [first exposed](#) Babeu's ties to DeSisto and the horrific abuse at the school in 2012. At the time, he threatened to file a lawsuit. His attorneys claimed he had [no 'knowledge' and wasn't 'aware'](#) of any mistreatment of students. But Clark said she needed to speak out after ABC15 [obtained a damning home video](#) recorded in 1999 that shows Babeu discussing [abusive punishments](#) in detail. "As the video shows, the Sheriff knew exactly what was going on and decided to condone it instead of speaking up for very vulnerable children," said Clark, who also said she was disturbed by Babeu's repeated denials. "There was absolutely no way you could be involved with that school and not have known what was going on." DeSisto was a therapeutic boarding school for teens. Many of the students had a wide range of special needs, including eating disorders, depression, paranoid schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, self-harm and suicide attempts, learning disabilities, and substance abuse issues. In the home video, Babeu praises the school's extreme disciplinary methods used on the children. He called one of the most punitive practices "amazing." He tells family members that the students "need to feel hopeless and feel depression." The goal is to make them "bottom out." Despite the video evidence, Babeu continues to minimize his role at the school. In response to this story, he issued a written statement. It begins, "I do not recall ever meeting with this attorney nor was I a principal in any state investigation

that occurred during or after my two-year employment at the school. As headmaster, I oversaw administrative issues with the school and had no involvement in discipline or student affairs.” (READ MORE OF BABEU’S STATEMENT BELOW) Rep. Clark said she remembers meeting Babeu. However, she said he quit working at the school before state investigators could depose him. State child care officials launched a civil licensure case to curb DeSisto’s dangerous practices in May 2000 – directly in the middle of Babeu’s tenure. But Babeu left the school August 2001, one month before the state ruled it needed to obtain a license and stop its dangerous practices or be shut down, records show. During that time, Clark said Babeu was “definitely part” of trying to keep state investigators away. “He had a high role there,” Clark said. “When he was there, he really stonewalled our investigations at every turn, as did the school.” During Babeu’s time as DeSisto’s administrative head, the school violated court discovery orders, repeatedly withheld records, obstructed, and was sanctioned, according to an order written by a superior court justice. In his statement, Sheriff Babeu did not respond to Clark’s statements about him stonewalling the state’s case or what state documents show on the matter. The rest of his written statement said, “But what this does show is the Democrat Congressional Campaign Committee has a target on me and they will sink to baseless personal attacks and spare no expense to keep this seat from falling into Republican hands. I reject this politics of personal destruction.” Rep. Clark is a Democrat representing a district surrounding Boston. She pushed back the claim that her comments are political. “This case wasn’t about who’s a Democrat or Republican. It’s about the welfare of children,” she said. “It was ritualistic child abuse - a sort of lord of the flies situation, where some of the children were groomed into positions of disciplining other children, including some really egregious things like students strip searching other student when they arrived at the school,” Clark said. “That was the type of allegation we were trying to investigate when the Sheriff was in charge of the school, and we were met with a complete stonewall.” Contact ABC15 Investigator Dave Biscobing at dbiscobing@abc15.com. Source: <http://www.abc15.com/news/local-news/investigations/congresswoman-katherine-clark-sheriff-babeu-stonewalled-abuse-case-while-running-boarding-school>

Retired St. Paul cop repeatedly punched juvenile in group home, charges say The suspect, Clemmie H. Tucker, Sr., previously pleaded guilty in federal court on drug charges. By [Chao Xiong](#) Star Tribune February 5, 2016 — 11:18pm Tom Sweeney, Star Tribune Former St Paul police officer Clemmie Tucker, in the white hat, in 2006. Text size [share0](#) [tweet](#) [email](#) Print more Share on: [Share on LinkedIn](#) [Share on Google+](#) [Share on Pinterest](#) Copy shortlink: Purchase:[Order Reprint](#) A retired St. Paul police officer working as a counselor in a group home punched a juvenile “too many times to count,” according to charges filed Friday. Clemmie H. Tucker Sr., 64, was charged in Ramsey County District Court with one count of malicious punishment of a child for the Jan. 30 incident that left the 14-year-old boy’s face bruised and swollen. Tucker, who retired from the department as a sergeant in the 1990s after 23 years, has a troubled past. In 2006, he pleaded guilty in federal court to possessing about 22 pounds of cocaine and 8 pounds of methamphetamine estimated to be worth \$4 million. “People who know me best know I am not a criminal,” Tucker told the judge when he was sentenced to five years in prison. “I made a mistake.” In his most recent run-in with the law, he allegedly assaulted a teenager, talked over the boy while police were questioning the boy and then left the scene despite orders from police to stay put. According to the complaint: Police responded to a group home about 7:40 p.m. for an assault. Tucker told police the boy assaulted another juvenile. The boy, who was in tears, told police that Tucker assaulted him “for no reason.” The boy said that he had argued with another teenager over video games and that he had punched the other teenager. Tucker called police and confronted the boy. The boy said he stood up in front of Tucker because the other kids picked on him and he didn’t want to look weak. Tucker pushed the boy to the ground. “[The boy] said he tried to get up and Tucker punched him in the face and head, ‘too many times to count,’ ” the complaint said. The account was corroborated by a witness and surveillance video, which showed the boy did not swing at Tucker. Another juvenile in the home told police that he witnessed the first altercation between the two boys, and then Tucker’s reaction. He told police that Tucker told the boy, “ ‘I wish you would hit me like that, I’d [expletive] you up.’ ” The juvenile said that was when the boy stood up in front of Tucker and was assaulted. “The juvenile male stated that once [the boy] was on the ground, Tucker continued to punch him multiple times,” the complaint said. “Tucker was hitting [the boy] with both hands and [the boy] was trying to hide under the table.” Tucker was breathless after the assault, the witness said. Tucker drove away from the scene and was later fired from the group home. He was a Golden Gloves boxing champion in his teens, according to the complaint. Twitter: @ChaoStrib Source: <http://www.startribune.com/retired-st-paul-cop-repeatedly-punched-juvenile-in-group-home-charges-sav/36786982/>

Martial arts hold used on teen before detention center death by Curtis Figueroa on 06/02/2016 "The staff performed an [Aikido](#) restraint hold to safely conduct a pat-down search and remove the youth's hoodie", wrote a spokesperson from Lincoln Village Juvenile Detention Center in an email. After the physical encounter, it is reported that the guards didn't check on McMillen overnight, and once they found her unresponsive, they waited 11 minutes to administer CPR. According to a spokesperson for the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice, McMillen refused to remove her sweatshirt for a booking photo and patdown, leading one staffer to use the hold on her. The detention officers used what is referred to as an Aikido restraint, which could be a number of restraints considering Aikido, like most martial arts, includes various techniques. McMillen was placed in the cell on January 10 and detention center workers allegedly didn't check on her again until she failed to respond to a breakfast call the next morning. Eventually, shortly following the Aikido restraint, McMillen was brought to her cell, and spent the night there, failing to react in any way when personnel tried to bring her food at 6:30 a.m. and then at 8:17 a.m. and 8:53 a.m. The troubled teenager also remained silent and passive when her mother tried to contact her later that morning. Recordings released Saturday also reveal responders started CPR on Gynnya 11 minutes after she was found dead. At about 9:55 a.m., a deputy arrived at about to take Gynnya to her court appearance. It took nine minutes for the staff to call 911 at 10:04 a.m. When the 911 operator asked the nurse at the detention center (about 90 seconds into the call) if CPR was in progress, the nurse said, "No it's not". Indeed, given the fact that McMillen was kept in isolation throughout the night, her condition should've been monitored every 15 minutes, if internal regulations at Lincoln Village had been followed. A day before authorities confirmed the martial arts maneuver was used on the teen, Lincoln Village Juvenile Detention Center employee Reginald Windham was placed on administrative leave. Juveniles alone in cells are under constant surveillance at the Kentucky facility. "As far as I'm concerned that is a completely inappropriate use of a restraint", Deitch added. "This goes back to not being so punitive with kids". "We're not exactly sure what happened but I can tell you this". Officials have said it appears that McMillen died in her sleep. That footage has been turned over to investigators. Source: <http://cinemablaze.com/2016/02/06/martial-arts-hold-used-on-teen-before-detention-center-death.html>

Man arrested in rape was foster parent, youth leader [Rebecca Butts](#) and [Cameron Knight](#), cknight@enquirer.com 4:29 p.m. EST February 5, 2016 Joseph Niemeyer (Photo: Provided/Kenton County Detention Center) A church youth leader arrested Tuesday in connection with the rape of a minor girl was also a licensed foster parent, officials confirmed Friday. Joseph Niemeyer, 54, worked with youth at the New Banklick Baptist Church in Walton. He was also a resource for Benchmark Family Services, a foster care service, according to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. A statement from the agency said it was fully cooperating with the investigation. "We did all required criminal background checks as well as the required child abuse and neglect checks for the foster home," the statement said. "Our agency has completed all requirements associated with the foster home's initial certification and annual re-certification. We are deeply saddened by this tragic news." Benchmark Family Service and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services have not disclosed whether Niemeyer was taking care of any foster children at the time of his arrest. Niemeyer turned himself in to the Independence Police Department, where he was arrested Monday. He is facing first-degree sexual abuse, rape and sodomy charges, all against a girl younger than 12, police said. Capt. Mike Thatcher could not confirm whether there are multiple victims, and said the investigation into the abuse is ongoing. He said several other possible witnesses and possible victims need to be interviewed. Niemeyer and his wife, Becky, are listed as youth ministers on the church's website, but pastor Tim Cochran said Becky Niemeyer actually leads the youth program. Joseph Niemeyer will not be allowed to continue leading youth services at the church if he is released from jail, Cochran said. Cochran has known Joseph Niemeyer for five years and considered him a friend. The two traveled to church retreats and conferences together. He was sickened at the news of Niemeyer's arrest. "Our church, we are all just sick about what has happened," Cochran said. "He was a good friend of mine. Never in a million years would I have thought he would do anything like this." Kenton County Prosecutor Rob Sanders said investigators would be checking on any children Niemeyer had contact with. Sanders went on to explain "education and reporting methods have improved." Programs, including those in schools, are teaching kids about what is proper contact and what isn't. This has resulted in more cases involving sexual abuse, he said. "I see cases like this every week in my office," Sanders said. Niemeyer is being held at the Kenton County Detention Center on a \$50,000 bond. A preliminary hearing is scheduled for Tuesday. Source: <http://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/2016/02/04/nky-church-youth-leader-accused-rape/79808012/>

Juvenile centers make hundreds of 911 calls [Kendra Conlon](#), WTSP 11:18 p.m. EST February 10, 2016 There are 10 state-funded facilities in the Bay area, and there have been fights, riots and escapes from the facilities. (Photo: WTSP) [CONNECT](#) [TWEET](#) [LINKEDIN](#) [COMMENT](#) [EMAIL](#) [MORE](#) Three riots at local juvenile detention centers, two teens recently escaped, 10News WTSP is now learning just how many 911 calls to these facilities are costing you -- the taxpayer. Bay area juvenile detention facilities are supposed to be putting troubled teens on the right path. 10News has uncovered problems on the inside prompting hundreds of 911 calls. There are 10 of these state-funded facilities in the Bay area, all privately run by the company [G4S](#), and taxpayers are on the hook to help fix problems. In the past, we've seen the aftermath from riots, fights and escapes caught on camera, staff arrested and accused of sex acts with the teens inside the detention centers. Leaders have been calling for change. "The way juvenile justice is done in the state of Florida needs to undergo radical change," says Polk County State Attorney Jerry Hill. Recently, two teens escaped from the Tampa Residential Facility through a hole in the fence, only to be captured days later. Two workers got fired, two others are being punished and retrained. It's the latest in the long list of problems for company G4S. 10News wanted to know just how many times Tampa police and Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office deputies have been called out to the facilities. Here's what we found at the Columbus Drive complex: From 2012 through Jan. 21, 2016, there have been 291 calls. Seventy percent of the cries for help turned out to be founded. There have been founded reports of child abuse, assault, and sexual battery. Columbus Drive Juvenile Justice Complex: 2012 22 calls 16 founded 2013 96 calls 63 founded 2014 52 calls 42 founded 2015 99 calls 67 founded 2016 (through Jan 21) 22 calls 16 founded At Les Peters Academy on West Martin Luther King Boulevard, from 2013 to 2015, Tampa police handled another 71 calls. 2013: 20 calls 2014: 21 calls 2015: 30 calls "I'm sure they're going to take a look at what you're questioning, to make sure we're not missing something, because that the dedication the secretary has," says Rep. Kathleen Peters, R-District 69. Peters and the Department of Juvenile Justice tell 10News with offenders having unlimited access to the Department of Children and Families Abuse Hotline, they expect every time there's an accusation of child abuse, it will be investigated, and say staff should err on the side of caution when deciding to call law enforcement. "We want to ensure that every child has an opportunity to make sure they're protected. Is it perfect? No, but it's significantly better than it was," says Peters. G4S tells 10News that it has a plan to make sure an escape doesn't happen again. We requested a copy of the corrective action plan from the Department of Juvenile Justice and were told it's still being finalized. Gov. Rick Scott has requested an additional \$12.8 million in this year's state budget for DJJ to repair buildings, increase staffing and improve prevention and intervention programs. Prior problems have prompted changes at some of the G4S facilities. Source: <http://www.wtsp.com/story/news/2016/02/10/juvenile-centers-make-hundreds-911-calls/80213702/>

Youth treatment center counselor arrested Comment 0 1 By [Joe Goldeen](#) Record Staff Writer recordnet.com By [Joe Goldeen](#) Record Staff Writer Posted Feb. 9, 2016 at 4:52 PM By [Joe Goldeen](#) Record Staff Writer Posted Feb. 9, 2016 at 4:52 PM » Social News By [Joe Goldeen](#) Record Staff Writer Posted Feb. 9, 2016 at 4:52 PM TRACY — A 25-year-old Stockton woman who worked as a counselor at a youth treatment center has been arrested and charged with suspicion of having sex with a minor and committing lewd acts with a child younger than 14. Tracy police arrested Ariana Gonzalez Salas on Thursday. Salas faces two felony counts: unlawful sexual intercourse with a minor more than 3-years younger; and lewd or lascivious acts with a child younger than 14. She is being held at San Joaquin County Jail in French Camp in lieu of \$1.55 million bail. At the time of the reported incident on Jan. 15, Salas had worked for Manteca-based **Valley Oak Residential** for almost four years. Its website describes the 27-year-old residential treatment facility as a 24-hour, 36-bed program that provides specialized treatment for emotionally disturbed and behavior disordered children between 10 and 17 years old. It operates a six-bed home in Tracy as well as homes in Stockton, Manteca, Ripon and Modesto. "We just became aware that there were some boundary issues and we just turned it over to the (Tracy) Police Department," said Greg Potts, Valley Oak's founder and executive director. "We're sick to our stomachs." Potts said Tuesday he had no further information about the criminal case against Salas, who had been a long-term employee before being terminated. He said she typically worked an eight-hour swing shift alongside other counselors in the Tracy home. Valley Oak operates with a staff of 75. Potts said he had considered Salas a good employee. "There were no red flags; this caught us off guard. She had been working with the children for four years," he said. Sgt. Steve Beukelman, a spokesman for the Tracy Police Department, said the department declined comment because of the sensitive nature of the case. Court documents referred to the victim as John N.M. Doe and indicate he would have been at least 16 years old in January. The prosecutor assigned to the case could not be reached for comment Tuesday afternoon to explain the discrepancy between the second charge and the age of the victim. A protection order has been issued restricting Salas to no direct or third-party contact with the victim, including by electronic means. She also must stay more than 100 yards away. In addition to unspecified jail time, court documents indicated that if Salas is convicted, she will have to register as a sex offender. Salas' first hearing was held Monday in the Manteca branch of San Joaquin County Superior Court. It was continued to 8:30 a.m. Feb. 19. — Contact reporter Joe Goldeen at (209) 546-8278 or jgoldeen@recordnet.com. Follow him at recordnet.com/goldeenblog and on Twitter [@JoeGoldeen](https://twitter.com/JoeGoldeen). Source: <http://www.recordnet.com/article/20160209/NEWS/160209722>

A Louisiana foster care worker faces criminal charges that she faked documents to cover up her failure to visit foster children THE ASSOCIATED PRESS Published: 2/15/16 3:18 pm EST - Updated: 2/15/16 3:18 pm EST [AAA](#) BATON ROUGE, Louisiana — A Louisiana foster care worker faces criminal charges that she faked documents to cover up her failure to visit foster children. The Advocate (<http://bit.ly/1QhPTgP>) reports that Kimberly Deann Lee, a 49-year-old Calhoun resident, faces 20 counts of filing false public records and one count of malfeasance in office, according to an arrest warrant filed by the Office of Inspector General in the 19th Judicial District Court on Feb. 10. Inspector General Stephen Street said Lee is expected to surrender this week at the East Baton Rouge Parish Prison. He said the misconduct isn't linked to child abuse, but says the case is significant because there is a potential for abuse or other problems when children are not properly supervised. The warrant says Lee was hired in December 2012 and required to make monthly in-home visits in the Ruston area. At least 20 times between July 31, 2013 and August 15, 2014, Lee used the state computer system to log fake reports, the warrant says. Foster parents in four foster homes confirmed that Lee did not conduct the visits, according to the document. The investigation started with a complaint from DCFS on Dec. 5, 2014, the warrant says. Attempts to reach Lee were unsuccessful Monday. Spokespeople for the Department of Family and Children's Services did not immediately respond to requests for comment on Monday. In an interview with OIG investigators held in Monroe in June, Lee explained her actions by saying she was committed "to getting things done no matter what." She said her supervisors gave her a heavy workload and pressured her to use "buzz words" in her reports, according to the warrant. "This is the sort of behavior that cannot be tolerated. Matters of child welfare are of the utmost importance and we will seek to hold people criminally accountable whenever we uncover this kind of misconduct," Street said Monday. Street said he does not expect more arrests in the immediate future linked to this case. Source: <http://www.therepublic.com/view/story/5153c479041c411e82e09b9c552e3994/LA--Foster-Care-Charges>

Teen Treatment Center Won't Allow Disability Rights Iowa To Investigate By [Sarah Boden](#) • Feb 15, 2016 Share [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Google+](#) [Email](#) A residential treatment center for teen boys is being sued for refusing to allow a federally-mandated agency to inspect the facility and its records. Disability Rights Iowa says a minor with the initials P.F., who stayed at the **Rabiner Treatment Center in Ft. Dodge** last year alleges a staff member slammed him against a wall. P.F. also claims a center employee provided boys at the treatment center with alcohol, tobacco, and other controlled substances. Rabiner's services include substance abuse treatment. DRI wants access to the facility to investigate and review the original documents. Rabiner has denied the request, though correspondence shows it did turn over copies of the P.F.'s records. DRI says it also wants access to the facility, staff, residents, photographs, video/audio records, and other documentation on Rabiner's buildings, professional performance, procedure and safety standards. The treatment center says while a social worker did determine P.F. has a mental illness, this was not a formal diagnosis. Rabiner also says it doesn't have to comply because it does not provide mental illness treatment. Rabiner's attorney, Eric Eide, says he does not yet know how the treatment center will respond since he has yet to meet with the board. Source: <http://iowapublicradio.org/post/teen-treatment-center-wont-allow-disability-rights-iowa-investigate#stream/0>

State investigation leads to changes at girls' inmate facility By Cory Pippin (WPEC) Wednesday, February 17th 2016 Share Video Share **MARTIN COUNTY** — A brawl at the **Martin Girl's Academy** prompts the state to make some changes. The fight broke out almost a year ago but investigators with the Department of Juvenile Justice just finished their investigation of the youth inmate facility. The 21 page report goes into specific detail about violations committed by the administrator of the facility as well as a security officer. It began after a juvenile inmate was jumped and attacked by five other inmates on May 3rd of 2015. Investigators say an anonymous tip alleged the facility administrator Anne Posey canceled a 9-11 call made by the victim and security officer Alonzo Watkins physically harmed an inmate involved. According to documents released by the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Martin County sheriff's office responded and "Posey acknowledged she informed law enforcement that the matter would be handled internally and their services were not needed." The paperwork continued: "There is sufficient evidence to support the allegation that Facility Administrator Posey failed to allow youths timely access to the abuse hotline." Investigators say that action was a failure of policy. Also according to the state, "surveillance video shows Watkins tackled (an inmate) to the floor."

Accordingly, the allegation of Excessive Use of Force against Watkins is sustained." The Department of Juvenile Justice acted immediately upon concluding the investigation. Watkins was fired and authorities arrested the five suspects involved. They also forced the Girls Academy to install a direct access abuse hotline which allows youth to make abuse calls without restrictions or limitations. Still, records show the incident isn't rare. According to the Martin County Sheriff's Office, deputies have been called to the Martin Girls' Academy 53 times since the attack for incidents that include youth assault, a sexual assault, fights and regular police service calls. State investigators say the Department of Children and Families is also involved and they're currently reviewing policies to see if other improvements can be made. Source: <http://cbs12.com/news/local/state-investigation-leads-to-changes-at-girls-inmate-facility>

Death of Boys Town teen under investigation By 10/11 News | Posted: Tue 11:26 AM, Feb 23, 2016 | Updated: Tue 5:13 PM, Feb 23, 2016 OMAHA, Neb. - The recent death of an 18-year-old Boys Town resident is under investigation by Douglas County authorities. The Sheriff's Office said Tuesday that the body of Larry McBryde, of Erwin, North Carolina, was found on the floor of his room around 7:15 a.m. Monday morning. He had last been seen around 10:45 p.m. Sunday. Investigators have found no signs of injury, struggle or other disruption in the room, the Sheriff's Office says. An autopsy is scheduled for Tuesday. Boys Town is an Omaha orphanage that was founded in 1917. It is situated in western Omaha, serving as a residential center for troubled youth. Boys Town Spokeswoman Lauren Laferla says counselors and grief support will be available for youths and staffers on campus. Source: <http://www.1011now.com/content/news/Authorities-investigating-death-of-Boys-Town-teen-369822531.html>

More boarding schools unregulated by DHS [Lee Rood](#), lrood@dmreg.com 9:42 a.m. CST February 24, 2016 In this photo taken on Thursday, Feb. 11, 2016, a Uhaul is parked outside Midwest Academy in Keokuk, Iowa. Federal, state and county law enforcement officials have returned to the southeast Iowa boarding school for troubled teens following abuse allegations. The Keokuk Daily Gate reports officials with the FBI and the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation returned to Midwest Academy on Thursday to execute a search warrant for records following an initial search of the academy on Jan. 28 and 29. (Photo: Cindy Iutzi/Daily Gate City via AP) At least three other boarding schools in Iowa have no oversight by Iowa's Department of Human Services in addition to the shuttered southeast Iowa facility where accusations of sex abuse and other crimes are being investigated. Cono Christian School, a tiny boarding school north of Walker for struggling seventh- to 12th-graders, has never been licensed as a foster care facility in Iowa, state officials say. Like Midwest Academy in Keokuk, the 65-year-old school costing more than \$36,000 a year also has no accreditation and is not considered a school by the state. Likewise, the Maharishi School's boarding program, for almost 60 international high school students in Fairfield, and Scattergood Friends, a college prep program for 35 students in West Branch, have no oversight by DHS. However, both of those private-pay schools, which cost roughly \$28,000 a year, are independently accredited with oversight by the Department of Education. MORE: [Legislators to investigate Midwest Academy after abuse reports](#) Any private boarding school in Iowa — including Midwest Academy should it reopen after this year's criminal probe concludes — could be greatly affected by [Senate Study Bill 3154](#), introduced this month by Sen. Herman Quirmbach, D-Ames. The bill would require any facility of its kind housing seven or more youth to be licensed by DHS, and overseen by the departments of education and inspections and appeals. Such legislation would not only necessitate licensing visits and far more reporting, but also require that such facilities abide by state and federal laws affecting safety, staffing, where youth sleep, what they eat and when or if they can be restrained. Amy Lorentzen McCoy, a spokeswoman for DHS, said a mix of state agency officials are reviewing the legislation. The state is also mulling other action, such as a possible certification process, that might be considered less onerous for owners of private boarding schools. "I think there is a desire by some groups that, if they are not receiving any government funding, to not have the same requirements," she said. [DES MOINES REGISTER Editorial: Youth homes need state oversight](#) The new bill came after a 17-year-old one-time student at Midwest Academy claimed she was sexually abused by owner-director Ben Trane. Court records also show criminal investigators are looking into allegations of fraudulent practices and a pattern of child endangerment in the school's use of isolation rooms. Celeste Siemsen, administrative director at the Maharishi School, said officials there were unaware of the proposed legislation. However, she said, "Certainly, we fall in the category of very much being for school choice." The Maharishi boarding school differs from public schools because of its interdisciplinary curriculum and incorporation of transcendental meditation twice a day into classes. Students stay with host families, who are vetted by the school, she said. "We ask for regular progress reports (of students) and check in with families on a regular basis," she said. Iowa's DHS has always had the authority to conduct child abuse probes at any school or facility. But the bill would send state workers to the schools more often during licensing visits and other times. PREVIOUSLY: [80 sheriff calls in 3 years to school Sheriff says academy needs oversight DHS: Midwest Academy used outdated methods](#) Quirmbach, chairman of the Senate's Education Committee, said he believes whether a boarding school receives public funding or not, it needs to be regulated if it bills itself as therapeutic. "Look, I think we have a responsibility for these kids," he said. Quirmbach said a draft version of the bill passed out of the Education Committee last week. "But I committed to having broad input before any floor action would take place," he said. "It's still a work in progress." Midwest Academy was in the process of applying for foster care facility licenses for its Keokuk and Montrose locations when the criminal probe was launched. But not all the necessary documentation was submitted, and no site visits had been made, Lorentzen McCoy said. The DIA was overseeing the application process and eventually was expected to give DHS a recommendation on whether to approve the application and license. Source: <http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/2016/02/23/more-boarding-schools-unregulated-dhs/80820862/> (HEAL Note: 26 States fail to provide any oversight or regulation of private schools (including residential schools). An additional 12 States require private schools register but provide no regulation or oversight. And, even where approval or licensing is required, often the State exempts faith-based schools from any regulation leaving children in harm's way.)

Norfolk foster parent accused of soliciting sex from boy he adopted BY World-Herald News Service/Paul Hammel | February 25, 2016 [Home](#) > [News](#) > LINCOLN — A longtime foster parent in Norfolk, Nebraska, has been ordered to stand trial for soliciting sex from a foster child he adopted. The 59-year-old man is accused of offering \$100 and other favors in exchange for being allowed to sexually fondle a boy, then 17, he had adopted after serving as the boy's foster parent. The man — whose name is not being published to protect the identity of the teen — has pleaded not guilty to soliciting prostitution from a person under age 18. If convicted on the felony charge, he could face up to two years in prison and 12 months post-release supervision, or a \$10,000 fine, or all. A trial has been scheduled for March 8 in Madison County District Court. According to court records, the Norfolk man has been a foster parent to at least 13 boys since the 1990s. A court document from 2008 indicated that **he was employed by Boys and Girls Home of Nebraska**. Madison County Attorney Joe Smith said the case points to a need for more vigorous review of people who are allowed to foster children. The teen was placed under temporary custody of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services after telling police that he had been assaulted in April 2015. Now 18, he lives independently, Smith said. Ron Temple, a Norfolk attorney defending the accused man, did not respond to calls seeking comment. Russ Reno, a spokesman for Health and Human Services, confirmed that the man's home was licensed by the state for foster care. He said that when the department hears of a serious criminal charge, it will put a hold on placements at such locations pending the resolution of the allegations. Reno said prospective foster parents are put through a "battery" of background checks, including checks of criminal history and sex-offender registries. Source: <http://kutt995.com/state-news/norfolk-foster-parent-accused-of-soliciting-sex-from-boy-he-adopted/>

Fmr. Mountain View employee says she's witnessed inmate abuse By Heather Burian | Posted: Thu 11:53 PM, Feb 25, 2016 | Updated: Fri 12:18 AM, Feb 26, 2016 KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (WVLT) -- Sex between inmates and staff, physical abuse, even inmates escaping are all headlines involving Mountain View Youth Development Center in Dandridge. It's run by the Department of Children's Services and houses the most serious youth offenders. A former employee said she's aware of staff physically abusing inmates and despite her attempts to bring attention to it, nothing is being done. In fact, Dmayla Holliday, a youth service worker, was let go Thursday. DCS said it was poor performance. Holliday tells us it's because she took a stand. Holliday said she's had a number of inmates come up to her accusing staff of physically assaulting them while they're in handcuffs, in confinement, and when they're being transported. According to Holliday, she couldn't let the accusations go by without investigating. Then she started seeing it first-hand. Holliday said she's tried to report the it, but the people the kids accuse of physical abuse are her superiors. One example Holliday gave was when she was helping to restrain an aggressive inmate. "He does end up assaulting guards. That does happen. But once we got the situation under control -- we were able to get the handcuffs, we were able to place him into confinement -- there was a guard who had his hand around (the inmate's) throat. I actually grabbed the guard's arm and I moved it and I told him get your hand off of his throat, he's already contained," Holliday said, adding she found another inmate last week covered in blood, his face swollen, his lip busted. Holliday said she doesn't care that she lost her job, what's most important is making sure these inmates are protected. While these children are violent offenders, Holliday said she sees signs that make her believe they are telling the truth. For example, when inmates are scared to go up to the floor where they eat, because that's where the main office is. "If your son or your daughter was to accuse somebody of abuse, would you instinctively think of all the bad things they've done

in their past? Or would you say, 'Hey, where is this coming from?' Would you dig deeper to try to figure out what's going on." As for whether there are cameras in the facility, Holliday says there are, but access is limited. They're not in certain meeting areas, bedrooms nor in confinement, which is where a lot of the abuse happens, according to Holliday. DCS has investigated some recent sexual abuse cases at Mountain View. Source:

<http://www.local8now.com/content/news/Fmr-Mountain-View-employee-says-shes-witnessed-inmate-abuse-370221721.html>

Criminologists: Boot out boot camps By COREY CONNELLY Sunday, February 28 2016 Criminologist and founder of the Caribbean Ant-Violence Institute Renee Cummings has debunked the myth that boot camps are a sure way to rehabilitate delinquent youths. "Boot camps are popular not because they work but because they make good reality television. Through popular American television talk shows, boot camps garnered attractive public appeal. Politicians and citizens like the military style which is naturally seen as being tough on crime," she said in a Sunday Newsday interview. Cummings said, however, that in contrast to public perception, research has shown that boot camps are not very effective in rehabilitating juveniles. "There's little evidence that the attitude-change lasts beyond the length of the programme which is usually three to six months," she said. Cummings was responding to Government's plan to consider establishing boot camps as a way to curb delinquency among the nation's youth. The issue came to the fore, following recent reports of violence and serious indiscipline at Chaguanas North Secondary School. According to Cummings: "Current studies in adolescent brain research, juvenile delinquency best practices and youth development suggest that teenagers do not respond to a short term physical programme that includes punishment, threats and humiliation." She added that the hostile environment of the boot camp worked against rehabilitation. "Over three decades of research in the United States, showed that the boot camp is a flawed model. Once perceived as a promising solution, it is now viewed as a failed experiment," Cummings said. Given the nature of the initiative, Cummings argued, participants in boot camps were constantly at risk of injury and death "which goes beyond the concept of pair punishment." She said the intense nature of the staff-participant relationship also created a high risk for abuse of participants. "The lack of a proper screening mechanism for physical and mental health has made the boot camp a deadly experience for some young people," Cummings added. Cummings, who is also a criminal psychologist and profiler, further argued that on the issue of reducing recidivism, boot camps do not seem to have any lingering effect on participants once their resident stay ended. "Actually, re-offending is usually higher for boot camp participants," she said. Cummings said young people need an opportunity to change their lives and re-invent themselves in a caring and supportive environment. "Weighing in on the possible move to implement boot camps to curb juvenile delinquency, criminologist Ian Ramdhanie noted that while the idea was being touted, no clear plan has been put forward. "To date there have not been any clear proposal of what this boot camp aims to accomplish, how it should operate, who will be executing it, how it will be monitored to see if it worked. It has always been talk, talk and more talk," he told Sunday Newsday. "We are yet to see any policy paper on this proposition. We had some versions of this in the recent past. For some people, the MILAT and MYPART may be seen as some type of boot camp." Ramdhanie said there also has not been talk about where the boot camps will be located, its costs and whether there will be qualified persons to deliver the Government's mandate. Noting there were many types of boot camps around the world, the criminologist said some were academic-based while others were treatment-oriented and punishment-driven. "What model will Trinidad and Tobago follow is unknown," he said. "There had not been any national discussion with the critical stakeholders on how it should be patterned. These stakeholders include the parents/ guardians, teachers, police, corrections, judiciary." Ramdhanie said to criminologists and other professionals, the perennial talk about sending delinquent youths to boot camps comes across as a diversion tactic from the real issues rather than trying to reduce the delinquency problem itself. "Two weeks from now, no one will be talking about boot camps since no technical discussion has been held on what types of delinquent problems will qualify for a term at a boot camp. For example, is it that for fighting in school, drugs in school, cursing, disrespect to teachers. We don't have a clue," he said. Source: <http://www.newsday.co.tt/news/0,224630.html>

Our opinion: Iowa must regulate youth facilities [Story Comments](#) [Share](#) [Share](#) [Print](#) [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) where we stand Iowa lawmakers must take steps to ensure that facilities like Midwest Academy aren't allowed to operate without some government oversight. Posted: Sunday, February 28, 2016 12:00 am | Updated: 6:10 am, Sun Feb 28, 2016. [Our opinion: Iowa must regulate youth facilities](#) BY THE TH MEDIA EDITORIAL BOARD Telegraph Herald One month ago, news broke about a raid at an Iowa facility for troubled youth. Allegations of sexual abuse by staff members prompted law enforcement to swoop in and shut down Midwest Academy in Keokuk. For many Iowans, that was likely the first time they heard mention of the place. It's the kind of place you don't hear about or find -- unless you really need it. Desperate parents seeking help for troubled teens sought refuge there. Midwest Academy is the kind of place parents find online when they are at the end of their rope. Its website offered counseling, academic support and therapy in a safe and secure environment. Programs like this can cost thousands of dollars, but that probably seemed like a small price to pay if it could get these struggling youth back on track. So parents bought in to the school, and sent their children off into the care of the facility's employees. Maybe parents didn't want to ask too many questions. Finding support for a teenager on the edge can be daunting. But this home for troubled youths wasn't a school. And it wasn't a mental health facility. Therefore, it was not beholden to any state rules that regulate those kinds of institutions. Midwest Academy quite literally made its own rules. In the month since the raid, the FBI continues to investigate, children have returned home, the doors have shuttered and the website has closed. Officials are looking into possible charges of sexual abuse, child pornography and child endangerment, among other claims. But so far, no charges have been filed. Because it was not governed by state regulations, filing charges might be complicated. Whether there was criminal behavior on the part of Midwest Academy employees is a matter best left to law enforcement to sort out. The Iowa Legislature, however, can and should take action. This past week, lawmakers announced that a bipartisan committee would be assembled to launch an investigation on behalf of the state. Because the facility had no burden of regulation, there's no obvious state department to turn to for oversight. The Legislature is right to step in. Further, lawmakers have an opportunity to remedy the circumstance that led to this rogue facility lurking in vulnerable minors. The Legislature can and should put a stop to facilities operating in this capacity without transparency or oversight. Senate Study Bill 3154 would require places offering services like this to more than six youth be licensed by the state. With that oversight would come audits, inspections and transparency in programming. Lawmakers must get behind this measure. For parents seeking help for an out-of-control teen, the promise of a "wilderness camp" or "boarding school" that can "straighten out" at-risk kids is likely incredibly tempting. They exist all over the country. But many of these programs fly under the radar of state and federal regulation. Parents have no guarantee that these programs are even safe for their children, much less that they can truly help children. Parents must look at programming like this with great scrutiny and a degree of skepticism. It's troubling to hear allegations of abuse about a place billed as a refuge for struggling teens. We must be more vigilant about ensuring that these facilities aren't allowed to operate within our state's borders without government oversight. Editorials reflect the consensus of the TH Media Editorial Board. Source: http://www.thonline.com/news/opinion/article_24cef152-ec88-5f91-922c-61a06276c339.html

Denver County Human Services to close center for foster teens More than 60 Family Crisis Center employees learned Monday they would lose their jobs [By Jennifer Brown The Denver Post](#) Posted: 03/01/2016 12:01:00 AM MST [9 Comments](#) Updated: 03/01/2016 08:08:12 AM MST The Denver Family Crisis Center (Andy Cross, The Denver Post file) A Denver County home for troubled teenagers in foster care will close in July, and 64 workers with the Human Services Department will lose their jobs. Family Crisis Center is home to 29 teens, most placed by court order, who will move to foster homes or privately run residential treatment centers by July 1. Employees of the county-run center, who are caseworkers, therapists, kitchen staff members and others, were notified Monday that their jobs end in three months, said department communications director Julie Smith. Closure of the center, which costs nearly \$6 million annually, comes as residential treatment centers across Colorado downsize while the state works to meet federal goals in housing more foster kids with families and fewer kids in so-called "congregate" care. Family Crisis Center has the capacity to house 60 teenagers ages 12-17, but Denver County Human Services cut that number to 30 in recent years as caseworkers aimed to send more kids to families and group homes. Denver County is the only county in the state that runs its own residential treatment center. In recent years, the county was increasingly competing with the private sector as fewer children needed care at the Family Crisis Center, Smith said. Also, running the center conflicted with the county's goals of reducing the number of children in residential treatment centers. Advertisement By July, human services will pay private centers to house the teens and will use the cost savings on prevention of child abuse and neglect as well as mental health services, Smith said. Since 2008, the state has focused on reducing "out-of-home" care and increased spending on prevention and mental health. The county has scheduled two job fairs and two workshops to help the 64 employees find new positions in the Denver area. "We recognize this is not an easy thing," Smith said. Jennifer Brown: 303-954-1593, jenbrown@denverpost.com or [@jbrowndpost](https://twitter.com/jbrowndpost) Source: http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_29578534/denver-county-human-services-close-center-foster-teens

Treynor man arrested for alleged group home sexual abuse - The Daily Nonpareil - Council Bluffs, Iowa: Local News Treynor man arrested for alleged group home sexual abuse Treynor man arrested for alleged group home sexual abuse Michael Krauth Posted: Tuesday, March 1, 2016 12:00 am | Updated: 9:25 am, Tue Mar 1, 2016. [Treynor man arrested for alleged group home sexual abuse](#) By Tim Johnson tjohnson@nonpareilonline.com nonpareilonline.com | [0 comments](#) A Treynor man employed by REM Iowa Community Services is facing charges for sexual exploitation by a counselor or therapist. Michael E. Krauth, 54, was arrested on warrant at 11 a.m. Friday at REM Iowa's Council Bluffs office at 25 Main Place. Krauth is accused of victimizing a 30-year-old male resident of a group home in August 2015 and September 2015, according to Sgt. Chad Meyers of the Council Bluffs Police Department's Criminal Investigation Division. Krauth is being charged at the level of an aggravated misdemeanor. Kelly Flanagan, area director for REM Iowa Community Services, said Monday morning, "I can't make any comment at this time." Sarah Magazine, a spokeswoman for REM, said that Krauth was not an employee at the time the allegations occurred. She said he was hired last fall after passing a background check. REM Iowa's Council Bluffs operation offers services to children and adults with disabilities, including residential services and dual diagnosis services, and also offers supported living services to adults with neurological disorders and brain or spinal cord injuries. Krauth was being held in the Pottawattamie County Jail on Monday on \$10,000 bond. He has requested a public defender, and his preliminary hearing is scheduled for Thursday, March 10. Correction: The original version of this post incorrectly identified the group home where the alleged incident took place as being operated by REM Iowa. Source: http://www.nonpareilonline.com/news/local/treynor-man-arrested-for-alleged-group-home-sexual-abuse/article_6547e42d-edbc-5354-9db7-8f6822a0d0de.html

Sex Abuse, Drugs, Lack of Food Pose 'Immediate Risk' to Kids at State-Funded Group Homes | NBC Bay Area Sex Abuse, Drugs, Lack of Food Pose 'Immediate Risk' to Kids at State-Funded Group Homes A three-month NBC Bay Area investigation reveals serious health and safety violations at facilities that house over 3,700 abused and neglected children in California. By [Bigad Shaban](#), [Michael Bott](#) and [Jeremy Carroll](#) [View Comments \(3\)](#) | Email | Print UP NEXT X Sex Abuse, Drugs, Lack of Food Pose... Link Embed Email Copy Close Link to this video Copy Close Embed this video [Replay](#) More videos (1 of 9) «» An NBC Bay Area investigation reveals dreadful violations at some of California's group homes, which are 24-hour child care facilities that house abused and neglected children throughout the state. California is in the midst of overhauling its child welfare system, but the reform could take years. In the meantime, the Investigative Unit found evidence of 815 violations at Bay Area group homes that posed an "immediate risk" to children and teens over the past five years. Those violations included physical and sexual abuse of children, drug use among group home staff, and other serious violations such as a lack of food. Lawmakers in California have acknowledged that outcomes for children in group homes are substantially worse compared to outcomes for children placed with relatives or foster families. As a result, the state is now undertaking one of the largest overhauls of the child welfare system in recent history. The effort, which has been dubbed the "[continuum of care reform](#)," aims to eliminate group homes by 2021, which currently house roughly 3,725 children and teens across California. The reform would require counties to do a significantly better job in recruiting foster families and relative caregivers for foster youth. "When you look at the suicide rates, drug abuse rates, when you look at all the negative outcomes for the foster care population – the lack of the number of kids going into higher education, just the absolute lack of success – that's the danger that the system puts these kids into," said Assemblymember Mark Stone, who authored AB 403, the legislation behind the continuum of care reform effort. Stone says group homes were originally intended to be short term placements for foster youth, while social workers connected children with foster families or relatives. Counties, however, simply have not been able to recruit enough foster families or relative caregivers, which has transformed group homes into long term placements for many children. Stone says his legislation would address these shortfalls by increasing resources for the recruitment and retention of foster families and relative caregivers. The group homes that continue to exist after the transition will become short-term facilities, which would aim to place children in longer-term homes within 6 months. "We want to reduce the amount of suicides, we want to reduce the amount of drug abuse, we want to reduce the amount of failure that kids suffer coming out of the foster care system," Stone said. "And it's not because they're bad kids. It's not because they're not capable. It's because they haven't had a chance." There are currently 166 group homes across the Bay Area that can house anywhere from four to more than 100 children. To find out what foster kids were enduring at Bay Area group homes, NBC Bay Area obtained hundreds of pages of inspection reports from the Department of Social Services. The reports contained troubling allegations that government inspectors determined to be true. They include: A group home employee "[sexually abused a child](#)" Staff [did drugs with a child](#) An employee [brought a 'loaded gun'](#) into a group home Several violations over a [lack of food for children Failing to provide medical attention](#) to a child "after a seizure" [Not reporting an injury](#) to a child that resulted in two broken bones An employee caught on tape "physically abusing" a child by [cracking an object like a 'whip'](#) Using [behavior modifying drugs as punishment](#)." After acting out, one child was given "Benadryl on at least 30 documented occasions," which can cause drowsiness Despite the seriousness of these violations, the group homes where these violations occurred all remain open, although some are on probation, meaning their license can be revoked if they don't show improvement in the quality of care provided to children. NBC Bay Area requested an interview with Department of Social Services director Will Lightborne to discuss whether the state was doing enough to ensure the safety of children housed in group homes, however, the agency said their spokesperson Michael Weston was the only person available. Weston agreed that group homes are not appropriate long-term placement options, which is why he said the Department of Social Services is supporting and implementing the continuum of care reform. "These group homes were designed to deal with children who needed therapeutic services," Weston said. "What they've become for some kids, particularly at the lower level, is a permanent placement option and that is what a lot of the reform is trying to undo." While Bay Area group homes have been cited 815 times over the past 5 years for putting the health, safety, and personal rights of children at "immediate risk," Weston said the department is doing enough to keep children in group homes safe. "We have a system for dealing with facilities that are out of compliance and part of that is a progressive discipline process," Weston said. "And where we have facilities where children's needs aren't being met, we're being very active. There's a process that we go through." Weston said that process includes meeting with group homes to discuss improvements, putting them on probation, or even shutting them down. Inspectors with the department's Community Care Licensing division are required by law to conduct unannounced inspections at every group home at least once every five years. Weston says the department aims to investigate complaints against group homes within 90 days. Weston, however, said shutting down a problematic group home can be a long process. "The administrative process does not give the authority to the department to close a facility without doing a lot of legwork," Weston said. "[There's] a lot of legal work in order to do that. It's a very long process in order to investigate and close a facility from start to finish." Records provided by the Department of Social Services show [19 group homes](#) in California have had their licenses revoked between 2011 and 2015. Mariah Corder, 16, spent much of her childhood in group homes after her biological father went to prison for murder. She was removed from her parents' home as a toddler. Corder has cycled between multiple group homes and foster homes since then, and says the state should be doing more to protect children and teens. "The purpose of a high level group home is to help a youth deal with any trauma they've had before," Corder said. "But I really believe that pretty much all of the group homes I was in gave me more trauma that I had to deal with." Corder said she experienced physical abuse by staff members, and at one group home, was even given daily doses of psychotropic drugs to unnecessarily subdue her. NBC Bay Area confirmed that once she was transferred to a different group home, the staff there took her completely off the medication, saying she didn't need it. "I never should have been abused," Corder said. "I never should have had to fight or defend myself in a government home and never should have had to be so behind in school. I never should have had to be in a group home at all really. If there were more foster homes, I wouldn't have." Corder did spend some time in foster homes as a child, which she says made her realize how poor the conditions were at group home facilities. "It took a few foster homes in between group homes to realize how different things were and a couple of really good foster homes to explain to me that the stuff that was happening to me wasn't right," she said. Corder says she supports the continuum of care reform, but does have some reservations about whether counties will be able to recruit enough foster parents and relative caregivers to phase out group homes as long-term placement options for foster youth. In the meantime, Corder is fighting to change the system alongside other teens at [California Youth Connection](#), a non-profit group that's been advocating for child welfare reform for the past two decades. "I think just knowing the horrible things that I went through and never wanting any other youth to have to go through that, that's what gets me going every day," Corder said. "[It's what] keeps me motivated to advocate for youth." Source: <http://www.nbcbayarea.com/investigations/Bay-Area-Group-Homes-for-Children-and-Teens-369305871.html>

Request sent to DHHS for formal investigation of faith-based foster care agencies Posted: Thursday, March 3, 2016 12:17 pm | Updated: 3:01 pm, Thu Mar 3, 2016. [Request sent to DHHS for formal investigation of faith-based foster care agencies](#) By HEATHER RIGGLEMAN Hub Staff Writer Kearney Hub LINCOLN — After the Feb. 17 Judiciary Committee hearing on LB975, state Sen. Adam Morfeld of Lincoln sent a letter to the Department of Health and Human Services to request a formal investigation of faith-based foster care agencies, including Compass of Kearney. [“According to recent news reports and testimony at the public hearing on LB975, several organizations contracting with your department have admitted to engaging in discrimination on the basis of religion,” he wrote.](#) The letter listed Bethany Christian Services of Lincoln, Christian Heritage of Omaha and Compass as agencies discriminating against children or families on the basis of religion. Kathie Osterman, communications and legislative services administrator with DHHS, said the agency hasn’t launched any formal investigations. “We are reviewing the transcripts of the hearing to verify the comments,” she said. heather.rigglesman@kearneyhub.com Source: http://www.kearneyhub.com/news/local/request-sent-to-dhhs-for-formal-investigation-of-faith-based/article_beeb9639-ab00-5cd7-86ab-61f55c535a5e.html

Top Texas CPS Official Stepping Down AP FILE PHOTO: J. Michael Short by [Lana Shadwick](#) 6 Mar 2016 6 Mar, 2016 7 Mar, 2016 The top official for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) has announced that he is stepping-down effective May 31, 2016. Judge John Specia Jr. announced on Friday that he intends to retire after 30 years of public service. Specia became DFPS Commissioner on December 1, 2012. Commissioner Specia is a former family law judge with a distinguished legal history, especially in Child Protective Services (CPS) cases. He has extensive expertise in the foster care system, and has broad civil law experience. “It has been an honor every day working with the dedicated public servants at DFPS,” Commissioner Specia said in a prepared statement. “I never cease to be amazed at the way our team fights for our kids and vulnerable adults, no matter the circumstances. I know they will continue to put at-risk Texans first as the HHS system transforms itself in the coming months and years.” “Judge Specia is a dynamic leader and has proven himself a true public servant for three decades,” Health and Human Services Executive Commissioner Chris Traylor said in a statement obtained by Breitbart Texas. “His career will always be defined by his commitment to children, preventing child abuse and making Texas a safer place.” The former judge was a founding member and jurist in residence for the Texas Supreme Court Children’s Commission. He also established the Bexar County Children’s Court which provides specialized services for children. He created the Family Drug Treatment Court in that county and it became a model for the Lone Star State. He was vice-chair of the Supreme Court’s Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth, and Families, and chair of the Supreme Court Task Force on Foster Care. Commissioner Specia served as District Judge of the 225th District Court in San Antonio for 18 years (1988-2006) and was the administrative judge for Bexar County district courts for four of those years. He also served as Master of the 289th Family and Juvenile District Court (1985-1988). Commissioner Specia was one of the state’s first child welfare attorneys, serving as a regional attorney for the former Texas Department of Human Services (1980-1985), and he was a family law attorney in private practice before becoming a district judge. After retiring from the bench in 2006, Specia served as partner in a law firm where he practiced mediation and arbitration. He also served as a visiting judge. Judge Specia has been an adjunct professor at St. Mary’s School of Law since 1995, teaching trial advocacy, advanced trial advocacy, and international arbitration. Specia was honored with the 2012 Infant Mental Health Advocacy Award and received the 2011 Lone Star Award for his work in substance abuse prevention and treatment. He was a recipient of the Dale Wood Award for outstanding protection of children by the judiciary and was named “Judge of the Year” by [Texas CASA](#) (Court Appointed Special Advocates). Specia has a bachelor of arts in political science from the University of Texas and a doctor of jurisprudence from St. Mary’s University of Law. The Department of Family and Protective Services is the agency in Texas that works to protect both children and the elderly from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Its most commonly known subdivision is CPS. It also has an Adult Protection Services Division (APS). The agency also licenses facilities and works to protect the health and safety of children in day care and foster care. The agency is not, and has not been, without its critics. Breitbart Texas has reported about the abuses, problems, and overreach in the agency, particularly among CPS caseworkers and in foster care. In 2014, the department approved [new agency rules](#) aimed at preventing deaths of children in CPS foster care, as [reported](#) by Breitbart Texas. The Council’s action came after the deaths of two year old Alexandria Hill and eleven month old Orion Hamilton. Both died of blunt-force head injuries suffered in foster and kinship homes. The homes were approved by child-placing agencies (CPAs) which were licensed by TDFPS. The Department licenses the 220 foster child-placing agencies that recruit, investigate, and train potential foster and kinship parents and monitor the placements once they become caregivers. In March 2015, Breitbart Texas [reported](#) that Texas Governor Greg Abbott directed the DFPS to implement comprehensive reforms after three children died under the supervision of the department. The reforms were aimed at protecting future and current children under the agency’s care. Nine children died under DFPS’ watch during 2014. In September, a CPS worker was found guilty of official oppression, as [reported](#) by Breitbart Texas. The CPS worker, Rebekah Ross Thonginh, is one of three individuals who were charged in connection with a CPS investigation of a case involving a special needs teenager who was murdered in 2012. Thonginh, Natalie Ausbie Reynolds, and Laura Ard were [arrested](#) in September of 2013 and were charged with official oppression and tampering with evidence. Critics say that more caseworkers should be investigated for their constitutional overreaches with parents, custodians, and guardians. In 2014, a Texas judge ordered the removal of a [YouTube video](#), which after highlighted in an article by Breitbart Texas, went viral with hundreds of thousands of views and shares. As [reported](#) by Breitbart Texas, [Judge Keith Dean](#) ordered the [removal](#) of a YouTube video produced by a 13-year-old boy that exposed the sexual and physical abuse that he and his brother and family say they endured while in CPS foster care. The [video](#), obtained from someone outside of the family, also discusses the 377-day nightmare suffered by him and his six siblings after they were ripped from their family and placed in four different foster care facilities out of their home county. The mother told Breitbart Texas at the time “they are trying to rake this abuse under the rug.” A Children’s Advocacy group brought a class action lawsuit against CPS in December of 2014, as [reported](#) by Breitbart Texas. The class-action lawsuit was filed by a New York advocacy group called Children’s Rights. About 12,000 children were included in the class-action suit. These children were in long-term care in Texas. The group successfully sought and received an order from U.S. District Judge Janis Graham Jack to have the State of Texas enact reforms for its children’s services. The judge ruled that the long-term foster care system is improperly run and is a place “where rape, abuse, psychotropic medication and instability are the norm,” as [reported by](#) the Dallas Morning News in December 2015. The judge noted that the DFPS and Judge Specia have “the best intentions” but the system is underfunded. She called the long-term foster care system in the state “broken.” Lana Shadwick is a writer and legal analyst for Breitbart Texas. She has served as a prosecutor and associate judge. Follow her on Twitter [@LanaShadwick2](#) Source: <http://www.breitbart.com/texas/2016/03/06/top-texas-cps-official-stepping-down/>

Oklahoma Man Gets 40 Years in Prison in Kenya Orphans' Abuse By tim talley, associated press OKLAHOMA CITY — Mar 7, 2016, 3:37 PM ET 147 Shares [Email](#) Star 147 Shares [Email](#) A former missionary from [Oklahoma](#) convicted of sexually abusing children at an orphanage in [Kenya](#) was sentenced Monday to 40 years in a federal prison. U.S. District Judge David L. Russell handed down the sentence to Matthew Lane Durham, 21, who had faced up to 30 years on each of four counts of engaging in illicit sexual conduct in foreign places. He also ordered Durham, of Edmond, to pay restitution of \$15,863. “These were heinous crimes committed on the most vulnerable victims. He was their worst nightmare come true,” Russell said. Durham, wearing an orange prison-issued jumpsuit, read a statement before sentencing in which he asked the court for mercy but did not express remorse for the offenses he was convicted of. Durham showed no emotion when the sentence was issued. Prosecutors alleged Durham targeted orphans while volunteering at the Upendo Children’s Home in Nairobi between April and June 2014. Durham had served as a volunteer since 2012 at the orphanage, which specializes in caring for neglected children. “All I wanted was to follow God’s plan for me,” Durham told the judge. He said he will try to commit himself to serving others while he serves his prison sentence. Although Durham claims he is innocent of the charges, he said he was sorry that the accusations against him had damaged the orphanage and those it cares for. “The Upendo kids do not deserve this,” Durham said. In a sentencing memorandum, prosecutors said Durham’s actions have had a chilling effect on the lives of dozens of foreign volunteers in Kenya and elsewhere “who must now live under the cloud of suspicion, distrust and apprehension when they volunteer their time, talent and resources for the betterment of children in East Africa and beyond.” “There is a real perception among Upendo’s local Kenyan community that more pedophiles lurk among the volunteers, especially the young male volunteers,” prosecutors said. A jury convicted Durham in June on seven counts of engaging in illicit sexual conduct in foreign places, but Russell acquitted Durham on three of the charges in January. The same jury cleared Durham of accusations he planned to abuse the children before leaving the United States. Defense attorney Stephen Jones has said Durham plans to appeal his convictions. The orphanage’s founder, Eunice Menja, read a statement in court Monday in which she said the sexual abuse was “not only a betrayal of the Upendo mission but of the trust Upendo placed in him.” “Matthew Durham defiled the children,” Menja said as she fought back tears. “Matthew has no remorse. After he got caught, he still denied.” Menja told reporters after the hearing that she hopes Durham’s 40-year sentence is long enough to prevent him from being a threat to

anyone else. "We're hoping that when he comes out he will be a changed man," she said. Federal prosecutors had asked in their sentencing memo that Russell to sentence Durham to 120 years in prison — the maximum punishment he faced. Jones had sought a sentence of just eight years, followed by probation. Evidence produced by prosecutors included handwritten, signed confessions that Durham gave orphanage officials after he was accused of inappropriate behavior. Jones has argued that the statements were coerced by orphanage officials who isolated Durham, took his passport and created the allegations to obtain \$17,000 from the U.S. government for security cameras. Jones has described Durham, who was 19 when he was charged in 2014, as "an emotionally vulnerable teenager" who was struggling with "sexual identity and development" while also being a devout Christian. Source: <http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/sentencing-set-oklahoma-man-convicted-abusing-orphans-37453769>

Lawsuit: State could've saved children raped by foster dad Attorneys for girls say DSHS failed to act on misconduct report 2 years before Granite Falls man raped children BY LEVI PULKKINEN, SEATTLEPI.COM STAFF Published 2:51 pm, Sunday, March 6, 2016 Image 1 of 3 Caption Close Image 1 of 3 Attorneys for two Washington children raped by their state-paid foster father, John Henry Phillips, pictured above, have sued the claiming child services workers failed to act on a warning of sexual abuse in the Snohomish County foster home. less Attorneys for two Washington children raped by their state-paid foster father, John Henry Phillips, pictured above, have sued the claiming child services workers failed to act on a warning of sexual abuse in ... more Image 2 of 3 John Henry Phillips, pictured in a Department of Corrections photo. John Henry Phillips, pictured in a Department of Corrections photo. Image 3 of 3 Attorneys for two Washington children raped by their state-paid foster father have sued the claiming child services workers failed to act on a warning of sexual abuse in the Snohomish County foster home. Attorneys for two Washington children raped by their state-paid foster father have sued the claiming child services workers failed to act on a warning of sexual abuse in the Snohomish County foster home. Photo: Rachel La Corte, ASSOCIATED PRESS Lawsuit: State could've saved children raped by foster dad 1 / 3 Back to Gallery Two children sexually assaulted by a state-paid foster parent now say child services workers ignored an earlier report of abuse in the Snohomish County home. Attorneys for the girls claim Department of Social and Health Services workers failed to act on a 2012 report of sexual behavior in foster father John Phillips' home. Months later, Phillips began raping two foster daughters and a third child. Phillips, now 45, was found out in 2014 and is currently serving a 25-year prison term. "Sadly, once again we see two innocent young children horrifically abused in our state's foster care system," attorney Michael Pfau said Friday. "This lawsuit is hopefully the beginning of a long journey toward healing for them. "Our state meanwhile must address the problems in its foster care system now so tragic cases like this are a rare occurrence not something we continually read about in the news media." Pfau, a Seattle attorney with the firm Pfau Cochran Vertetis Amala, filed a lawsuit on the girls' behalf earlier in March. They are seeking compensation for harm they claim was caused by state negligence. A Department of Social and Health Services spokesperson declined to comment on the claims, citing a DSHS policy against speaking about pending lawsuits. The Washington girls, then 9 and 14, were placed in Phillips' Granite Falls home after being physically and sexually abused elsewhere. Phillips, aware of what the girls had already endured, won their trust and then sexually exploited them. Two years before that, though, child services workers received a report that a 4-year-old who had been placed at Phillips home reported sexual activity there, attorneys for the girls said in the lawsuit. The child told her foster mother an individual in the home had exposed himself to "exercise ... on someone's butt." The girls' attorneys claim the state didn't properly investigate the strange report and instead allowed three children to be raped by Phillips. Investigators would ultimately learn that Phillips had been raping the girls regularly at the home he shared with his wife and biological children. The abuse continued throughout the girls' time at Phillips' home. The abuse came to light in August 2014, when the younger foster daughter when to Phillips' wife and said she had "done something bad." The girl went on to say Phillips had touched her sexually. Phillips' wife called the other foster daughter and a third girl into the room and asked them if Phillips had abused them. They said he had. Phillips walked in a moment later. Confronted, he admitted to abusing the girls, though he would later make nonsensical claims that the children enticed him into raping them. "Although he readily admits to his actions he refuses to take actual responsibility for choosing to do what he did," a Snohomish County community corrections officer who interviewed Phillips said in court papers. Phillip turned himself in after his wife said she was going to report the abuse. He later said he didn't know what he would've done had his wife not threatened to turn him in. Authorities arrested Phillips and removed the foster children from his former home. He ultimately pleaded guilty to four child rape and child molestation counts, and is currently imprisoned at Washington State Penitentiary in Walla Walla. In court papers filed in Phillips criminal case, a social worker assisting the girls after their ordeal with Phillips said both have struggled because of the betrayal. "They both trusted John and (his wife) to be their adoptive parents," the social worker said in the June memo. "It's been hard trying to build that trust again." Attorneys for the state have not yet responded to the girls' lawsuit, which is filed in King County Superior Court. Source: <http://www.seattlepi.com/local/crime/article/Lawsuit-State-could-ve-saved-children-raped-by-6873013.php>

Youth home closed after sex acts, meth Records show porn exposure, broken bones at brawl By [Greg Moran](#) | 7 a.m. March 8, 2016 The former home of the **Phoenix House Academy** in Decanso. [Union-Tribune file] Nancee E. Lewis The former home of the Phoenix House Academy in Decanso. [Union-Tribune file] A group home in Descanso that treated youths with drug and alcohol problems under a contract with San Diego County abruptly closed last fall, following a series of incidents involving staff and residents that led child welfare officials to stop sending children there for treatment. Records show that Phoenix House Academy, a group home located on about 90 acres of what was once a ranch in bucolic East County backcountry, was told a year ago that county officials had become concerned for "the safety and welfare of dependent and probation youth" placed in the home. In a February 2015 memo, the county demanded a plan to correct 11 areas, including supervision and training, "appropriate staff-to-youth ratio" and improving the "timeliness and accuracy" of reports that are required to be submitted to the county when someone is hurt, property damaged or some other incident occurs. [W](#) Phoenix House submitted a 60-page plan to correct the flaws in March. But by September, the group informed the county it was closing down, citing a change in funding and regulations, as well as an increase in the severity of the case referrals of adolescents. That decision came after a series of incidents dating from October 2013 detailed in the records, which included incident reports and complaint investigations. They included: In April 2014 a female staff counselor was found to have engaged in sex acts with a male resident on at least two occasions, and providing the youth with methamphetamines. A male staff member in October 2013 gave pornography to residents, purchasing a magazine on the way to work and leaving it in a place male residents would find it, according to a redacted report of the incident. The report indicated the staff member had been disciplined once before and "had issues with inappropriate boundaries with residents at Phoenix House." On Jan. 31, 2015, five male residents got into a brawl in one of the residential cabins on the site, leaving one with a broken hand. One of the fighters threatened to stab another, and was found with utensils that had been fashioned into weapons. On Aug. 30 last year, about a week before the announcement to close, two female youths walked away from an outing at the Mission Valley mall and were missing for hours. They were found that night in Poway and later tested positive for drugs. The program's closure was not announced at the time. The San Diego Union-Tribune came across the situation as part of an unrelated request for public records. Ann Bray, executive director of the organization that operates 120 programs in California and nine other states, declined to comment on the specific incidents detailed in the reports. She said in an interview that the string of incidents did not factor into the decision to close the Descanso facility, which the organization had operated for more than 25 years. The rural location and expense of maintaining the home led to the decision to no longer accept youth under the contract, which was set to expire in 2017, Bray said. Phoenix House still provides rehabilitation services for county youth — but they are sent on a case-by-case basis to a facility in Lake View Terrace in Los Angeles County. "We made the decision it was better to deliver care in a more contemporary health care setting rather in a facility in a remote location, that was built in the 1940s," she said of the Descanso campus. The referrals to Los Angeles are done under an amended annual contract that could pay Phoenix House up to \$600,000 per year for treating youths, said Dale Fleming of the county's Health and Humans Services Agency. She said the county continues to contract with the organization because it is one of the few that offers the kind of specialized care that some youth need. Until it closed, Phoenix House in Descanso was the only place such youth could go to within the county, Fleming said. She said the county stepped in when it became aware of the problems there last year. "We worked closely with Phoenix House Academy to take appropriate steps to prevent these types of situations from recurring," Fleming said in a written response to questions about the facility. She said the county stopped referrals there from Feb. 18 to March 13 last year. In all, the county has paid \$2.8 million to Phoenix House since 2014 under two separate contracts. Candi Mayes, the executive director of the Dependency Legal Group which represents children in child welfare cases, said she was unaware of the problems detailed in the county reports. The relatively small number of clients placed out there had concerns other than reports of misconduct by staff there. "They didn't feel like it was helping them, or the group counseling was consistent," she said. "They were raising concerns with their attorneys that they were in the inpatient programs, and they didn't feel they were getting the intensive services that they needed. For us, the issue was it was more about it wasn't a good fit." Bray said that the organization now plans to convert the Descanso site from a licensed treatment program for youths, to a post-treatment recovery retreat type facility for families. The new program would

require county development approvals, but there is no plan to take county referrals. That may not sit well with residents of the area, some of whom have long complained about problems with the facility, which is not a locked or secured camp. There have been problems with youth trespassing on private property, thefts and traffic hazards from vehicles traveling down the winding road to the camp, said Maggie Leavitt, a resident and former chairwoman of an association of property owners in the area. One resident committed suicide there in 2010, according to the medical examiner, which said the youth had a history of depression and making suicidal threats. "Ever since they opened the doors it's had problems," Leavitt said, "Kid-created problems, staff-created problems." She said placing any kind of rehab facility in the area is "highly inappropriate in our rural, residential community." The county said that since 2014 it had placed some 107 youths at the Phoenix House campus, 84 in 2014-15, and 23 from July 2015 until it closed down. Since the closure, the county has placed 10 children in the Los Angeles Phoenix House facility. Also see [County-contracted charity accused of improper billing](#) Fleming said county officials visited the facility in January and were "comfortable with what we observed." She said the county did not know of any problems at that location. Source: <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2016/mar/08/phoenix-house/>

Paddles, Stun Guns and Chemical Sprays: How US Schools Discipline Students Friday, 11 March 2016 00:00 By [Eleanor J. Bader](#), Truthout | News Analysis font size [decrease font size](#) [increase font size](#) [Print](#) (Image: [Lauren Walker / Truthout](#)) "Brian was a regular kid," longtime communications professional Kathy Parrent says, "a boy who liked to make everyone in our third grade classroom laugh. One day he said something smart-alecky, and our teacher grabbed him by the collar, lifted him up, opened up the coat closet, threw him in and locked the door. The rest of us sat in stunned horror, terrified. Brian immediately began banging and screaming, 'please, please, let me out,' but the teacher kept him in there for what felt like an eternity." As Parrent speaks, her voice breaks and it is clear that Brian is still vivid in her mind's eye. "I remember that he was wearing a white shirt and when the teacher finally opened the door, he was covered in blood. My first thought was that he must have cut himself, but no. He'd had a nosebleed, something that happened to him all the time. It was awful. He might have deserved to be reprimanded; I don't know. What I do know is that more than 50 years later, I can still see the blood." Despite the lasting impact of this incident on Parrent -- we can only guess how it affected Brian as he continued his schooling and came of age -- it's tempting to assume that this type of discipline is a thing of the past. After all, the encounter took place in 1963. Security officers routinely use mace, pepper spray, stun guns and Tasers to break up fights and suppress "unruly" behavior. But not only are students still being locked in "isolation rooms" and physically restrained, but 19 states also continue to employ corporal punishment against "disobedient" pupils. What's more, in the wake of Columbine, Sandy Hook and other school shootings, security officers -- often employees of the local sheriff's department or area police force -- routinely use mace, pepper spray, stun guns and Tasers to break up fights and suppress "unruly" behavior. First, let's look at corporal punishment. Since there are no federal policies regarding the paddling or physical punishment of students, a patchwork of state regulations govern how students can be disciplined. This means that although 31 states prohibit public school teachers, paraprofessionals and principals from striking students -- only two states, Iowa and New Jersey, ban private schools from doing the same. The practice remains pervasive, particularly in the South. To wit: [Available statistics](#) show Texas leading the nation, with 49,197 students being paddled at least once during the 2008-09 academic year; Mississippi came in second, with 38,131 cases; then there's Alabama, with 33,716; Arkansas, with 22,314; Georgia, with 18,249; Tennessee with 14,868; and Oklahoma with 14,828. Children with disabilities are between two and five times more likely to be hit than other students. For those unfamiliar with this type of chastisement, it is worth noting that the paddle is typically made of wood and is used on the thighs and buttocks for infractions such as bullying, "defiance," fighting, using profanity, refusing to put a cell phone away, smoking on school grounds, tardiness or violating a school dress code. Equally noteworthy, boys of color receive the stick far more frequently than white males or females, regardless of race. Indeed, more than a third of those paddled during that school year -- 35.6 percent -- were Black boys. The 12 to 15 percent of public school students living with disabilities also experience disproportionate corporal punishment, regardless of race and regardless of whether they have learning disorders, are autistic or have illnesses ranging from cerebral palsy to asthma. According to the [Gundersen National Child Protection Training Center](#), children with disabilities are between two and five times more likely to be hit than other students. And paddling, of course, is only one of the tools used to control them. Isolation or Seclusion for Students With Disabilities Historically, time-outs, also known as seclusion or isolation, have been used to give students a means of stepping away from stimuli. "People typically couch removal from class in therapeutic language, but there is no research to back up the use of isolation as helpful," said Gail Stewart, an attorney in Albuquerque, New Mexico, who has represented numerous children with disabilities in lawsuits against punishment-happy school systems. "What isolation teaches is trauma." New Mexico, she adds, like most other states, does not require parents to be notified when their children are put in seclusion or are restrained, and since many of those placed in involuntary isolation are nonverbal, family members are often unaware of what's happening in the classroom. "Many kids become highly distressed when sequestered," Stewart told Truthout. "You can see blood and snot, and smell urine, in these holding rooms." "No one has solid numbers on the number of officers with Tasers or sprays, how much is spent by school districts, or exactly where they are used." She described a typical scenario, illustrating the type of provocation that can send a student into seclusion. "A kid who does not want to transition from one activity to another may throw a book or push a desk," she said. "The teacher then calls security. In some cases, the room will be cleared of other students, leaving three or four adults to surround the kid who is considered 'noncompliant.' If the kid ends up on the floor, it can escalate into head-banging or thrashing, and may result in injuries." In addition, says Matthew Bernstein, staff attorney at Albuquerque's [Pegasus Legal Services for Children](#), "zero-tolerance" policies in some schools complicate things further by prohibiting teachers from using discretion when handling disruptive behaviors. "I was a high school teacher before I went to law school," he said. "I know it's hard to be a teacher and individualize what each student needs, but it's time to dial back the punishments and find alternatives." This is especially true when punishment includes being tased, zapped with a stun gun or sprayed with chemicals. That said, no one knows how often, or even where, these methods are used. "There is not a federal mandatory school crime [sic] incident reporting system for Pre-K through 12 grade school crime," Ken S. Trump, [president of National School Safety and Security Services](#), wrote in response to an email from Truthout requesting hard data. "No one has solid numbers on the number of officers with Tasers or sprays, how much is spent by school districts, or exactly where they are used," he wrote. Instead, we have anecdotes. Although Trump calls Tasers "an additional intervention tool that falls between the ultimate use of deadly force and other less-than-lethal interventions," he is emphatic that they should be used exclusively by "sworn, certified and trained police officers," not educators. Many Ask Why Police Are in Schools at All. Many, however, believe law enforcement is missing the mark and argue that neither police nor weaponry belong in schools; others, however, take a middle position, advocating that law enforcement should be a last resort, utilized only when other types of mediation have failed since chemicals and stun guns have the potential to cause permanent physical and psychological problems. Ebony Howard, an attorney at the Alabama-based [Southern Poverty Law Center](#) (SPLC), represented eight students in a lawsuit against a Birmingham school district over its use of mace. "One of them was KB, a pregnant African-American 16-year-old," Howard told Truthout. "She was going from one class to another when a boy walked up to her and started calling her foul names like bitch and whore. She tried to get away from him but he and a group of his friends followed her." Things got loud and a security officer showed up. According to Howard, "he told KB that if she did not calm down, he'd arrest her. He then sprayed her with mace." "In schools where the students are poor and mostly of color, police departments are criminalizing adolescent conflict." Fortunately, KB recovered and her fetus was unharmed, but a SPLC lawsuit challenged the officer's handling of the altercation. A judge ultimately found that the officer's use of mace constituted excessive force and while the ruling did not impose an outright ban on the use of chemical compounds in academic settings, Howard believes that the decision "sends a signal to other school districts" about calling police at the first sign of discord. "Here in Alabama and across the country, in schools where the students are poor and mostly of color, police departments are criminalizing adolescent conflict," Howard told Truthout. "Bias against children of color is woven into the fabric of the US. They are devalued." This has become known as the school-to-prison pipeline and Howard is clear that it represents a gross violation of students' rights to test boundaries and resolve conflicts on their own. Still, Howard notes that if law enforcement personnel are going to be stationed in schools, they should be trained to work with young people. "They do not need to use a hammer to settle a conflict. They need to learn to negotiate and work things out without arresting anyone." Rukiya Dillahunt, a former teacher and school administrator from Raleigh, North Carolina who now works with the [Education Justice Alliance](#), favors peace circles facilitated by mediators. "I remember doing this with two girls who'd gotten into a brawl over a boy. A social worker and peer mediator met with them to talk it out. There were rules. For example, they couldn't call each other names and had to either talk directly to one another or to one of the other people in the room. From what I saw, the method worked. It gave the parties involved a way to process the issue. By the time they walked out, things between them were fine. Furthermore, they learned a strategy to settle disputes, and I hope, developed into adults capable of handling conflict and tension." This would not have happened had one or both been arrested, Dillahunt said. Suspension would have been similarly disruptive. "When kids are kept out of school they become demoralized and angry," she told Truthout. "We have a block schedule, with 90-minute classes. If you miss one day, it's like you've missed two. Not everyone can catch up, especially if

they've been kept out for five or 10 days. Some kids feel like they'll never pass, so rather than fail, they drop out." While some may re-enroll later, excessive discipline is associated with other negative consequences including increased aggression, anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation. These conditions, in turn, can lead to physical ailments, including liver and heart disease. All of this, said Victor Vieth, director and founder of the [Center for Effective Discipline at the National Child Protection Training Center](#), is completely avoidable if school personnel look at the underlying issues -- including poverty, hunger, domestic abuse and homelessness -- that typically cause students to act out. "If we simply respond with corporal or violent punishment we're treating the smoke while ignoring the fire that underlies it," he said. This, of course, hurts students and their allies and can turn school from a place of excitement and wonder into a site of angst and upheaval. [Eleanor J. Bader](#) Source: <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/35173-paddles-stun-guns-and-chemical-sprays-how-us-schools-discipline-students>

Dangerous use of restraints plummets at Minnesota homes for people with disabilities By [Chris Serres](#) Star Tribune March 9, 2016 — 9:08pm Text size [comment2](#) [share113](#) [tweet](#) [email](#) Print more Share on: [Share on LinkedIn](#) [Share on Google+](#) [Share on Pinterest](#) Copy shortlink: Purchase:[Order Reprint](#)

Minnesota has turned the corner in a prolonged battle against the use of dangerous restraints and isolation rooms at facilities for people with developmental disabilities. Eight years after reports first surfaced of metal handcuffs and leg shackles being used as punishment in state facilities, officials are reporting a 40 percent drop in the use of restrictive procedures at group homes and programs for people with disabilities. Advertisement: Replay Ad Ads by ZINC Incidents of restraint, seclusion and other restrictive measures dropped from 8,602 two years ago to 5,124 in the most recent fiscal year, according to a report state officials filed last week in federal court. The sharp drop results from changes in state law and a massive effort by state and county officials to stamp out the use of punitive techniques that are widely seen as inhumane and unnecessary. The issue was also the subject of a Star Tribune series last year that found Minnesota had fallen behind other states in integrating people with disabilities in mainstream life, and often isolated them in group homes far from families and friends. Though the use of restraints persists, the recent reduction marks a major shift for a state that has long relied on punitive techniques as a way to control behavior at small group homes and other state-licensed facilities. As far back as 1949, Gov. Luther Youngdahl lit a giant bonfire of straitjackets, cuffs and leather straps on the grounds of the state mental hospital in Anoka, while condemning the "barbarous devices and the approach which those devices symbolized." "This is a paradigm shift, and something that we have wanted to see for a very, very long time," said Roberta Opheim, of the state Ombudsman Office for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities. In 2008, Opheim's office reported that scores of residents at a state-operated facility in Cambridge, Minn., were being routinely handcuffed, placed in leg irons or isolated in seclusion rooms as punishment. One resident of the facility, known as the Minnesota Extended Treatment Options (METO), was restrained 299 times in a single year. In some cases, residents were restrained for behavior as minor as touching a pizza box, bumping into someone or threatening to run away. The findings led to a federal class-action lawsuit by METO residents and their families, and a major legal settlement that forced the state to modernize its rules. At the time, Minnesota had fallen behind other states and generally accepted standards in social services, which held that restraints have little or no therapeutic value and can be extremely dangerous. After Minnesota changed state law in 2014 to prohibit a long list of restrictive procedures, from leg shackles and handcuffs to prone restraints, the state Department of Human Services launched an unprecedented outreach and training effort across the state. The agency created a special team to train staff at facilities for people with disabilities on identifying the individual needs of their clients, and to de-escalate situations without resorting to restraints. And, for the first time, the state required providers to report all incidents of restraint and seclusion and began issuing licensing violations against providers that didn't comply with the law. Tighter enforcement, combined with increased awareness from the METO lawsuit, led to a "change in thinking," said Alex Bartolic, disability services director at DHS. "We drew a very hard line in the sand," she said. "We decided that we no longer wanted to do things that caused people pain and humiliation." The impact was immediate. Within months after the new state law took effect, the use of restrictive procedures plunged by more than a third, from 746 incidents a month to fewer than 500. The most dramatic drop, say state officials, has been in the use of forced isolation. Until recently, many providers still thought it was acceptable to use "time out," or seclusion rooms, to correct unwanted behaviors. But regulators have also moved to stamp out more subtle forms of punitive restraints, including a category the state refers to as "penalty consequences." In these cases, residents are punished with the loss of certain rights or privileges, such as visits from family and participation in group activities, if they fail to correct certain behaviors. "We said, 'You should never take away something that is a basic right,'" Bartolic said. "Karen H" Despite the improvements, disability advocates remain concerned that state enforcement hasn't kept pace with the changes in state law. In late 2014, a federal court monitor raised alarm that documented incidents of restraint were not properly investigated, after highlighting the case of a 33-year-old woman strapped to a metal-framed chair in a group home in Crystal for up to nine hours a day. The woman, identified as "Karen H." in state documents, was deprived of food and bathroom breaks while in the chair and urinated on herself, investigators found. In a case last year, federal inspectors found that a patient at Anoka-Metro Regional Treatment Center was placed intermittently in a wheelchair restraint, without being evaluated for the restraint and without proper documentation. The initial gains will be difficult to sustain if Minnesota does not address other issues, such as the statewide shortage of people trained to care for people with developmental disabilities, Bartolic warned. Some providers may resort to punitive methods because they lack staff trained in more positive approaches. "We saw a big drop," Bartolic said, "but it's going to take a lot of diligence to keep seeing gains." Opheim, the state ombudsman, said she worries that the new rules have not been in place long enough to determine whether all providers are actually reporting all incidents as required under state law. "I am cautiously optimistic that we're on the right track," she said, "but we still have a long ways to go." Source: <http://www.startribune.com/dangerous-use-of-restraints-plummets-at-homes-for-people-with-disabilities/371606151/>

Girl in city-contracted foster care molested, suit alleges - NY Daily News EXCLUSIVE: Girl in city-contracted foster home was repeatedly molested, then blamed for 'acting out,' new lawsuit alleges BY [Victoria Bekiempis](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Wednesday, March 9, 2016, 6:56 PM A A A facebook 124 [Tweet](#) [email](#) Share this URL Frances Twitty/Getty Images A woman who claims she was repeatedly molested while under the care of city-contracted foster home is seeking \$18 million in damages. A girl under the care of a city-contracted foster home provider was repeatedly molested in her household — and then blamed for "acting out" when she complained about sexual abuse, a new Manhattan federal lawsuit alleges. The victim, who is now 20 and whose name is not listed in the civil complaint, was removed from her birth home when she was 2-years-old. Abbott House, a foster care organization that receives some \$50 million in public funds, was charged with taking care of her, the lawsuit claims. When she was 8 years old, the woman complained to her school about her foster mom's alleged physical abuse. An Administration for Children's Services staffer investigated but didn't permanently remove the girl from the home, the lawsuit charges. She was sent to therapy at Arista Center for Psychotherapy, Inc., and the foster mom whom she alleged assaulted her attended the sessions. Her foster mom's teenage son started molesting her around age 9, and the abuse came to include years of "oral sex and penetration," the suit states. Several years after the abuse began, she was sent back to the same therapist, who blamed her for the molestation, claiming she was "acting out." Arista staffers wrongly described her behavior as "giving oral sex to an older boy" and "treated her for shame instead of seeking to treat her and protect her from the sexual abuse traumatization," the suit says. Arista had a legal obligation to tell an independent entity about the girl's allegations, but only "cooperated with Abbott House and treated the minor 10-year-old child for years for her guilt instead of investigating the causes and making sure there was a safe foster home setting." The lawsuit also alleges that Abbott House has a history of providing abusive foster homes — but that the organization and city turn a blind eye to them. Bruce Young, the woman's lawyer, said the case reveals the need for more oversight in foster homes. "We trust and presume they're helping troubled children," Young said. "But that presumption — that they're safe — needs greater scrutiny." The woman is seeking \$18 million in damages. A Law Department spokesman said "We will review the complaint." Neither Abbott House nor Arista returned calls for comment. Source: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/girl-city-contracted-foster-care-molested-suit-alleges-article-1.2559041>

City shuts down illegal group home By Vanessa Murphy | vmurphy@8newsnow.com, Neb Solomon Published 03/10/2016 10:57PM Updated 03/10/2016 11:22PM LAS VEGAS An alleged scam is disturbing part of a valley neighborhood. Some say it highlights the problems of homelessness and a lack of resources. A house near Maryland Parkway and Charleston Boulevard appears to be set up for business, but that's not what was happening. Police say it was being used as an illegal group home. "It's just been people coming and going," said nearby resident Eileen Lanahan. She says she saw someone with a clipboard leading a group of people from the nearby Huntridge Circle Park to the house. "We've got a problem," Lanahan said. She says she has lived in the neighborhood all her life. The park where these individuals came from is known to be frequented by the homeless. Metro Police say the tenant renting the house was renting it to others. It was operating as an unlicensed group home, and police were called there 14 times over two and a half months, mainly for disturbances. A spokesman for the City of Las Vegas says code enforcement took action in mid-February. The place was cleaned out, and people living there

had to leave. Now, they're back on the streets. "We've got to do something about the homeless," Lanahan said. Merideth Spriggs connects the homeless with resources through her organization Caridad. She agrees this may be a sign of a bigger problem. "We have a need, and we're not really addressing it," she said. According to a survey from 2015, there are more than 7,500 homeless people in southern Nevada. 28 percent of them reported suffering from mental illness. Spriggs says there are not enough places they can go in southern Nevada for long-term treatment they may need. "We desperately need mental health beds in Clark County. There's a shortage," she said. "It seems like they're always full and in dealing with the homeless, it can sometimes be hours waiting to get someone into mental health services, even if they do have insurance." Spriggs says she's waited up to twelve hours with some clients to get them a bed in a mental health facility. She says police and jails have become the mental health services in Clark County. The owner of the house is a Texas-based corporation. 8 News NOW reached out to the attorney, but received no response. According to the city, the owner had to evict the person who was renting the place out to others. Source: <http://www.lasvegassnow.com/news/city-shuts-down-illegal-group-home>

Legality of group home being investigated following Taylor fire that injured three men Published: Thursday, March 10, 2016 [0 Comments](#) More Photos Click thumbnails to enlarge A fire from a discarded cigarette destroyed this house in Taylor Wednesday afternoon, believed by authorities to be a group home, despite not being licensed with the state. Photo courtesy of Allen Park Fire Department Facebook By Jessica Strachan jstrachan@heritage.com [Click to enlarge](#) A fire from a discarded cigarette destroyed this house on John Daly street in Taylor Wednesday afternoon, believed by authorities to be a group home, despite not being licensed with the state. Photo by Jessica Strachan A fire destroyed what is believed to have been an unlicensed group home in Taylor on Wednesday afternoon, sending a resident and two firefighters to the hospital for treatment. All three men have reportedly been released and are recovering, but the blaze has sparked an investigation into the legitimacy of the facility. The fire started just before 3 p.m. in the 6100 block of John Daly Road, near Van Born and Beech Daly roads. Taylor firefighters arrived to find several residents and a reported caretaker outside, Fire Chief Steve Portis said. One man, described as being in his mid-to late- 60s, was still inside and had to be rescued. As a result of battling the fire, one firefighter was treated for smoke inhalation and another received medical attention after a portion of the roof collapsed on top of him, according to Taylor Fire Marshal John Hager, who said Allen Park and Dearborn Heights fire departments assisted on scene. The fire started after a man who lives in the home attempted to toss a cigarette butt on the ground, but instead set fire to two mattresses that were stacked outside on the deck, Hager said. City tax records show the house is owned by **Habib Capital, LLC**, a Farmington Hills-based company, registered since 2012. It is listed as a 1,600-square foot, three bedroom house with two bathrooms. Hager said he spoke with a man employed by Habib Capital, LLC on scene and that the home had six adult residents, five of whom were there when the fire broke out. Smoking is not allowed inside the home, per management rules, Hager said. The fire completely destroyed the house and residents were reportedly transferred to other group homes outside the city, but owned by Habib Capital, Hager said. Group homes are licensed by the state, based on criteria like services provided and mental status, but are not always registered with the cities they are a part of. Those with fewer than seven residents are not required to seek rezoning permits from the city, according to state officials. "We do have several group homes in the city, but I was not aware that this one," Hager said. "Maybe it's something we're going to have to look at as a city and figure out if we need an ordinance (to keep track of group homes)." [Continued... 1 2 See Full Story](#) "Especially with the (residents') mental status, it was challenging trying to talk to them and determined what happened," he added. State law says an operation must be licensed if it is providing personal care, supervision and protection, in addition to room and board for unrelated people "who are aged, mentally ill, developmentally disabled or physically disabled" for five or more days a week, two or more consecutive weeks — for compensation. Nineteen adult foster care facilities in Taylor are registered with the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs. The John Daly property is not licensed, according to state records. A State of Michigan representative investigating the damaged house Thursday afternoon confirmed that a complaint had been received and that they will be making contact with the owner to determine if the operation was legal. Source: <http://thenewsherald.com/articles/2016/03/10/news/doc56e1c7e4908db050408240.txt?viewmode=fullstory>

Decades in prison for Tucson couple who imprisoned children Decades in prison for Tucson couple who imprisoned children By Curt Prendergast Arizona Daily Star Arizona Daily Star 23 hours ago • By [Curt Prendergast](#) Curt.Prendergast@tucson.com [Trial begins for Tucson couple accused of imprisoning children](#) The trial of a Tucson couple accused of imprisoning children began Friday. [Read more Girls not mistreated, mom in Tucson confinement trial says](#) Sophia Richter took the witness stand as the trial against her and her husband, Fernando Richter. [Read more Tucson home captivity case goes to jury](#) Authorities: 3 sisters malnourished, trapped inside house for months on end. [Read more Unique program prepares children to testify in Tucson court](#) Prosecutors say program puts children at ease by showing them what a trial is like. [Read more](#) The husband and wife convicted of keeping their three daughters imprisoned in their house were sentenced to 58 years and 20 years, respectively, in prison on Thursday. Fernando and Sophia Richter were found guilty in December of three counts each of kidnapping and child abuse. Fernando Richter, stepfather to the three girls, was also convicted of two counts of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. The girls testified to having been physically abused, taken out of school and held captive for several months before the two younger girls escaped through a window in November 2013. Police rescued the oldest girl, who was held in a different room. They were 12, 13 and 17 at the time. The Richters were sentenced by Pima County Superior Court Judge Paul Tang after a morning of hearing statements from the couple's daughters and relatives. "This was a tragedy to us all," Tang said as he announced the sentences. The daughters survived physical and mental abuse, yet "found grace and forgiveness," which Tang called "a testament to the human spirit." Sophia Richter held tissues to her face as her daughters spoke, while Fernando Richter faced away from the gallery. "I rescued myself from a condition that no child should go through," said the 16-year-old daughter, who was 13 when she escaped. "I know she could have left if she really, really wanted to. She let this man torture us," she said of her mother. But she said she does not hate her mother, who was abused in a prior relationship. She said she forgave Fernando because she "can't live with the hatred." Her younger sister also spoke to the judge, saying she was consumed by fear of people around her after she was rescued and for a time wanted to go back to be with her mother and stepfather. "I guess because I was so used to it," she said, adding Fernando "took everything away from me." "Even after everything she has done, I find it in me to love her," she said of her mother. The oldest daughter, 19, said the rules of the trial unfairly restricted her mother from testifying that she also was a victim. Fernando is a "really evil person" who manipulated her mother, she said. Tang said the court was bound by law from allowing such testimony. A 20-year sentence for Sophia Richter would be "too long," she said. "The court is ignoring our need for our mother." "I want her to get help and be our mother again," she said. As for Fernando, he "truly deserves to rot in prison." Robert Richter, stepfather of Fernando Richter, read a statement saying Fernando cannot read or write properly and has suffered from mental illness since he was a boy. Fernando Richter previously raised the issue of mental illness, but after an evaluation Tang ruled he was competent to be sentenced. Defense attorney Paul Skitzki said Fernando was "not a monster." Records of Fernando's mental illness go back to early childhood and were "not something put together for the defense." The daughters testified that Fernando put cameras in their rooms and locked the windows, he said. Fernando did that to protect them out of fear of outside influences. "In Fernando's mind, that's true," he said. Paula Kammon, mother of Sophia Richter, said her daughter became "withdrawn" after meeting Fernando Richter and "kind of slipped away." Fernando Richter was given 58 years in prison and credited with 835 days of time served in jail awaiting trial; Sophia Richter, who was also sentenced to three years' probation in addition to her 20-year sentence, was credited with 835 days of time served. Sophia Richter's defense attorney Leo Plowman said he would appeal. "We were not allowed to present a defense," he said, citing the fact that Sophia Richter could not testify that she was under duress. Source: http://tucson.com/news/local/crime/decades-in-prison-for-tucson-couple-who-imprisoned-children/article_2d1edee7-2888-5e1d-a6b2-b0b0cd3008ae.html

Man Gets 20-Year Term for Starving, Beating Foster Children By The Associated Press SAN ANTONIO — Mar 11, 2016, 8:10 PM ET 33 Shares [Email](#) Star 33 Shares [Email](#) A third former operator of a San Antonio day care center was sentenced Friday to 20 years in prison for forcing his three adopted children to sleep in a shower, bite each other and pour bleach on wounds. Tim Archuleta agreed to the 20-year sentence in a deal with prosecutors in which he pleaded guilty to injury to a child with serious bodily injury by omission. His sentencing comes a week after his wife, Iliana Archuleta, was sentenced to 30 years in prison and his brother, Rogelio Archuleta, received a 35-year sentence. Both pleaded no contest to injury to a child and other charges. Prosecutor Stephanie Boyd told state District Judge Ron Rangel that the three adopted children, who had been born drug-addicted, to collect the state support of more than \$90,000. "They got \$90,000 tax-free and blew it all on themselves," Boyd said. Nevertheless, defense attorney James Tocci appealed for probation for his client. "Should he have done more? Yeah, OK, I'll give you that. But did he intend to starve those kids out? No," Tocci said. Rangel told Archuleta that he "buried his head in the sand" while the children were abused and starved. The children, 8 to 10 years old at the time, had been taken from an abusive home before being placed with the couple, who operated a day care. They slept in a shower, forced to sit with their knees pulled tight against their chests, Bexar

County sheriff's investigator Tony Kobryn said. The shower drain and a bucket served as toilets, and boxes were stacked against the glass door to prevent the children from opening it. They ate mostly bread and butter, with some broth and the occasional half sandwich, he said, and weren't allowed to eat with the Archuletas or their two biological children. The mistreatment was discovered when one child was taken to a hospital for seizures and staff found him malnourished and bruised. The case had highlighted long-standing questions about the [Texas](#) Department of Family and Protective Services, which a federal judge last year ruled was unconstitutionally broken. The judge said many kids often leave state custody in worse shape than before. The system has nearly 30,000 children and is one of the largest child protection agencies in the U.S. Caseworkers face massive workloads and struggle to provide necessary oversight, with only about 100 residential Child Care Licensing investigators to ensure that the state's roughly 10,000 foster homes are providing adequate care, according to Dimple Patel, senior policy analyst with The Texas Association for the Protection of Children. Source: <http://abnnews.go.com/US/wireStory/man-20-year-term-starving-beating-foster-children-37592535>

Mother: 'My son was murdered and I want to know the reason' [Katie Nelson](#), kenelson@argusleader.com 6:46 p.m. CST March 11, 2016 Buy Photo Courtroom file photo(Photo: Argus Leader Media)Buy Photo 148 CONNECT[TWEETLINKEDIN](#) 6 COMMENTEMAILMORE A mother wants answers after her 2-year-old son's death while in foster care was ruled a homicide. "My son was murdered and I want to know the reason behind it," the boy's birth mother, Nina Stead, said in a Facebook message to Argus Leader Media. "I cannot begin to tell you what I feel inside. My family and I are suffering a great loss." The Sioux Falls boy was taken off life support Jan. 6 after suffering from a traumatic head injury. His foster mother, Mary Beth Jennewein, has been [charged with second-degree murder](#) in connection with his death. "I grew up in the system and I know that there are people who foster children and mistreat them," Stead said. "I began to cry just at the thought of how he was treated behind closed doors." Public records do not indicate why the boy was in foster care. A background check for his birth mother, Stead, revealed arrests for disorderly conduct and several traffic violations, as well as an arrest for child abuse in Brule County in 2009. That charge was dismissed by the prosecutor. [ARGUS LEADER Foster mother charged in child's death](#) The South Dakota Department of Social Services, which licenses foster parents, would not make anyone available for a phone interview. Spokeswoman Tia Kafka said in an email that abuse by foster parents is rare and that the department deals with fewer than three cases per year. "South Dakota has a rigorous process for licensing of foster parents that is set out in administrative rule," Kafka wrote. Potential foster parents are required to pass a criminal background check conducted by the FBI and the Department of Criminal Investigation, Kafka said. They must also not be on the state's sex offender registry or the South Dakota Central Registry for Child Abuse and Neglect. Foster homes are inspected weekly for the first month after a child comes to live there and monthly after that, Kafka said. Jennewein was licensed to become a foster parent on Jan. 23, 2015, and has fostered five children. The department followed the correct process when licensing Jennewein, Kafka said, and no complaints had been made against her. A statewide criminal background check on Jennewein showed only three minor charges, all traffic-related, between 2004 and 2014. Kafka described the licensing process as "rigorous," but said the department was reviewing its procedures following Jennewein's arrest. "DSS reviews processes in an effort to identify opportunities to make improvements, and will do so in this situation as well," Kafka wrote. Stead said she is thankful her son is no longer being mistreated and that she prays the truth will be made known. "An innocent child was taken and he lived a short life," she said. "My son will not be forgotten." Follow Katie Nelson on Twitter [@KatieNJourn](#) Source: <http://www.argusleader.com/story/news/crime/2016/03/11/mother-my-son-murdered-and-want-know-reason/81575764/>

Midwest Academy highlights child welfare worries [Lee Rood](#), lrood@dmreg.com 8:27 a.m. CDT March 13, 2016 In this photo taken on Thursday, Feb. 11, 2016, a Uhaul is parked outside Midwest Academy in Keokuk, Iowa. Federal, state and county law enforcement officials have returned to the southeast Iowa boarding school for troubled teens following abuse allegations. The Keokuk Daily Gate reports officials with the FBI and the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation returned to Midwest Academy on Thursday to execute a search warrant for records following an initial search of the academy on Jan. 28 and 29. (Photo: Cindy Iutzi/Daily Gate City via AP) Story Highlights Coming Monday: Could Omaha's Boys Town be a model for Iowa group home reforms? First of two parts Last April, 11 students at a southeast Iowa boarding school near Keokuk stampeded through the facility's kitchen and across an open field on the 70-acre property. All but one of the runaways was rounded up within a few hours. The other was found the next evening. Afterward, Midwest Academy owner Ben Trane emailed parents scattered around the country, recounting the incident and urging them not to be frightened into picking up their children. "Please reinforce with all your children that emotional terrorism is not tolerated anymore," he wrote in the email, obtained by The Des Moines Register. What happened next, according to one of five former students whose families have hired a nationally known children's rights lawyer for possible litigation against the company, underscores why child welfare advocates have been warning for years about the risks associated with residential foster care facilities for troubled youths. MORE: [Midwest Academy-inspired bill held up in House](#) | [Prosecutor: Sex abuse allegation may not stick against academy owner](#) The boys were put into concrete isolation rooms, sometimes two at a time. That isolation lasted at least three weeks for each one, said David Ferleger, the Pennsylvania children's rights lawyer representing a student who recounted the incident. "No matter what one thinks of therapeutic boarding schools, putting a child in a segregation room for three weeks is unacceptable," Ferleger told the Register. Trane has not responded to several requests for interviews regarding allegations at the facility. As state and federal authorities continue to investigate allegations of child sex abuse and other mistreatment of children at Midwest Academy, some Iowa lawmakers have been moving swiftly to require oversight of private-pay facilities that foster struggling youths. State officials concede that they don't know how many youths are being housed in Iowa's private-pay foster care facilities, because no state agency licenses or regulates them. But in May, Hillcrest Family Services in Dubuque, which has been providing government funded residential care for years, is expected to open one more. Awakenings Academy will be a private-pay, six-bedroom program with a more holistic approach for behaviorally challenged boys ages 12 to 17. "Parents whose kids do not qualify for state or federal subsidies still have needs," said John Bellini, a vice president for Hillcrest. A bill passed by the Iowa Senate would at least mandate certification of those homes — requiring that they meet basic health and safety needs, protect children from abuse and neglect, conduct background checks, and limit the use of seclusion and restraint. House members have said it's too late to pass their own bill, but they are weighing whether to add the language into a human service appropriations bill. Nationally, though, residential group homes for troubled youths that receive taxpayer money are coming under increased scrutiny. In states such as California and Illinois, scandals have erupted over widespread reports of sexual abuse, excessive use of restraints and lack of supervision at group homes. RELATED: [Despite complaints, agency couldn't regulate boarding school](#) | [Search warrant info remains confidential in Midwest Academy case](#) The number of children in any kind of foster care, including residential and group homes, has dropped by almost one-third since the late 1990s. Still, about 57,000 — or 14 percent — of the nation's foster youths live in group care, according to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, which has been pushing Congress for legislative changes. A bipartisan group of U.S. senators, including Iowa's Chuck Grassley, co-chair of the Senate's caucus on foster youths, has been looking to shift funding away from group care that isn't deemed clinically necessary in favor of options that keep more children home or with relatives. Major national providers of residential and community-based programs generally agree with that goal. At a congressional hearing that Grassley chaired in 2014, Jeremy Kohomban, CEO of Children's Village in New York City, said group care is "simply the wrong intervention for most youth, including teens." Kohomban said reforms are needed to address "pervasive incentives" that steer most federal child-welfare dollars into foster care, including group settings. But if you talk to parents who took their children to Midwest Academy, they will tell you almost uniformly that they could no longer handle their sons or daughters at home. And few places would take them. "I didn't sleep at night until I put him in there," said Jeff Rolczynski, who brought his 16-year-old to Midwest Academy from Illinois. "He was either going to be dead or in jail." Rolczynski said he traveled the country in 2011 looking for a place to put his son, who had problems with drugs and alcohol, as well as acting out. "My son's psychologist said I basically had two choices: either I need to come home every day and handcuff him to a bedpost, or find a boarding school of some sort," Rolczynski said. EDITORIAL: [Youth homes need state oversight](#) In return for tuition ranging from \$30,000 to \$50,000 a year, Midwest Academy marketed a "merit model" of behavioral modification that some former students and parents likened to brainwashing. Boys and girls reported being stripped of their possessions and shoes, cut off from communication with family, and prohibited from speaking to their peers until they earned privileges through "good behavior, academics, and leadership." Rolczynski said his son, now 20, changed his behavior in just five months. "It didn't fix him. But it did give him a base as to how he could get back on track," he said. While some parents loved the rigid atmosphere at the boarding school, others complained that it was a traumatizing, one-size-fits-all program that had no basis in child psychology. Laura Gillings, who lives in Minnesota, said her son spent a majority of his three months at the school in 2006 in isolation. Afterward, she said, she learned that he was on the autism spectrum, "which explains why he couldn't understand how to get out of isolation." Gillings said her son, now 23, was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder after attending the academy and Tranquility Bay, a similar school in Jamaica recommended by the staff. That school was shuttered in 2009 after

reports of alleged child abuse, unsanitary living conditions, unqualified staff and denial of medical care. "I am still in debt ... paying for the schools that ruined our family," Gillings said. Source: <http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/investigations/readers-watchdog/2016/03/12/midwest-academy-highlights-what-worries-child-welfare-experts-group-care/81501780/>

Centers to Treat Eating Disorders Are Growing, and Raising Concerns By [ERICA GOODE](#) MARCH 14, 2016 Inside Photo Ashley Bilkie, 29, at home in Northville, Mich. She enrolled in four inpatient programs for treatment of anorexia, for which her father said he paid at least \$350,000 in unreimbursed costs, before making progress at Johns Hopkins Medical Center. Credit Laura McDermott for The New York Times Advertisement [Continue reading the main story](#) [Continue reading the main story](#) Share This Page [Email](#) [Share](#) [Tweet](#) [Save more](#) [Continue reading the main story](#) [Continue reading the main story](#) Their websites show peaceful scenes — young women relaxing by the ocean or caring for horses in emerald pastures — and boast of their chefs and other amenities. From Our Advertisers One center sends out invitations to a reception with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres. Another offers doctors and therapists all-expense-paid trips to visit and experience their offerings, including [yoga](#) classes. Several employ staff who call [mental health](#) professionals, saying they would love to have lunch. The marketing efforts by these for-profit residential care centers are aimed at patients with [eating disorders](#) and the clinicians who treat them. The programs have proliferated in recent years, with some companies expanding across the country. [Continue reading the main story](#) Related Coverage [What to Look For in an Eating Disorder Treatment Center](#) MARCH 14, 2016 [Anorexia May Be Habit, Not Willpower, Study Finds](#) OCT. 12, 2015 [Ruling Offers Hope to Eating Disorder Sufferers](#) OCT. 13, 2011 [Patient Money: Treating Eating Disorders and Paying for It](#) DEC. 3, 2010 The rapid growth of the industry — there are more than 75 centers, compared with 22 a decade ago, according to one count — has been propelled by the Affordable Care Act and other changes in [health insurance](#) laws that have increased coverage for mental disorders, as well as by investments from private equity firms. The residential programs, their directors say, fill a dire need, serving patients from areas where no adequate treatment is available. "Only 15 to 30 percent of people have access to specialized care for eating disorders, which means there are a lot of people out there who have zippo," said Doug Bunnell, the chief clinical officer for [Monte Nido](#), a program that began in Malibu, Calif., and now operates centers in five states. But the advertising and the profusion of centers, which typically cost \$1,000 a day but can run much higher, is raising concerns among some eating disorders experts, who worry that some programs may be taking advantage of vulnerable patients and their families. In the companies' rush to expand, they argue, quality of treatment may be sacrificed for profit. And they question whether the sparkle atmosphere of some programs is so comfortable that it fosters dependency. "For the most part, the people who are running and working in these programs believe they're doing the right thing," said Dr. Angela Guarda, the director of the eating disorders program at [the Johns Hopkins Hospital](#) in Baltimore. "But it's a slippery slope," she said. "Money can cloud your view." Many eating disorders specialists agree that some patients require the supervision of residential programs and benefit from the treatment. But studies showing the programs' effectiveness are scant, Dr. Guarda and other experts said. The methods of the handful of studies that exist have been criticized. The quality and form of treatment varies widely across centers, and in some cases includes approaches — equine therapy, for example, or "faith-based" treatment — with little or no scientific evidence behind them. Some programs have full-time psychiatrists and medical doctors on staff, but others lack the expertise to handle emergencies or treat patients with coexisting medical or psychiatric problems. The perks offered to outside clinicians who might refer patients, the experts say, include free trips, restaurant meals, educational seminars and small gifts like pens and key chains dispensed at professional meetings. Critics liken them to pharmaceutical industry tactics that led to laws and policies requiring financial disclosure, though on a smaller scale. Studies had shown that even small gifts from drug companies, like free medication samples, affected doctors' prescription practices. [Continue reading the main story](#) What to Look For in an Eating Disorder Treatment Center Choosing a residential treatment program for eating disorders can be challenging. [Click here for advice](#) from specialists who treat eating disorders about what you should look for. Advertisement [Continue reading the main story](#) In [an article](#) to be published Monday in the journal *Psychiatric Services*, Dr. Evelyn Attia, a professor of psychiatry and director of the [eating disorders program](#) at Columbia University Medical Center, and four colleagues called for more transparency about the financial relationships between residential centers and the professionals who send them patients, and urged clinicians to be mindful of efforts to influence their recommended treatment. "The effect of these clinician inducements, which are aimed at building a program's patient referral base, may not be fully recognized by the professionals they target," wrote Dr. Attia and her colleagues, who included Dr. Guarda. Several industry representatives said that while they had not seen the journal article, they agreed that more data on patient outcomes and stricter standards were needed. But, they said, the trips and seminars offered to clinicians were primarily educational. "I don't think anyone in the eating disorders world is giving out swimming pools and trips to Europe and things like that," Dr. Bunnell said. Jillian Lampert, president of the Residential Eating Disorders Consortium, a group that represents about 85 percent of the centers, said, "Health care's always been a business," adding that quality and profit were not mutually exclusive. If there are concerns, she said, "we are incredibly open to having those conversations." A Deadly Mental Illness Eating disorders are among the most difficult mental illnesses to treat. [Anorexia](#), in particular, has stymied many of psychiatry's best treatment efforts. The illness has the highest mortality rate of any mental disorder, with patients dying from the medical complications of starvation or from suicide. And patients often resist treatments that make them feel uncomfortable. The most severely ill patients — the prognosis is grimmer the longer someone has anorexia, studies suggest — require hospital treatment just to stay alive. But even after being stabilized, many patients need continual supervision for a time to regain weight and learn new behavior. The length of stay in residential centers ranges from two weeks to a year. A 2006 study found that the average stay was 83 days. In the past, health insurance companies placed strict limits on coverage for eating disorders, treating them differently from other medical illnesses. Few insurers were willing to pay for 24-hour care after a patient was out of immediate danger. But the passage of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act in 2008 and the Affordable Care Act two years later mandated equal treatment. Lawsuits brought by the families of patients who were denied coverage added to the pressure on insurers. In 2012, a federal appeals court ruled that health plans must cover residential treatment for anorexia under California's parity law. The higher reimbursement rates offered some relief to families, who had often mortgaged their houses or drained their savings to pay for critically needed care. Advertisement [Continue reading the main story](#) They also attracted the attention of Wall Street investors, who saw profits in providing treatment for so-called behavioral health problems like eating disorders, [alcoholism](#) and [drug abuse](#). "The number of covered lives is growing faster than the availability of services to treat them, creating compelling investment opportunities," the accounting and consulting firm BDO noted last year in [an article](#) on its website, referring to the effects of the legal changes. Advertisement [Continue reading the main story](#) As the industry has expanded, larger centers have acquired smaller ones and some programs, flush with private equity investments, have expanded across the country. For example, Monte Nido, a treatment program founded by Carolyn Costin, a former teacher who recovered from an eating disorder, began with a center in Malibu. But in 2012, with [financing from Centre Partners](#), a middle-market equity firm, Monte Nido began opening new residential centers and day-treatment programs. The company now has centers in Oregon, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and New York, including one in a renovated mansion in Westchester County. [Continue reading the main story](#) Sign Up for the Science Times Newsletter Every week, we'll bring you stories that capture the wonders of the human body, nature and the cosmos. Last year, noting that the investment had "tripled the company's facility footprint during our ownership period," Centre Partners [sold Monte Nido](#) to another investment firm, Levine Leichtman Capital Partners, for an undisclosed sum. "I believe that the Monte Nido's [sic] approach to eating disorder treatment is what you and others like you have been waiting for," Ms. Costin wrote in a letter to potential patients on the company's website, which includes images of beaches, mountains and the Boston skyline on its home page. With a need to fill more beds, marketers for some centers make cold calls to psychiatrists, psychotherapists, medical doctors and others who treat eating disorders, offering to inform them about a program's advantages and inviting them to visit. The Denver-based [Eating Recovery Center](#) has a call center and employs 20 "professional relations liaisons" who contact clinicians across the country. The author and motivational speaker [Jenni Schaefer](#), who recovered from an eating disorder, recently joined the program's outreach team. On its website, the company, which began with a single center, bills itself as "the only national health care system devoted to serious eating disorders at all levels of care." Craig Johnson, a well-known eating disorders specialist, joined the company in 2010 and has seen it through its expansion to 24 treatment programs in seven states, including three residential centers. He said when therapists visit, the focus is education, not entertainment. "We're delivering lectures," Dr. Johnson said. Some therapists see the offer of free trips as a chance to view the facilities that they might recommend to patients. Ann Jacob Smith, a family therapist in Chevy Chase, Md., said that last year, she accepted an invitation to visit the Oliver-Pyatt eating disorders center in Miami. (The center is now part of Monte Nido). "It was absolutely promotional," she said, "But it was actually really educational. They took us in depth into what they did." Advertisement [Continue reading the main story](#) Her later referrals were not influenced by the visit, she added. "I'm not impressed by being romanced." But Adrian Brown, a psychiatrist in Virginia, said that therapists who had not gone through the "battle phase" with drug companies might not even realize they were being swayed by financial interests. Dr. Brown recalled being offered a "V.I.P." trip to a treatment center, with the representative telling her, "We will pay your way, put you up in a really nice hotel, all expenses paid, yoga and whatever." Dr. Brown responded, "No, that's

not ethical.” The representative replied, “What do you mean?” Another invitation arrived the next year. Photo Jillian Lampert heads a group representing eating disorder centers that is seeking to establish standards for accreditation. Below, some centers’ promotional images. Credit Jenn Ackerman for The New York Times Mixed Results Prospective patients or family members searching for a treatment program sometimes turn to ed.treatmentreview.com, where former patients describe their experiences at different centers, evaluating the staff, critiquing the food and noting whether cellphones are allowed. Many reviewers have spent time in more than one residential center and the opinions on any particular program vary widely, a range reflected in interviews with former patients over the last several months. Tina Klaus, a 51-year-old artist who has struggled with [bulimia](#) since she was 10, said residential care was initially useful. “Residential treatment is vital when you are at your ultimate rock bottom” she said. But once home, her illness worsened because “you’re going back into your life, you’re going back into all the emotions you used your eating disorder to hide from.” Melissa R., 28, who asked that her last name not be used for reasons of privacy, said after several hospitalizations for anorexia, beginning when she was 21, she found a residential center in the Southwest on the Internet and spent six weeks there. The center, which she described as “more like a resort,” was “somewhat helpful,” she said, but not worth the time and money. “People were nice, and the food was really good,” she said. “I had fun, I enjoyed rock climbing and stuff, but that’s not why I was there. I’m paying a lot of money to get well, not to rock climb.” Last year, she spent two months at Eating Recovery Center in Denver, moving from residential care to day treatment, and began to gain control of her illness. “E.R.C. was the best place I’ve been,” she said about the center. “They were very individualized.” Ashley Bilkie, 29, had a different experience with E.R.C. When she returned home in February 2015 after about six months in the Denver program — her fourth stay in an inpatient program for treatment of anorexia and her second at E.R.C. — “I was getting sicker and sicker,” she said. She lost the weight she had gained back at the center. “I had to buy children’s clothing,” she said. She was evasive with her parents. At the recovery center, she said, “It was kind of like they set up a battle between myself and my parents.” For their part, Ms. Bilkie’s parents, who for years had watched their daughter’s health decline, grew frantic. Ms. Bilkie would disappear, her father, Robert Bilkie, said, and he would find her wandering the aisles at Kroger or Target. Driving through the neighborhood, he half-expected to see her hanging from a tree. Advertisement [Continue reading the main story](#) Advertisement [Continue reading the main story](#) “It’s a parent’s worst nightmare,” he said. It was also expensive. Mr. Bilkie, a financial adviser in Michigan, calculated that over three years, he paid at least \$350,000 for unreimbursed inpatient care for his daughter. The Eating Recovery Center, he said, sent him bills for \$30,000 each month. Mr. Bilkie paid willingly — he was desperate to see Ashley get well, he said — but no program seemed to produce lasting results. “We spent an outrageous amount of money for what really amounted to ineffectual treatment,” Mr. Bilkie said. Last fall, Ms. Bilkie entered the eating disorder center at the Johns Hopkins Medical Center, a university affiliated program. Photo Ms. Bilkie is studying to be a nurse. Credit Laura McDermott for The New York Times The staff there gradually weaned her off some drugs she had been taking taking at the center in Denver, including high doses of Xanax, a tranquilizer, and Adderall, an attention deficit drug and a stimulant. In group therapy, other patients put pressure on her to change her behavior. It was a switch, she said, from previous groups, where patients talked about their problems. With the program’s stress on weight restoration — studies show that it is [the best predictor](#) of how anorexic patients will do once they leave, rather than, say, elevated mood — her weight returned to normal. She was discharged in November and continues to do well. “I hated every single solitary second of it,” she said of the experience. “But that’s a good thing, because I was not comfortable, and it meant that something was working.” Dr. Ovidio Bermudez, the chief clinical officer of Eating Recovery Center, said that other patients have fared poorly at academic centers and then done well at E.R.C. Despite Ms. Bilkie’s perception, he said, therapists at the program did not try to divide patients from their families. (Ms. Bilkie gave Eating Recovery Center permission to discuss her case.) “We would have to filter this through 20/20 hindsight,” Dr. Bermudez said. “It’s really hard to know what somebody’s frame of mind is and the degree of fragility they bring to any treatment experience.” Dr. Anne Marie O’Melia, a psychiatrist at the recovery center, said Ms. Bilkie was on Xanax when she arrived and was fearful of reducing the drug’s dosage, though the center tried. She was switched to Adderall from another stimulant at E.R.C., Dr. O’Melia said, to treat “significant impulsivity.” Seeking Standards Ms. Bilkie’s history of ups and downs is not unusual for patients with eating disorders. “In many cases, you see one step forward, two steps back,” said Dr. Mark Friedlander, the chief medical officer for Aetna Behavioral Health. His company, Dr. Friedlander said, considers residential care essential for treatment of some patients. But, he said, a lack of outcome studies, an absence of industry standards and a patchwork licensing system across states make it difficult for Aetna or other insurers to evaluate care. “We would love to see greater consistency and higher standards,” he said. To that end, a group of eating disorder specialists from treatment centers, including Eating Recovery Center and Monte Nido, have developed a list of minimum requirements for accreditation of residential programs. [The Joint Commission](#), an independent company that accredits health care facilities, has adopted the requirements, which go into effect July 1. Dr. Lampert, president of the consortium, said the centers in the organization were also collecting data on patient outcomes, lengths of stay and other variables, with each center collecting data on 15 consecutive admissions of adults and adolescents. In the meantime, many patients and families will continue to rely on word of mouth and any information they can find online. “These are black boxes,” Dr. Scott Hadland, an adolescent medicine specialist at Harvard Medical School, said of the residential centers. “People get the idea that these are places that can heal just based on what they see on a website or in the photos.” Source: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/15/health/eating-disorders-anorexia-bulimia-treatment-centers.html?_r=0

Police investigating allegations of unreported abuse at boys ranch [Print](#) [Font](#) [\[+\]](#) [\[-\]](#) [Leave a comment »](#) By [Pat Reavy](#), Deseret News Published: Wednesday, March 16 2016 2:10 p.m. MDT Updated: yesterday Share6 Share3 Tweet2 Share0 Share0 The Sanpete County Sheriff’s Office is investigating allegations of sexual abuse and obstruction of justice at a southern Utah residential treatment center, a newly unsealed search warrant reveals. [Shutterstock Enlarge photo»](#) Summary The Sanpete County Sheriff’s Office is investigating allegations of sexual abuse and obstruction of justice at a southern Utah residential treatment center, a newly unsealed search warrant reveals. MT. PLEASANT, Sanpete County — The Sanpete County Sheriff’s Office is investigating allegations of sexual abuse and obstruction of justice at a southern Utah residential treatment center, a newly unsealed search warrant reveals. Sheriff’s deputies went to the Mount Pleasant Academy, 70 W. 1100 South in Mt. Pleasant, and seized multiple computer hard drives and at least one computer tower, according to a search warrant affidavit that was executed on Feb. 23. The warrant was unsealed in 6th District Court Tuesday. Investigators were looking for documents, data, emails, photographs, filings and other evidence of multiple sex crimes as well as evidence of attempts to conceal the crimes, the affidavit states. The investigation began in January when the Division of Child and Family Services received information “that juveniles at a youth group home (Mt. Pleasant Academy) were engaged in unlawful sexual activity and that the staff members of the home were aware of the activity and not reporting to the proper authorities,” according to the warrant. A staff member from the academy who wished to remain anonymous filed the complaint, the warrant states. “The intake report also stated that staff members do not supervise the children appropriately to prevent sexual incidences between the children. In the intake report, the complainant also makes allegations that the director of the youth home is sharing video surveillance with other staff members,” the affidavit states. Six days after the division contacted the sheriff’s office, interviews were conducted with three boys at the ranch. “Interviews indicated that there had been sexual activity between some of the boys in the home and that the staff was aware of the sexual activity,” according to the warrant. Sanpete County Sheriff Brian Nielson confirmed Tuesday there is an active investigation, but he said it will likely take some time to complete. Until then, he said he was unable to comment. On its website, the Mount Pleasant Academy advertises itself as “a small, 16-bed, residential treatment center for boys ages 12-18 struggling with compulsive sexual behaviors, sensitive sexual issues, pornography addiction, and/or digital addictions.” The director of the academy on Wednesday referred all calls to the executive director. A call left at the executive director’s St. George office was not returned Wednesday. Source: <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865650199/Police-investigating-allegations-of-unreported-abuse-at-boys-ranch.html?pg=all>

Investigation underway in Winter Park foster care agency Updated: Mar 16, 2016 - 5:20 PM 1 Tweet this to your followers! From To Compose your message 114 Thanks for sharing with your followers! Investigation underway in Winter Park foster care agency - <http://www.wftv.com/news/9-investigates-investigation-underway-in-winter-park-foster-care-agency/165156176> <http://www.wftv.com/news/9-investigates-investigation-underway-in-winter-park-foster-care-agency/165156176> WINTER PARK, Fla. — Eyewitness News uncovered one of the largest foster care agencies in Florida is denying allegations of Medicaid fraud. Officials said the Children’s Home Society of Florida admitted to 9 Investigates they made billing errors totaling \$82,000. Eyewitness News was first tipped off early Wednesday that a whistleblower complaint sparked the investigation at the state’s oldest and largest statewide organization. The facility based in Winter Park has a stellar reputation, providing care for 50,000 families throughout Florida. According to the most recent tax returns available, the agency received \$7 million in Medicaid and/or Medicare payments from the state and federal government to provide care for those families. Now, an investigation is underway to find out if

the agency over-billed the government for those claims. A spokesperson later sent Eyewitness News a statement, admitting the agency uncovered billing claim errors, totaling \$82,000. In a statement, the agency said: "In July 2014, Children's Home Society of Florida implemented a new electronic health records and billing system. During this transition, we experienced some implementation challenges related to billing errors which resulted in allegations of fraud. Once management was made aware of the allegations we took several actions: We immediately reported the allegations to the Inspector General's Office for the Agency for Healthcare Administration. We engaged outside counsel and an auditing firm to independently investigate the allegations. The investigation concluded there was no fraud committed. CHS assigned a team comprised of senior management to perform a claim-by-claim review of every transaction dating back to July 2014 when the new billing system was first implemented. As of today, this review has identified claim errors totaling \$82,876. We have repaid \$66,821 to date and the remaining \$16,055 is in the repayment process. All claims submitted were for services that were actually provided. Because there were no findings of fraud, no CHS employees have been disciplined in connection with any part of this investigation. Specifically, Bob Wydra, our former Chief Financial Officer, did not leave CHS as a result of this investigation. We continue to encourage our employees to raise any concerns through an independent whistleblower hotline, which reinforces our commitment to transparency. Going forward, CHS has engaged outside consultants to resolve any outstanding issues with our billing implementation system. We are also providing increased and enhanced training for staff on how to use the new billing system. CHS has a strong history of caring for children and families across Florida. Our services depend on our strong and committed workforce. We will continue to review our billing implementation systems while maintaining the same high level of quality services to children and families that we've provided for more than 100 years." Eyewitness News was told the agency implemented a new electronic health records and billing system in 2014. During that process, a spokesperson said there were challenges related to billing errors, but allegations of fraud were unfounded. Eyewitness News asked if their internal investigation was related to the recent departure of CFO Bob Wydra. A spokesperson said no employees with the Children's Home Society have been disciplined because there were no findings of fraud. A spokesperson told Eyewitness News Wydra did not leave as a result of the investigation. The state attorney general would not confirm or deny an ongoing investigation on that level. They did confirm they have received five complaints against the agency since January of 2015, but wouldn't say what they are related to. Click [here](http://www.wftv.com/news/9-investigates/investigation-underway-in-winter-park-foster-care-agency/165156176) to read about other cases investigated by the state. Source: <http://www.wftv.com/news/9-investigates/investigation-underway-in-winter-park-foster-care-agency/165156176>

Controversial youth program director seeks House seat By [Dan Boyd / Capitol Bureau Chief](#) Friday, March 18th, 2016 at 12:01am SANTA FE – The owner of a southwestern New Mexico ranch whose youth program has come under fire and been the subject of several lawsuits – at least one of which is still pending – is running for an open seat in the state House. CHANDLER: Says he's conservative, independent Scott Chandler, the owner of Tierra Blanca Ranch, said this week that he doesn't think the high-profile abuse allegations will be a distraction during his campaign this year. "I don't think so. I don't want it to be (a distraction)," Chandler said in an interview, pointing out that no one affiliated with the ranch's youth program has faced criminal charges. "If anything, I think it shows I've been vetted." Chandler, a Deming Republican, is one of four candidates – two Republicans and two Democrats – vying for the House District 32 seat currently held by Rep. Dona Irwin, D-Deming. Irwin, who was first elected to the seat in 1998, is not seeking re-election this year. The race could play a role in determining which political party ends up controlling the House. Republicans currently hold a 37-33 edge and are seeking to retain control after a historic takeover of the chamber in 2014. Chandler likely has the most statewide name recognition of any of the four candidates, though much of the attention the former college football player has received has come because of his ranch. Tierra Blanca is a 30,000-acre working cattle operation in New Mexico's Black Range. The ranch's High Country Youth Program is intended to "teach responsibility, self-discipline and the existence of consequences" to troubled teens, according to its website. While some former ranch residents have praised Chandler and the youth program's positive impact, other participants have claimed they were beaten, shackled and fed starvation rations. New Mexico State Police agents and social workers, responding to abuse allegations, showed up at the ranch in October 2013 to try to take custody of the children staying there. That led the Chandlers to file a lawsuit against the Children, Youth and Families Department in 2013, claiming the agency had overstepped its authority. The lawsuit was settled in 2014. Meanwhile, three lawsuits have been filed by families alleging their children were abused at the ranch. Two of those lawsuits have been dismissed, state court records show, and one is still pending. In addition, Chandler and his wife have a separate lawsuit pending against the State Police and the state Department of Public Safety, among other parties. The lawsuit alleges that Chandler was defamed by Gov. Susana Martinez's security detail when he was asked to leave a GOP event in Luna County that the governor was attending. Chandler said this week that his family is "very proud of how we've helped people." He described himself as "very conservative" on most issues, but said that, if elected, he'd be politically independent and willing to work with Democratic lawmakers on regional job creation efforts. The other candidates running for the open seat are Democrats Candie Sweetser and Frederick Sherman, and Republican Vicki Chavez. All four are Deming residents, according to campaign filings. Source: <http://www.abqjournal.com/742340/news/controversial-youth-program-director-seeks-house-seat.html>

Foster care scandal: Human services director fires top child welfare officials 1 / 6 foster care feb. 3, 2016 Oregon's then-interim human services director Clyde Saiki, left, and Dani Ledezma, a policy adviser for Gov. Kate Brown, prepare to testify to lawmakers in support of foster care reform legislation. Saiki is among those sued Thursday over treatment of two vulnerable preschoolers. Denis C. Theriault/staff [Denis C. Theriault | The Oregonian/OregonLive Print](#) Email By [Denis C. Theriault | The Oregonian/OregonLive](#) The Oregonian Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#) On March 18, 2016 at 11:04 AM, updated March 18, 2016 at 2:32 PM Kate Brown Answering a foster care abuse scandal that's rocked the Department of Human Services for months, Gov. Kate Brown's newly appointed human services director, Clyde Saiki, has fired two of the agency's most senior child welfare officials. Ousted are Jerry Waybrant, the agency's chief operating officer over child welfare programs, and Lois Day, the agency's current child welfare director. Saiki announced the dismissals Friday, days after Brown made his position atop the agency permanent. "When the governor asked me to serve as the director of DHS," Saiki said in a statement, "she made it very clear that one of my top priorities was the safety of children entrusted to our care. She had serious concerns about some of the incidents that came to light over the past year, and I share those concerns, too. "I need to have leaders who can help DHS move in the direction we need to go. I am making changes today, and in the coming months I will make additional personnel changes, as needed," he continued. The decision also came as the agency learned of a [\\$60 million lawsuit](#) that accuses officials of allowing two small children under its watch to endure severe starvation. In a note to lawmakers Thursday morning, obtained by The Oregonian/OregonLive, Saiki said he acted "after reviewing the case and based on my assessment of our child welfare program." Jerry Waybrant Denis C. Theriault | The Oregonian/OregonLive Waybrant briefly served as the agency's acting director last year, until he was replaced by Saiki. [Brown demoted him](#) amid reports he was among a group of senior officials, including former director Erinn Kelley-Siel, who'd continued placing children with a Northeast Portland provider despite repeated red flags over abuse complaints and financial problems. Day was also among that group. She had retained her job atop the child welfare program, even as lawmakers led by Sen. [Sara Gelser](#), D-Corvallis, held a series of hearings on foster care lapses and released hundreds of pages of documents showing concerns and indifference had stretched back years. Those hearings led to legislation, [Senate Bill 1515](#), that requires quarterly reports on abuse, tightens licensing rules for providers and makes it a crime for officials to knowingly ignore neglect. Day, repeatedly called to testify in front of lawmakers, had called Gelser's proposals "very good." Earlier, in September, she had promised an internal review of the agency. Denis C. Theriault | The Oregonian/OregonLive "I feel responsible for helping see this through," she said in November, "to ensure this doesn't occur again." The records released by Gelser show officials had known about problems at provider Give Us This Day for more than a decade, adding to revelations that included allegations of [\\$2 million in misspent money](#) and children forced to deal with [mold, hunger, inappropriate force and a lack of bedding](#). And a complaint log released among the documents raised serious questions about the way human services officials handle [complaints of abuse and neglect](#). Many serious complaints against Give Us This Day and its employees never went beyond an initial screening. The words "no investigation" appeared next to reports on allegations including anal rape, sexual fondling, children accused of having sex after being found in the same bed, a lack of supervision from foster parents, bruises and death threats. Oregon's foster care system, in charge of thousands of kids on any given day, has long faced troubles — paying millions of dollars to settle abuse claims and struggling under budget cuts that sapped caseworker staffing and sent caseloads skyrocketing. In June, The Oregonian/OregonLive found the Human Services Department had [struggled to report](#) a basic means of keeping children safe: monthly visits from caseworkers. Federal audits have repeatedly dinged the department for falling behind benchmarks. Saiki has presided over a steady shakeup since being given interim control of the department in November. Under Saiki, department administrators now meet regularly to discuss abuse claims and licensing infractions. And Saiki has talked about opening his door directly to employees and others who worry mid-level managers aren't heeding their concerns. Earlier, some foster care programs, despite racking up complaint after

complaint, had continued receiving children despite lingering on a department watch list for years. Twice since November, the department has moved against the licenses of programs [who'd been on that list](#). One of those providers, Youth Villages in Lake Oswego, closed one of its programs as part of a settlement with the state. Saiki has also been asked to shepherd an outside review of the department's child welfare system, another effort launched by Brown. "Our mission is to assist Oregonians in achieving safety, health and independence — and in some areas we have lost that focus," Saiki said in a statement Friday. "It is my job to make the decisions and changes, sometimes difficult ones, to restore that focus on safety. The governor expects it, and Oregonians deserve it." — Denis C. Theriault dtheriault@oregonian.com 503-221-8430; @TheriaultPDX Source: http://www.oregonlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2016/03/foster_care_scandal_new_human.html

Long Island Foster Parent Accused Of Sexually Abusing Kids In His Care « CBS New York. Suffolk DA: Long Island Foster Parent Accused Of Sexually Abusing Boys, Dog March 18, 2016 5:20 PM Filed Under: [Cesar Gonzalez-Mugaburu](#), [Sex Abuse 2](#) RIVERHEAD, N.Y. (CBSNewYork/AP) — A Long Island man is accused of sexually abusing at least seven foster children in his care at a home prosecutors described as a "house of horrors." Cesar Gonzalez-Mugaburu, 60, of Ridge, pleaded not guilty to child endangerment and sexual misconduct charges at his arraignment Friday in state Supreme Court in Riverhead. Suffolk County District Attorney Thomas Spota said the victims, who were as young as 8, were forced to live under punishing conditions. "Physical contact, physical abuse, hitting them, denying them meals, making them stand out in the cold," Spota said. Neighbors claimed they saw some of the children rummaging through garbage cans in search of food, Spota said. Mugaburu fostered 140 children over 19 years, earning as much as \$18,000 a month, authorities said. The children were all boys with special needs. The floodgates opened when seven boys recently came forward, afraid until now to admit the heinous abuse, CBS2's Jennifer McLogan reported. The district attorney said Mugaburu also abused the family dog. The victims said he threatened and controlled them with physical beatings, cutting off cell phone contact, not allowing girlfriends, and giving them two meals a day. CBS2 asked neighbors if they had suspicions. "We've seen him always putting out there with his cars and the kids doing yard work, tidying up the place," neighbor Christine Stein told CBS2. "I've talked to them, played baseball with them, never complained. It's insane. I never would have thought this," neighbor Patrick Cawley said. Authorities said the children were placed in his care by New York City child welfare officials and SCO Family of Services, a non-profit group on Long Island. "SCO Family of Services is aware that the Suffolk County District Attorney has filed charges against a former SCO foster parent in connection with allegations of abuse and maltreatment," the group said in a statement. "SCO considers the safety and wellbeing of children in our programs to be our absolute highest priority. We are cooperating with authorities as they continue their investigation." A spokeswoman for New York City's Administration for Children's Services didn't immediately comment on the allegations. The defense attorney denies Mugaburu was ever abusive, calling him a doting and caring father who was never in trouble with the law. The district attorney wants to know if the nonprofit organization ever made house calls or checked up on Mugaburu in any way. Detectives said they expect there are dozens more victims. He is being held on \$500,000 bail. He faces up to 50 years in prison if convicted. Source: <http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2016/03/18/long-island-foster-parent-sex-abuse/>

Youth Services International history of problems dates to 1989 | www.mypalmbeachpost.com Detainees forced to pay for forks; shackled teen coughing up blood [News](#) By [Pat Beall](#) - Palm Beach Post Staff Writer [0](#) Posted: 7:32 p.m. Friday, March 18, 2016 Youth Services International is not the only for-profit juvenile detention company targeted for criticism. But, say critics, the company, its founder James Slattery and YSI's predecessor companies have been under fire for far longer than other firms, in more states and for many of the same issues. 1989: Hoteliers James Slattery and Morris Horn's stab at government-subsidized housing ends amid allegations of squalor — and roughly 600 code violations — at New York City's infamous Brooklyn Arms welfare hotel. The hotel is closed. Undaunted, the two men found Esmor Correctional Services and strike a deal with the federal government to house immigrant detainees. 1995: One year after Esmor begins operating a New Jersey immigrant detention center for the federal government, immigrants riot. A federal investigation finds detainees were forced to pay for forks and spoons. Women were denied sanitary napkins. Clothing was dirty, and soap was withheld. Severe understaffing forced 16-hour shifts. And the facility administrator said corporate policy was to keep the government "in the dark." The contract was canceled. [Detainees sued](#). 1997: Esmor reorganizes as Correctional Services Corp. and moves to Florida, where it contracts with the state to run the 350-bed Pahokee Youth Development Center for teenage offenders. Eight months later, a Dade County Circuit judge reports "[physical and psychological conditions bordered upon child abuse](#)." The state defends its contractor and Slattery denies reports of problems. The state contract is ended early, by "mutual agreement." 2001: A teenager serving six months at a Texas boot camp run by CSC dies of pneumonia. According to a suit filed by his family, Bryan Alexander had been coughing up blood for days before he was shackled in leg irons and taken to a hospital. A suit was settled for more than \$38 million. 2004: The U.S. Justice Department concluded [teenagers at the YSI-run Charles H. Hickey Jr. School in Maryland were in danger](#). Citing "a deeply disturbing" degree of violence by staff, federal investigators found excessive solitary confinement, female staffers romantically involved with teenagers as young as 14 and psychiatric drugs used to sedate teens. 2010: [The Southern Poverty Law Center sued YSI](#) over management of Broward County's Thompson Academy. There wasn't enough to eat, said teenagers, and weight loss of 10 pounds or more was common. Excessive force was being used, and some teenagers were promised rewards if they did not speak to their lawyers, according to the suit, which was settled and sealed. 2012: The Pembroke Pines Police Department filed misdemeanor battery charges against two Thompson staffers. According to police records, one abruptly put a teen in a choke hold. Witnesses said the teen stopped breathing, but the guard refused to release him. In a separate incident, a staffer grabbed a teenager by the neck and began choking him. 2013: The U.S. Justice Department found that of 41 teenagers at the YSI-run Palm Beach County Juvenile Correctional Facility who filled out a confidential survey, 16.2 percent reported sex abuse, more than triple the statewide average of 5.2 percent. All of the self-reported sex offenses involved staff, and about two-thirds of them involved force, the teens said. A Florida Department of Juvenile Justice review found no substantiated cases. Source: <http://www.mypalmbeachpost.com/news/news/detainees-forced-to-pay-for-forks-shackled-teen-coughing-up-blood/>

Santa Teresa youth facility faces state sanctions Diana Alba Soular, Las Cruces Sun-News 5:47 p.m. MDT March 19, 2016 Company says it's making improvements Pictured is the Peak Behavioral Health Services facility located at 5055 McNutt Road in Santa Teresa, New Mexico. (Photo: Robin Zielinski / Sun-News) 350 CONNECT [TWEET](#) [LINKEDIN](#) [COMMENT](#) [EMAIL](#) [MORE](#) LAS CRUCES - A Santa Teresa mental-health and substance-abuse treatment facility for teens is under a six-month-long period of intense state scrutiny after findings that it routinely neglected residents' safety last year. A statewide advocacy group in late 2015 issued a highly critical report on the 119-bed facility, known as Peak Behavioral Health Services, or "The Peak" for short, and urged potential clients to consider other options for psychiatric treatment. Meanwhile, Peak Behavioral Health and its parent company, Strategic Behavioral Health, issued a statement, saying they're collaborating with the state to make improvements and have implemented "many" changes contained in a corrective plan. Report issued The 28-page report, [issued by the nonprofit advocacy group](#) Disability Rights New Mexico, concluded that Peak Behavioral Health failed to protect its teen residents from attacks by other residents and used questionable physical restraints and chemical restraints — the use of medicine to subdue someone — during a 13-month period of monitoring by the group that ended in the fall of last year. Also, residents were found to have escaped from the center in 23 instances. In all, Disability Rights New Mexico — a state-designated disability rights watchdog group — found there were 80 incidents of "resident-on-resident violence or aggression" that resulted in "numerous injuries," including a broken nose, loss of teeth, bleeding and swollen lips, a cut that required stitches. Also, there were "eye, hand and ankle injuries requiring X-rays," the report states. Police were called to the facility's adolescent Residential Treatment Center on 21 occasions, according to the report. More than 50 suicide attempts and self-harming incidents were reported. Disability Rights New Mexico reviewed 316 incident reports submitted by Peak Behavioral Health — run by Strategic Behavioral Health — from the 13-month time frame and carried out interviews with residents at the center. The group concluded the company "provided an unsafe environment" that was the "result of a pattern and practice of neglect" in violation of state regulations, according to its report. "The frequency of resident-on-resident violence reported above, in conjunction with perpetual incidents of self-harm, elopement, and sexual allegations, clearly pinpoint the Peak's failure to provide a safe and humane psychological and physical environment," the report states. "To that end, DRNM is deeply concerned about the safety of residents on the RTC (Residential Treatment Center) units at the Peak under the care of Strategic Behavioral Health." Among incidents cited by Disability Rights New Mexico were a resident who was hit by another resident and was taken to a hospital ER for stitches; a resident who was "punched in the face" by another resident and suffered a broken nose; and a resident who was "straddled by a peer and kicked and punched in the face 4-5 times," while another resident was a "lookout" on the watch for staff. Some residents reported being in fear of other residents. In concluding the report, Disability Rights New Mexico stated it "encourages adolescent consumers and their guardians who are seeking residential treatment options to consider alternatives to the Peak," the report states. It also recommended that judges and court officials "seek

alternatives to the Peak" when ordering teens to attend residential treatment facilities. Restraint use questioned In addition, the organization found that Peak Behavioral Health staff failed to fully fill out incident reports about the use of physical restraints, which is required by state regulation, and implemented "questionable use of restraint for incidents that did not meet the criteria of an emergency situation," according to the document. And there was "frequent" use of medication restraints after physical restraints, the document states. Nancy Koenigsberg, senior attorney with Disability Rights New Mexico, said restraints are a way to address a patient who's endangering himself, herself or other people. But restraints should be a last resort. They're not a form of treatment and shouldn't be used lightly, especially because teens can have backgrounds of physical or sexual abuse and find the restraints traumatic, she said. "Restraints are not therapy," she said. For instance, Koenigsberg said, a child failing to obey a directive is not appropriate justification to use restraints. But the frequent use of restraints, including medication-type restraints after instances of physical restraints, at Peak Behavioral Health during DRNM's monitoring period was a sign of a break-down in its treatment program, Koenigsberg said. That's because clients, including those with self-harming tendencies initially, should be making strides toward well-being during their stays at the facility. A high rate of restraint incidents isn't a positive sign, she said. Questionable uses of restraints identified in Disability Rights New Mexico's report include a resident who was "restrained for 37 minutes after throwing a tennis ball at a staff member," a resident who was restrained for "screaming at staff" and a resident who was restrained after "throwing yogurt at a wall," according to the document. Separate from DRNM's investigation, the New Mexico Children, Youth & Families Department was carrying out an investigation of its own last year that resulted in sanctions because of similar findings, said Henry Varela, spokesman for the agency. Jose R. Santos, chief executive officer for Peak Behavioral Health Services, said in a prepared statement that the company is "dedicated to providing excellent care to adolescents in our residential treatment program, which is focused on the underserved population of children with significant mental health issues." "We have been working collaboratively with the state's Children, Youth and Families Department to make improvements in our program that address concerns the agency raised in its report, and have taken those concerns very seriously," he wrote. The facility serves clients who are referred by a variety of agencies and organizations. That's after a treatment authorization by one of the insurance plans — also called Managed Care Organizations — in New Mexico, officials said. Clients can fall under either Medicaid or private insurance. State sanctions According to public records obtained by the Sun-News, the state department issued a "notice of contemplated action" against Peak Behavioral Health on Nov. 9 of last year, based on its findings. A Nov. 23 letter from the state to the center indicating the state planned to issue "formal sanctions," including directing corrective actions and implementing a compliance monitor team, according to the document. It also specified that facility, based on earlier negotiations, had voluntarily agreed to a freeze on new admissions, which would "remain in place for a minimum of 30 days after the Compliance Monitor begins." And after the freeze, Peak Behavioral Health would voluntarily cap the client population in the center. Varela said the existing clients at the facility at the time of the admissions freeze were transitioned out in several ways. Some were transferred to other centers. Others were at the normal end of their treatment stay or because their treatment needs required less-intensive care. A Nov. 24 memo from CYFD to the state to the company specified that an independent professional, Katie Cosper, had been appointed to serve as a compliance monitor for the residential center for six months, along with state staff that would work with her. Cosper was tasked with reviewing center records and policies to make sure proper policies were in place, making recommendations on how to correct violations and "improve overall programming," according to the document. Santos said Peak Behavioral Health Services has submitted an action plan to the state and has "already implemented many of the improvements it contains." "In fact, some of the changes were already underway before the state issued its report," he wrote. "Nationally recognized experts have been brought in to conduct training at our facility, and we have brought on new medical and administrative leadership. We have also revamped our assessment methods, and improved management of medication and medical issues." Continued Santos: "Perhaps, most importantly, we have put in place a new treatment model, which focuses on helping residents heal from the traumatic abuse that most of them have suffered." Santos noted the facility is "fully accredited" by The Joint Commission, the "leading agency in healthcare." He said it's been "recognized by The Joint Commission for the past three years as a top performer on key quality programs." There's been a change in CEOs at the facility since last year. Admissions re-launched In late February, CYFD sent a letter to Strategic Behavioral Health — Peak Behavioral Health's parent company — notifying it that the state had received the facility's revised policies and procedures regarding the use of restraints and seclusion practices. Daphne Rood-Hopkins, children's behavioral health director for CYFD, also said that the state was "ready to proceed with allowing admissions to the Peak" according to a verbal agreement made earlier. "We agreed that the Peak will admit 2 boys and 2 girls per week for the next 4 weeks for a total of 16 admissions," the letter states. Varela said the gradual addition of clients is a way to resume the needed service, while ensuring that children are receiving proper treatment. There are weekly visits by the monitoring team, he said. "It's a way to slowly bring them in," he said of the clients. Varela said the state's efforts are not only scrutinizing the center, but also meant to help it develop sound practices because there is a big need for mental health services. "We assist in any way we can to make sure they have the resources they need," he said. The six-month monitoring period by the state began in November, according to Varela. That means it will run through May. Diana Alba Soular may be reached at 575-541-5443, dalba@lcsun-news.com or @AlbaSoular on Twitter. Source: <http://www.lcsun-news.com/story/news/local/2016/03/19/santa-teresa-youth-facility-faces-state-sanctions/81874650/>

City sent me to therapy with my abuser when I asked for help: suit By [Kathianne Boniello](#) March 20, 2016 | 1:02am [Modal Trigger](#) Photo: Shutterstock More On: [lawsuits](#) Instead of rescuing her from a hellish foster home, a Bronx woman says social workers and therapists hired by the city ignored her complaints and sent her to therapy with her abuser. Now 20 years old, the woman has filed a \$3 million lawsuit against the Administration for Children's Services workers, foster-care program and therapists who oversaw her case, claiming they never investigated her reports of abuse or reported it to authorities. Therapists at Arista Center for Psychotherapy forced her into counseling with the foster mom who assaulted her, the woman claims. — ADVERTISEMENT — The woman, whom the city took from her parents before she was 2, "learned that her cries for help . . . would be ignored or reported directly back to the perpetrator of harm, until she learned to no longer ask for help," the lawsuit says. ACS and a Bronx foster-care program called Abbott House placed the woman, identified only as "E.L.A.," in the foster home of Linda Smalls as a young child without properly investigating the home, who was living there or checking the sleeping arrangements, she claims in Manhattan federal court papers. In 2003, the girl told a teacher that Smalls abused her, but social workers and the therapists at Arista in Queens never talked to the educator, the girl alleges. Abbott House declined to comment. Arista did not return a message. Smalls could not be reached. Source: <http://nypost.com/2016/03/20/city-sent-me-to-therapy-with-my-abuser-when-i-asked-for-help-suit/>

EXCLUSIVE: Accused Long Island pedophile foster parent kept terrified children locked in rooms BY [Ross Keith](#), [Joseph Stepansky](#), [Larry McShane](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Sunday, March 20, 2016, 4:00 AM A A A facebook [Tweet](#) email Share this URL David Wexler/For New York Daily News Cesar Gonzales-Mugaburu's foster home was a house of horrors for four children who spent two unsettling months with him in 2009. An accused pedophile foster parent who preyed upon boys tried to keep a 1-year-old in his Long Island house of horrors, while striving to evict his three older sisters, their mother told the Daily News. Creepy Cesar Gonzales-Mugaburu, 59, left the girls in tears with his bizarre behavior during their time together and tried to arrange their transfer to another home, according to mom Sue O'Keefe. "He just wanted my son," O'Keefe told The News in a Saturday interview at her Staten Island home. "He didn't want my daughters. . . . It didn't make sense to me. Why would you keep my son?" Gonzales-Mugaburu, of Ridge, L.I., was charged with sexually abusing seven children — and a pet dog — inside his home on a Suffolk County cul-de-sac. He was jailed on \$1 million bond. Prosecutors say there were likely more victims among the 140 kids he took in over the past 20 years. [L.I. FOSTER PARENT ABUSED CHILDREN FOR 20 YEARS: PROSECUTORS](#) "You never got a good vibe from this guy," said O'Keefe, who recognized a photo of Gonzales-Mugaburu from The News' front page. Suffolk County District Attorney's Office/Reuters Gonzales-Mugaburu kept foster children locked in their rooms, barred them from playing with other kids and once sliced all the cables to the television as punishment. Her children began recounting memories of abuse and bizarre antics after seeing the picture of their alleged tormentor, she said. O'Keefe said caseworkers told her at one point that her daughters were in good hands with the alleged predator. Their explanation, she said — he was gay. The four children spent two unsettling months with the suspect in 2009, their mother said. The kids shared the place with one of his adopted sons, who was a former foster child. According to the kids, their freaked-out foster dad kept them locked in their rooms, barred them from playing with other kids and once sliced all the cables to the television as punishment. The 1-year-old brother was permitted out of his room with Gonzales-Mugaburu while his sisters were often kept behind closed doors, the oldest of the three told The News. New York Daily News Gonzales-Mugaburu faces up to 50 years in prison if convicted on charges of sexual misconduct and child endangerment. The eldest girl, now 16, told The News that Gonzales-Mugaburu once called the police — and when they responded to the house, insisted that she had threatened to kill him. Another time, two of the girls had to free their terrified little brother when Gonzales-Mugaburu locked him alone inside a room and left the house for more than an hour. "When he got home, he was yelling, 'Who did it? Who let him out?'" the

oldest daughter recounted. "So then he grabbed a knife from downstairs and cut all the cables to the TV. I started crying. We all started crying." Gonzales-Mugaburu punished the same girl by taking her phone and throwing it into the woods. He would push dressers in front of kids' doors to block them from leaving their rooms. "He was very abusive toward us," said the daughter. "When I got in trouble, he used to come into my room and scream in my face." [Susan Watts/New York Daily News](#) "You never got a good vibe from" Gonzales-Mugaburu, said Sue O'Keefe, whose children were in his custody. Over the years, needy kids were sent to the serial foster parent by both the New York City Administration for Children's Services and the nonprofit St. Christopher Otilie, known as SCO. In an email to The News, SCO said the situation was "extremely troubling" and the organization was cooperating with authorities. Additional charges against Gonzales-Mugaburu were blocked in some cases by statutes of limitation, officials said. He was due back in court Monday, and faces up to 50 years in prison if convicted on charges of sexual misconduct and child endangerment. Authorities charged that Gonzales-Mugaburu had sexual relations with a female dog while a girl assigned to his care watched. [LONDON COP SUING AFTER NYC ARREST, BABY PUT IN FOSTER CARE](#) There were two cars parked Saturday in the driveway of Gonzales-Mugaburu's home, but nobody answered the door. David Wexler/For New York Daily News At least two organizations sent needy kids to the serial foster parent who faces up to 50 years in prison if convicted. One of the suspect's adopted sons drove up to the house behind the wheel of a white Lincoln Continental. "No comment," he said, before zipping away. Prosecutors said another of Gonzales-Mugaburu's adopted sons cooperated with the probe after two boys made allegations to a caseworker about mistreatment. Neighbors said Gonzales-Mugaburu, who pleaded not guilty Friday, was single with no family other than his adopted children. O'Keefe, 37, now has custody of all seven of her kids, although all were at one point in foster care. Over the last two decades, the suspect kept as many as eight children at a time in his two-story ranch home. The Administration for Children's Services issued a Friday statement saying it removed all foster kids from the house upon learning of the allegations — although the agency didn't specify when that was. With [Barry Paddock jstepansky@nydailynews.com](#) Source: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/nyc-crime/pervy-foster-parent-terrified-kids-locked-rooms-article-1.2570784>

Yet Another Scandal Rocks Utah Home for Vulnerable Children Police raided the home after an employee reported sex among residents and misconduct by staff. by [Joaquin Sapien](#) ProPublica, March 21, 2016, 10:27 a.m. [0 Comments](#) [Print](#) [Print](#) Spur Reform in 2016 Support ProPublica's mission to expose abuses of power and corruption. Mount Pleasant Academy in Utah. (Kim Raff for ProPublica) In 2014, an employee at a group home for troubled children in Utah said they informed superiors that a staff member was having sex with one of the boys the home was charged with safeguarding. When nothing happened, the employee helped alert local child welfare officials, and the staff member was eventually charged and convicted of sexual battery. But Utah officials took no action against the home, Mount Pleasant Academy. It was allowed to continue housing as many as 16 boys, almost all of them sent to the home to be treated for a variety of sexual addictions or disorders. "We found no evidence of violation of our rules," said Diane Moore, the licensing director for the Utah Department of Human Services, which oversees the operation of group homes in the state. Barely 18 months later, the same employee said they made another grim discovery: several boys, at least one as young as 13, were having sex with each other with the full knowledge of members of the home's staff. Worse, the employee alleged, the home's director shared video of the sexual activity with other employees. The employee made direct reports to state authorities, and last week the Sanpete County Sheriff's office raided the home, taking computers, surveillance tapes and other possible evidence. A search warrant based on the employee's claims lays out the suspected crimes: forced sexual abuse of a minor; unlawful sexual activity with a minor; abuse and neglect of a child with a disability. Still, Mount Pleasant Academy is open, with boys remaining in its care. "Yes, children are still placed there pending further fact finding," said Moore, the state licensing director. "Even if violations are found, facilities may remain open while addressing corrective action plans and timelines as long as there is no perceived further risk to critical health and safety rules. These are the very things we will be assessing moving forward." Mount Pleasant Academy's program director, Matt Kiefer, told ProPublica he was "not going to be talking" about the latest developments. Kiefer is the man accused by the employee of sharing sex videos with his staff. Brian Pace, executive director of Red Rock Canyon, the parent organization of Mount Pleasant, said information ProPublica had obtained was "incorrect" but declined to elaborate. "We always work with our licensing agency and local law enforcement to get these matters resolved," he said. "We also do our internal investigations and if disciplinary measures are necessary we take them." In 2015, ProPublica examined [the raft of problems plaguing group homes](#) for vulnerable children in California. We discovered that California was so bereft of safe options for its troubled children that it had [sent hundreds of them out of state](#), some 600 to Utah alone. And California was doing so knowing the risks: Utah had suffered a variety of scandals involving its own group homes, including one that led to a lawsuit on behalf of hundreds of children who said they had been abused at facilities in the state. Indeed, Red Rock Canyon, the parent facility located in St. George, Utah, had a sex scandal in 2014. A worker pleaded guilty to multiple counts of sexually abusing three residents, one of whom was just 13. A state investigation found that the facility did not properly report the abuse to the Department of Human Services, which oversees group homes throughout the state. Again, no action was taken against Red Rock Canyon, and it now turns out that an almost identical crime took place in 2014 at Mount Pleasant. The employee who made the reports about Mount Pleasant in 2014 and again this year spoke to ProPublica and laid out what the employee said was a deeply disturbing series of events and failures to act. The employee has since quit and would not be identified for fear of reprisal. The employee said that in 2014 officials at the home became aware that a 20-year-old employee named Robert Quirt Ashworth had sex with a minor at the home over the course of several months. The sex would occur in locations at the facility that were not monitored by surveillance cameras. The employee said they were told their only responsibility had been met — to report it to their superiors. But when Ashworth went unpunished, the employee went to the authorities. The former employee said that Ashworth was spared discipline by the home's management because he was related to senior officials there. Ashworth was charged with a misdemeanor count of sexual battery of a minor at the home in 2015. He pleaded guilty in Sanpete County District Court. Efforts to contact him were not successful. Moore, the director of licensing for Utah, tried to explain why the state authorities were limited in what they could do against the home. "As serious and abhorrent as this crime was, our statutory oversight is in regards to the licensee and their program. We assess to ensure that no rule violations contributed to the incident. Our inquiries include but are not limited to verification of incident notification, staffing ratios, training, current staff background screenings, and overall administrative response by the program." "Of course the action of the employee was a violation and a crime," Moore added. "But we have to be able to tie that unfortunate event to specific rule violations by the licensee in order to take action against the licensee." The latest set of incidents, the former employee said, had taken place over several weeks. That boys were having sex with each other was widely known, and even treated as an amusement. "So many staffers knew what was going on — too many to name — but no one reported it," the former employee said. "We were told to go through our chain of command." The employee said that at least one child connected to the activity had been arrested. Last December, Mount Pleasant was featured in [a ProPublica article](#) that examined the number of troubled California children sent out of state. That story focused on the journey of 15-year-old Deshaun Becton, a boy who lived in several California group homes before landing in Mount Pleasant in the summer of 2015. Out of Options, California Ships Hundreds of Troubled Children Out of State One 14-year-old boy's search for care takes him to Utah as his home state struggles to safeguard its most challenging children. [Read the story](#). The boy's adoptive mother, Veronice Becton, was hesitant to have Deshaun live at the home. She only agreed to place him there because she was completely out of options. Deshaun's often violent outbursts had exhausted the resources of several other group homes meant to provide intensive care to emotionally disturbed children. Deshaun's parents eventually removed him from Mount Pleasant after he had been hurt in several encounters with the staff. When Veronice Becton arrived to pick him up, she found him filthy and disheveled. As a result, when she learned last week that officers with the Sanpete County Sheriff's department had begun investigating allegations of sexual abuse, Veronice Becton was distressed, but not shocked. She said she intends to contact police in Utah to make Deshaun is available to be interviewed. "They were never very transparent," she said of the leaders of Mount Pleasant. "I don't know if it was just me, but I felt like they did not appreciate any kind of questions or inquiries at all. They were very hostile towards us." The former employee remembered Deshaun fondly. The employee said the home had recognized it was not appropriate for Deshaun, but had taken him in because it wanted to keep its beds filled. "Please tell her, I can't take ownership for what happened to him, but I am very, very sorry," the employee said of Veronice. "I care deeply for their son." Michael Weston, a spokesman for the California Department of Social Services said no children from the state's foster care or juvenile justice systems were currently placed at Mount Pleasant. Help us investigate: If you have experience with or information about group homes or child welfare, email Joaquin.Sapien@propublica.org. Source: <https://www.propublica.org/article/vet-another-scandal-rocks-utah-home-for-vulnerable-children>

Danger in the psych ward Safety issues plague a chain of mental-health hospitals in Texas and across the United States By [Miles Moffett](#) | Staff Writer March 18, 2016 Universal Health Services, Inc., headquarters in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. (Kris Tripplaar/Sipa USA) In Sherman, workers at a psychiatric ward dropped a suicidal patient off at a bus stop; a day later he was found dead after jumping from a Dallas bridge. In San Angelo, hospital

employees created infection risks by leaving an observation room covered in vomit and a kitchen black with grease and dead bugs. And in Austin, male nurses stripped a teenage sex-abuse victim and shut her in solitary confinement, naked. Inspection data uncovered by The Dallas Morning News shows that serious safety problems have plagued dozens of mental-health hospitals owned by one giant chain: Universal Health Services Inc. Across Texas and around the country, government inspectors investigating patient complaints cited 44 of the company's hospitals for dangerously poor care or unsafe conditions between 2012 and mid-2015, according to data from the federal Department of Health and Human Services. That's more than a quarter of the 154 company hospitals that The News identified as receiving taxpayer money to treat the poor and elderly. Inspectors found safety breaches at [13 of the company's 26 such facilities](#) in Texas, the hospital company's largest market. Universal Health is the nation's biggest for-profit provider of mental-health services, including treatment for depression and addiction, and also owns some full-service hospitals. "The large number of investigations aimed at misconduct within this hospital system is appalling," said Dr. Peter Breggin, a New York-based psychiatrist who has consulted for the National Institute of Mental Health and the commission that accredits hospitals. "It is especially frightening that these deviations are occurring in the largest network of psychiatric hospitals in the country." Universal Health, which is valued by Wall Street at over \$11 billion, says its overall safety record is excellent. It cites rising patient-satisfaction scores and above-average results on hospital-accreditation evaluations. The number of government safety citations simply reflects the chain's size, according to the company, which is based in a suburb of Philadelphia. When problems have been brought to its attention, the company says, it has come up with plans to fix them. "We are mindful that over the course of treating approximately 2.5 million patients per year, irregular and unpredictable events occasionally occur," the company said in [a statement in response to questions from The News](#). However federal data suggests that Universal Health has a higher-than-average rate of problems, according to a News analysis of government reports on hospitals that receive funding from Medicaid and Medicare. For example, government inspectors investigating complaints found serious problems at 8.4 percent of Universal's hospitals in 2014, the most recent full year for which data is available. Nationwide, that figure was 3 percent. Federal regulators usually focus only on incidents at individual hospitals, not across chains, so government data is fragmented and you can't easily compare Universal Health to its peers. And the company operates hospitals under a variety of names that can make it difficult for patients and watchdogs to evaluate its overall care. But the government compiled an unusual systemwide report on the company last summer at the request of congressmen from Illinois and Massachusetts, where [a report by the Boston Globe](#) and [another by the Chicago Tribune](#) revealed problems at Universal Health hospitals. Source: <http://interactives.dallasnews.com/2016/danger-in-the-psych-ward/>

Student's death investigated decades later Phil Williams Jr. was a student at school for troubled teens in Poland when he died in 1982 [NEXT STORY](#) [Maine police department's post about 'misplaced' marijuana goes viral](#) Text Size: [ASmall Text](#) [AMedium Text](#) [ALarge Text](#) POLAND, Maine —State police are investigating the death of a student more than three decades ago at a now-closed school for troubled teens. The cause of death for Phil Williams Jr. was listed as "probably a ruptured aneurysm" on his death certificate in 1982. He was 15 years old and living at Poland's Elan School for troubled teens. Pam Newall, his sister, said for 33 years she never thought to question his death. "I didn't know that these stories were out there, but they've been out there for years," Newall said. Newall was contacted by a former student working on a documentary who had names and phone numbers of witnesses. They told her Williams was accused by staff of faking headaches. They said in the hours before her brother's death, he had been punished in what they described as a boxing ring. "Not a boxing ring, like a boxing ring. A ring of children where he proceeded to get beat," Newall said. "Twenty minutes or so they called the ambulance. They took Phil and they never saw him again." The Elan School closed in 2011 after being criticized for its controversial therapies — one of which was forced fighting. "I want people to take responsibility for what they did. I don't care that they didn't throw the punches. They were adults. Adults are supposed to take care of children," Newall said. She said she hopes state police can uncover what really went on that day. "I thought it was a wonderful place. I thought they were helping my brother. I thought he was coming home. He came home all right ... in a box," Newall said. Source: <http://www.wmtv.com/news/students-death-investigated-decades-later/38641272>

St. Paul Facility for Troubled Teens Forced to Suspend Referrals after 'Serious Concerns' [Brett Hoffland](#) Updated: 03/23/2016 8:58 AM Created: 03/22/2016 5:34 PM The future is uncertain for a St. Paul facility that houses troubled teens. Ramsey County judges have stopped sending children to the Boys Totem Town program because of what they're calling "serious events." Verena Nelson, a St. Paul resident who lives right across from the facility, says usually the neighborhood is pretty quiet, but she did have a run-in with some teens who decided to escape. "One day I was sitting out on the porch and a couple of kids come running by and they said, 'We're running away from Totem Town,' and they climbed over my fence and away they went," Nelson said. Nelson isn't alone. "I've seen it on several occasions," Geff Crowell, a St. Paul resident, said. Last month, 29-year-old Karen Anne Meyer, a contract therapist, was charged, accused of helping two teens escape from custody. "That really surprised me," Nelson said. Judge Teresa Warner sent a letter to Ramsey County Community Corrections because "the lack of communication from probation to the judges regarding that incident is concerning." In a separate event, according to Warner, a young man "ran from Boys Totem Town, stole a neighbor's vehicle, and then tried to run over the neighbor." Since Feb. 19, there haven't been any new referrals to this facility and Judge Warner says there won't be any in the future until they see some changes. "We were very surprised, obviously, and very concerned about the situation," said John Klavins, the Ramsey County Community Corrections director. Klavins says these are medium- to high-risk teens who he says committed mainly property crimes or low-level personal offenses. He says they're reviewing their communication protocols and updating security procedures to protect the boys and the community. "I certainly hope we can get the program back on track," Klavins said. Seventeen teenagers are still at the facility. The county says the independent investigation should be finished in a couple weeks to determine whether Boys Totem Town can start accepting children again. Source: <http://kstp.com/news/ramsey-county-st-paul-facility-trouble-teens-totem-town/4082381/>

Kansas lawmakers vote to overhaul juvenile justice system AP File Photo. [Enlarge photo](#). In this March 6, 2014, file photo, Sen. Greg Smith, R-Overland Park, asks a question during a committee hearing in Topeka. Smith is chairman of the committee that sponsored a Senate bill to overhaul the juvenile justice system. By Associated Press — [Associated Press](#) March 21, 2016 Advertisement Topeka — Kansas lawmakers have voted to overhaul the juvenile justice system by allowing more low-risk offenders to stay at home while participating in community-based programs like anger management. Juvenile offenders can currently be placed in juvenile detention centers or group homes for any level offense. Kansas has the sixth-highest rate of juvenile offenders placed in detention centers or group homes nationwide. The measure passed 117-6 in a final-approval House vote Monday, after it passed 38-2 in the Senate last month. Senators will review the changes before it is sent to the governor. The House version of the bill includes a provision to reserve up to 50 beds in group homes for juvenile offenders. The previous measure approved by the Senate says all group homes will close by July 2018. Source: <http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2016/mar/21/kansas-lawmakers-vote-overhaul-juvenile-justice-sy/>

Ex-EGF treatment center director accused of rape faces lesser charge By [Becky Jacobs](#) on Mar 23, 2016 at 7:04 p.m. News Grand Forks, North Dakota 58203 http://www.grandforksherald.com/sites/default/files/styles/square_300/public/field/image/86185T_2.jpg?itok=VayjTgJB Becky Jacobs Grand Forks Herald (701) 780-1123 customer support <http://www.grandforksherald.com> Ex-EGF treatment center director accused of rape faces lesser charge Grand Forks North Dakota 375 2nd Ave. N. 58203 CROOKSTON—A former director of an East Grand Forks treatment center faces a new charge linked to [allegations he sexually assaulted a female patient](#). Recommended for you [Valley City State prof faces ID theft charges after police seize 200 credit cards](#) Bruce Lee Biddlecome, who was the director at Douglas Place, a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center, was charged last May with [one count of third-degree criminal sexual conduct](#) in Polk County District Court, but a judge dismissed that felony charge in December. The 41-year-old appeared in court and pleaded not guilty Tuesday to a new charge: one count of criminal abuse, a gross misdemeanor, that applies when a caregiver or staff person in a facility engages in sexual contact with a patient or client. While both charges are linked to the same alleged incidents from 2014, the difference stemmed from a disagreement over Biddlecome's role at the center involving the patient. A now-29-year-old female told investigators Biddlecome sexually assaulted her twice when he took her in his truck on two different trips to Wal-Mart and Gordmans in November and December while she was a patient at the center, according to a court document. Both times, Biddlecome demanded she have sex with him and threatened she would go back to where she came from—she understood him to mean jail—if she did not comply, a court document states. The woman told investigators Biddlecome assaulted her a third time on Christmas Eve when he went into her room at Douglas Place and said he had come "for an early Christmas present and that it was her," according to a court document. The woman turned over a napkin to a counselor at the center, which she said had Biddlecome's semen on it, and the napkin later tested positive for Biddlecome's DNA, according to court records. Last November, Biddlecome argued his felony charge should be dropped because the charge didn't apply to him. His initial charge accuses him of having sex with a patient to whom he was a counselor, but Biddlecome's attorney, Eric Gudmundson, argued Biddlecome wasn't a counselor to the woman at

all. A Douglas Place employee told police Biddlecome was assigned as a counselor only to male residents. Biddlecome would have one-on-one sessions with female patients in his office, but he "never documented these incidents," a court document states. The prosecution argued that Biddlecome was a licensed drug and alcohol addiction counselor and the woman was a patient seeking treatment, resulting in his original charge, but the defense responded Biddlecome managed the center and oversaw other counselors, and there was no evidence Biddlecome was ever the woman's counselor. Biddlecome was charged with the wrong crime, Gudmundson argued, and said a gross misdemeanor in which it is illegal for any staffer at a residential addiction treatment center to have sex with a resident was more appropriate. That is what Biddlecome is charged with now. Biddlecome faces a far lesser sentence for his new charge. For the gross misdemeanor, he faces a maximum of one year in jail and \$3,000 fine. For his original felony charge, he faced a maximum of 15 years in prison. The Polk County assistant attorney prosecuting Biddlecome's new case did not return a call by press time to discuss the difference between the charges. Typically, district court prosecutors are unable to comment on active cases. Biddlecome next appears in Polk County District Court on his new charge at 1 p.m. May 17. Source: <http://www.grandforksherald.com/news/crime-and-courts/3993665-ex-egf-treatment-center-director-accused-rape-faces-lesser-charge>

Abuse in Foster Care: The Denial Runs Deep by [Richard Wexler](#) March 24, 2016 Here's the latest foster care horror from Oregon, according to the [Oregonian](#): Under the watch of the Oregon Department of Human Services, a lawsuit alleges, a young sister and brother were starved so severely by their foster parents and guardians that they weighed the same at ages 4 and 5 as they did at ages 1 and 2. Those facts, largely supported by the state's own examination of the case, are laid out in a complaint filed against the state Thursday. It says the children ended up resembling victims of a famine: their ribs visible, their bellies protruding and their brain development severely affected. The suit says caseworkers and their supervisors and managers overlooked repeated specific complaints and glaring red flags... A caseworker saw the children less than a month before doctors at Randall Children's Hospital determined they were suffering from chronic starvation, but the caseworker did nothing. That story comes on top of [this one](#), and [this one](#). That's just Oregon. A federal judge [in Texas](#) found rampant abuse in foster care. And in just the past week, there was [this from New York](#) and [this from Utah](#). Of course, there are plenty of horror stories about how children are treated by their own parents. In fact, the current child welfare system was largely built on such stories. When anecdotes collide, it's time to look at the data. But not in the highly-selective way Marie Cohen chose to do so [in a recent column](#) published by The Chronicle of Social Change. She wrote that "[State data](#) compiled by the federal government show that the proportion of children in foster care who were the subject of substantiated maltreatment in foster care ranged from 0 to 1.34 percent." But the figures she cites come from child welfare agencies' own investigations of abuse in foster care. For reasons that should be obvious, in such cases agencies have a strong incentive to see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil and write no evil in the case file. If the figures Cohen cites are to be believed, there are three states – Delaware, Vermont and New Hampshire – where absolutely no children at all were abused or neglected in foster care in 2014. New Hampshire has made that claim for five years in a row. Seriously? Texas claims that fewer than one-third of 1 percent of foster children were abused in foster care in 2014. In other words, if 300 former foster children were gathered in a room and asked, "How many of you were abused over the course of a year?" only one would raise his or her hand. That's not what [the judge found](#). And in Oregon, which claims that fewer than three-quarters of 1 percent of foster children were abused, state law apparently [sets a higher standard](#) for substantiating abuse if a foster parent or institution staff are accused than if the accused is a birth parent. In contrast, research has revealed alarming rates of abuse in foster care. One independent study after another has found abuse in [one-quarter to one-third](#) of foster homes, and the rate in group homes and institutions is even higher. And for reasons related to study methodology [explained here](#), even those figures almost certainly are underestimates. In response, Cohen abandons the fiction of the official figures and simply tells us the homes from which the children were removed must be even worse because the children were removed from those homes. But just because a caseworker says a home was abusive or neglectful doesn't make it so – particularly since poverty itself [often is confused with "neglect."](#) Her argument also presupposes that no intervention other than foster care could prevent recurrence of abuse in the cases in which children were removed. But the real question is: How does the rate of abuse in foster care compare to what would happen if families simply got the help they needed? It's not hard to answer, considering that even when families don't necessarily get the help, foster care often is a worse option. There are [two massive studies](#) involving 15,000 typical cases in which the researcher made exactly the sort of comparison Cohen demands: What happens to children placed in foster care and left in their own homes, in the same types of cases? The children left in their own homes typically do better – and that's even when the families did not necessarily get any help. None of this means no child ever should be taken from her or his parents. But foster care is an extremely toxic intervention that should be used sparingly and in small doses. Cohen wants to further increase the dose. I prefer less toxic options. Source: <https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/blogger-co-op/abuse-foster-care-denial-runs-deep/16834>

LDS Church named in lawsuit alleging sexual abuse of Navajo children in foster program | fox13now.com LDS Church named in lawsuit alleging sexual abuse of Navajo children in foster program Posted 6:14 pm, March 24, 2016, by [Mark Green](#) and [Lauren Steinbrecher](#). Updated at 11:09pm, March 24, 2016 [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Reddit](#) [Pinterest](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Email](#) WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. -- Two members of the Navajo Nation have sued The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, alleging the church placed Native American children in Mormon foster homes where they were sexually abused and that LDS leaders did not take adequate steps to protect those children. The lawsuit, filed in Navajo Nation District Court on March 22, names The Corporation of the President of the LDS Church, The Corporation of the Presiding Bishop of the LDS Church, LDS Family Services and the LDS Church itself. The allegations stem from a foster care program formerly carried out by the LDS Church and its subsidiaries called the "Indian Placement Program" or the "Lamanite Placement Program" (LPP). The two plaintiffs, a brother and sister, state they and another sibling experienced abuse while in the program in Utah from 1976-1983. "It was kind of a series of ongoing sexual abuse situations of varying degrees while in this program," said Craig Vernon, one of the attorneys for the plaintiffs. The brother, fictitiously named in the lawsuit as "RJ" to protect his privacy, reportedly suffered abuse that included fondling, sexual molestation and rape during his years in the program. According to the suit, RJ was placed in an LDS home in Oak City, Utah in 1978 at the age of 10, where he was allegedly sexually molested on several occasions by an older stepbrother. The boy was removed from the home after he disclosed the abuse, and the next year he was placed with another family in Utah--where the lawsuit states he was again molested by an older foster-brother. After the boy said he again reported the abuse to Church leaders, he was placed with another family in the LPP, where he was again allegedly abused and also witnessed the alleged abuse of a younger sister. He said he reported the abuse to the Church, but this time, the Church sent him back to live in that same home where the reported abuse occurred. The sister, fictitiously named "MM" in lawsuit documents, was placed in an LDS home in Utah in 1976. The girl was allegedly raped by a friend of her stepbrother, who was 40 years old at the time. A few years later in 1983, after being placed in a different foster home in Centerfield, Utah, MM said she was again allegedly abused sexually, this time by her foster-father. The lawsuit alleges the LDS Church did not take reasonable steps to protect the children--even after abuse was reported. "The problem is, when they reported this to LDS social services, we don't believe that the police was ever contacted," Vernon said. "First and foremost, that's what needs to happen." Other steps would have included removing children from the home where the abuse occurred, and setting up better policies to monitor children, according to the lawsuit. The lawsuit further alleges that LDS Church policies are designed to protect the church and its leaders from culpability rather than ensure that abuse is reported to authorities and justice pursued. The lawsuit cites a policy that states, "'To avoid implicating the Church in legal matters to which it is not a party, Church leaders should avoid testifying in civil or criminal cases or other proceedings involving abuse.'" (Handbook 1, Stake Presidents and Bishops 2010, section 17.3.2)." And another policy that encourages church leaders to contact an LDS Bishop about abuse first rather than the police. "We want clear policy changes... that the Church is not going to investigate its own sexual abuse, it's going to report it immediately and direct its members and leaders to report it immediately to police," Vernon said. The lawsuit also asks the Church to create a policy to remove any leader named in abuse allegations from contact with children. Plus, the attorneys request that the LDS Church change their policy about directing leaders not to testify in civil or criminal cases involving abuse. The lawsuit seeks damages for the injury caused to the plaintiffs, though no amount is specified. And, Vernon said, the plaintiffs want to see the LDS Church write a formal apology for harms caused and to restore Navajo culture, which they allege was damaged by years of efforts to assimilate native children into white, Mormon culture. The LDS Church released a statement Thursday in response to the lawsuit through spokeswoman Kristen Howey: "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has zero tolerance for abuse of any kind and works actively to prevent abuse. This lawsuit was filed earlier today [sic]. The Church will examine the allegations and respond appropriately." Another attorney on the case, William Keeler, said the Church has 30 days to respond to the lawsuit. The LDS Lamanite Placement Program ran from about 1947 to the 1990s. Lamanite is a term used by the LDS Church to refer to Native Americans, who the LDS Church believes are descended from a group that fled Israel in 600 B.C. The lawsuit states Mormons believe Native Americans were "cursed" with dark skin for wickedness, and the lawsuit alleges Mormons felt a cultural and religious duty to convert Native American children and immerse them in

white, Mormon culture as a way to redeem their prophetic destiny. As such, thousands of Navajo children like the plaintiffs were baptized into the LDS Church and relocated to live with white, Mormon families through the LPP. Source: <http://fox13now.com/2016/03/24/lhs-church-named-in-lawsuit-alleging-sexual-abuse-of-navajo-children-in-foster-program/>

Most drug, alcohol group homes in City of Prescott not state-licensed Photo by [Les Stukenberg](#). Dayton Turberville sits on a bench outside Prescott House, one of the oldest recovery homes in the Prescott area. By [Cindy Barks](#) Originally Published: March 27, 2016 6:03 a.m. [Cindy Barks](#) Editor's note: This is the next in an ongoing series of articles concerning the sober-living group home issue in Prescott. PRESCOTT – Of the 160 or so drug-and-alcohol-treatment group homes identified in the City of Prescott, only about 40 are listed as having a license through the State of Arizona. The discrepancy occurs, in part, because state licensing requirements take in some of the group-home categories, but not others. For instance, the state requires licensing for: inpatient facilities with a specific number of beds (behavioral health facility-adult); outpatient treatment centers; and detox centers (behavioral health inpatient facilities-subacute). The Arizona Department of Health Services Division of Licensing Services' website lists 26 licensed outpatient facilities in Prescott, along with six in Prescott Valley. In addition, the list includes two detox (behavioral health-subacute) centers in Prescott, and two in Prescott Valley. The number of inpatient (behavioral health-adult) facilities totals 10 for Prescott, and four in Prescott Valley, along with three counseling facilities in Prescott. (Some of the facilities double up on categories. For instance, the Chapter 5 Treatment Program in Prescott is licensed for two behavioral health-adult inpatient facilities, as well as a counseling facility, and an outpatient treatment center. Likewise, West Yavapai Guidance Clinic is listed as having licenses for five outpatient facilities – two in Prescott, three in Prescott Valley – and one behavioral health facility adult facility). Even as the state is licensing those categories, however, it does not require licensing or registration for sober-living or halfway homes. And, according to local experts, that is the category that has grown exponentially in Prescott in recent years. 'IT HAS EXPLODED' Officials at Prescott House (one of the licensed inpatient residential facilities), say the Prescott landscape has changed dramatically over the past decade or so. Dayton Turberville, executive director of Prescott House, says the community had just a handful of treatment centers and halfway houses when he came on board at Prescott House 12 years ago. He and Jeff Martin, program manager for Prescott House, say things started changing about nine years ago, and then, "In the last five years, it has exploded," Martin said. They say a main difference between the licensed and unlicensed facilities lies with the amount of supervision. Martin pointed out that Prescott House has supervisory staff members awake 24 hours, which allows for crisis management around-the-clock. "If we have a crisis here, there is someone to deal with it," he said. Unlicensed facilities have no such requirement. "I think that's a world of difference," Martin added. Martin, Turberville and other local industry representatives say a number of the centers in Prescott use an arrangement known in the industry as the "Florida model" – a system in which residents of nearby sober-living homes travel to licensed outpatient centers for their treatment. Under that model, the state requirement for licensing of outpatient treatment facilities is covered, but the people who use the facilities for treatment live elsewhere – often in unlicensed homes. A description of the "Florida model" on the [DrugTreatmentFinder.com](#) website explains that the model flourished in south Florida over the past several decades because of the mild weather and beaches, which provided "an enticing recovery environment." The website maintains that the Florida model has been effective – not only because of the favorable locale, but because "having so many rehabs in an area gave individuals a selection from which they could choose, finding the treatments that best addressed their needs." In Prescott, the model reportedly has contributed to the community's proliferation of "structured sober-living homes." In several instances, the same operators that are licensed through the state for outpatient-treatment facilities also have a number of unlicensed sober-living homes. State records show, for instance, that A Sober Way Home has two state-licensed outpatient treatment centers on Plaza Drive and West Gurley Street. And City of Prescott registration records show that A Sober Way Home also has a half-dozen or so other homes in residential areas, which are not listed on the state's licensure list. Sandra Tillman, owner of A Sober Way Home, said this past week that the organization would soon be closing all of those homes, however, and moving to a new location. The new building is currently under construction on the site that previously housed an East Gurley Street motel, she said. The move is being made, Tillman said, in order to get all of the treatment centralized in one licensed facility. "It will be a one-stop facility," she said, adding that the center would likely house 60 to 70 clients. And Tillman expressed some dismay at the way the recovery industry is being portrayed in the community and the media. "So many people have come through the program and are successful," she said. "It's a sad thing to see how it's being portrayed." She added: "The problem is not the halfway houses; the problem is heroin." LEGISLATION Many in the community have pointed to the dozens of sober-living homes in residential neighborhoods as a source of continuing problems, such as loud parties, drug use, smoking, unkempt yards, and declining neighborhood property values. That situation led Arizona Rep. Noel Campbell to introduce a bill in the State Legislature this year that aims to give cities and counties more authority in regulating the sober-living homes. Campbell's original bill referred to mandatory registration, as well as training and education standards for house managers. A later amendment made the bill's language less specific, but still would give cities, towns, and counties the right to craft more regulation for structured sober living homes (although it would not require the municipalities and counties to take on the new responsibilities). The amended bill, House Bill 2107, passed out of the Senate Rules Committee this past week, Campbell said on Friday, March 25, and could go to a vote of the full Senate sometime this week. If successful in the Senate, the bill would then have to go back to the House of Representatives for another vote on the amended version. Campbell has maintained that the structured sober-living homes have caused problems in residential neighborhoods, because they have little regulation, other than the zoning-oriented rules for which the city currently has the authority. But Tillman says the legislation would not solve Prescott's issue, and would open the community up to a discrimination lawsuit. She also questions the city's list, which identifies about 160 group homes within city limits. Although some in the community have speculated that the number is likely closer to 200, Tillman said, "There are not 200 here; you might find 60. They just come and go so fast." SERVING LESS FORTUNATE Despite the lack of regulation, all of the local experts emphasize that some effectively run sober-living homes already exist in Prescott. Bill Orick of Triple Point Recovery Homes considers his homes among those well-run houses. He pointed out that Triple Point is contracted through Yavapai County Probation to take in clients who are one step away from incarceration. While most people on standard probation are allowed to live out in the community, Orick said, "If they screw up," they could be eligible for Triple Point, as an alternative to jail. Clients are required to participate in a 12-step program, Orick said, and they are required to get up at 7 a.m., do chores, and then either go to work or go to a meeting. They also are mentored in living a normal lifestyle. "Some of them are 50-year-old men who have never lived a structured life," Orick said. He sees programs such as Triple Point as necessary because it serves "the less fortunate" – those men who have no insurance, cannot afford other treatment, and have little or no family support. Nearly all – 99 percent, said Orick – are battling heroin addiction. Noting that the well-run homes are often categorized by the community with less effective sober-living homes, Orick sees the need for more regulation. "I'm so frustrated with all of these programs that are opening up," he said. City actions such as the recent approval of stricter code enforcement and the possible implementation of a business license would help to make the industry more accountable, he said. Source: <http://dcourier.com/news/2016/mar/27/most-drug-alcohol-group-homes-city-prescott-not-st/>

City of Prescott's group homes list reveals web of owners, operators By [Les Bowen](#) Originally Published: March 27, 2016 6:02 a.m. [NewsyLesBowen](#) PRESCOTT – A list maintained by the City of Prescott shows there are some 164 homes city officials have determined or believe are group homes. The Daily Courier obtained the list through a public records request to the city. City officials redacted information about four entries on the list, explaining those are emergency shelters and, in the interest of protecting the privacy of people who own, operate or patronize the shelters, they are not subject to the newspaper's records request. Of the remaining list, two homes are listed as adult care centers, three for people with developmental disabilities and one for gambling recovery. For six entries on the list, Prescott city officials did not indicate what type of support services the home provided. The city categorized the remaining 148 as either focused on drugs and alcohol addiction recovery, or having multiple focuses. An analysis of the complete list shows the variety of owners and operators running these homes. The Daily Courier compared the city's records against Yavapai County's property ownership records and the state's database of corporations, compiling a database of every identifiable company or individual connected to the group homes industry. First, it should be noted the city's list contains some outdated information. City officials have been developing the list for at least two years, and it contains at least 33 entries for homes that appear to have been sold since the city collected its information. In some cases, home ownership was transferred to a corporation with connections to the drug and alcohol rehabilitation industry. However, in other cases, it appears homes were sold and no longer owned or operated by the companies and people on the city's list. City Planning Manager George Worley said the list is constantly changing and the city updates it as new information becomes available. He further explained that the list contains a fair amount of historical artifacts that may not reflect the ownership and operation of group homes currently in the city. One notable example is the home of Prescott City Attorney Jon Paladini, which he purchased in early 2014, about a year after taking his job with the city. Prior to his purchase of the home, city records indicate Decision Point operated a group home there. "The house sat vacant for about a year and a half ... the group home

closed, before I bought it,” Paladini said, confirming that he lives in the house. The city has marked the entry for Paladini’s home as “discontinued” – the only such entry on the city’s list – but other entries on the list reflect a reality that the city has been unable to verify operators of some homes. In another example, homeowners sold two houses previously listed as operated by Embark Sober Living. The city indicates one home is now operated by Carleton Recovery Center, but there’s no new information for the other. What is clear from the information in the city’s records is that there are a handful of major players operating many group homes. Some takeaways from the list of prominent operator include: • The Solution House operates 24 group homes, according to the city’s list, some of which are owned by subsidiary companies including The Bridges Network and LNK Holdings. An address cross-check showed corporate agents for The Solution House share an address with a corporate agent listed for Paramount Recovery Services, which the city reports as operating two homes. • A Sober Way reportedly operates 20 homes. Two organizations with connections to A Sober Way – Clean Adventures of Sober Living and Oasis Addiction Counseling – apparently operate another six. • Carleton Recovery Center appears to have ties to Decision Point. The two companies operate 17 group homes, according to the city’s list, three of which are owned by yet another affiliate company, NTD Properties. All three companies share some or all of their corporate officers and have ties to company called DPC Behavioral Health. • The Next Step Transitional Living runs 10 homes, according to the city records. Most of the company’s homes appear to be leased from private owners with no obvious connections. • West Yavapai Guidance Clinic reportedly owns and operates seven group homes, and is operating an eighth under a lease from a private owner. Further analysis of the list also reveals connections between seemingly separate organizations. For example, two companies, Footprints Recovery Home and New Freedom Recovery House, share several corporate agents, as well as a common attorney who filed paperwork with the state. The companies operate five different group homes, according to the city’s list. A third company, Recovery in the Pines, operates a home whose owner’s address is the same as one of the corporate agents listed for Footprints Recovery Home and New Freedom Recovery House. There are a few other similar connections between owners and operators, but from outward appearances, most of the remaining group homes in Prescott are independently owned, and many operators run fewer than three homes. In the end, the city’s list shows the sheer size of the group homes industry: More than 300 individuals or companies are connected to the ownership and operation of group homes in Prescott. Source: <http://dcourier.com/news/2016/mar/27/city-prescotts-group-homes-list-reveals-web-owners/>

Keep the foster kids safe, Bill NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Sunday, March 27, 2016, 4:10 AM A A A facebook 14 [Tweet email](#) Share this URL A Look Inside The Home Of A Pedophile Foster Parent Cesar Gonzales-Mugaburu Inside the Long Island home where an accused pedophile foster parent preyed upon already-suffering boys is a shrine of sorts to films of every genre. NY Daily News A Look Inside The Home Of A Pedophile Foster Parent Cesar Gonzales-Mugaburu Inside the Long Island home where an accused pedophile foster parent preyed upon already-suffering boys is a shrine of sorts to films of every genre. NY Daily News BACK Embed [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#) This video player must be at least 300x168 pixels in order to operate. A Look Inside The Home Of A Pedophile Foster Parent Cesar Gonzales-Mugaburu Inside the Long Island home where an accused pedophile foster parent preyed upon already-suffering boys is a shrine of sorts to films of every genre. NY Daily News So many boys. So much hurt. And five alarms are sounded that the city’s child welfare agency appears to have put dozens of foster children into the hands of a sexual predator. Prosecutors have charged serial foster father Cesar Gonzales-Mugaburu with subjecting kids as young as 8 to sexual abuse in a Long Island house of horrors. For two decades, New York City sent children who had lost their parents or been taken from them to live with Gonzales-Mugaburu, via the Administration for Children’s Services The commissioner of that agency, Gladys Carrion, has retreated into silence, deflecting explanation, let alone accountability, behind the confidentiality that protects children’s privacy. And that enables officials to hide the failures of their agencies. [A LOOK INSIDE THE LONG ISLAND HOUSE OF ALLEGED PERVERT CHARGED WITH MOLESTING FOSTER BOYS](#) Mayor de Blasio must take notice because the emerging facts strongly suggest that ACS allowed Gonzales-Mugaburu to operate a money-making orphanage that concealed entrenched abuse. Based on the horrific circumstances, the mayor would be well advised to order a Department of Investigation review of ACS foster care placements. All told, Suffolk County District Attorney Thomas Spota says, 140 boys, many with disabilities, came into the dad-for-pay’s clutches, half by way of SCO, a private agency hired by ACS and county agencies to find and oversee foster homes. Through ACS, New York City paid Gonzales-Mugaburu as much as \$2,400 per month per boy, six to eight at a time. Prosecutors say that he has no employment record. If true, it’s likely Gonzales-Mugaburu has supported himself entirely through stipends meant to help foster parents meet the expenses of their charges. New York Daily News ACS regulations are designed to prevent adults from making a cottage industry out of taking in foster kids as a way to improve their own lifestyles. The more children, the more money. The more children, perhaps, the less care. [ACCUSED L.I. PEDOPHILE FOSTER PARENT KEPT TERRIFIED KIDS LOCKED IN ROOMS](#) Former wards, now aged 11 to 30, speak of beatings, weeks-long confinement, forced lock-outs in the cold and even witnessing Gonzales-Mugaburu having sex with the family dog. He has pled not guilty, and the district attorney bears the onus of carefully verifying each and every account of criminality. But that is hardly the end of the matter. Allegations of sexual and other abuses in city foster care permeate a lawsuit brought last year by Public Advocate Letitia James. De Blasio resisted the suit. As the government ultimately responsible for foster care, the state was also a defendant. Gov. Cuomo agreed hire a monitor to scrutinize ACS under a settlement that’s pending before a federal judge. ACS is responsible for 10,000 children living in foster care, the majority placed by private agencies into the homes of strangers. Those agencies struggle to find capable adults willing to invest time and energy to caring for needy and often troubled youngsters, perhaps for years on end. Against that backdrop, private and public agencies appear to have accepted at face value Gonzales-Mugaburu’s long readiness to take in children while lacking other evident means of support. De Blasio needs to know how and why that happened, most especially because of how horribly children were allegedly victimized for so long. Source: <http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/foster-kids-safe-bill-article-1.2578266>

Lawyers for foster kids fighting to obtain ACS case files - NY Daily News Attorneys for foster kids claiming abuse fighting to obtain ACS case files needed for lawsuit BY [Victoria Bekiempis](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Thursday, March 31, 2016, 9:46 PM A A A facebook [Tweet email](#) Share this URL Bonifacio, Mark Seen here is the Administration for Children’s Service’s office in New York City. The agency is battling lawyers trying to obtain case files for foster kids who are suing the city and state. Lawyers for 10 children alleging abuse while in foster care are fighting for access to the kids’ ACS case files, part of an ongoing federal lawsuit seeking reforms to the child welfare system. The children claimed in the lawsuit filed against the city and state in July that they’d been abused — some of them sexually. Their attorneys blame systemic failings by the city Administration for Children’s Services and the state Office of Children and Family Services. The lawyers are not seeking monetary damages, but are trying to prevent children from being placed with agencies that have excessive caseloads. They also argue that children have better outcomes when placed in foster situations permanently, rather than being shuffled from place to place. [N.Y. SENATE GOP TOO BUSY TO FIX KID-RAPE LAW](#) The plaintiffs have hit a wall, they argue, because the city is blocking access to the children’s case files that might shed light on their care. The city says the release of the case files would threaten the privacy of others, possibly the foster children’s siblings, foster parents or biological parents. While the state agreed in October to certain reforms, the city continues to fight the lawsuit. A Manhattan federal judge agreed in November that city and children’s lawyers could share certain confidential information with each other, such as case files. In a letter earlier this month, however, city lawyers asked the court to further consider the matter. Marcia Lowry, one of the lawyers representing these children, disagrees and said the city’s move just drags out the legal process. “The longer they’re withheld, the longer the case is going to be delayed,” she said. The city Law Department defended its position, saying, “There are confidentiality issues that have to be worked out regarding the people mentioned in the files who are not plaintiffs.” Source: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/lawyers-foster-kids-fighting-obtain-acscase-files-article-1.2584724>

Family says 'mysterious circumstances' in teen's death at Allendale April 1st, 2016 Police are investigating the death of a 16-year-old boy Wednesday night at the Allendale Association campus in Lake Villa. Steve Lundy | Staff Photographer [Shaquan Allen](#), 16, died Wednesday at the Allendale Association campus in Lake Villa. [Attorney Cannon Lambert Sr.](#), seated left, is joined by the family of Shaquan Allen at a Chicago news conference. Shaquan’s mother, Willie Mae Allen, said she’s seeking answers into her son’s death. Christopher Placek | Staff Photographer [Police](#) are investigating the death of a 16-year-old boy Wednesday night at the Allendale Association campus in Lake Villa. Steve Lundy | Staff Photographer [Shaquan Allen](#), 16, died Wednesday at the Allendale Association campus in Lake Villa. [Christopher Placek](#) Family members of a 16-year-old Chicago boy found dead at the Allendale Association campus in Lake Villa said Friday they have more questions than answers about their loved one’s death. Their attorney, Cannon Lambert Sr., said at a Chicago news conference that Shaquan Allen was found dead in “very mysterious circumstances” and that the family has been given three versions of what happened Wednesday night at the private residential treatment center serving children and adolescents with moderate to profound emotional and behavioral disabilities. Lambert said he believes Allendale “is responsible for the occurrence.” The attorney said authorities have told him there are two suspects in custody. Lambert

declined to reveal additional details of the investigation at the request of the Lake County Major Crimes Task Force. Det. Christopher Covelli, a spokesman for the task force, confirmed two adults are in custody and are considered persons of interest. No charges have been filed yet. Shaquan Allen's mother, Willie Mae Allen, said an employee at Allendale who befriended her son advised her to seek an attorney. "I wanna know how could this happen to my baby, and nobody is telling me anything to let me know what's really going on," she said. "He was only 16 years old. I didn't send him there for that. I sent him to get help, because I didn't want to lose him to the streets." Allendale officials did not return messages seeking comment Friday. An Allendale official said Thursday the entire staff was "saddened beyond words" and was cooperating with the investigation. The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services is also investigating. "Any time we lose a child, under any circumstance, we are devastated. Right now DCF is in its initial stages of an investigation," DCF Director George H. Sheldon said. "We are gathering all the facts and are working with authorities and Allendale officials to get to the bottom of this incident." The state agency has staff on site to help the other children there deal with the trauma of Allen's death, spokeswoman Veronica Resa said. It has put a hold on Allendale accepting any new children for the time being, she added. Resa said "Allendale is not a problematic facility" and doesn't have a history of serious issues. Lake Villa police and rescue were called to the Allendale campus at 9:58 p.m. Wednesday for the report of an injury. The 16-year-old resident was taken to Advocate Condell Medical Center in Libertyville, where he was pronounced dead at 11:10 p.m. An autopsy was scheduled for Friday by the Lake County coroner's office, but no findings have been released. The family plans to have an autopsy of its own done as well. Willie Mae Allen said her son had been receiving treatment at Allendale for three years. She believes his behavioral problems were due, in part, to the loss of his father, who died in 2007. Though he was a ward of the state, he came home from time to time, and his mother said she often went to Allendale to take part in family counseling sessions with her son. She said she last spoke with Shaquan two days before his death, and he talked about coming home for spring break. Allendale was founded in 1897. The youth and their families receive care and treatment through the residential treatment programs, day treatment special education schools or from community-based clinical programs and services, [according to its website](#). The organization says more than 1,200 clients between the ages of 7 and 18 are served annually. The Lake Villa campus has residential services for 150 clients and a school with an enrollment of 200 students. It also has homes or community-based centers in Wisconsin, Highland Park and Waukegan. • Daily Herald staff writers Lee Filas and Mike Riopell contributed to this report. Source: <http://www.dailyherald.com/article/20160401/news/160409877/>

Mentor-on-the-Lake man gets 9 1/2 years in prison for sex acts against four girls Duncan Scott – The News-Herald Daniel Taeusch listens as one of his victims makes a statement March 31 in Lake County Common Pleas Court before being sentenced to 9 1/2 years in prison by Judge Eugene A. Lucci. Taeusch previously pleaded guilty to one count of sexual battery and three counts of gross sexual imposition. At right is defense attorney Mary Catherine O'Neill. By [Andrew Cass](#), The News-Herald Posted: 03/31/16, 5:33 PM EDT | Updated: 8 hrs ago [Q](#) A Mentor-on-the-Lake man was sentenced March 31 to 9 1/2 years in prison on sexual battery and gross sexual imposition charges. Daniel Taeusch, 43, was indicted in October on two counts of rape and five counts of gross sexual imposition. On Feb. 25, Taeusch agreed to plead guilty in Lake County Common Pleas Court to a reduced charge of sexual battery and three of the gross sexual imposition counts. Taeusch, a driver for a courier service, was arrested at his Mentor workplace by police and the U.S. Marshals Fugitive Task Force several months after the incidents were reported. Assistant County Prosecutor Jenny Azouri previously said none of the girls were strangers to Taeusch and all were under the age of 16. Advertisement The 9 1/2 years was the maximum Taeusch could serve on those four counts. "The victims of the case, all four of them, are going to feel lasting effects beyond the maximum potential sentence in this case," Azouri said. "It wasn't their choice these offenses occurred. It was the defendant's choice four separate times." The first victim was molested at a Mentor-on-the-Lake home between Sept. 14, 2010, and Sept. 14, 2011, with the threat of psychological force, Azouri said. Between March 1 and May 31 of 2015, Taeusch then had sexual contact with two other victims while their abilities to resist were impaired. He was charged with a prior sex offense in the late 1990s, which led to him being dishonorably discharged from the U.S. Navy after a court-martial. Although Taeusch ended up pleading to a misdemeanor in that case, he spent 16 months in a military prison. One of Taeusch's victims read a statement at the sentencing. "The situation has affected my life in many different aspects," she said. "Some are more serious than others, but it changed my life and I'll never be the same person again." She said she has been emotionally affected and traumatized. She's had signs of paranoia, depression, anxiety and constantly feels unsafe and has trouble trusting people. "I cry about what's happened to me at random times," she said. "Even when I'm having fun and happy one moment, the situation will cross my mind and I will cry." She said her social life has been a "whole new world" and she's been bullied and harassed. "People will say things like, 'Stop lying, you're ridiculous,' and 'I can't believe you made that up,'" she said in the statement. Taeusch's attorney, Mary Catherine O'Neill, said that Taeusch takes full responsibility for what he did and has dealt with mental health issues and alcoholism. O'Neill said that his family would struggle if he was sentenced to prison and argued for him to avoid prison time. Judge Eugene A. Lucci, however, ultimately felt prison time was necessary. "The effects are irreversible, most of them can't be helped and I have to live with them for the rest of my life," the victim said in her statement. Source: <http://www.news-herald.com/general-news/20160331/mentor-on-the-lake-man-gets-9-12-years-in-prison-for-sex-acts-against-four-girls>

Two Employees Charged After Boy Dies At Lake Villa Troubled Youth Facility April 2, 2016 9:58 AM By Mike Krauser Filed Under: [Lake Villa](#), [Mike Krauser](#) UPDATED: 11:29 a.m. (CBS) –Two employees of a residential treatment center for troubled teens in Lake Villa are charged in the death of a 16-year-old resident following a struggle on Wednesday night. Detective Chris Covelli with the Lake County Major Crimes task Force says Shaquan Allen was having behavioral issues at the Allendale Association residential treatment center. Lake Villa Police Chief Craig Somerville says employees James Davis and Justin Serak were attempting to get him to his room. "Officers were told by Allendale staff that the juvenile became unconscious during an effort to restrain him following a brief struggle," Somerville said. Covelli said Davis had the teen by the throat and Serak was holding his legs and Covelli said both lied to investigators, saying all three slipped on water. "It was later determined the water was caused by the defendants pouring water on the victim to attempt to wake him," Covelli said. He said there were 15 witnesses. The teen died of asphyxiation due to restraint. Covelli said, "It's a tragic time for the family and we can't imagine the pain they're going through right now. State's Attorney Mike Nerheim asked for a million dollars bond for Davis, who's charged with involuntary manslaughter and obstruction. "We have a dead 16 year old child, so I think a million dollars is appropriate." Serak is charged with obstruction and had his bond set at \$50,000. Nerheim said its troubling nobody called 911 for 15 minutes. "Anytime you have a case like this it's a tragedy and that's always compounded when you have a child," he said. The victim's family said they were told three different stories by Allendale staff. "I wanna know how could this happen to my baby and nobody is telling me anything to let me know what's really going on," said the victim's mother, Willie Mae Allen. The boy was a ward of the state and his mother said she pressed for him to be admitted to the facility because she didn't want to lose him to the streets. Source: <http://chicago.cbslocal.com/2016/04/02/two-in-custody-for-boys-death-in-lake-villa/>

Private Prison Companies See Dollar Signs in 'Treatment and Care' Facilities April 3rd 2016 By: [Alex Mierjeski@amierjeski](#) [Share](#) [Tweet](#) [Mail](#) [SMS](#) In recent years, [private prison companies](#) have quietly been handling deals to handle correctional care beyond prisons and detention centers, adapting to changing opinions about mass incarceration. For decades, private prison companies have made billions in revenue, operating correctional and detention facilities on the behalf of overburdened states; last year, the combined revenue for [CCA](#) and [GEO](#) exceeded \$3.5 billion. But nationwide efforts to scale back mass incarceration and cut down on harsh sentencing have posed problems to private corporations' revenue models. Corporations like Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) and GEO Group, whose businesses had been largely dependent on [putting and keeping people behind bars](#), [have diversified](#) and now include the treatment and care of those within the criminal justice system — but not necessarily locked up in its cells. That means private contracts for out-of-jail services like "probation and parole services, halfway houses, day reporting centers, drug and alcohol treatment programs, home confinement, electronic monitoring, and various supportive services such as educational classes and job training," Arjun Sethi, who teaches law at Georgetown University, and Cate Graziani, a mental health campaign coordinator at a national non-profit that studies private prisons, [wrote in Politico](#). Researchers who have studied the transition call it the "treatment industrial complex." Activists worry about the incentives of corrections companies "whose bottom line depends on the growth of supervised populations, rather than their rehabilitation and treatment," Sethi and Graziani wrote. Flickr/Christian Senger "As state governments work to reduce prison populations by creating alternatives to incarceration, the private prison industry is rebranding itself and taking over treatment alternatives," Bob Libal, executive director of Grassroots Leadership, said in a statement. Grassroots Leadership released a [report](#) on private operation of mental health facilities back in March. As private prison companies move to adapt, researchers point to private corporations' sketchy record of handling the care and safety of inmates housed in their prisons to discredit claims that they are well-positioned to transition into treatment and care providers. There have already been lawsuits brought by prisoners against private care providers in New York, and calls for federal intervention after a gruesome Florida case involving a mentally ill man who died

after [allegedly being left in a scalding bathtub for hours](#). As Sethi and Graziani note in Politico, these are just some of the complaints "now proliferating regarding [private prison companies'] treatment and rehabilitation programs." Source: <http://www.attn.com/stories/7024/private-prison-turn-to-private-treatment-care>

Why Are K-12 School Leaders Being Trained in Coercive Interrogation Techniques? Wednesday, 06 April 2016 00:00 By [Kali Holloway](#), [AlterNet](#) (Op-Ed font size [decrease font size](#) [increase font size](#) [Print](#)) One of America's great paradoxes (or perhaps hypocrisies) is its claim to be a global beacon of freedom, even as it jails [more of its citizens](#) -- by population percentage and in raw numbers -- than any other country in the world. This tendency toward suspicion, hyper-enforcement and punishment is so pervasive it even trickles down to our kids. [CNN cites](#) a National Center for Education Statistics report that finds 43 percent of US public schools have some form of security personnel patrolling their halls and grounds, a figure that rises to 63 and 64 percent, respectively, in public middle and high schools. In addition to the school resource officer, the over-policing of American society has now given rise to a new figure: the educator-interrogator. As [the Guardian](#) noted last year and [the New Yorker](#) discussed recently, school administrators are increasingly being trained as interrogators to extract confessions from students for so-called "crimes" -- most often, minor offenses from schoolyard scuffles to insubordination. Instruction in the interrogation arts is provided by John E. Reid and Associates, a global [interrogation training firm](#) that contracts with police departments, armed services divisions and security companies around the country. According to the New Yorker, the company has taught its patented "Reid Technique" to hundreds of school administrators in eight states. That training may be leading to an increasing number of students 'fessing up, even when they have nothing to confess to. As the New Yorker notes, "like the adult version of the Reid Technique, the school version involves three basic parts: an investigative component, in which you gather evidence; a behavioral analysis, in which you interview a suspect to determine whether he or she is lying; and a nine-step interrogation, a nonviolent but psychologically rigorous process that is designed, according to Reid's workbook, 'to obtain an admission of guilt.'" Reid's methods are built on what [Bloomberg](#) writer Drake Bennett calls "the twin poles of interrogation styles: 'minimization' and 'maximization.'" Forms of coercion that correspond, roughly, to "good cop, bad cop." Minimization plays down the significance of the crime and offers potential excuses for it -- "you just meant to scare her" or "anyone in your situation would have done the same thing." Maximization plays it up, confrontationally presenting incriminating evidence and refusing to allow any response except a confession. The two are the most widely used tools in the American police interrogator toolkit. The New Yorker spoke with Jessica Schneider, an attorney at the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, who attended one of Reid's educator-focused training sessions early last year. The instruction included a run-down of telltale body language signs indicating a student -- or as they were referred to in the session, suspect or subject -- is lying. Many of these purported indicators can be found in Reid's [Criminal Interrogation and Confessions](#). The list [includes](#) "closed, retreated posture" ("crossed arms...reflect decreased confidence or lack of emotional involvement"), "constant forward lean" ("a controlling and defensive posture") and "frozen and static" ("the subject who is so intent on not incriminating themselves...may, essentially 'shut down' nonverbally"). Interrogators are cautioned to look for poker-like deception "tells" -- hand wringing, scratching, wiping sweat, knuckle popping. An anxious liar, according to the Reid Technique, is a squirmy liar. One of the many problems with this approach is that it's notoriously fallible. Typically nervous behaviors are not surefire indicators of guilt, mostly because there's no universal litmus test for lying. Bennett points to a [2003 study](#) from the Universities of Virginia and Missouri-Columbia which found that many of the behaviors associated with lying don't necessarily tell us anything at all. "Behavioral cues that are discernible by human perceivers are associated with deceit only probabilistically," researchers wrote. "To establish definitively that someone is lying, further evidence is needed." In other words, there is no definitive liar's pose. TV police procedurals and cop movies get it wrong all the time, and when they expect similar results, so do real-life interrogators. Minimization and maximization interrogation methods, like those used by Reid and others, are good at yielding confessions. But an increasing number of experts suggest that in far too many cases, those confessions are false, resulting from a blend of fear and coercion. Psychologist Melissa Russano devised a study that found the Reid Technique often produces false admissions of wrongdoing in innocent subjects. "Guilty people are more likely to confess," Russano told [Bennett](#). "The problem is, so are innocent people." That was certainly true in the case of [Juan A. Rivera](#), who in 1993 was convicted to life in jail for the rape and murder of an 11-year-old girl. After serving 20 years for a crime he didn't commit, Rivera sued a number of law enforcement agencies and other organizations for \$20 million, a figure he was granted in an out-of-court settlement. John E. Reid and Associates [paid](#) \$2 million of that sum. The false confessions of the [Central Park Five](#), who were all teenagers at the time of their arrests, were also likely obtained using Reid-derived methods. It's no wonder the US Supreme Court has [written that](#) "mounting empirical evidence" proves that certain forms of interrogation "can induce a frighteningly high percentage of people to confess to crimes they never committed." Another glaring issue is that children and adolescents are often easily influenced and compliant toward authority figures. They're easy to intimidate and coerce, and often prioritize immediate rewards (having the interrogation end; getting to go home) over future penalties (suspension/expulsion/etc.) The Innocence Project, highlighting figures provided by the National Registry of Exonerations, [notes that](#) "in the last 25 years, 38 percent of exonerations for crimes allegedly committed by youth under 18 years of age involved false confessions, compared with 11 percent for adults." A University of Virginia [review of research](#) on the subject found a study of exonerations between 1989 and 2004 discovered "42 percent of the cases of juvenile exonerees involved false confessions, compared with 13 percent of the cases of adult exonerees. Among the youngest of these juvenile exonerees (12- to 15-year-olds), 69 percent confessed to homicides and rapes that they did not commit." A 2013 [American Prospect](#) piece titled "Teacher, May I Plead the Fifth?" cites yet another example: In a 2012 study of interrogations of around 300 juveniles charged with felonies in Minnesota -- the largest such empirical study available -- University of Minnesota law professor Barry Feld found that, after suspects waived their Miranda rights, officers used maximization techniques in 69 percent of cases and minimization techniques in 15 percent. Seven percent of all the interrogations studied were performed in schools...In the Minnesota study, 93 percent of juveniles gave [their Miranda rights] up. Juveniles waive at such high rates either because they do not understand the warning, do not grasp the gravity of their situation, want to tell their side of the story, or are terrified, says Feld. After they start to talk, confessions almost always follow (88 percent of the time in the Minnesota study), making the state's case easy to put together and often leading to a quick plea bargain. These issues are particularly relevant in schools, where protocols such as reading kids their Miranda rights and securing authority for searches don't apply. There's also the highly important question of how transforming school administrators into interrogators informs their view of students. A 2009 study cited by the New Yorker suggests that among police, training in the Reid Technique skewed perceptions of juveniles, making them appear more adult and less trustworthy. University of Virginia psychologists reported that "Reid-trained police were less aware of the developmental differences between adolescents and adults than police who did not receive the training." The researchers also found that officers trained in the Reid Technique "tended to believe that adolescents were just as capable as adults of withstanding psychologically coercive questioning, including deceit." That's not a particularly surprising outcome to casting every student as a potential criminal. If even well-trained law enforcement personnel have their ideas about minors shifted in this way, imagine the likely impact interrogation training has on school administrators. If all this isn't enough to show how problematic interrogations in schools are, consider how the practice contributes to the school-to-prison pipeline, a cluster of education policies that combine to deliver students -- overwhelmingly poor, African American, Latino, or coping with physical and mental disabilities -- directly from schools to jails. Zero-tolerance policies, which criminalize and disenfranchise already vulnerable students, have resulted in an unprecedented rise in suspensions and expulsions. The Vera Institute of Justice [finds that](#) around the country, the number of high school students suspended or expelled each academic year increased "from one in 13 in 1972-'73 to one in nine in 2009-'10" -- a nearly 40 percent rise. From [preschool](#) throughout their years of schooling, [black and Latino](#) students [are more](#) likely to be [punished in](#) this way. Though schools have multiple options for disciplining students, under zero tolerance they often resort to the harshest available, [despite evidence](#) that interventions such as counseling yield better results for student health than criminalization. From the [Vera report](#): A rigorous and detailed study of students in Texas published in 2011 by the Council of State Governments and the Public Policy Research Institute at Texas A&M University shows how the culture of zero tolerance became so pervasive in that state that harsh punishments are meted out even when they are not strictly required. Twelve researchers tracked every student who entered seventh grade in 2000, 2001, and 2002 for six years. They found that more than half (60 percent) were suspended or expelled at some point in middle or high school. Moreover, the majority of those suspensions and expulsions appear to be for offenses that did not involve behaviors that fell within the parameters of the state of Texas zero-tolerance mandate; instead, they were simple violations of the school's code of conduct, such as using tobacco or acting out in ways that teachers find to be disruptive. In other words, school administrators chose to use harsh punishments even when they had the discretion to do otherwise. Considering that [a 2012 study](#) from Johns Hopkins found that a single suspension in ninth grade potentially doubles the chances a student will drop out, the stakes are incredibly high. In 2014, the [Obama administration](#) suggested teachers and schools abandon zero-tolerance policies and consider less extreme actions. Even at the highest levels, there's new recognition that turning schools into prisons simply isn't working, and neither is turning educators into interrogators. Instituting low-grade forms of school-sanctioned terror just

creates a culture of mutual distrust and antipathy and ensures that the first lesson kids learn in school is one rooted in fear. [Kali Holloway](#) Kali Holloway is a senior writer and the associate editor of media and culture at AlterNet. Source: <http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/35524-why-are-k-12-school-leaders-being-trained-in-coercive-interrogation-techniques>

Employees Of Youth Care Charged in Teens Death [Send to friend](#) [Comments \(0\)](#) [Add to Favorites](#) Get National News Alerts 4 Apr 2016 12:29 PM EST CBS Chicago reports, two employees of a residential treatment center for troubled teens in Lake Villa are charged in the death of a 16-year-old resident. The charges follow a struggle that occurred on Wednesday night. Detective Chris Covelli with the Lake County Major Crimes Task Force says Shaquan Allen was having behavioral issues at the Allendale Association residential treatment center. Lake Villa Police Chief Craig Somerville says employees James Davis and Justin Serak were attempting to get him to his room. Somerville said, "Officers were told by Allendale staff that the juvenile became unconscious during an effort to restrain him following a brief struggle." Covelli said Davis had the teen by the throat and Serak was holding his legs. Covelli said both lied to investigators, saying all three slipped on water. He added, "It was later determined the water was caused by the defendants pouring water on the victim to attempt to wake him." There were 15 witnesses. It was determined the teen died of asphyxiation due to restraint. Source: <http://www.allmediany.com/news/63571-employees-of-youth-care-charged-in-teens-death>

Palm Beacher's documentary indicts Florida's foster care system | [www.mypalmbeachpost.com](#) Palm Beacher's film indicts Florida's foster care system [Entertainment](#) By [Barbara Marshall](#) - Palm Beach Post Staff Writer [0](#) Posted: 7:00 a.m. Thursday, April 7, 2016 [Mari Frankel](#) is an unlikely Michael Moore, in her comfortably casual house on Palm Beach's north end full of kids' sports equipment. She opens the door wearing the Palm Beach uniform of a cotton tunic and narrow pants, her tanned glow the result of tennis games and paddleboarding sessions on the Intracoastal. Yet, this 55-year-old mother of three, 15-year board member of [Adopt-a-Family](#) and a [Guardian Ad Litem for Palm Beach County courts](#) has become a crusading documentary filmmaker, who produced a powerful film portraying Florida's foster child system as an inept failure when it comes to protecting the children in its care. Called "[Foster Shock](#)," the film will be shown twice during the [Palm Beach International Film Festival](#). "I don't mind putting myself outside the box," said Frankel, whose father was restaurateur [Chuck Muer](#), who owned [Charley's Crab](#) and Chuck and Harold's restaurants in Palm Beach. He and Frankel's mother and another couple disappeared without a trace aboard Muer's 40-foot sailboat in a 1993 storm off the coast of Palm Beach County. [+ Richard Graulich](#) Mari Frankel has written and produced a documentary about the abuse of foster kids, to be shown at the PB International ... [read more](#) [Richard Graulich](#) Mari Frankel has written and produced a documentary about the abuse of foster kids, to be shown at the PB International Film Festival which begins April 6. She is sitting in the backyard of her home in Palm Beach. (Richard Graulich / The Palm Beach Post) Frankel readily admits she has no journalism or film background. "I really didn't stop to figure it out, I just did it," she said. "I just plowed into what was wrong with the system." She was so horrified by what she saw after becoming a court-appointed advocate for children, that she felt compelled to make public what she says is a system geared more toward making a profit from abused and neglected children than caring for them. [+ The post for Foster Shock](#), a documentary about Florida's child welfare system, premiering at the 2016 Palm Beach International Film Festival, ... [read more](#) The post for Foster Shock, a documentary about Florida's child welfare system, premiering at the 2016 Palm Beach International Film Festival, April 6 - 13. "There's unacceptable," she says, "and then there's reprehensible." Frankel contends that Florida's child welfare system went off the rails nearly 20 years ago when then-Gov. Jeb Bush privatized foster care. Virtually all responsibility for children in the state's care went to local private, for-profit entities, whose executives often earn large salaries while warehousing children, she says. "They have a \$2.9 billion dollar budget and these kids aren't getting their basic needs met," Frankel said. She recalled her first case about six years ago in which a mentally-challenged little boy had been sexually abused in a therapeutic foster home. "The second time I visited, I was with a therapist. The boy told the therapist what happened. The therapist turned to me and said, 'These kids say these things all the time. I don't believe it.' They put another kid in there that night and he was also raped," said Frankel. To help her tell the story, Frankel hired filmmaker [Brian Bayerl](#) of Wilton Manors, who immediately connected with Frankel's outrage. "People don't necessarily need the film experience to do a documentary," he said, "because I know how to make a film. What I need is the passion of someone who is fighting injustice and wants to fix it. That's what I liked about Mari." The story is told by several former foster children, now adults, who tell their stories of sexual abuse and neglect, of not having enough to eat and of group home supervisors so poorly trained they relied on police to deal with the slightest rule infraction. "Most (group homes) have more than 200 police calls a year. A lot have 500 a year. Some had more than 800 per year, in group homes that usually have 9 to 12 kids," Frankel said. Angel, now 24, grew up in more than 50 foster homes. Her dying mother was in hospice care, yet Angel's caseworker didn't notify her so she could say good-bye. In the film, Angel breaks down as she described being told of her mother's death two days after it happened. "She was so lost in the system that her caseworker couldn't find her," said Frankel. Bayerl said they hired researchers to back up claims made in the film. "Everything has been fact-checked," he said. Frankel said she's sent copies of "Foster Shock" to officials at the Department of Children and Families in Tallahassee and to a few elected officials. She doesn't yet know if any of them have watched it. IF YOU GO Foster Shock is scheduled to be shown at the [Palm Beach International Film Festival](#). When, where: Saturday, April 9 at 11 a.m. at [G-Star Studios, 2030 S. Congress Ave., West Palm Beach](#) and Wednesday, April 13 at 8:25 p.m. at [Muvico Parisian Auditorium 17, 545 Hibiscus St., West Palm Beach](#). Admission \$12. Source: <http://www.mypalmbeachpost.com/news/entertainment/palm-beachers-film-indicts-floridas-foster-care-sv/ngwXU/>

Research suggests children require stability to ease trauma of long foster care stays By Hannah Frommelt CKN Contributor MISSOULA — Limiting the time a child is in foster care improves mental health outcomes, according to Casey Family Programs research investigator Peter Pecora. For youth in prolonged foster, there are strategies for resilience. Most children enter foster care due to neglect, but research shows extended stays in foster care can also be harmful. In 2014, 46 percent of youth were in foster care for 11 months or less, but 14 percent had been there for three years or more. Pecora's study looked at the health of adults that had spent at least one year or more in foster care from the ages of 14 to 18. His research found that these adults had a significant increase in at least one mental health diagnosis in the past twelve months and over the course of their lifetime, as compared to youth that spent less time in foster care and the general population. Symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Major Depressive Episode competed for dominance as the most common symptoms self reported by the research participants, and the vast majority of sufferers had symptoms of other mental disorders and physical illness as well. Pecora said the lack of stable support systems is potentially the main reason for these troubling outcomes. Children are often reassigned social workers, causing them to feel diminished and unable to feel a sense of stability. Pecora recalled the story a youth's experience in the foster care system. "She called him only, 'Worker Number 9,' refusing to learn the names of any more social workers," he said, illustrating the disheartening effect of trading hands between nine different caseworkers. Increasing stability through lowering the number of home placements, the rate of change between placements, and the length of time in foster care can improve the health outcomes of those in foster care. Having a school mentor; tutoring; group sports; and job placement with positive role models also improve the mental health of children in foster care. Pecora said, "Remember, the glass is half full." Pecora said that slightly less than half of the individuals with prolonged placement in foster care showed no signs of a health care diagnosis in the last twelve months. Most had completed high school, volunteered in their community, and 21 percent had a household income at least three times the poverty level. Foster care improvements were also coming from an unlikely place, said Pecora. "Even in this dysfunctional Congress," Pecora said, "legislation was passed to help children in foster care." Among them was the Chafee Act that increased resources and training for preparing for independent living; the Fostering Connections Act, which enables youth in foster care to stay in care if in school or working until the age of 21; and a key phrase change in the FAFSA to make higher education more accessible to foster care individuals. Peter Pecora is a research investigator for the Casey Family Programs, which is the largest Operating foundation that promotes improvements in child welfare practice and policy in addition to providing direct services and support to youth and families. They work collaboratively with all fifty states, and a handful of tribal entities, including, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. Pecora presented his research as part of the McNall Lecture Series for the Department of Sociology for the University of Montana on Wednesday, March 23. Source: http://www.charkoosta.com/2016/2016_04_07/Foster_Care-HGF.html

37-year-old woman charged with sexual assault of a minor | 911 News | [journalstar.com](#) 37-year-old woman charged with sexual assault of a minor By the Lincoln Journal Star Updated 9 hrs ago [\(8\)](#) Bishop Courtesy photo A 37-year-old woman is accused of sexually assaulting a teenager in a group home in York and ending up pregnant. The 15-year-old told investigators with the Nebraska State Patrol that he was living at the Epworth Village group home in York when he and Jamie Bishop began having sex two to three times a week from January 2015 to July 2015, according to an affidavit for her arrest. Bishop was a staff member of Epworth Village at the time of the alleged assaults and was suspended last summer and then terminated, officials at the group home said. All sexual relations allegedly took place in the victim's room at Epworth Village, or outside on the facilities grounds. A Bishop and the boy were seen together several

times on surveillance video and her Internet history showed she searched for the definition of degrees of sexual assault in Nebraska, consequences of lying to police and the age of consent in Nebraska, documents say. DNA test results returned March 9 show the teenager fathered Bishop's now 5-month-old son, documents say. In Nebraska, children younger than 16 cannot legally consent to sex. Bishop was arrested March 15 and charged with first-degree sexual assault of a minor Wednesday. York County Judge Linda Senff set her bail at \$75,000. Source: http://journalstar.com/news/local/911/year-old-woman-charged-with-sexual-assault-of-a-minor/article_64b397dc-7cc8-555c-ab86-f6f7162deac3.html

Judge orders state to fix Yakima mental-health facility Originally published April 11, 2016 at 12:17 pm A federal judge ordered the state of Washington to stop sending mentally ill defendants to a new treatment facility in Yakima after learning that the renovated jail poses a safety risk. Section Sponsor Share story By [MARTHA BELLISLE](#) Associated Press A federal judge in Seattle ordered the state to stop sending mentally ill defendants to a new treatment facility in Yakima after learning that the renovated jail poses a safety risk. Lawyers for the defendants had sought a restraining order to stop the Department of Social and Health Services from sending mentally ill defendants to the Yakima Residential Treatment Facility to have their competency restored. They argued that a former jail was not an appropriate setting for treating the mentally ill, and said the facility hadn't been properly renovated to ensure that patients would not harm themselves or others. U.S. District Judge Marsha Pechman agreed in part and on Friday, she granted a modified restraining order against the state, saying the defendants were at risk of irreparable harm by staying at the newly opened center. "They are shut down until the risks are addressed," said Emily Cooper, a lawyer with Disability Rights Washington. Pechman's order focused on two critical issues, Cooper said. Pechman said the stairway poses a risk for jumping or hanging and needs to be fixed. She also said the state needs to modify the seclusion and restraint room before any new defendants are sent there, Cooper said. "It is unfortunate that the plaintiffs were forced again to seek judicial relief due to DSHS' failure to protect class members," Cooper told The Associated Press in an email. "We look forward to when DSHS will step up and exemplify the leadership necessary to implement a safe and effective solution to the delays in competency services." The restraining order comes after a high-profile escape last week at the state's largest mental hospital. On Saturday, department officials said security is being enhanced at state psychiatric hospitals after a man accused of torturing a 20-year-old woman to death escaped from the Western State Hospital with another patient. Both have [been recaptured](#). The men were at the Lakewood hospital under court commitment after being found too mentally ill to understand their criminal charges. The state opened the Yakima center in March in an effort to satisfy a previous order that requires it to provide competency treatment services within seven days of a judge's order. Pechman made that order last year after finding that the state was violating the constitutional rights of mentally ill defendants who were forced to wait in jails for weeks or months before getting a competency evaluation or restoration treatment. Kathy Spears, a spokeswoman for the state agency and the private group running the center, Comprehensive Mental Health, said they have already begun to make changes to satisfy the judge's concerns. "No patients will be served on the second tier until the court's concerns about the stairwell are addressed," Spears said. "The seclusion and restraint room will not be used until the concerns with a ventilation grate are addressed." The state agency planned to meet with the court-appointed monitor on Monday to clarify any long-term solutions and address concerns so that the facility can again be used for competency services, she said. Source: <http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/crime/judge-orders-state-to-fix-yakima-mental-health-facility/>

Two more leaders resign amid problems with CPS and foster care | www.statesman.com Two more leaders resign amid problems with CPS and foster care 10:48 a.m. Tuesday, April 12, 2016 | Filed in: [News Comments 0](#) Story Highlights Colleen McCall, who oversees CPS field operations, to leave in May. Paul Morris, who runs licensing and investigations of homes for foster children, also resigned Resignations among a growing number of departures by top level employees in recent months. [MyStatesman Get complete, in-depth analysis and more with our interactives](#) Access to MyStatesman included for Statesman subscribers. [Explore](#) SIGN UP FOR NEWSLETTERS Want more news? [Sign up](#) for free newsletters to get more of the Statesman delivered to your inbox. Two top leaders at the state's child protection agency stepped down this week, the latest in a series of high-level resignations to hit the flailing agency as it is battered by high profile child deaths, profound foster care troubles, fleeing employees and intense media scrutiny. Director of Field Operations Colleen McCall — whose job is to ensure that ground-level Child Protective Services operations across the state are flowing smoothly — announced her resignation to employees [in an email](#) this morning. McCall's operations have come under fire over the last few weeks because of high turnover in Dallas and a blundered child abuse case there in which a little girl was killed. Problems in Travis County are also coming under the microscope. The number of backlogged cases in Travis County has spiked 76 amid an environment former and current employees call toxic and abusive. "Delinquent" cases, as they are called, have been a factor in child deaths across the state In an email obtained by the American-Statesman, McCall said that she was proud of her career at CPS and that she felt "blessed" to have worked with CPS. "However, the work is never easy and the demands on our time are great," she wrote. "My family is calling me and I owe them some quality time after so many years of putting my CPS duties first. The email says that her last day is May 19. Meanwhile, assistant commissioner of residential child care licensing, Paul Morris, added his resignation to the list. Morris' division regulates, licenses, and investigates residential foster care operations. In an email on Monday, Morris wrote that he was leaving to take on a consulting role with an emphasis on emergency response and business continuity. "I also want you to know that it has been an honor and a privilege to work with such a dedicated team of professionals these last three years," the email states. "You've taught me a great deal about Licensing and the critical role we have in reducing risk to children in care. The volume of work this team is able to accomplish with relatively small staff and resources is demonstrative of your unwavering dedication to our children." That division was harshly criticized by U.S. District Judge Janis Jack, who ruled in December that CPS needed a massive overhaul to protect children from danger. In her ruling, Jack said that Morris' division made mistakes regarding abuse or neglect in a majority of its decisions. "This is staggering, and it means that many abused children—for whom a preponderance of evidence indicated that they were physically abused, sexually abused, or neglected—go untreated and could be left in abusive placements," Jack wrote. The departures are one of a number of resignations in recent months. Lisa Black, former assistant commissioner of CPS, resigned several months after the federal court ruling. Jackie Freeman, who ran the Dallas region CPS operations retired last week after a Dallas Morning News report exposed problems in those operations. On Sunday, the American-Statesman published [a report detailing CPS problems](#) across the state. The newspaper also reported systemic troubles at the agency last year in its extensive investigation called [Missed Signs, Fatal Consequences](#). What we reported In early 2015, the American-Statesman published "Missed Signs, Fatal Consequences," a three-day series of stories in which the paper reviewed 779 child death reports by Child Protective Services from September 2009 through March 2014 and found nearly 400 cases in which children who died of abuse or neglect were known by CPS to be in potential danger. Last week, the story won an Innovation in Investigative Journalism award from the national nonprofit Investigative Reporters and Editors. Source: <http://www.statesman.com/news/news/breaking-news/two-more-top-leaders-resign-amid-problems-at-child/nq4Lk/>

Foster care failures Writer Posted Apr. 12, 2016 at 2:01 AM Posted Apr. 12, 2016 at 2:01 AM Posted Apr. 12, 2016 at 2:01 AM For some time, Rhode Island has faced significant problems with its foster-care program. But a new report, from the state's Office of the Child Advocate, highlights particular deficiencies that may have contributed to two recent child deaths. According to the report, children in state care are living in more than 320 unlicensed foster homes. Of that number, more than 100 have gone unlicensed for more than six months, contravening state law. The head of the licensing unit at the Department of Children, Youth and Families was recently relieved of his duties. But that will not ensure that this problem is solved. Nationally, according to the OCA's report, 25 percent of all placements of children outside the home are with relatives. In Rhode Island, the proportion is much higher, more than 60 percent. Frequently, children are taken to a relative on an emergency basis. Although even initially, the relative's home must meet certain requirements, they are less stringent than those faced by non-relatives. The law forbids leaving a child in an unlicensed relative's home for more than six months. Last December, Lillianna Burt, an infant under state care, died in a relative's unlicensed home. An autopsy linked her death to unsafe sleeping conditions. Another infant, unnamed, died in October, also while living in an unlicensed relative's home. The state child advocate, Regina M. Costa, convened a panel to look into these and two other child fatalities. Ms. Costa has reached the end of her five-year term, and is to be succeeded by Gov. Gina Raimondo's pick, Jennifer A. Griffith, who was confirmed last week. Ms. Costa's tenure has been marked by communications struggles with DCYF. Only recently has she embraced the view that her office should automatically investigate every death involving a child in state care. Under current law, such probes are optional. That puts Rhode Island at odds with most other states, as well as with common sense. It is time for the General Assembly to spell out firmer requirements in these cases, and clarify DCYF's responsibility for providing information to the child advocate. The bigger picture, unfortunately, is more daunting. Among DCYF's many challenges is that it places far too many children in group homes rather than with families. Governor Raimondo, who declared the agency dysfunctional shortly after she took office, has embarked on an ambitious restructuring, assigning a leadership role to Jamie McDonald. Unfortunately, Ms. McDonald lacks the credentials required to head a child welfare agency. The lack of a permanent director with appropriate experience could be holding the reform effort back. Recruiting more

foster care providers is a key element of the state's strategy. But, given the relatively low financial support offered, the results are apt to be modest.

Page 2 of 2 - The OCA report argues that the licensing process for relatives' homes should be improved, to include greater supervision and more frequent visits by social workers. It urges that DCYF be more aggressive in disqualifying relatives, if necessary, after an emergency placement has been made. Yet while these are fine ideas, they raise staffing issues. Caseloads for DCYF workers remain quite high, and are a cause of frequent turnover. Improving the lot of children under the state's care is clearly a tall order. In the near term, certainly, it is urgent to do a better job on the licensing front. While a better system for investigating child deaths is also needed, **better licensing could lead to fewer deaths.** Source:

<http://www.providencejournal.com/article/20160412/OPINION/160419865/?Start=2>

Drugging Our Kids: Foster care bill targets excessive prescribing of psychiatric drugs By Karen de Sá, kdesa@mercurynews.com Posted: 04/11/2016 01:18:44 PM PDT Updated: 04/12/2016 05:30:42 AM PDT Drugging Our Kids [Read the Bay Area News Group investigation about psychiatric drugs in the California foster care system.](#) SACRAMENTO -- The voices of foster youth and their advocates overcame the powerful physicians lobby in the Capitol on Monday, as a bill to identify and investigate California doctors who overprescribe psychiatric drugs to traumatized foster children won a key Senate vote. The unique legislation -- part of a series of bills inspired by this newspaper's investigative series "Drugging Our Kids" -- mirrors efforts to stop reckless prescribing of painkillers. Sen. Mike McGuire's Senate Bill 1174, which passed on an 8-0 vote from the committee overseeing the state's businesses and professions, would give the California Medical Board greater authority to crack down on doctors who engage in "repeated acts of clearly excessive prescribing, furnishing or administering psychotropic medications to a minor" without medical justification. State Sen. Mike McGuire, D-Healdsburg, testifies on Monday, April 11, 2016 at the California state Capitol in Sacramento, Calif., during a hearing on Senate Bill 1174, which would strengthen the power of the California Medical Board to identify and investigate high prescribers of psychotropic medications given to foster children. To his right is Kimberly Kirchmeyer, executive director of Medical Board of California, who also testified during the hearing. (Dai Sugano/Bay Area News Group) (Dai Sugano) California's foster care system has come to rely on powerful antipsychotic drugs to sedate troubled teens, the newspaper's investigation revealed. But while a series of bills passed last year instituted many new measures to curb the practice, the laws did nothing to target the source of the drugs: the doctors who prescribe them. "The vast majority of medical professionals are doing their job well, but as in any industry there are going to be outliers, and medical professionals are no different," said McGuire, D-Healdsburg, whose bill now heads to the Senate Appropriations Committee. "And if there is an outlier, it could cost someone their life, or cause permanent damage for a child." Advertisement Lobbyists for the California Medical Association, the California Psychiatric Association and the California Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry oppose McGuire's bill, unless it is watered down to include an "education-first" rather than an "enforcement-first" approach. They argue that the additional oversight will drive physicians from working with foster children and "add another bureaucratic layer to a process that is already highly regulated." Under McGuire's bill, the medical board would monitor physicians through quarterly reports of prescription claims that would not reveal patient names, but rather the prescribers' practices. Prescribing to very young children, high dosages of medications, and the use of multiple psychotropic medications at once could be grounds for investigation under the bill. While physicians have due process rights to defend themselves, ultimately the worst offenders could lose their licenses. The new scrutiny of psychotropic prescribing is similar in some ways to curbs on the overuse of pain medications, now tracked by the state Attorney General's Office. The California Medical Association's Stuart Thompson testified Monday that his group has no problem with the bill's data-sharing provisions between state health officials and the medical board. "But what we do have a problem with is, this is going to be a retroactive look at prescribing practices." Thompson proposed that instead of trained state investigators, an "ad hoc committee" should review physician care of foster children. However, Cal State East Bay student Tisha Ortiz, a 23-year-old former foster youth, said more serious review is urgently needed. Testifying before state senators, Ortiz said as a young teen she took as many as 12 pills a day in foster care, including a combination of an antidepressant, an antipsychotic, an anti-anxiety medication and a mood stabilizer. It left her listless, overweight and suffering from tics. The bill "will help identify doctors who are too quick to prescribe medications and who are overreliant on them," she said, and ensure that prescribers "distinguish between behavioral issues and mental illnesses." McGuire's bill expands on a series of laws passed last year to restrict the excessive use of psychotropic drugs in the foster care system, after the newspaper's investigation. The series found almost 1 in 4 foster teens on mind-altering medications, which have serious side effects. Under a second pending bill, authored by Sen. Jim Beall, D-San Jose, counties would be required to submit a local plan each year detailing mental health services available to children in foster care and the juvenile justice system. The plans would be reviewed by quality-control experts, and counties found lacking would be subject to sanctions, including the withholding of state and federal funds. Both bills are sponsored by the National Center for Youth Law, which was successful in passing a package of reform bills last year. Beall's Senate Bill 1291 passed a key Senate committee last week. With McGuire's bill now moving toward the Senate floor, the senator said he is hopeful that foster children will receive the same protection of other California patients. His office found that from 2014 to 2015, more than 8,000 medical board complaints were filed, but not a single one came from a parent or advocate for a foster child. "These kids don't have anyone standing up for them, and they don't have a voice, and they're suffering the consequences," he said. Contact Karen de Sá at 408-920-5781. Source:

http://www.mercurynews.com/ci_29752732/drugging-our-kids-foster-care-bill-aims-at

Investigation Exposes Failings of Oversight in NYC Group Homes City investigators say oversight was so lax at homes for juvenile offenders that violent episodes were "all but inevitable." by [Joquin Sapien](#) ProPublica, April 13, 2016, 1:14 p.m. [1 Comment Print Print](#) This is part of an ongoing investigation [Level 14](#) How a home for troubled children came undone and what it means for California's chance at reform. Spur Reform in 2016 Support ProPublica's mission to expose abuses of power and corruption. The Boys Town home in Park Slope from which three teenagers escaped and allegedly robbed and raped a woman in Manhattan in 2015. (David Sleight/ProPublica) Update, Apr. 13, 2016: This story has been updated to include a [statement](#) from an ACS spokeswoman. It was a disaster waiting to happen. That's what the New York City Department of Investigation concluded in a 24-page report on a violent rape committed last year by three troubled youngsters who had run away from a group home in Brooklyn. For years, the Department of Investigation found, the city's child welfare agency had failed to adequately monitor the Brooklyn home and others like it throughout the city. According to the report, the agency, known formally as the Administration for Children's Services, lacks sufficient protocols to respond to escapes or violent incidents at the homes; its inspectors do not visit the group homes nearly enough to ensure safe conditions; its contracts with the nonprofit providers who run the homes do not even contain specific safety requirements; and ACS has not developed a way to effectively evaluate the performance of the homes. A spokeswoman for ACS did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the report, but DOI notes that ACS officials agreed with the investigation department's findings and have begun implementing corrective measures — hiring more staff, for instance, and increasing the frequency of inspections. The report said such fixes were urgently needed. Given the agency's "systemic failure" to oversee the homes — small facilities meant to house juveniles who have committed low-level crimes — last year's rape was "all but inevitable," and "there can be no guarantee against further incidents," the report said. The Department of Investigation also announced the arrests of three current or former group home workers, all of whom had worked for Boys Town, a Nebraska-based nonprofit that ran the home in Brooklyn. Drawing on hours of surveillance footage recorded by Boys Town, DOI investigators found that the workers failed to monitor youth in their care and falsified logbooks. In several instances, the workers said in logbooks that teenagers were safely asleep in their beds when the video showed the workers were asleep themselves. The report represents the latest blow for a program that New York City policymakers had envisioned as the future of treatment for juvenile offenders. The program, known as Close to Home, was instituted in April 2012. Its central aim was to keep New York City youth who'd been convicted of crimes closer to their relatives and communities, in group homes that were meant to resemble a family-like atmosphere. The idea was that the homes would provide the teens a better chance at rehabilitation and reform than had the notoriously violent and scandal-ridden youth prisons upstate. The homes in the city were not locked, but the youngsters assigned to them were to be under 24-hour supervision. But as [ProPublica reported in 2015](#), the implementation of the program was rushed and beset with problems from the beginning. The nonprofit organizations who contracted with the city complained that they were insufficiently prepared. Children ran away on hundreds of occasions, sometimes committing violent crimes. In 2014, there were 177 arrests made of children living in the homes. In June 2013, a 17 year old fled a Staten Island home and allegedly stabbed a man to death in Queens. The city had acted to curtail the number of runaways and subsequent arrests when, in June 2015, three boys ran away from the Boys Town home in the Park Slope section of Brooklyn. The boys, according to authorities, met a woman at an internet café in Chinatown, took her into the hallway of a nearby apartment building, then beat, robbed and raped her. Earlier this year, the boys pleaded guilty to rape, robbery, and burglary counts. In the summer of 2015, a ProPublica reporter interviewed one of the boys on Rikers

Island, where he had been jailed. He said that he and his accomplices had frequently and easily run away from the group home. They rigged the alarm system so that it would not alert employees when they escaped out of a window, he said. They had also routinely smuggled cocaine, marijuana and ketamine into the home and used the drugs in their rooms, the boy said. [New York City terminated Boys Town's \\$6.4 million dollar contract](#) to oversee troubled youth as part of the Close to Home program in June 2015, three weeks after the rape. It was the third such agency to lose its contract following problems with runaways. Even after the 2015 rape, the Department of Investigation found that the incident had only a marginal impact on the frequency with which Boys Town employees conducted bed checks. Over the 12 nights following the rape, employees only conducted 98 of 192 required bed checks, a rate of 51 percent. In the 25 nights before the rape, employees checked beds at a rate of 15 percent. Widespread Problems With Group Home Agency Prompt City to Cut Ties Boys Town becomes third agency to fail as New York City tries new model for juvenile offenders. [Read the story](#). According to the most recent figures available, there are currently about 30 homes caring for more than 150 boys and girls each month. In an emailed statement, a spokesperson for Boys Town said "these allegations, if true, fail to meet the core values of Boys Town and our mission of caring for at risk children and families. We have taken clear, specific steps to ensure that they do not happen in the future. Our focus remains on our core mission: changing the way America cares for children, families and communities." Update, April 13, 2016: In a statement, an ACS spokeswoman defended the Close to Home program and detailed improvements she said the agency was making to it: "Until recently, New York City's youth were shipped hundreds of miles from their homes and communities, which negatively impacted both the youth and the communities they returned to," the spokeswoman said. "Close to Home is a massive transformation in the City's approach to juvenile justice and along with other juvenile justice reforms, has led to an all-time low youth crime rate." She added that runaways had continued to decrease in recent years and that ACS was working with the New York Police Department to increase the safety of Close to Home facilities. She said that Mayor de Blasio had authorized a \$4 million dollar budget increase, allowing for 35 new hires to assist in tightening oversight of the program. Correction, April 13, 2016: An earlier version of this article reported that four people had been arrested as a result of the Department of Investigation's inquiry. DOI has amended its report to say only three people had been arrested. Help us investigate: If you have experience with or information about Close to Home, juvenile detention or child welfare email Joaquin.Sapien@propublica.org. Source: <https://www.propublica.org/article/investigation-exposes-failings-of-oversight-in-nyc-group-homes>

Group Home Workers Are Charged With Falsifying Records By NIKITA STEWART/APRIL 13, 2016 [Continue reading the main story](#) Share This Page [Continue reading the main story](#) [Share Tweet Email More Save](#) One current and two former employees of a nonprofit that ran group homes in Brooklyn were arraigned on Wednesday on charges of falsifying records, the New York City Investigation Department said. The homes were closed last year after three teenagers sneaked out during the night and [raped a woman](#) in Manhattan. The three employees, Andrew Best, 23, Soraya Delancey, 36, and Stanley Stephens, 23, worked overnight at two of the group homes in Brooklyn operated by [Boys Town](#). They failed to monitor their charges through the night and falsified the records to make it look as if they had, the Investigation Department said. Mr. Best was on duty at the group home in Park Slope where the three teenagers slipped out, while Mr. Stephens and Ms. Delancey, who the investigative agency said still worked for **Boys Town**, were employed at another home in the neighborhood. The investigative agency said another former employee, Orville Morgan, 25, who worked at the same home as Mr. Stephens and Ms. Delancey, would also be charged. The arrests followed a [monthslong investigation](#) that found staffing shortages, pervasive deception by overnight employees and a severe lack of oversight by the city's Administration for Children's Services. The child welfare agency was aware that there was a problem with teenagers' leaving group homes without permission but did not adequately develop policies to address it, making security lapses "all but inevitable," the Investigation Department's report said. If the child welfare agency does not take significant action to improve its oversight of group homes, the report said, "there can be no guarantee against further incidents." Advertisement [Continue reading the main story](#) The arraignments of the workers further tainted the [Close to Home](#) program, which supervised the Boys Town group homes and was started four years ago through state legislation calling for a new approach to juvenile justice. The program aims to keep juveniles who are in legal trouble in their communities and close to their families. Currently, there are eight providers with 29 locations that house 235 youths. "It's important to distinguish between the idea of a program, which is a great idea, and the execution of that idea," Mark G. Peters, the Investigation Department's commissioner, said in an interview on Wednesday. "At all levels, this program was poorly executed without appropriate regard to public safety." In a statement on Wednesday, the child welfare agency called Close to Home "a massive transformation" in how the city approaches juvenile justice and credited the program with "an all-time-low youth crime rate." The agency, which terminated its contract with Boys Town last year, is also working with the New York Police Department "to assess and further improve Close to Home safety and security, increasing staff training and monitoring instructions and allocating additional staff and resources to create more robust oversight of the program," the statement said. In a review of 37 nights of video footage after the assault on June 1, 2015, investigators concluded that 10 out of 22 overnight workers at the homes run by Boys Town did not conduct required bed checks and falsified logbooks over multiple nights. Some employees even left the homes when they were on duty; one worker was gone for an hour and a half. Kara Neuvirth, a spokeswoman for Boys Town, said in a statement that if the allegations were true, they "fail to meet the core values of Boys Town and our mission of caring for at-risk children and families." "We have taken clear, specific steps to ensure that they do not happen in the future," she said. "Our focus remains on our core mission: changing the way America cares for children, families and communities." The arrests brought more unwanted attention to the Administration for Children's Services, still grappling with [the arrest last month](#) of a [longtime foster father](#) on charges of sexually abusing five adopted sons and endangering the welfare of two foster children in a case in which prosecutors expect additional charges. Advertisement [Continue reading the main story](#) The Investigation Department report also cited widespread safety deficiencies. Over the four years of the Close to Home program, the child welfare agency warned six out of nine contractors, including Boys Town, to improve security. But the agency often deferred corrective action and monitoring to the providers. The report focused mostly on security lapses at the Boys Town homes. On June 1, 2015, three boys, who were 16 at the time, slipped through a bedroom window with a broken alarm in their home in Park Slope. They made their way to an Internet cafe in Chinatown in Manhattan, where they forced a woman into a nearby stairwell and robbed and raped her. The teenagers, Sanat Asliev, Emanuel Burrowes and Eric Pek, pleaded guilty to rape and robbery charges this month. Investigators learned that a supervisor at Boys Town knew the alarm was not working, but failed to tell the two overnight employees, so no one took precautions, such as moving the boys to rooms with functioning alarms. More troubling, however, was that no one was watching despite video surveillance and room-check requirements, Mr. Peters said. Ten days after the teenagers were arrested, Denzel Thompson, an employee, [was charged with offering a false instrument](#) and falsifying business records after he admitted he had not checked on the boys despite notes in a logbook that he had done so every 30 minutes of his shift. Mr. Thompson, who has pleaded not guilty, was not alone. Investigators found that overnight employees made required bed checks just 15 percent of the time in the 25 days before the attack, and that faking entries in logbooks — "all youth are asleep" and "all youth are in rooms" — was routine. Even after the woman was attacked, investigators found that overnight employees made bed checks only 50 percent of the time. Source: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/14/nyregion/group-home-workers-are-charged-with-falsifying-records.html?_r=0

Attorneys: Seattle foster parents abused kids on state's watch Foster children sexually assaulted, fed dog food BY LEVI PULKKINEN, SEATTLEPI.COM STAFF Published 9:01 pm, Wednesday, April 13, 2016 6 Five former residents of a now shuttered Seattle foster home say state officials failed to protect them from physical and sexual abuse. Placed as children in a Seattle foster home, the children endured physical and emotional torture for years without relief, according to their attorneys. They were forced to eat dog food, raped and molested by a man living in the home and beaten by their foster parents. Attorneys for the former foster children gave notice earlier this month that they are prepared to sue the state Department of Social and Health Services. They claim their clients are due as much as \$30 million. Documents provided by attorneys Lawand Anderson, Lincoln Beauregard and Julie Kays show DSHS began receiving concerning reports about the couple within months of their licensing in December 1988. The couple maintained their license for 11 years. The children, now grown, were placed at the home between 1992 and 1999, the year child services workers staunchly the flow of children into the couple's home. A DSHS spokeswoman declined to comment on the allegations, citing a department policy against discussing potential litigation. "They want accountability, and they want the system to be a little bit better," Beauregard said. "This place was just treated like a clearinghouse for hard-to-place foster children." One August 1989 report authored by a child services worker showed a child nearly drowned at couple's home. That child had also suffered burns to his chest and feet. In the years that followed, Seattle police investigated numerous instances of suspected abuse after welts, burns and bruises were found on children living in the South Seattle home. The foster father was investigated in 1992 after a report that he angrily fired a shotgun inside his home. Reports of abuse were usually followed by in-home reviews meant to teach the couple how to discipline the children they were being paid to care for. It appears the couple collected about \$35,000 annually in foster care payments during several years. Attorneys for the former residents say the foster mother failed a background check in

1995. Nonetheless, children were placed with her and her husband for years afterward. "DSHS records reflect that the ... residence was viewed as a clearing house for foster children and that (the couple) treated the home as a profit center," the attorneys said in a statement Wednesday. Each of the young adults now preparing to sue the state claim to have been repeatedly raped and molested by a man living in the home. That man had been licensed by the state to care for children as well. According to documents provided by the attorneys, Seattle Police Detective Al Cruise told state regulators in 1998 that both foster parents had been convicted of crimes in other states. Those crimes were apparently missed in background checks conducted during the licensing process. The couple's license was revoked in the following August after 11 years of operation. Attorneys for the former residents estimate that their clients are owed \$25 million to \$30 million. The tort claim filed April 7 given the state 60 days to reach a settlement before a lawsuit could be filed. Beauregard, whose practice has included several large lawsuits representing abuse survivors, said the Department of Social and Health Services has failed to take advantage of that settlement window in recent years. Instead, the attorney said, the state winds up paying the costs of protracted litigation once a settlement is reached. "DSHS never seems to take the opportunity to approach the clients seriously early in the process," Beauregard said. "They just don't do it. ... I think it's a complete waste." The former foster children are represented Anderson of L.A. Law & Associates in Seattle as well as Beauregard and Kays of Connelly Law Offices in Tacoma. Seattlepi.com reporter Levi Pulkkinen can be reached at 206-448-8348 or levipulkkinen@seattlepi.com. Follow Levi on Twitter at twitter.com/levipulk. Source: <http://www.seattlepi.com/local/article/Attorneys-Seattle-foster-parents-abused-kids-on-7246649.php>

Owner of 9 north Alabama mental health group homes decertified [Print Email](#) By [The Associated Press](#) The Associated Press on April 15, 2016 at 3:14 PM 3 shares The Alabama Department of Mental Health decertified the owner of nine group homes in northern Alabama. State officials delivered the notice Thursday to K&D Group Home executive director Katie M. Smith that the state was immediately revoking her license, [the Decatur Daily](#) reported. Smith was licensed to operate group homes in Decatur that serve patients with intellectual disabilities. "I find it necessary to immediately revoke your department certification because the deficiencies cited pose a serious threat to the safety and welfare of the consumers," Mental Health Commissioner James V. Perdue wrote in a letter dated Thursday to Smith. Perdue said the state made visits on March 1 and March 31. Smith had 15 working days in which to appeal the decision, according to Perdue's letter. The letter did detail the deficiencies, but Sabrina Gibson, who serves as facility director, said there were some issues with paperwork during the two visits. She said a disgruntled employee went to the state, but no issues were related to the "health and welfare" of clients. Smith could not be reached for comment. Some parents said they need more information, and opted to take their children home. "I think all the parents just want a little more information from the state," said Maletha Pointer, who moved her 26-year-old autistic son to another group home. "My son had some behavior problems, but since he's been with them (K&D), he has gotten a lot better." Decatur police and state officials converged at her group homes looking for the 16 patients in Smith's care. Department of Mental Health spokesman Terry Mitchell said patients in the group homes will be relocated, but the state declined to say where. There are 84 homes for people with intellectual disabilities in Decatur. The Department of Mental Health's website does not list the 2016 visits, but it references inspections of Smith's nine group homes on March 15, 2015. They all received scores of 84, which falls in the one-year certification category. State officials have said the need for group homes like this in the Decatur area increased significantly after the state closed Lurleen B. Wallace Developmental Center on U.S. 31 in 2003. Source: http://www.al.com/news/huntsville/index.ssf/2016/04/owner_of_9_north_alabama_mental.html

Coconut Creek Police officer accused of molesting boys denied bond Posted: Apr 14, 2016 6:28 PM PDT Updated: Apr 15, 2016 3:54 PM PDT Close X Embed Video Code Link to Video Coconut Creek Police Officer Daniel Rush Broward County Sheriff Scott Israel POMPAÑO BEACH, Fla. (WSVN) -- A Coconut Creek Police officer will remain behind bars, days after, officials said, allegations surfaced that he had inappropriately touched two boys. According to the Broward Sheriff's Office, Coconut Creek Police Officer Daniel Rush was arrested at his police department, Thursday afternoon, at around 4 p.m. Rush, a five-year veteran with the department, was charged with one count of custodial sexual battery and two counts of lewd and lascivious molestation. Broward County Sheriff Scott Israel and Coconut Creek Police Chief Albert "Butch" Arenal spoke about the arrest with reporters at a news conference, Thursday night. "The allegations against the former officer are disturbing, to say the least," said Israel. Investigators said the accusations came to light on Sunday, when one of the alleged victims handed a note to a parishioner during a service at the United Church of Christ in Pompano Beach. "The victim threw the note in the garbage. The parishioner, who we're so grateful for his due diligence and attention to detail, retrieved the note from the garbage," said Israel. The note, officials said, included claims of sexual misconduct. The next day, the parishioner notified BSO's Pompano Beach district office. "He brought it to the attention of our police officers," said Israel. Detectives spoke with the alleged victim, and during an independent interview at a sexual assault treatment center, they learned the alleged incident occurred last year in Coconut Creek. Investigators said Rush, 26, attends the United Church of Christ. A second victim, another boy, was later identified. Investigators said he told them Rush had fondled him. "It's unsettling for anyone to violate the sanctity of a child," said Israel. **Rush, the co-founder of the mentoring organization Men of Virtue and Ethics (MOVE), mentors troubled teens. Investigators said the victims were boys he was supposed to be mentoring.** Officials said one of the boys was 12 years old at the time of the alleged sexual battery, and the other was 13. "If these allegations are true, this behavior is reprehensible," said Israel. "Our detectives will do everything within their power to fact-find and make sure justice is served." "We'll continue to work closely with Broward County Sheriff's Office investigators, and we are 100 percent committed to ensuring that justice is done in this case," said Arenal. Investigators said Rush admitted knowing the boys but indicated no inappropriate behavior took place. Rush's attorney confirmed his client insists he did not molest the boys. "[These are] serious allegations of sex offenses that he denies, yes, adamantly," said Johnny McCray. Rush was part of a Taser incident last February in which 39-year-old Calvin Reid died. The Broward County Medical Examiner ruled the death a homicide. A grand jury will reportedly be convened to look into this case by the end of June. Due to the group's affiliation with other churches, detectives are concerned there may be more victims. "For this reason, our agency is not only in a state of shock, but this has been a blow to everything we stand for," said Arenal. Rush has been placed on unpaid administrative leave until this investigation is complete. His bond was denied, Friday. McCray said he is currently preparing his defense. "He's been an upstanding officer, upstanding citizen, and we intend to fight these allegations," he said. United Church of Christ officials released a statement saying that they are deeply saddened by this devastating news. They went on to say that their thoughts and prayers are with the individuals and families involved. If you have any information that could help investigators, call Broward County Crime Stoppers at 954-493-TIPS. Remember, you can always remain anonymous, and you may be eligible for a \$3,000 reward. Source: <http://www.wsvn.com/story/31730371/coconut-creek-police-officer-accused-of-molesting-boys-denied-bond>

Sparring continues over Utah charter school linked to treatment center for troubled youths By [BENJAMIN WOOD](#) | The Salt Lake Tribune First Published Apr 15 2016 07:30PM • Last Updated Apr 15 2016 09:35 pm (Rick Egan | The Salt Lake Tribune) Maria Olsen and Josh Graham, attended West Ridge Academy, a youth residential treatment center based in West Jordan. Friday, February 12, 2016. (Rick Egan | The Salt Lake Tribune) Maria Olsen and Josh Graham, attended West Ridge Academy, a youth residential treatment center based in West Jordan. Friday, February 12, 2016. Education » State wants specifics on how a separation between Eagle Summit school and West Ridge Academy resources would be enforced. A new charter school linked to a residential treatment center for troubled youths generated more debate between Utah's top school boards on Friday. During a visit to the Utah Board of Education's monthly meeting, members of the state Charter School Board were pressed for specifics on how separation would be enforced between the Eagle Summit Academy charter school and West Jordan's West Ridge Academy. The state school board initially denied Eagle Summit's charter application in February to allow for an investigation into allegations of financial insolvency and child abuse at the private school currently operated by West Ridge Academy. Board members approved the charter in March after adding caveats that prohibited the blending of funds and personnel between Eagle Summit and West Ridge, and that a safety plan be developed to protect charter school students from the youth residents of the treatment center. But Howard Headlee, chairman of the charter school board, said there was no need for the added provisions because they are already required by Utah law. "We see the concern and we agree with the concern," Headlee said. "We just plan on moving forward as required by state law and [school] board rule." Headlee told members of the state school board that identifying specific laws in agreements between Eagle Summit and the State Charter School Board could downplay the importance of other laws. "It creates ambiguity in the contract," he said. But board members Leslie Castle and Laura Belnap, who opposed Eagle Summit Academy in March, said an understanding that additional protections would be in place was a factor in the charter school securing a majority vote of board members. Belnap said the hybrid structure of Eagle Summit, which will enroll students from the West Ridge treatment center as well as trauma-sensitive youths from the area, creates unique and specific challenges within the state's public education system. "I believe that the safety plan is in board rule and in law," she said. "However, I don't believe the specificity of not commingling funds with a private and a charter entity are part of that." Eagle Summit is scheduled to open its doors next fall. It will replace the private school at West Ridge Academy and will be located on the West Ridge campus, with some buildings and spaces shared by the two

entities. The charter school's board includes former members of the West Ridge advisory council, and the treatment center's academic director, Paul Keene, is slated to run the new charter school. During debate over the charter school's application, the charter board and state school board heard testimony from former students who accused West Ridge staff of using violence as a disciplinary action against rule-breaking and misbehavior. And the Utah Office of Education's investigation into the treatment center identified several lawsuits against West Ridge that were settled out of court. Representatives of Eagle Summit were joined by Dan Griffiths, a former member of the state school board, when the charter made its case before the state school board in March. A records request by The Salt Lake Tribune also revealed that Sen. Lincoln Fillmore, R-South Jordan, who works privately as a charter school consultant, texted two school board members during a March meeting to encourage support for Eagle Summit. In the text messages, sent separately to Belnap and board member Jennifer Johnson, Fillmore requested that they call him about Eagle Summit Academy. Source: <http://www.sltrib.com/home/3782753-155/sparring-continues-over-utah-charter-school>

Midwest founder helped create troubled-teens industry [Lee Rood](#), lrood@dmreg.com 9:08 p.m. CDT April 16, 2016 Cindy Iutzi/Daily Gate City The Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation conducted a search at Midwest Academy in Keokuk, above, and another site in January after a student reported being sexually assaulted. In this photo taken on Thursday, Feb. 11, 2016, a Uhaul is parked outside Midwest Academy in Keokuk, Iowa. Federal, state and county law enforcement officials have returned to the southeast Iowa boarding school for troubled teens following abuse allegations. The Keokuk Daily Gate reports officials with the FBI and the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation returned to Midwest Academy on Thursday to execute a search warrant for records following an initial search of the academy on Jan. 28 and 29. (Photo: Cindy Iutzi, Cindy Iutzi/Daily Gate City) Without the benefit of a college degree, Robert Browning Lichfield parlayed his work into a multi-million-dollar industry. Now 62, the former fundraiser for 2012 Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney worked in the 1970s at the Provo Canyon School, according to a 2003 profile published by the Los Angeles Times. Lichfield eventually came to run the Brightway Adolescent Hospital in St. George, Utah, south of Salt Lake City, in the Mojave desert near the Utah-Arizona border. Youths from that facility would eventually feed into Cross Creek Manor, the first in Lichfield's network of such schools that became the World Wide Association of Specialty Programs and Schools, also known as WWASPS. According to a series of stories published by the Deseret News in Salt Lake City, the Independent Mail in Anderson, S.C., and other media, WWASPS referred families to other residential facilities owned or run by Lichfield's founders, trustees and relatives. It also reaped payments for referrals, billing and marketing. MORE: [From Utah to Iowa: Marketing a profitable fix for troubled teens Former Midwest Academy employee says student spent 47 days in isolation](#) Fifteen years after opening the first facility, Lichfield had 10 other schools and several other related businesses based in St. George or nearby La Verkin. They included referral and marketing websites TroubledTeens.com, TeenHelp.com and Adolescent Services that directed parents and their children to the schools, according to Utah secretary of state records. In 2003, Lichfield bought the old Lee County Home near Keokuk for \$500,000 to transform it into Midwest Academy. Though Midwest Academy owner Ben Trane denied any ties to Lichfield or WWASPS, he has said he got his start in the industry at Cross Creek Manor. Lichfield has been a principal, partner or trustee in about 40 other businesses in Utah — some serving the troubled-teen industry, including Adolescent Programs Consulting, Parent Teen Guide and Midwest Outsource Services. Efforts by The Des Moines Register to reach him over two weeks by telephone, email and mail for comment were unsuccessful. Source: <http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/2016/04/16/midwest-founder-helped-create-troubled-teens-industry/82992202/>

Fate of school for troubled teens rests with Legislature [Story Comments](#) [Print](#) [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) 1 Posted: Monday, April 18, 2016 11:28 am | Updated: 11:48 am, Mon Apr 18, 2016. [Fate of school for troubled teens rests with Legislature](#) Associated Press | [0 comments](#) COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — A public residential school that seeks to transform the lives of South Carolina's troubled teens has lost its accreditation, leaving its fate to the Legislature. Lawmakers have long wanted to revamp John de la Howe School in rural McCormick County but couldn't agree how. The state education agency's decision this month to yank the school's accreditation effectively forces the school to close unless another plan is approved. A House proposal transfers the school's money to the Department of Juvenile Justice and requires a coalition of state agencies to recommend a less costly way to help at-risk youth. State officials say the school spends \$92,000 annually per student. Senators are working on their plan. Sen. Wes Hayes says he thinks the 1,200-acre property needs "to get out of the education business." Source: http://www.theeagle.com/news/nation/fate-of-school-for-troubled-teens-rests-with-legislature/article_8614f924-6c23-5e15-865e-0147b93062aa.html

Carbon County group home has license revoked [Small Text](#) [Medium Text](#) [Large Text](#) Carbon County group home has license revoked ALBRIGHTSVILLE, Pa. - A children's group home in Carbon County is in deep trouble. On April 14, The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services pulled the licenses of two **Child First facilities** called Williams House located in a building on Route 903 in Albrightsville. Investigators said teens at the group home are at the center of the sexual abuse and a beating, but according to a state violation report, a staff member knew about the beating that was videotaped and did nothing to stop it. Paperwork from the department cites "gross incompetence" along with "abuse" and "mistreatment." According to the state's violation report, between February and March of 2016 a teenager was sexually abused by two other teens. Then it states on April 2, several children beat the two teens accused of the sexual assault. In the report, it states a staff member was told by multiple children that an assault was going to happen and "staff member A" told the children quote "You know what needs to be done" and "you know what needs to happen." The report states one of the teens told the staff member to "go into your room" while the assault happened. It goes on to say the staff member went into an office and closed the door. The group home also has a violation for having an improper ratio of children to adults during the alleged violent incident. WFMZ knocked on the door of Williams House to get their response, but there was no answer. WFMZ also went to one of the Child First offices in Allentown, but no one wanted to make a comment. Child First has 10 days to appeal the revocations, and if they appeal they must submit a plan of correction. Source: <http://www.wfmz.com/news/poconos-coal-region/carbon-county-group-home-has-license-revoked/39120986>

Former Tenn. youth center guard arrested for having sex with inmate WATE 6 On Your Side Staff Published: April 22, 2016, 11:55 am DANDRIDGE (WATE) — A former Jefferson County youth development center guard is facing charges for having sex with an inmate. Investigators say former Mountain View guard Breanna Garber was arrested Thursday for incidents which began in February. The Department of Children's Services confirmed Garber worked at the facility from November 2015 and resigned February 14 of this year. The suspect faces charges for sexual misconduct, sexual battery and statutory rape. Investigators say Garber brought alcohol into the center. There is no new information at this time. Source: <http://wjhl.com/2016/04/22/former-tenn-youth-center-guard-arrested-for-having-sex-with-inmate/>

How School Vouchers Promote Religious Schools And Hurt Education The [recent debate](#) about Harriet Tubman replacing Andrew Jackson on the front of a twenty-dollar bill revealed broad disagreements in the country about the value of lifting up the contributions to the nation made by women and people of color. It also revealed the importance of being [properly educated in American history](#). We're used to seeing history curriculum being altered by religious fundamentalists and conservatives to impart false ideas to schoolchildren. In [Texas](#), state school board members recently issued geography, history, and U.S. government textbooks that pushed conservative Christian fallacies about U.S. history, including warped views of Biblical influence on the nation's founders and the importance of slavery as the chief cause of the Civil War. Also in [Colorado](#), school board members in a district outside of Denver made national news when they rejected a highly regarded history curriculum because it didn't "sufficiently" "promote citizenship, patriotism, essentials and benefits of the free-market system, respect for authority, and respect for individual rights." But at least those controversies took place in public, so opposing points-of-view could respond. The Texas textbooks caused such a storm a publisher of one of those books, [McGraw-Hill](#), was forced to issue an apology about a caption in the book that referred to African slaves who were forcibly brought to the Americas as "workers." The textbook controversy prompted [California](#) lawmakers to introduce a bill in the state legislature to prevent Texas-approved changes from seeping into textbooks in the Golden State. In Colorado, the actions of the conservative school board caused mass [student walkouts](#) in high schools across the district, and local parents organized a successful effort to [kick the offending board members](#) out of office. American history school curriculum has been a subject of heated debate forever, and indeed it should be as history stays alive by reflecting on and then reconsidering whose point-of-view the narrative comes from. But what if the debate, instead of taking place in the public, gets completely hidden from view? That's the question members of Congress need to consider this week as they deliberate over a bill to renew funding for the school voucher program in Washington, D.C. The Fad Over School Vouchers As an article in [The Washington Times](#) explains, the voucher program gives low-income students in the district the opportunity to transfer from public schools to private schools at taxpayer expense. Conservative Republicans champion the

program as a “promising new pathway” for children out of “failed” public schools. The Obama administration, which has declared [it will not veto the bill](#) should it pass the House, opposes the vouchers because they don’t produce any statistically significant results for the children who use them. As I reported for [Salon](#) in 2014, school vouchers – which are frequently disguised with euphemistic terms such as scholarships or tax credits – have long been dismissed by liberals, yet their presence has significantly increased in state and federal education policy. These programs are now prominent features in education policies in about a third of the states in the country, siphoning billions of dollars from public service budgets. Most recently a voucher program passed in Nevada, according to [Education Week](#), would allow all parents of public school students to “use state funding earmarked for their child toward tuition or other expenses related to a nonpublic education.” The law is currently tied up in court, but according to a report in [The Washington Post](#), prominent conservatives, such as former Florida Governor and failed presidential candidate Jeb Bush, are already trying to push the Nevada voucher program nationwide. “Lawmakers in Georgia, Iowa and Rhode Island considered similar legislation this year,” the Post reporter explains. Track Record On Vouchers Mostly Negative There is a long track record of failure for vouchers, particularly in [Milwaukee](#), where a 26-year program has produced little gains for the students who’ve have taken advantage of more than \$1.7 billion in taxpayer money to transfer to private schools. Even more significant, the voucher program has done nothing to lift up the entire system. An analysis last year of a long-running statewide voucher program in Louisiana found the program “harms students’ academic performance,” as reported by [U.S. News & World Report](#). The D.C. voucher program has had more [mixed results](#) producing “no conclusive evidence” in overall achievement for the students who participated but significant improvement in high school graduation rates. Although it can be argued that the quality of education in the District has improved of recent, the D.C. schools as a whole continue to produce some of the [most unequal results in achievement](#) between white students and their non-white peers. Most of the war over voucher programs is fought over quantifiable data about the academic results these programs hardly ever seem to produce and the money they redirect from public schools to private pockets. But there is an important quality issue as well. How Vouchers Promote Religious Schools First, there is the issue of church and state separation. All research shows that most of the money voucher programs redirect from public schools to private institutions ends up going to religious schools. In D.C., [80 percent of voucher users](#) attend religion-based private schools. North Carolina’s relatively new voucher program sends 93 percent of its money to “[faith-based schools](#).” Due to voucher programs, in all their forms, “religious schools actually are receiving large amounts of government money,” David Berliner and Gene Glass explain in their book [Myths & Lies that Threaten America’s Public Schools](#). Berliner and Glass explain how, through various workarounds approved by ideologically driven courts, many states have reversed historical precedent to ensure the public is unwittingly funding religious-based instruction. In Arizona, a tuition tax credit program ensures that people and corporations who donate to a fund for private, mostly religious, schools can take that donation off their taxes, which decreases the amount of money the state has to spend on public services. In Ohio, government funds pay directly for parents’ tuition payments in private schools, most of which are religion-based. In New Jersey, the governor enjoys a special set-aside of \$11 million for two religious schools in the state. In most of these cases, the majority of the students receiving voucher money were already previously enrolled in religious schools. So much for “opening promising new pathways” in the public school system. Voucher programs that redirect money to private religious schools are in clear violation of the federal Constitution’s establishment clause and state constitutions’ [Blaine Amendment](#) language, but the programs continue to proliferate and expand nevertheless. This Should Alarm Every American As Berliner and Glass explain, “Diversion of existing public schools resources to private schools results in taxpayer support for all kinds of religious instruction at all kinds of religious schools, with little or no oversight by states or the public.” That means public tax dollars are funding [religion based curriculum](#) that teach, for instance, a [creationist view of science](#) or a version of history that [portrays slaves as happy servants](#) to their masters. Curriculum materials that [depict people of color in demeaning, stereotypical ways](#) that have created such consternation in public schools can be readily adopted for private schools using vouchers. And how many schools getting voucher funding will choose a [right-wing version of history](#) that teaches the founders of the nation never intended the separation of church and state but sought instead to construct a Christian theocracy? Voucher proponents claim all of this is fine because parents have “made the choice.” But shouldn’t we have a choice about whether or not we fund this? Most [Republicans](#) running for president have come down firmly on the side of embracing more “choice” in education including [vouchers](#). GOP front-runner Donald Trump’s [education policy ideas](#) are still largely a mystery. But his perspectives on American history are pretty obvious. When questioned about the decision to replace Andrew Jackson with Harriet Tubman on the \$20 bill, Trump replied, according to the [Wall Street Journal](#), he’d prefer to keep Jackson on the 20 and put Tubman on the \$2 bill instead. But then again, Trump is also on record declaring, “I love the poorly educated.” Should the craze for school vouchers continue, Trump may get just the kind of electorate he prefers. Source: <http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/congress-needs-to-know-school-vouchers-promote-religious-schools-and-hurt-education/>

St. George man allegedly defrauded group that helps disabled - SFGate St. George man allegedly defrauded group that helps disabled Published 3:14 pm, Saturday, April 30, 2016 [ST. GEORGE](#), Utah (AP) — A human resource officer is accused of defrauding a St. George company that provides group home services to people with autism and other disabilities. The Spectrum of St. George reports (<http://bit.ly/24dsry6>) that 27-year-old [Jonathan Michael Heck](#) has been arrested on eight felony counts of fraud, theft and forgery. According to charging documents, he allegedly made up false timesheets for four short-term Chrysalis employees and himself. He allegedly siphoned more than \$15,000 in stolen funds between August 2015 and last January. The former workers whose names were used told police the dates on the timesheets were days they didn’t work for the company. Most Popular 1 [Giants provide health updates on Pagan](#), [Panik 2 Sports Authority liquidating all stores nationwide, including...](#) 3 [One-third ponder leaving Bay Area amid costs, congestion](#) Chrysalis CEO [Marc Christensen](#) says Heck was fired as soon as the defrauding was discovered. Heck is free on bond and is scheduled to appear in court Tuesday. Source: <http://www.sfgate.com/news/crime/article/St-George-man-allegedly-defrauded-group-that-7385821.php>

Teen, Interrupted By Alex Floyd May 2, 2016 Share on Facebook Tweet Share Share Pin Ryan Lewis had been exhibiting signs of clinical depression for months. Concerned about their son, his parents decided to send him to a residential treatment center to get him help. They consulted an educational expert, who referred them to the Alldredge Academy in West Virginia, a therapeutic wilderness program in the Appalachian wilderness that promised a combination of schooling and therapy to treat Ryan. The colorful brochures and promises of healing in the outdoors appealed to both Ryan and his parents, and with some hesitation coupled with mostly hope, they sent their son away. Less than a week later, he was found dead, having hanged himself on campus property. Tragically, Ryan’s story is one of many. More than a decade after Ryan’s death, residential teen treatment centers like Alldredge Academy (later rebranded as Alldredge Wilderness Journey) are still dangerously under-regulated and can be woefully under-equipped to handle the teenagers placed in their care. In a similarly horrific case, Diamond Ranch Academy, a treatment center notorious for its deplorable conditions, charged one girl’s family \$60,000 for ten months of care, over the course of which she was exposed to beatings, unsanitary medical facilities, and a rigid environment where she was not even allowed to sit down without permission. Like many other facilities, Diamond Ranch also makes use of so-called “transport” groups, organizations that forcibly remove children from their homes and place them in these treatment facilities. Since this is done with parental approval, a child is often helplessly placed into a facility where her complaints or allegations of mistreatment are discounted and ignored. Ryan Lewis, for example, was accused of trying to manipulate his counselors into letting him leave the day he killed himself. But many parents who send their children to a dangerous facility often do so unknowingly, rather than out of a lack of concern for their child. This was the case for Ryan’s parents, who hired an independent educational consultant and thought long and hard about their decision before sending their son away. In fact, treatment academies like Alldredge and Diamond Ranch often prey on the parents of children suffering from severe depression, substance abuse, or other psychological ailments, luring them in with what many describe as a highly effective and occasionally manipulative marketing campaign that promises a variety of benefits for teens. But these benefits are often difficult to evaluate, especially since independent inspections are rare and usually not state-mandated. While many of these academies were created out of a genuine desire to provide mental rehabilitation for those who were dealing with serious psychological issues, the system in place for regulating and accrediting these centers remains nearly nonexistent and incapable of dealing with the onslaught of cases involving negligence and misconduct. Yet the abuse is far from unknown. A Government Accountability Office (GAO) report noted over 1,500 cases of abuse across 34 states pertaining to facilities like Alldredge. The report also provided a disturbing reminder that while some of these facilities do close after reports of abuse or even deaths, many simply rebrand themselves without making any meaningful changes, like Alldredge did before ultimately closing in 2008. In terms of federal oversight, there are no specific regulations for these centers beyond general rules regarding child safety. States, theoretically, fill in this gap themselves, providing the appropriate regulation and protection for teens in residential treatment. But state laws are, to say the least, lacking. Riddled with loopholes and often vague, they do little to prevent abuse simply because hundreds of cases of mistreatment slip through the system. For example, a Texas law would allow a residential treatment center to rebrand itself as simply a “boarding school” to avoid having to

obtain a license. And in some cases, the private accreditors of these centers do not notify the state if an accreditation is suspended or denied. The GAO report even noted that many state agencies simply remain unaware that these programs exist at all, with a full 45 states reporting that they did not have enough information about these facilities to confirm whether a teen under their care had died. In addition to the lack of oversight, limited funding often prevents state agencies from carrying out any meaningful enforcement, including conducting inspections. For instance, Utah undertook a massive overhaul of its laws regarding such centers in 2005 following numerous reports of abuse. Yet by 2012, reports of abuse were already cropping up again, involving programs that were specifically targeted by the regulatory reforms. The problem wasn't that the rules weren't stringent enough or that teens were crying wolf — the issue was funding. The state can only do so much with even the best rules if it doesn't have the manpower or the resources to enforce them. In turn, many have called on the federal government to intervene and help regulate these centers effectively. Congressman George Miller (D-CA) originally held hearings on the state of residential teen treatment centers and their shortcomings in 2007, which produced the GAO report confirming deaths and abuse due to a combination of negligence, inadequate training, and, of course, a significant lack of government oversight. Following the revelations from the report, Congressman Miller introduced the the Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act of 2008, but it failed to pass. The legislation contained many hopeful provisions, including prohibiting the abuse of minors in rehabilitation programs and punishment by withholding food and water. Congressman Miller has since reintroduced it in subsequent congressional sessions even after the Democrats lost their majority, most recently in 2013. Yet time after time, the bill is scuttled without so much as a vote, typically due to complaints by the industry that the bill unfairly targets them, in addition to a lack of Republican support. But even as Congressman Miller's bill slowly moves through the legislature, there is still a pressing need for immediate action. Many students are still in programs like Alldredge Wilderness Journey or Diamond Ranch Academy, and even more parents are considering whether their troubled teen should be sent to one of these institutions. While many of these academies were created out of a genuine desire to provide mental rehabilitation for those who were dealing with serious psychological issues, the system in place for regulating and accrediting these centers remains nearly nonexistent and incapable of dealing with the onslaught of cases involving negligence and misconduct. The Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) main tactic to prevent abuse is encouraging parents to research individual institutions and judge their merits before they make a decision. But even this can be highly confusing, given the number of accreditation agencies that a family is supposed to consult just to find out if a school is properly licensed. The FTC also advises parents to ask about background checks, noting that if the organization in question does not perform them on their employees, parents should "consider it a red flag." Yet background checks for employees are not required in every state, and there is no uniform standard for how thorough they must be. The core of the problem, however, may be just how lucrative treating teenagers has become. Residential treatment centers now comprise a billion dollar industry, and that figure is expected to grow, with institutions collectively adding around 10,000 to 20,000 teenagers each year. Thus, it seems inevitable that some facilities may become more careless by using less qualified counselors or doing minimal training and upkeep to save a few dollars. But for an industry focused on helping some of society's most vulnerable members at an extravagant price, this is simply unacceptable. Parents need a means of oversight to protect their children, and teenagers dealing with what can be life-threatening mental health problems deserve legitimate care and better conditions. A manager for one treatment center, Deb Hatland, reportedly said, "We are not a perfect organization, and...we all make mistakes." While Ms. Hatland is certainly right that everyone makes mistakes, the margin of error is simply too large when treating troubled teens for anything below the very best. Art by Alyssa Schulman Source: <http://www.brownpoliticalreview.org/2016/05/teen-interrupted/>

Weber County Sheriff's Office Youth counselor charged with child porn, marijuana possession By Pat Reavy | Posted May 5th, 2016 @ 12:39pm 61

Having trouble viewing the video? Try disabling any ad blocking extensions currently running on your browser. 10PM: Child porn found at home of youth counselor, police say OGDEN — A youth counselor in Ogden was charged Wednesday with possessing child pornography and growing marijuana. Skyler Eugene Hartsough, 26, of Ogden, was charged in two cases in 2nd District Court. In one case, he was charged with 20 counts of sexual exploitation of a minor, a second-degree felony; and in the other he was charged with cultivation of marijuana, a third-degree felony; possession of a firearm by a restricted person, a third-degree felony; and possession of drugs and drug paraphernalia, class B misdemeanors. Hartsough worked at Youth Health Associates, a group home for adolescent boys in Clearfield, but was fired after his arrest. "Nothing happened here," said Brian Garlock, owner of Youth Health Associates. "It didn't involve our boys, our staff, our company. We obviously did everything that we could do as far as the protections, the background checks. There were no red flags." [Advertise with us Report this ad](#) Search warrants were served on Hartsough's house, 3210 Jefferson Ave., on Tuesday. Investigators found 10 marijuana plants growing in the basement, drug paraphernalia, a rifle and child pornography, according to charging documents. Hartsough told investigators he grew the marijuana for personal daily use, the charges state. Members of the Internet Crimes Against Children task force seized multiple electronic devices containing images and videos of child pornography, according to charging documents. "Hartsough stated during the course of the interview that he routinely and regularly views images of child pornography and that he obtained child pornographic images through a peer-to-peer network over the course of years," the charges state. Hartsough also worked for two months in 2015 as a temporary case worker in Ogden and was terminated for cause, according to the Utah Department of Child and Family Services. According to an online biography from a prior employer, Hartsough "specializes in helping children and families who have experienced trauma; especially sexual abuse, family violence, physical abuse and associated injuries come to terms with acceptance and life moving forward." He did his undergraduate internship course work with St. Anne's Center catering to mental health needs and interned for the state of Utah in Weber County for Division of Child and Family Services. Contributing: Ladd Egan Source: <http://www.ksl.com/?sid=39646861&nid=148>

ED: No Records on Closed Charters Mentioned in Its "Commitment to Transparency," CMD Appeals Submitted by [Lisa Graves](#) on May 5, 2016 - 8:23am Today the Center for Media and Democracy is filing its appeal from a claim by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) that it has no records about closed or never-opened charter schools referenced in its "Commitment to Transparency" press release. On December 23, ED publicly issued a statement called "A Commitment to Transparency: Learning More about the Charter School Program." That statement noted that it had spent more than \$1.6 billion funding more than 2,600 charter schools that were "operational" in the last full school year and that it had funded 430 charters that had "subsequently closed," along with 699 "prospective schools." However, ED released data for the operational charter schools and othes and did not list data identifying which of the 1,129 charters either had closed or had not yet opened since 2006. So, in January, CMD requested records about those other charters. In April, ED denied CMD's request saying it had searched and found no records about the closed or not-opened charters that had received federal taxpayer monies, despite the specific numbers it used in its release. CMD's appeal notes that: It strains credulity and common sense that, despite spending billions in taxpayer dollars on charters and putting out this press release—among several—on the accomplishments of the Charter Schools Program, the Department claims to have no databases, no data analyses, and no internal communications about the program mentioned in its press release and charters that received funds but closed or never opened, nor any external communications with charter school grant recipients about the success or failure of those charters. The Department's article states that, "CSP planning and startup capital facilitated the creation of over 2,600 charter schools that were operational as of SY 2013-14; approximately 430 charter schools that served students but subsequently closed by SY 2013-14; and approximately 699 'prospective schools.'" Yet the Department claims that it was unable to locate any lists of what schools those are, how much federal funding they received, or any correspondence or other records relating to that data. Similarly, the Department claims that it has no records relating to an assessment of the suitability or eligibility for financial support of "prospective schools" and no correspondence regarding charter schools that closed or never opened. Accordingly, the search conducted by the Department of Education's Office of Innovation & Improvement for records responsive to our requests must have been inadequate. As CMD was first to document last year, the federal government has spent more than [\\$3.7 billion in taxpayer dollars fueling the charter school industry](#) since the 1990s, and ED has now calculated that it has spent more than \$1.6 billion of this sum since 2006. The Center for Popular Democracy and the Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools has tracked [more than \\$200 million in fraud and waste by charter operators](#) in the past decade or so, and many—but not all—of the charters whose operators were indicted for criminal fraud were subsequently closed. Charters have closed for a variety of reasons, as CMD documented in its "[Charter School Black Hole](#)" report, including fraud, mismanagement, poor enrollment, and poor planning. Meanwhile, as CMD noted, [several audits and reviews have found that federal and state overseers have failed to monitor](#) the spending of taxpayer money by charters or to follow up adequately when charters closed after receiving federal or state taxpayer monies. In numerous instances, states could not even identify where the assets went that were purchased by failed charters to reclaim them for the government. In essence, [public assets had been converted to private ones](#) and then were unaccountable when a charter failed. And, lobbying groups like the [American Legislative Exchange Council](#) have peddled legislation in states to exempt charters from financial accountability and other rules—while federal and state charter

advocates in government agencies have been giving favorable ratings to states with "flexible" rules or loopholes governing charters. Using other federal [data](#), CMD sought to determine which charters had closed or [never opened](#) ("ghost charters") after receiving federal funds and was able to identify more than 2,000 since the inception of the federal Charter School Program more than two decades ago, but some of those had been assigned new identification numbers because they had changed their names or locations or their status in some way. So, in response to ED's "Commitment to Transparency" statement and its release of data about "operational" charters, CMD sought records used and accessible to the federal Department of Education about the 430 federally-funded charter schools that the federal government had identified as closed since 2006, along with the 699 it has funded but not yet opened. But ED claims to have no records related to those failures or to the prospective schools it claims are worthy of federal funding because their "operators are best positioned to open high quality schools." In CMD's view, it is impossible that the agency has no records about charters that were deemed to have "high quality" potential and none about those whose potential failed to manifest or measure up. ED's denial of CMD's requests under the Freedom of Information Act comes in the wake of [repeated assurances that the agency will provide greater transparency](#) and oversight over charters as it seeks continued increases in funding for charters. It also comes in the aftermath of the decision by the agency's Office of Innovation and Improvement to award [its largest grant last year to Ohio, despite the public scandal](#) over the state's charter school leader fixing test scores to misrepresent the performance of charters to the public. CMD had requested that ED make public the names of the states and applications for that Charter School Program last year, so residents could learn whether their states were seeking more charter school funding and weigh in, but [the agency refused](#) to make that information public until after it had made [its decision to award \\$71 million to Ohio](#) and tens of millions more to other states. When it [made those applications public after allocating taxpayer money](#), it turned out that the government had been provided [only letters of support from the charter school industry](#) favoring those grant awards and the government did not solicit or receive information from citizens concerned about fraud, waste, and other problems with charters—like Ohio's effort to [manipulate public opinion about charters by hiding the terrible test results of virtual charters](#). In the meantime, CMD has documented ED's deferential culture toward charters as shown most recently by its [obedience to a request by the KIPP "public school" charters to keep secret from the public](#) information about how many of its charter students graduate from high school and enroll in or graduated from college, along with key information about how it is spending federal tax dollars, even as KIPP has spent millions of dollars on luxury trips to [Las Vegas, DisneyWorld](#), and other resorts for KIPP charter employees in recent years. More information about CMD's appeal is available in the primary documents uploaded below. [Education News](#) Attachment Size Attachment Size [CMD Appeal Letter](#) 387.88 KB [ED Commitment to Transparency Press Release](#) 259.56 KB [ED Says It Has No Responsive Records](#) 199.52 KB [CMD FOIA Request re Commitment to Transparency Request A](#) 118.87 KB [CMD FOIA Request re Commitment to Transparency Request B](#) 118.15 KB [CMD FOIA Request re Commitment to Transparency Request C](#) 115.98 KB [CMD Charter Transparency Article Image for Sharing](#) 92.98 KB - See more at: <http://www.prwatch.org/news/2016/05/13101/ed-says-it-has-no-records-re-its-commitment-transparency-charters-cmd-appeals#sthash.oomumGPJ.dpuf>

Modern boarding schools still a form of "abuse" claims therapist in new book By [Xantha Leatham](#) - May 6, 2016 [0](#) 14 SENDING children to boarding school is a form of abuse and forces youngsters to develop "survival strategies" to deal with feelings of neglect, according to a new book. The authors of "Trauma, Abandonment and Privilege" claim that despite improved pastoral care in modern boarding schools, pupils still mask their true emotions which can cause major problems in later life. The book has been written by former boarding school teacher Nick Duffell and Thurstone Basset as a guide for therapists working with former boarding school students, to whom they refer as "survivors". The authors claim that despite appearing outwardly happy, the vast majority of children are hiding psychological trauma caused by moving away from home at a young age. They report that the "Boarding School Survivors" agency they founded to help traumatised ex-boarders has had "more and more people coming forward for help" in recent years. Robin Fletcher, chief executive of the BSA, said boarding is "not right for everyone" Mr Basset, who is also a board member for the Journal of Mental Health Training Education and Practice, said: "Boarding schools aren't as brutal as they used to be and there is more potential for contact with families now because of things like smartphones and improved technology. "But a child at just eight years old still has to learn to live without parents when they start at boarding schools. It's ridiculously young really. "None of the psychological theories that I am aware of support taking children away from parents at eight years old. "I wouldn't expect an eight-year-old to turn round to their parents and say 'it's time to go now'. Mr Basset claimed that youngsters who attend boarding schools are forced to develop "coping strategies" and mask their true feelings which can cause mental issues in later life. Strategy He continued: "When a child first goes away, they have to learn to cope – a survival strategy. "The mask is a part of that because the children will keep saying they're loving it when they're not. "When they're older, the mask can start to slip and a trigger such as a relative's death or tragedy can cause a seemingly successful person's life to crack and spiral out of control. He continued: "This is because they haven't resolved the feelings of neglect at school and are used to just having to grin and bear it so in adult life it all comes out. "At boarding school, you can't go about crying so you keep a stiff upper lip but not showing emotion in adult life can cause problems." The author noted that the "Boarding School Survivors" agency that he created had seen increased numbers of former boarders coming forward in recent years. He said: "We founded the Survivors' agency and over the years we've seen more and more people coming forward, looking for help with the issues they have as a result of boarding. Suitability "The workshops every year are doubling in numbers as people are becoming more aware of their issues and see others share how they feel. "They then feel the strength to come forward themselves." But Robin Fletcher, chief executive of the Boarding Schools' Association, said: "I'm not sure a 16-year-old boy playing rugby with his mates has developed a coping mechanism, I think he's just enjoying being with his mates. "Boarding is not right for every child but there's a lot of interaction with professional staff who have lots of training before a child starts now. "It's a family conversation now which involves a long process called "suitability for boarding" in which they have taster sessions and speak to parents and the children. "It's not in the schools' interests to have kids there who don't like it so this helps to make sure you don't get kids starting at schools who aren't right for boarding." He added: "The book refers to a very different time when certain people went to boarding schools who weren't suited to it." Source: <http://www.deadlinenews.co.uk/2016/05/06/modern-boarding-schools-still-form-abuse-claims-therapist-new-book/>

The State Foster Care System Has a License to Be Terrible at Licensing Friday, May 6, 2016 at 6 a.m. By [Craig Malisow](#) A [Facebook](#) 4 [Twitter](#) 2 [More](#) [shares](#) [recommend](#) [reddit](#) [email](#) 0 0 On February 23, 2016, an inspector for the Department of Family and Protective Services discovered how the staff of a Children's Hope foster care facility in Levelland disciplined the kids in their care: They hit them. The state inspector noted the violation at the facility, about 30 miles west of Lubbock, and gave Children's Hope's supervisors two months to make sure their staff stopped hitting children. Twenty days before the February inspection, a state worker observed that a staff member was sleeping instead of watching kids. Less than three weeks before that, an inspector noted that three storage rooms had "clothes, boxes, trash and other hazardous objects on the floor where children in care could trip and harm themselves." This Levelland facility, it seemed, had a knack for hiring staff with unique methods of discipline. In June 2015, a staff member took to pulling a kid's hair; in February, a staff member made the kids exercise outside, inadequately dressed for cold weather, whenever they acted up. The violations — all available on the department's online database — weren't just isolated to that Levelland operation. In April 2014, at Children's Hope's other Levelland facility, a staff member gave a kid a black eye, and in another incident, one worker told children to make false accusations against another worker. At this facility, kids "consistently reported that they were left in a van while two staff [members] went inside a staff's home." And in the Children's Hope facility in Lubbock, staff got downright creative with punishment, by making kids walk or run while holding chairs above their heads. State inspectors also observed floors smeared with feces and trash; inaccurate records for medication; bathrooms without paper towels; and staff that weren't aware that children slipped off to a bathroom to engage in "inappropriate touching." But besides a personal investment in basic human decency, there was no real incentive for Children's Hope to get its act together; the department rarely if ever seriously sanctions residential treatment centers and group homes that make money off warehousing children. Which is why it seems strange that the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services is getting into the business of licensing federal [detention centers](#) for immigrants seeking asylum. As we reported earlier this week, the department has granted a provisional license to the Karnes County Residential Center, which is run by the Geo Group, a private prison company that's [seen profits soar](#) with the rise of immigrant detention in the United States in recent years. The detention facility must pass three unannounced inspections over six months before it can be permanently licensed, but that shouldn't be a problem. The licensing bar is low. As revealed in recent class-action [litigation](#), the department had revoked the license of only one residential treatment center in the past five years — and that was only after four kids died. U.S. District Court Judge Janis Jack, who issued the damning ruling that laid bare the department's indifference to thousands of children in its care, outlined the ugly history of the Daystar facility in Manvel, which had a capacity of 141 children: Between 1993 and 2002, three teenagers died at Daystar from asphyxiation due to physical restraints. In most cases, the children were hog-tied. Beyond these deaths, there were reports of sexual abuse and staff making

developmentally disabled girls fight for snacks. Numerous stakeholders, including the district attorney, spoke out against Daystar, but the facility kept its license. In November 2010, a fourth child died in what was ruled a homicide by asphyxiation due to physical restraints. Daystar's license was still not revoked until January 2011. DFPS allowed this facility—that was responsible for four deaths, numerous allegations of sexual abuse, and unthinkable treatment of developmentally disabled children—to operate for 17 years. A group called Grassroots Leadership has [rallied](#) against the department's licensure of immigration detention centers earlier this week. The group's executive director says, "By all reasonable measures, family detention camps are prisons. They are not child-care facilities." (Grassroots on Wednesday successfully petitioned a Travis County District Court for a [temporary restraining order](#) blocking the department from licensing another detention center. A judge will hear arguments May 13.) But given how the department conducts business with residential treatment centers, it might be a stretch to call them child-care facilities as well. In 2015, Austin County Sheriff Jack Brandes filed his second [complaint](#) against the department regarding the number of runaway foster children from the Five Oaks Achievement Center. Brandes told the county commissioners' court, "We are deeply concerned for the safety of the residents that run away from this facility. Deputies have previously found runaways hiding in buildings on private property, and we're concerned over what could happen if the owners of the properties approach the runaways, especially at night." Five Oaks' solution? "We are going to build a tall deer fence," Five Oaks CEO Craig Bibb told the commissioners. "The state was concerned that it could have no razor wire or barbed wire. It's going to look really nice." Nine months after the sheriff complained to the commissioners' court, at least two more kids ran away. One stole a van. Apparently, Five Oaks and the department are less concerned with why so many children seem to want to get the heck out of Five Oaks, and are more concerned about penning them in like animals. Recent inspection reports note that Five Oaks could use some fixing up. Inspectors noted cottages full of holes, and mold in a girls' bathroom. Staff fight with each other in front of kids, and sometimes swear at the kids. One staff member continually taunts kids who display self-harming behavior; it's unclear if any of these include the kid who uses the chipped "upper corners" of the restrooms to "scratch themselves." In 2010, a 17-year-old Five Oaks resident collapsed from heat exhaustion during a nature hike and died weeks later. A month earlier, state inspectors discovered that at least seven staff members lacked first aid and CPR certification. (Recent inspections noted that the first aid kits are missing many items, but are not lacking in expired medication.) Department spokesman Patrick Crimmins [told](#) the Houston Chronicle at the time, "The children there have an established relationship with their caregivers...We feel those children are very safe." This is the level of safety that the children at the Karnes County Residential Center have to look forward to. Source: <http://www.houstonpress.com/news/the-state-foster-care-system-has-a-license-to-be-terrible-at-licensing-8375852>

Jail officer accused of choking teen inmate Will Cleveland. @WillCleveland13 7:23 p.m. EDT May 5, 2016 Brian Miller(Photo: Provided) A Wayne County correction officer is accused of choking a teenage inmate Thursday morning. According to the Wayne County Office of the Sheriff, Brian Miller, 47, is charged with criminal obstruction of breathing or blood circulation, endangering the welfare of a minor, two counts of second-degree falsifying business records, and second-degree harassment. Deputies allege that Miller, who has worked for the department for 14 years, choked an inmate during an altercation. The inmate, who is younger than 17, was not hurt during the incident. Miller was arraigned in Lyons Town Court and released to appear at a later date. He has been suspended with pay from the jail pending a departmental hearing. Source: <http://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/2016/05/05/correction-officer-accused-choking-teenage-inmate/83991382/>

Lawsuit: State Gave Child Foster Care License to Known Abuser Katherine Johnson Updated: 05/10/2016 1:29 PM Created: 05/09/2016 3:54 PM The Hennepin County Human Services Department allowed the placement of a foster care child into the home of a Brooklyn Park woman who had a record of substantiated child abuse, according to a lawsuit filed Monday in U.S. District Court in Minneapolis. In December 2014, 6-year-old Kendrea Johnson was found dead in that foster care mother's home. The child was found hanging from a bunk bed in her bedroom. 5 EYEWITNESS NEWS reviewed the child's welfare record cited in the lawsuit that shows that Hennepin County child protection authorities knew in December 2000 that the foster care mother, Tannise Nawaqavou, had a record of child abuse. But because of a little-known state law, commonly known as "[the look-back law](#)," Nawaqavou was granted a foster care license by DHS in October 2011 because a defined period of time had expired since her violation, thus allowing her to become eligible to take care of abused children. All foster care applicants must undergo a background check by the state prior to a decision being made on whether to grant a license. A January 2011 DHS background studies memo stated that Nawaqavou "physically abused her child or a child in her care," according to the document reviewed by 5 EYEWITNESS NEWS and which is referred to in the lawsuit. When she was asked in an interview about the DHS record, Nawaqavou denied ever having a record of child abuse. "I don't know about that," Nawaqavou said. "That's negative. That's the first time I've heard that." Jerry Kerber, DHS' Inspector General declined to be interviewed about the look-back law and Johnson's case. [He did send this statement](#). Following Johnson's death, Nawaqavou's foster care license was revoked in March 2015. DHS cited the fact that she had "provided false and misleading information during the child foster care license application process," according to state records. The [lawsuit](#) accuses Hennepin County child protection workers, a private foster care agency, Family Alternatives Inc., and a day treatment center, Lifespan of Minnesota, of failing to adequately protect the child before she died. Hennepin County officials and Lifespan declined comment on the suit. The attorney for Family Alternatives Inc. said the agency he represents should not be held accountable for the child's death. "It isn't the result of anything Family Alternatives has done wrong or the foster parent," said Rich Thomas. "It's just a terrible circumstance." But Jeff Storms, one of the attorneys representing Johnson's grandmother, said child protection authorities and the other named parties failed the child and her family when she was removed from her mother's custody. "Kendrea was alive at the time they took her," Storms said. "She had family members who loved her, who kept her alive, who made sure she was going to school. Knowing that they are putting that child in the home of an abuser is a clear and obvious step towards potential peril for that child. Why would we take that risk? If we were going to put money, energy and resources into anything, it should be making sure that we have good foster parents. Not giving money to known abusers." Three months before Johnson died, a Hennepin County child protection worker allegedly expressed concerns about whether the girl had been placed in the right foster care setting, according to state records cited in the suit. Monica Jochmans "had severe concerns about (Johnson's) routine, supervision plan and what Nawaqavou does to 'keep children safe that present with higher needs,'" according to the state records. Jeff Montpetit, co-counsel with Storms, said that an overall review of Johnson's records show a continuing pattern of failure. "Nobody was in charge," Montpetit said. "Nobody cared enough to take charge and do things in Kendrea's best interest. I think it's a system that in its current state is broken. In its current state it needs to be overhauled and we hope to bring some of those deficiencies to light so that things like this don't ever have to happen again." Mary Broadus, Johnson's grandmother, isn't optimistic. "These are babies," she said. "And bad things are happening to them. She (Johnson) wasn't the first and she's not going to be the last. There's someone who loves these kids out there. I'm not just fighting for Kendrea. I'm fighting for all the babies this has happened to." [Review the Child Protection Oversight Committee meeting agenda from March 21, 2016 here](#). Katherine Johnson can be contacted at 651-642-4441 and kjohnson@kstp.com. Source: <http://kstp.com/news/foster-care-child-abuse-lawsuit-kendrea-johnson-tannise-nawaqavou/4131970/>

Patient accuses residential treatment center of sexual abuse Louie Torres May 11, 2016, 12:33pm CHICAGO — A Cook County woman is suing a Rockford residential treatment center, alleging she was sexually assaulted. Mary Bohanan filed a lawsuit May 3 in Cook County Circuit Court against Universal Health Services, Inc., doing business as **Rock River Academy & Residential Center**, alleging negligence, sexual abuse and sexual harassment. According to the complaint, between 2012 and 2013, Bohanan experienced abuse, sexual assaults and battery during her stay at the facility. The plaintiff alleges Rock River Academy failed to hire competent staff more suited to be around adolescent females as well as failing to take action when one of their patients was being mistreated. Bohanan seeks judgment of at least \$50,000, plus court costs. She is represented by attorney I. Peter Polansky of Polansky & Cichon CHTD. in Chicago. Cook County Circuit Court Case number L004539 Source: <http://cookcountyrecord.com/stories/510723896-patient-accuses-residential-treatment-center-of-sexual-abuse>

Lawsuit alleging abuse, neglect of teen filed against Zelenople group home Updated: May 11, 2016 - 7:32 PM 103 Share this with your friends! From To Compose your message Thanks for sharing with your followers! Lawsuit alleging abuse, neglect of teen filed against Zelenople group home <http://on.wpxi.com/1TbutGy> ZELIENOPLE, Pa. — A family is suing **Glade Run Lutheran Services**, a group home in Zelenople, claiming that a 13-year-old boy was abused and neglected at the facility. Attorneys for the boy and his family spoke Wednesday with Channel 11 News after filing the civil lawsuit. "The thing that gets this little boy excited is the thought that Glade Run will no longer exist," Nick Indovina of the Pisanchyn law firm said. Glade Run Lutheran Services in Zelenople Channel 11 News has covered the residential treatment facility, which cares for children and teenagers with severe mental health issues, for months. State inspectors found evidence last October of children having sex with other children on campus. As a result, the state Department of Human Services stripped the 56-bed facility of its license, which Glade Run is attempting to get back through an appeals process with the state.

The campus has three additional facilities that have remained open pending the appeal decision. No criminal charges were ever filed, but the state mandated changes, including firing the staff, hiring new employees and adding security cameras. Indovina said the changes are not enough. The lawsuit filed Wednesday details allegations too graphic for Channel 11 News to report about what the boy, now 15, endured from March to July 2015 while he was being treated at the group home for severe mental health issues. The suit alleges that the staff failed to keep him safe from other children. While Glade Run had yet to see the lawsuit, officials issued the following statement to Channel 11 News: "Glade Run Lutheran Services serves our communities' most challenging and traumatized youth, providing residential, school-based and community-based offerings to thousands throughout Western Pennsylvania each year. Many have complex mental health issues and behaviors that necessitate residential treatment for stabilization and healing. The safety of our clients remains our first priority, and we are committed to providing the safest environment for their treatment and recovery. "The provision of human services to individuals with mental health issues is not without risks. These risks include physical harm to staff and potential litigation. The privacy rights of our clients preclude us from discussing any allegation that may arise. Glade Run has a longstanding track record of more than 160 years of successful care and treatment of traumatized youth, and is dedicated to protecting the best interests of those we serve." Source: <http://www.wpxi.com/news/lawsuit-alleging-abuse-neglect-of-teen-filed-against-zelienople-group-home/276616277>

Group home workers facing assault charges Two women accused of mistreating a special needs client in February By Eric Deabill | edeabill@pahomepage.com Published 05/11 2016 04:45PM Updated 05/11 2016 06:32PM SPRING BROOK TOWNSHIP, LACKAWANNA COUNTY (WBRE/WYOU) - Two workers from a group home are facing assault charges in what Lackawanna County prosecutors are calling a disturbing case. Investigators say the two women shoved, pushed and even slapped a person with special needs who was in their care. Detectives say what makes this case especially disturbing is that the possible victim is non-verbal and doesn't use words to communicate. Investigators say they only learned of the abuse because the woman's family set up a secret camera in her room. The group home where the alleged assault took place is on Joni Drive in Spring Brook Township. The allegations are horrifying for neighbors. "It makes me angry to think that people could take advantage of someone who can't talk or someone who can't fight back," Donna Gardner of Spring Brook Township said. Prosecutors say Rakeelia Field and Jacquelynn Moore physically abused one of the residents. Besides being non-verbal, the victim can't feed or bathe herself and needs constant supervision. The abuse allegations involve the suspects slapping her, pushing her and shoving her into chairs. "It is really shocking for someone who can't complain to anyone that she's being abused," Barbara Delmore of Jefferson Township said. District Attorney Shane Scanlon says the abuse was only discovered after family members put a hidden camera in the woman's room. Scanlon has seen the videos. "But for the family putting in the camera, which is a hidden camera, God knows how long this abuse would have continued or endured," Scanlon said. According to court papers, one of the suspects may have actually stumbled onto the hidden camera on February 29th. That is the last date in the criminal complaint that any abuse may have taken place. People in the community say what the family of the victim did was right. "I applaud them because they were taking care of their own. They must have realized something was going on," Delmore said. All of the abuse is alleged to have taken place during on a one-week period at the end of February. Both of the workers charged are currently free on unsecured bail and expected back in court next week. Keystone Community Resources, the agency that runs the group home, told Eyewitness News on Wednesday that they don't comment on ongoing investigations. Court papers indicate that both women are no longer working at the facility in Spring Brook Township. Source: <http://www.pahomepage.com/news/group-home-workers-facing-assault-charges>

Look-Back Law Allows Foster-Care Licenses for Criminals, Abusers By Katherine Johnson, KSTP TV on May 12, 2016 at 12:00 a.m. AddThis Sharing Buttons Share to Facebook7Share to TwitterShare to RedditShare to EmailShare to Copy Link News Fargo,ND 58103 http://www.wday.com/sites/default/files/styles/square_300/public/field/image/KendreaJohnson_0.jpg?itok=SpuuPsI_ Katherine Johnson, KSTP TV WDAY <http://www.wday.com> Look-Back Law Allows Foster-Care Licenses for Criminals, Abusers Fargo ND 301 8th St. S. 58103 We first told you about the [Look-back Law](#) in an investigation Tuesday morning on First News. A lawsuit alleges that 6-year-old Kendrea Johnson was placed in the foster home of a known abuser. She died less than a year after her placement. During the investigation, we found a state law that allows the Minnesota Department of Human Services to issue foster-care licenses to criminals and child abusers as long as a set period of time has passed between the conviction and the application. Some crimes, such as murder and criminal sexual conduct, permanently disqualify a person from becoming a foster parent. However, other violent crimes involving children do not. We sat down with two members of the Governor's Child Protection Task Force to see if they believe changes should be made to the law. Regarding the conviction of Manslaughter of Assault of an Unborn Child, Safe Passage for Children of Minnesota Executive Director Rich Gehrman said, "If it's a conviction, it's a disqualification. It should be." Even a felony offense doesn't disqualify the criminal from obtaining a foster care license as long as 15 years has passed. "If there are some categories here that need to be looked at again, I think this is the opportunity to do it," said Gehrman. He said there is some leeway with the law but not when it comes to violent crimes involving children. "If you're convicted of malicious punishment of a child, that's not like you got into a situation randomly that you couldn't get out of. That's a pattern," said Gehrman. According to the Look-back Law, after parental rights have been terminated, that person is disqualified from becoming a foster parent for 15 years. However, after that time has passed, they are eligible again. "It's very difficult to have your parental rights terminated," said Gehrman. "It takes years and it's not just one mistake. There's a pattern there in almost in every case, statistically, so I think that's something that should disqualify somebody." State Rep. Joe Mullery (DFL-St. Paul) supports the law. "I don't think that a person should be excluded for their entire life for something that was committed a long time ago but I think they should be excluded for a certain period of time and then you watch them after that," he said. However, he adds it only works if case workers and investigators are making the proper follow-ups. "I don't think we have a very good quality assurance program for foster care in the state," said Gehrman. "We kind of don't know about how many quality foster homes we have and ones that aren't so good." Gehrman adds to create quality assurance in foster care there needs to be better training for foster parents. In Hennepin County, foster care training dollars have been steadily dropping in recent years. It fell from almost \$13,000 in 2012 to \$8,000 spent on foster care training in 2015. DHS declined an interview on the Look-back Law but they did send a statement that you can read [here](#). Source: <http://www.wday.com/news/4029893-look-back-law-allows-foster-care-licenses-criminals-abusers>

Peruvian Man Details Sexual Abuse He Faced at 'Boot Camp' for Troubled Catholic Kids By Simeon Tegel May 13, 2016 | 7:20 am The sexual abuse began one evening in a park, says Alvaro Urbina. He was 14. A misfit at his expensive English-style school in Lima, Peru, Urbina's recently separated mother was desperate to provide him with some direction. She enrolled him in Sodalicio de Vida Cristiana. Sodalicio was a kind of Catholic boot camp, run by non-clerical volunteers, dedicated to transforming teenagers from the Peruvian elite into prominent priests or devout and influential lay members of society. "We clicked a little," says Urbina of the mentor twice his age who had been tasked with befriending the troubled adolescent. "He was quite arrogant, but funny and very assertive, and a bit of a homophobe." One evening, after taking out Urbina and several other boys for ice cream, the pair wound up alone in the park. Urbina recalls his mentor talking about how they needed to trust each other and telling him to prove his trust by pulling down his pants and underwear. "He just looked at my penis for a while, in a kind of scientific way," the now 34-year-old remembers. "After a bit, he told me to get dressed and he took me home." It was the start of a two year physical relationship, involving oral sex and intercourse, during which Urbina and his abuser met about twice a week. Two decades later, Urbina has become the first of the dozens of alleged victims of sexual abuse that took place within Sodalicio to allow his name to be used publicly. He decided to do this as the scandal around the group, which is officially affiliated to the Vatican and governed by its canonical law, has grown into a litmus test of Pope Francis' ability to fulfill his promises of "zero tolerance" towards sexual abusers and those who cover up for them. When he was 14, Alvaro Urbina was sexually abused at Sodalicio de Vida Cristiana catholic boot camp in Peru. (Photo courtesy of Alvaro Urbina/VICE News) The Sodalicio case also has had a particular impact in Peru because the group maintains close ties with the country's elite. It also directly implicated Luis Fernando Figari, the order's founder and a prominent Peruvian. Last month, Sodalicio acknowledged that Figari — who is currently "in retreat" in Rome, apparently reluctant to return to Peru — had committed abuses and moved to expel him from the group. In an online video, Sodalicio's current head, Alessandro Moroni, tacitly admitted that the abuse involving Figari was the tip of the iceberg by accepting that victims had "received no satisfactory reply" from Sodalicio for years. "I apologize to the victims of any kind of abuse or mistreatment that they may have experienced from any member of our organization," he said. But this does not satisfy some. "It's been three years since Francis became pope, with his super-tough discourse on child sex abuse, but we have yet to see real action," said Peruvian journalist Pao Ugaz, who co-authored a book on the abuses in Sodalicio that propelled the scandal onto the front pages in Peru. "There's no transparency and no real response to the victims, or even empathy, never mind justice." He just looked at my penis for a while, in a kind of scientific way' The Sodalicio case echoes the scandal

around Marcial Maciel, the founder of the Mexican order Legionaries of Christ, and the decades-long systematic cover-up of his abuse of many children, including his own biological offspring. A confidante of Pope John Paul II, Maciel was treated like a living saint by the order that was close to some of the richest and most powerful people in Mexico. Although he was eventually ordered to retire to a life of prayer, Maciel was never declared guilty by the Holy See, let alone forced to face a criminal investigation in ordinary courts. Pope Francis, meanwhile, granted an indulgence, which is basically a pardon, to the order earlier this year. [Related: Priest Accused of Sexual Abuse in Mexico Vanishes](#) Sodalicio was founded in 1971 and is formally affiliated with the Vatican. Within Sodalicio, word of the horror first began dripping out in 2010, including through a Spanish-language blog, las Lineas Torcidas, dedicated to pedophilia within the Church. But it was the book — Half Monks, Half Soldiers — written by Ugaz and Pedro Salinas and published last year, that catapulted it out of the shadows. The book featured anonymous testimony about sex abuse within the organization from numerous victims of Figari and other adult members. It is only thought to have stopped in the 1990s. Salinas and Ugaz say this is because other Sodalicio members discovered it — and then promptly covered it up. It is only thanks to lobbying by the pair of journalists that Peruvian prosecutors finally began looking into the allegations last fall. The attorney general's office told VICE News that an investigation is active but the details remain confidential as it is still in a preliminary phase. But with a 20-year-statute of limitations for these sexual crimes, time is fast running out to bring the abusers to justice. 'This guy was supposed to be my spiritual guide. He was supposed to help me to grow up, to become a better person and deal with my personal problems. He wasn't supposed to fuck me' Meanwhile, last month's apology by Sodalicio head Moroni comes after months more of stalling. Sodalicio only acknowledged last October, while under considerable media pressure, that child sexual abuse allegations against its founder and other senior figures in the hierarchy were "plausible". The other figures included Figari's number two, Germán Doig, who died in 2001 and who Sodalicio had once proposed for sainthood. [Related: 'Almost Sociopathic Lack of Care': Vatican Child Protection Commissioner Calls on Church Finance Chief to Resign](#) In an emailed response to questions from VICE News earlier this year, Sodalicio's spokesman Fernando Vidal said that police were not contacted back in the 1990s, when the allegations first cropped up within the organization, because Doig was the person in charge of handling the matter. Vidal added that the group was "firmly committed to clarifying the facts", cooperating with investigators, providing compensation to the victims, and ensuring the crimes are never repeated. Of Urbina's alleged abuser, Vidal added: "We have had no ties to or contact with him since he left the institution many years ago." The response to the breaking scandal from Lima's archbishop, Juan Luis Cipriani — the ultra-conservative Archbishop of Lima who is one of just two cardinals from the famously strict Opus Dei order — has been similarly ambiguous. He ignored it entirely until commenting became unavoidable last October and he called for Figari's suspension from Sodalicio pending investigation. But Cipriani also gave a homily warning that he would not accept criticism from "false moralists who want to mistreat the Church." [Related: Pope Goes Off-Script on Sex Abuse, Says 'All Responsible Will Be Held Accountable'](#) More recently, Cipriani's office insisted that it was the Vatican, not the Lima archdiocese, which was responsible for getting to the bottom of the problems within Sodalicio. The Vatican did open an investigation in April 2015, yet the cleric appointed to head it admits he didn't get very far. 'We have had no ties to or contact with him since he left the institution many years ago' In an interview in his Lima office, Pablo Urcey, the Bishop of Chota, in the northern Peruvian Andes, said that he had met nearly 100 current and former members of Sodalicio, and had prepared a brief 30-page report for the Vatican. But although many witnesses alleged psychological abuse, the only evidence of pedophilia Urcey said he had uncovered was through two separate written statements from people he never met. He also said that he had not read Half Monks, Half Soldiers because he had been "too busy" with his other duties, including as General Secretary of Peru's Episcopal Conference. "We have been focused on how he [Figari] exercised his authority as founder," Urcey, said that this could have helped cover up "deviation" within the group. "The testimony alleges that he was authoritarian, despotic, bossy, and elitist." Urcey added that he believed Sodalicio wanted to get to the bottom of the scandal and saw his role as one of helping them do this. [Related: Sex Abuse Survivors Aren't Happy With the Pope's Comments on Bishops' 'Courage'](#) Urbina, who now runs his own bicycle business in Cologne, Germany, says his priority is to stop other children and adolescents suffering similar trauma. Though he is keen to stress he is proud of the man that he has become, he also recalls how he was expelled from school while he was being abused, and adds that the experience affects his sex life and requires him to still see a psychiatrist. "It took me a long time to realize how this has affected me, and shaped me psychologically," he says. "This guy was supposed to be my spiritual guide. He was supposed to help me to grow up, to become a better person and deal with my personal problems. He wasn't supposed to fuck me." VICE News was unable to contact his alleged abuser, who now lives in Illinois, despite repeated calls to his landline. "I've also felt guilty, not because of what happened but because I didn't speak out earlier," Urbina adds. "That is why I am talking now. If I can stop just one more kid being abused, I will be happy." [Related: French Troops Face Another Sexual Abuse Allegation in the Central African Republic](#) Follow Simeon Tegel on Twitter: [@SimeonTegel](#) Source: <https://news.vice.com/article/peruvian-man-details-sexual-abuse-he-faced-at-boot-camp-for-troubled-catholic-kids>

Damian Lewis: Boarding school is a 'very violent' experience that 'defines you emotionally for life' Damian Lewis: Boarding school is a 'very violent' experience that 'defines you emotionally for life' Damian Lewis, the Homeland actor, was sent to boarding school aged eight Credit: JAB Photography/REX/Shutterstock [Danny Boyle](#) 15 May 2016 • 4:03pm Damian Lewis, the Old Etonian actor, has told how he found being sent to boarding school a "very violent experience". The star said children who are sent away from home to be educated are left with an experience that "defines you emotionally for the rest of your life". The son of a City broker, he was born in the wealthy London suburb of St John's Wood and was sent to boarding school Eton, whose former pupils include David Cameron and Boris Johnson. Lewis, who has two children with fellow actor Helen McCrory, said he would not send his own children to boarding school at such a young age. There's a sudden lack of intimacy with a parent, and your ability to get through that defines you emotionally for the rest of your life. Damian Lewis Recalling his own experience, he said: "I went at eight and I think that's very hard. You go through something which, at that age, defines you and your ability to cope. "There's a sudden lack of intimacy with a parent, and your ability to get through that defines you emotionally for the rest of your life. It's a very violent experience in those first few weeks. It's just, boom." Lewis also told of his "surprise" when former pupils of a state school tried to stop him attending its 50th anniversary celebrations. The Homeland star was invited to switch on the laser display to mark Acland Burghley's golden anniversary earlier this year. But a former pupil of the mixed comprehensive in Tufnell Park, north London, tried to block the actor's appearance claiming his privileged background made him unsuitable. The petition - which only attracted 124 signatures - said the school had a "long and proud tradition in comprehensive education" whereas Eton "represents the reproduction of privilege and inequality in the UK". On Lewis, it added: "We have nothing against him as an actor or local resident, but he is a wholly inappropriate choice for this celebration of a wonderful local comprehensive school." Damian Lewis attended Eton, where former pupils include David Cameron and Boris Johnson Credit: Ian West/PA Lewis told the [Sunday Times Magazine](#) the protest "missed the point". He said: "I was surprised there was so much feeling, but in the end, the petition was very small. "I think she missed the point of the occasion. It was a celebration of community. Acland Burghley is a performing arts school with a special status for that, and I am a well-known local actor. "On the day, I was surrounded by friends who had been in my kitchen endlessly over the past 10 years, going on play dates with my kids, who were at the school. So it was a misjudgment." Source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/15/damian-lewis-boarding-school-is-a-very-violent-experience-that-d/>

State: Girl, 14, raped by staffer at mental health facility for troubled teens Investigators say staffer at Nexus Glen Lake assaulted emotionally troubled girl. By [Paul Walsh](#) Star Tribune May 18, 2016 — 9:58am Text size [share](#) [58 tweet](#) [email](#) Print more Share on [Share on LinkedIn](#) [Share on Google+](#) [Share on Pinterest](#) Copy shortlink: Purchase: [Order Reprint](#) A staff member at a state-licensed treatment facility for troubled teenage girls in Minnetonka flirted with a 14-year-old resident before raping the emotionally vulnerable teen, investigators revealed Tuesday. The attack occurred on Dec. 22 at Nexus Glen Lake, a locked mental health facility located about a mile west of Interstate 494 and County Road 62, according to the state Department of Human Services (DHS). The molestation and anal rape occurred in the resident's bedroom, the DHS's maltreatment report cited the teen as reporting to three Glen Lake employees. The teen has a history of being sexually, physically and emotionally abused, and has suffered from depression and anxiety, the state investigators noted in their report. The staffer denied the allegations and said the teen would make "playful" sexual comments to him, the DHS report read. A sexual assault exam and the DNA evidence collected neither confirmed nor discounted that the assault occurred, the DHS report read. The staffer, who identity was not disclosed by DHS, no longer works at the facility. The Hennepin County Sheriff's Office has responsibility for any criminal investigation. A spokesman for the county attorney said he sees no evidence that a case was submitted by the Sheriff's Office for consideration of charges. A Sheriff's Office spokesman had no information to share about the case, including whether there was an investigation. While investigators placed the blame for the assault solely on the staff member, the DHS found in a follow-up investigation that Glen Lake committed background check violations involving other two employees and fined the facility \$400. According to the DHS's findings, the staffer had a habit of saying he "liked" the teen and would slap her buttocks. On the day of the assault, the two spent much of the staffer's

shift "interacting with one another," according to the DHS review of the facility's surveillance video. The two were spotted together in a supply room with the lights off and were smiling after exiting. Later in the kitchen, the girl pressed her body against the staff member, without him appearing to object. The rape occurred less than an hour later. Although the staff member "denied the allegations, given the consistent information provided by the [resident] and that video surveillance corroborated parts of [her] statement, it was determined that the [resident's] statements were more credible" than the staffer's," the DHS report's conclusion read. "Therefore, there was a preponderance ... of evidence that the [staff member] has sexual contact with [the teen] at the facility." The 12-bed Glen Lake facility serves girls ages 14 to 19 with severe emotional and behavioral problems and is operated by the Plymouth-based nonprofit Nexus, one of the largest child residential treatment and foster care providers in the state. The nonprofit has similar facilities in Minnesota in Onamia and Austin, two in Illinois and one in Baltimore. Nexus also provides foster care, adoption and in-home counseling services in Minnesota for children from birth to age 18. In a statement read to the Star Tribune by one of its executives, Nexus said that as soon as staff became aware of the incident, "the employee was removed from the area immediately and had no further contact with the alleged victim. The employee was terminated." The girl was taken to a hospital emergency room, where staff there contacted law enforcement, the statement continued. The state investigation found that a background check was done on this employee and that it "found no fault with Nexus" in connection with this incident, according to the statement. DHS records online show one other investigation of Glen Lake by the agency since 2010. That involved two allegations of physical abuse. Both claims were unsubstantiated. Source: <http://www.startribune.com/state-girl-14-raped-by-staffer-at-mental-health-facility-for-troubled-teens/379857011/>

Oklahoma DHS pays settlement over murder of girl in foster care | News OK Oklahoma DHS pays settlement over murder of girl in foster care by [Nolan Clay](#) Published: May 17, 2016 Updated: 2 days ago 157 shares [facebooktwittergoogle plusemail](#) Alysa Horney The Oklahoma Department of Human Services has settled a wrongful-death lawsuit filed against it and a dozen child welfare workers after a **2-year-old girl was murdered by her foster mom**. DHS settled the federal lawsuit for \$435,000. The victim, Alysa Horney, bled to death on Dec. 8, 2013, after her liver was torn by a blow to her body. Her foster mother, Delila Ann Pacheco, 49, was convicted at a 2014 trial of first-degree murder. Advertisement: Replay Ad Ads by ZINC Prosecutors alleged the foster mother struck Alysa in the main bedroom of the rural trailer home outside Tahlequah because the girl wouldn't go to sleep. Alysa and an older sister had been in the foster home less than four months. Alysa spent nights on a pallet on the floor in the main bedroom. DHS admitted mistakes were made. The supervisor who approved Pacheco's application to be a kinship foster parent was demoted. Another supervisor involved in the girl's case resigned rather than face termination. Alysa's primary care worker retired. The demoted supervisor failed to have an adequate background check done on Pacheco and failed to take action after Alysa suffered a broken leg and a bruised face at the foster home, a DHS internal investigation found. He was specifically criticized for never even getting a 2011 arrest report about Pacheco or a 2012 request by a relative for a protective order against her. Pacheco had been arrested in 2011 on an aggravated assault and battery complaint. A Cherokee County sheriff's deputy reported she admitted grabbing a large kitchen knife during a fight with her husband. The deputy reported she also admitted to using marijuana and methamphetamine in the past. The supervisor said he did not review the arrest report because Pacheco was never charged and obtaining it would have "wasted another day," disciplinary records show. The girl's estate sued DHS and the child welfare workers in January 2015, at first in Cherokee County District Court. The case was later moved to the federal courthouse in Muskogee. A federal judge there approved the settlement in April. "This entire ordeal has been heartbreaking for everyone involved," DHS Director Ed Lake said Tuesday. "Though it was agreed by the parties to not pursue this case any further, nothing can make up for the underlying tragedy that cost this precious little girl her life. "The lessons learned ... was that we needed to ensure a consistent process in evaluating background checks before approving foster families and we need to more thoroughly assess the safety of children when visiting them in foster homes," Lake said. "More training has been provided to workers and supervisors on assessing the safety of children in foster homes and evaluating the needs of foster families to ensure they can adequately care for the children in their homes." The first \$275,000 of the settlement was paid May 6 from funds in the state's self-insurance program, records show. The rest will be paid from DHS funds next fiscal year. Alysa and her sister, Halia Horney, had been taken into emergency custody by DHS "against the wishes of their mother and father" on Jan. 3, 2013, according to the lawsuit. The mother, Holly N. Adair, 29, of Welling, and father, Donald Horney, 29, of Tahlequah, divorced in April after eight years of marriage. They are splitting the settlement, after attorneys' fees and the lawsuit costs are paid, records show. Also, the estate's personal representative is getting \$5,000 for his services. A Cherokee County judge approved that distribution Friday. Halia, now 6, was removed from the Pacheco foster home on Dec. 8, 2013, and is now living again with her mother, records show. Pacheco is serving a life sentence and will not be eligible for parole until 2052. Her conviction and sentence were upheld on appeal in April. Source: <http://newsok.com/article/5498786>

I. group home deficiencies detailed at Senate hearing Comment By [G. Wayne Miller](#) Journal Staff Writer providencejournal.com By [G. Wayne Miller](#) Journal Staff Writer Posted May. 17, 2016 at 6:41 PM Updated May 17, 2016 at 6:41 PM | [Purchase this Photo](#) Elizabeth Roberts, secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services; Sen. Josh Miller; and BHDDH head Maria Montanaro. The Providence Journal files By [G. Wayne Miller](#) Journal Staff Writer Posted May. 17, 2016 at 6:41 PM Zoom | [Purchase this Photo](#) Elizabeth Roberts, secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services; Sen. Josh Miller; and BHDDH head Maria Montanaro. The Providence Journal files By [G. Wayne Miller](#) Journal Staff Writer Posted May. 17, 2016 at 6:41 PM PROVIDENCE, R.I. — A recently completed survey of 30 state-run and private groups homes for intellectually and developmentally disabled people disclosed a multitude of deficiencies ranging from comparatively minor to significant, though not apparently life-threatening, such as medication errors and overdue physical exams. "Our survey and this experience has shown we need to make reforms to improve accountability and transparency in all of our group homes," Elizabeth Roberts, secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, told a Senate Committee on Health and Human Services hearing on Tuesday. The so-called Validation Survey — conducted in March and April by staff from the state Department of Health and the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH) — was prompted by the February death of Barbara A. Annis, 70, a developmentally disabled resident of the state-run College Park home, since closed. Staff abuse is alleged. Roberts told the committee, chaired by Sen. Josh Miller, D-Cranston, that while more than 100 deficiencies were found in the 30 homes — located in communities from Woonsocket to Charlestown — none were of the level of those that have been uncovered at College Park. Separate investigations of the alleged abuse of Annis continue. Among the Validation Survey's findings: — Ten of the 30 homes had residents without current Individual Service Plans. Another 15 homes had residents whose plans were "not fully executed." — Ten "failed to have medication orders currently filled." — Fourteen of the homes' staff said there were "staffing issues" at their place of employment. — Nine of the homes "failed to obtain annual physical exams" while 16 failed to see that residents had annual eye exams. Eight "failed to obtain annual dental exams." The homes have 30 days to submit plans of correction after receiving notice of deficiencies. Roberts said that larger system issues, in part the result of years of budget cuts, were confirmed in the findings. "I am committed to working with you and working with Rhode Island's very active, engaged and thoughtful community of providers, advocates and families to develop sound reforms which improve quality, accountability and safety for every resident in our system," she said. Toward that end, Roberts said she supports legislation to create a state ombudsman for developmentally disabled people, a similar position to the state Child Advocate and Mental Health Advocate. "This office would also allow for greater transparency in our group homes," Roberts said. "Public reporting on investigations is extremely limited by current statute and regulation," she said. "Current statutes restrict BHDDH from releasing information most other — if not all other — licensing bodies would be obligated to release." — A recently completed survey of 30 state-run and private groups homes for intellectually and developmentally disabled people disclosed a multitude of deficiencies ranging from comparatively minor to significant, though not apparently life-threatening, such as medication errors and overdue physical exams. "Our survey and this experience has shown we need to make reforms to improve accountability and transparency in all of our group homes," Elizabeth Roberts, secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, told a Senate Committee on Health and Human Services hearing on Tuesday. The so-called Validation Survey — conducted in March and April by staff from the state Department of Health and the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH) — was prompted by the February death of Barbara A. 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9 Deaths, No Charges Raise Questions About Oversight Agency By Michael Vartanen and Frank Eltman, associated press MINEOLA, N.Y. — May 19, 2016, 11:58 AM ET 0 Shares [Email](#) Star 0 Shares [Email](#) Little more than names and incident numbers appear on a Long Island medical examiner's list of nine developmentally disabled people who died in state care since 2013, but this much is known for sure: All the deaths came under a cloud of abuse or neglect allegations, and none resulted in criminal charges. The one-page list titled "Abuse and Neglect with Death Involved" surfaced as part of a Freedom of Information request by an advocate who called it only the latest example of how New York's oversight agency for the disabled in state care, the Justice Center, is not doing enough to pursue suspicious cases. Questioned by The Associated Press about the handling of the deaths, all in Long Island's Suffolk County, state and local officials responded with conflicting accounts. The Justice Center says it told county prosecutors about the cases, in accordance with state law, but prosecutors say that's not true. The medical examiner's office says it referred two cases to police for further investigation. After police denied for days that they got them, they acknowledged this week that they did. "It screams for a federal civil rights and criminal investigation," said Michael Carey, who became an advocate for the disabled after his son was suffocated in 2007 by a state group home worker who was later convicted of manslaughter. Carey has become a frequent critic of the Justice Center, established in 2013 to protect the 1 million disabled, addicted and mentally ill in state care. Its mandate is to probe all allegations of wrongdoing by caretakers, with the power to refer cases to local prosecutors or bring criminal charges itself. But an AP analysis last year found it rarely uses that power, with just 2.5 percent of the more than 7,000 substantiated cases of abuse or neglect resulting in criminal charges. Records released earlier this year showed the Justice Center declined to investigate most of the nearly 1,400 deaths of developmentally disabled people in state care in the past two years, leaving the majority of the investigations to the caretaker facilities themselves. Seeking to find out exactly how often the Justice Center refers deaths in state care to local officials for criminal investigation, Carey filed a sweeping public records request of every county prosecutor and medical examiner in New York. Suffolk County was the only one of 62 counties to offer up — by name — the suspicious deaths it received from the Justice Center over the past three years. Three other counties gave just numbers, a total of 15 such deaths. The list from Suffolk's medical examiner's office contained no details, and the Justice Center refused to elaborate about individual cases, citing privacy laws that entitle only relatives to health records and abuse reports. One of those families, located by the AP, plans to use those documents to sue the group home where a developmentally disabled woman lived before dying last year. Carolyn Jirak, 62, spent nearly her entire life in state-funded care, classified as nonverbal with the intellectual capacity of a young child. Her sister Catherine Jirak Monetti contends Jirak's death followed weeks of mistreatment, including an unexplained broken kneecap that was untreated for days, an ankle wound that became severely infected with cellulitis, and prescribed antibiotics that weren't given for three days. Jirak was eventually taken to a hospital with pneumonia and fever, and died 10 days later of respiratory failure. A report the family received on an internal investigation by group home operator, Independent Group Home Living Inc., found there was no abuse. But Monetti is not convinced. "She did not die of natural causes," the sister said. Another death on the list, that of 65-year-old Joseph Schuele, raised red flags with his former caregiver, Danielle Pouletos. She said she was told by a former colleague that Schuele died in November in the hospital from sepsis, a severe systemic response that followed a urinary tract infection at his Maryhaven Center of Hope group home. Pouletos, a former training coordinator for Maryhaven who helped care for Schuele from 2006 through 2013, said sepsis developing from a urinary tract infection could be a sign of negligence and may have been prevented "if he was in a different housing situation with medical oversight." Independent Group Home Living and Maryhaven Center did not respond to requests for comment about Jirak's and Schuele's cases. While the Justice Center declined to disclose its inquiries into the nine deaths case by case, it did say, in general, it has confirmed four administrative findings of neglect. Spokeswoman Diane Ward said center investigators ruled out eight other neglect allegations while confirming eight instances of caretakers or supervisors obstructing incident reporting. Three deaths remain under investigation. Under state law, the Justice Center must immediately notify the local district attorney and medical examiner of deaths involving allegations of abuse and neglect, even while the center conducts its own investigation. Whether that was followed in the Long Island deaths is in dispute. Ward told the AP that the center notified the local prosecutor and medical examiner in six cases the day it received each death report, another the next day, and another eight days later. In the ninth case, the medical examiner was notified by a hospital where the person died. As proof, the Justice Center provided the AP with notification documents, with confidential information blacked out, that were sent to the email addresses the center had for the prosecutor and medical examiner. Robert Clifford, a spokesman for the prosecutor's office, said it "has not received referrals from the Justice Center, the county medical examiner or any county or state agency regarding the deaths of these individuals." The Suffolk County medical examiner's office said that, out of the nine cases, it received seven notifications, was able to conduct four autopsies that resulted in two possible homicide cases referred to the Suffolk County Police Department. After the department initially said it never saw the two cases, Suffolk police Lt. Kevin Beyrer came back several days later to say it did, concluding one was a suicide. The other case was initially rejected for a homicide probe, he said, but now investigators are taking another look. Source: <http://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/deaths-charges-raise-questions-oversight-agency-39226962>

Caregiver accused of sexually abusing girl was on hiring exclusion list The operator of a child treatment center failed to notice that the 25-year-old was barred from working there. By [Chris Serres](#) and [Brandon Stahl](#) Star Tribune May 19, 2016 — 10:20pm Text size [share33](#) [tweet](#) [email](#) Print more Share on: [Share on LinkedIn](#) [Share on Google+](#) [Share on Pinterest](#) Copy shortlink: Purchase: [Order Reprint](#) A 25-year-old male caregiver accused of sexually abusing a teenage girl at a Minnetonka child treatment center in December should have been barred from working there in the first place, records show. The nonprofit operator of the center, Plymouth-based Nexus, also runs other child treatment facilities in the state where sexual misconduct occurred, state investigators have found. In three other instances since 2012, Nexus treatment centers in Austin and Onamia have been cited for allowing vulnerable children to engage in inappropriate sexual contact. Advertisement: Replay Ad Ads by ZINC In addition, the company did not always comply with the state's requirements for conducting background checks of its staff, records show. The male caregiver at the center of the alleged abuse at the 12-bed facility in Minnetonka, known as Nexus Glen Lake, had previously been placed on a statewide "exclusion list" in July. He was sanctioned for improper billing of the state's publicly funded health insurance program, known as Medical Assistance, state officials said. Under state rules, this should have barred him from working at the children's treatment center. Yet he was hired there four months after he was placed on the list, according to state records and Nexus. Patient advocates say the case highlights a troubling gap in the state's system for checking the backgrounds of tens of thousands of workers who care for troubled children and other vulnerable populations. Agencies have no automatic way of knowing when a caregiver has been placed on a state exclusion list, and often do not check. An ambitious effort to close this gap, through a new electronic background check system, has stretched on for nearly two years and will not be fully complete until late fall. "The tragedy here is this horrific assault was entirely preventable," said Roberta Opheim, state ombudsman for mental health and developmental disabilities. A spokesman for Nexus, which treats about 400 boys and girls at its residential treatment centers in Minnesota and Illinois, said it has fired the caregiver, but did not know he was on a state list of excluded providers. The issue did not come up on the company's background check of the staff person, said Jack Ewing, vice president at Nexus. The man was hired in November as a youth care professional, and only began unsupervised work with clients after Nexus received a preliminary authorization from the Department of Human Services (DHS), he said. "Nexus' priority is always to protect the safety of the clients in our care," Ewing said. "However, because of the nature of our work, and the histories and trauma of the clients we treat, these types of incidents sometimes do infrequently occur despite all best efforts." According to a DHS report, a girl with a history of being sexually, physically and emotionally abused reported being

raped the night of Dec. 22, 2015. The girl said that a male staff person entered her room, exposed his genitals, fondled her breasts, and then "anally penetrated" her. Staff later found the girl in her room with the lights off and a blanket around her waist, "crying, stuttering and shaking," the report said. Before that night, staff reported other incidents in which the man had touched the girl inappropriately, including one incident in which he slapped her buttocks; even so, the staff did nothing to discourage this behavior, the report said. The DHS determined that there was a "preponderance of evidence" that the male staff person at the Minnetonka facility had sexual contact with the girl. Despite the state's findings, the alleged assailant was never arrested, and the Hennepin County attorney's office decided not to bring charges against the man. A sexual assault exam and the DNA evidence collected neither confirmed nor discounted that the assault occurred, the state report said. Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman said he was "horrified" by the girl's allegations, adding that "folks are not supposed to be treated that way." Yet, Freeman said his office found "no physical evidence whatsoever" that would corroborate the girl's account. "It is a very rare case that we take when the only witness to the alleged bad conduct was the victim," he said. "It's impossible to prove these cases otherwise." Reached Thursday at his home in Coon Rapids, the former caregiver denied the sexual abuse allegations and said he did not know he was on a list of excluded providers. "I'm innocent," he said. "I didn't do what they say I did, and I will be appealing through the proper channels." The Star Tribune is not identifying the man because he has not been charged. Jeanne Ronayne, executive director of the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault, called the county attorney's decision "regrettable," arguing that a lack of physical evidence should not rule out criminal charges. In this case, she noted, state investigators had eyewitness accounts of the man touching the girl inappropriately before the alleged assault. "I certainly see quite a bit of evidence that could be used in a criminal case — more evidence than in other cases of sexual assault that are successfully prosecuted," Ronayne said. This marks the latest in a string of maltreatment cases at Nexus treatment centers in Minnesota. In March, the Nexus center in Onamia, known as the Mille Lacs Academy, was cited for neglect after two young residents, ages 15 and 17, admitted to engaging in sexual contact; one of the teens filled a bed with stuffed animals, then covered it with a blanket to avoid being detected. In other incidents, children at Nexus facilities were found inappropriately touching each other's genitals — both during a van trip and while in a storage shed during an outside activity, regulators found. Nexus, which reported \$44 million in revenue in 2014, was also cited last month for failing to submit background study requests to DHS for two staff persons, resulting in a \$400 fine. Staff researcher John Wareham contributed to this report. Source: <http://www.startribune.com/caregiver-accused-of-sexually-abusing-girl-was-on-exclusion-list/380186391/>

Ex-group home operator accused of rape now faces perjury charge 1:43 p.m. SHARE By [Crocker Stephenson](#) of the Journal Sentinel 1:43 p.m. 0 A man police say raped a 15-year-old boy at gunpoint while running a state-sanctioned group home for boys is now facing additional charges of concocting a fake alibi. Jermarro Dantzler, 37, of Brown Deer, was [charged in October](#) with first-degree sexual assault using a threat of force or violence. A final hearing in that case is scheduled for Monday. He now also is charged with one felony count of perjury and one felony count of bail jumping. A preliminary hearing on those charges is scheduled for Tuesday. According to court documents, the boy told police the assault occurred in Brown Deer on July 19. He said he was walking home when Dantzler, armed with a handgun, attacked him in the 6700 block of W. Brown Deer Road. Dantzler, the boy said, forced him behind some bushes and then raped him. When it was over, the boy said, Dantzler handed him two \$20 bills. About a month later, police said, Dantzler tried to contact the boy on Facebook. Police matched Dantzler to DNA evidence collected by a hospital on the night of the assault. In March, according to a complaint filed in the perjury case, Dantzler's attorney, Syovata Kanini Edari, contacted prosecutors with an alibi. According to the complaint, an associate of Dantzler lied to a defense investigator, saying that, at the time of the assault, he and Dantzler were picking up a pizza, which they then brought to Dantzler's house. The friend later admitted that pizza story was not true. In addition, the friend said that he and Dantzler met with two prostitutes who became angry when Dantzler refused to pay them. "The purpose of this story," the complaint says, "would be to explain how (Dantzler's) sperm got on the (victim)." Another associate of Dantzler, the complaint says, misled the defense investigator, saying that he had heard the victim make various plans to obtain Dantzler's DNA and use it to support a false allegation of sexual assault. Both men said Dantzler orchestrated the false reports. If convicted of the assault, Dantzler faces up to 85 years in prison. If convicted of the new charges, he faces an additional 12 years in prison. A spokesman for the Department of Children and Families said Dantzler was licensed to run a group home for boys in 1999. Four days before the alleged sexual assault, a 15-year-old resident of the home committed suicide by hanging himself from a backyard tree. The state revoked Dantzler's license after he was arrested by Brown Deer police. Source: <http://www.jsonline.com/news/crime/ex-group-home-operator-accused-of-rape-now-faces-perjury-charge-b99729267z1-380289831.html>

Uncovering the Stark Disparities Behind School Money Saturday, 21 May 2016 00:00 By [Annie Waldman](#), [ProPublica](#) | Audio Segment font size [decrease](#) font size [increase](#) font size [Print](#) Media Why do many school districts fail to meet the needs of their students? One commonly cited response is our country's disparate school funding system: because most districts rely heavily on local property tax for funding, schools in poor districts are often left with fewer resources than schools in wealthier areas. Even though school funding issues play out on a local level, in recent decades, it's risen to the forefront of national issues. This past year, for the tenth year in a row, a national Gallup poll found that Americans view lack of financial support as the [largest problem facing America's schools](#). But can more money really fix America's struggling, poor schools? That is exactly what NPR's Cory Turner and a team of over 20 NPR member-station reporters wanted to find out. After six months of investigating, Turner and his team published [a series of stories digging into school funding disparities](#) from Chicago to Sumter County, Alabama. ProPublica education reporter Annie Waldman spoke with Turner to learn more about their investigation. A few highlights from our conversation: Annie Waldman: Nearly every state in the country has been faced with a school funding lawsuit. Cory Turner: Some 45 states have had school funding lawsuits. It also became clear to me very quickly that these lawsuits are a symptom of a much broader ailment, which is how we pay for our schools, and why it is that school money is so inequitable in so many different places, which, again, as we explained in the reporting, not every time, but quite often, boils down to disparities in local property tax revenue. The story of America's school funding system starts with an unlikely character: Satan. Well, sort of. It really goes to the back to the Old Deluder Satan Law when the Massachusetts Bay Colonists basically said, "Look. If we want every child to be able to read the Bible, then every child needs to be able to read. It is in the best interest of the Colony that every child be taught to read, and as such, any village of 50 or more people needs to pay up for a teacher." I mean, you can see it in the law too. They're not just talking to parents. They're talking to everybody. It was captured in law. It was codified in law, this idea that educating the Colony's children, or you can extrapolate that to today, the nation's children, is in the best interests of all citizens. That's what so interested me with the Old Deluder Satan Law, as it's known now. School funding inequities often stem from antiquated segregationist policies. The challenge is when so much of that funding depends on local affluence and local school district lines. It's informed in a big way by old segregationist housing policy. You know? I mean, this is the nation we live in, and the fact is, there are an awful lot of school districts that are low wealth, low income districts, and they just don't have the same capacity to fundraise as other more affluent districts. That's just a fact. Some states have been very progressive about reckoning with that and using state dollars collected at the state level to help offset some, if not much, of that imbalance. But lots of other states just haven't done much, if anything, about it. Working with a team of over 20 NPR member stations is no easy task. We created a gigantic spreadsheet that has every reporter, every reporter's phone number, email and a quick logline of the story. I mean, I spent hours with this spreadsheet. This is kind of insane, I actually at one point cut them all out into these little tiny strips of paper and I just taped them on the wall and started rearranging them or clustering them to figure out, this is very early in the process, just to see, "Do I have too much overlap? Do I have too much, too many stories that are basically rich school/poor school?" Source: <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/36094-uncovering-the-stark-disparities-behind-school-money>

Child care worker busted for disabled teen assault at troubled agency that placed kids with accused perv Worker at troubled agency busted for assault of disabled teen BY [Ben Kochman](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Updated: Saturday, May 21, 2016, 1:50 AM [facebook](#) 152 [Tweet](#) [email](#) Reneisha Goodridge arrested for endangering the welfare of an incompetent/physically disabled person. (Nassau County Police Department) BY [Ben Kochman](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Updated: Saturday, May 21, 2016, 1:50 AM A child care worker at the same troubled agency that placed foster care children with an alleged sexual predator was busted Friday for assaulting a disabled teenager, police said. Reneisha Goodridge, 27, who works at SCO Family of Services in Huntington, L.I., is accused of dragging the 17-year-old across the floor after arguing with her at her Downing Ave. office Sunday night, Nassau County cops said. The victim was treated at the scene for bruises to her eye, scratches on her neck and a swollen lip, police said. Goodridge surrendered Friday and was charged with endangering the welfare of an incompetent/physically disabled person. [L.I. man charged with molesting boys says he's innocent](#) Cesar Gonzales-Mugaburu pictured in this undated booking photo. (HANDOUT/REUTERS) Earlier this year, the city cut placement ties with SCO Family of Services after it came to light that the agency kept sending kids to accused perv Cesar Gonzales-Mugaburu despite allegations against him. Authorities have charged Gonzales-

Mugaburu, 59, with sexually abusing seven children and a pet dog in his Suffolk County home. Prosecutors suspect he abused several more of the 140 kids he took in over the last 20 years. Source: <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/crime/worker-troubled-agency-busted-assault-disabled-teen-article-1.2644669>

Woman Dragged Disabled Teen Across Floor at Nassau Group Home: Police The 27-year-old was employed as a child care worker when the incident occurred, police say. Glen Cove, NY By [Ryan Bonner \(Patch National Staff\)](#) - May 20, 2016 10:22 pm ET [Share](#)[Tweet](#)[Google Plus](#)[Reddit](#)[Email](#)[Comments](#)[0](#)
SEA CLIFF, NY - A 27-year-old Huntington woman is accused of grabbing a disabled teen and dragging her across the floor at a group home in Nassau County. According to detectives, Reneisha Goodridge, was employed as a child care worker at [SCO Family Services](#), located at 101 Downing Avenue in Sea Cliff, when she became involved in an argument with a 17-year-old girl at about 5:52 p.m. on May 15. After pushing the teen, Goodridge grabbed her arm and dragged her across the floor, causing bruising to her eye, scratches on her neck and a swollen lip, police said. The teen was treated for her injuries at the scene. After SCO conducted an internal investigation, the police were notified on Friday and Goodridge voluntarily surrendered to detectives in Huntington, police said. Goodridge is charged with endangering the welfare of an incompetent or physically disabled person and will be arraigned on Saturday in First District Court, Hempstead. SCO says it "operates more than 80 programs at 120 locations, providing necessary services and unconditional care to more than 55,000 of New York's most vulnerable people." Source: <http://patch.com/new-york/glencove/woman-dragged-disabled-teen-across-floor-sea-cliff-group-home-police-0>

After Courant Investigation, Feds Find State Failing To Keep Developmentally Disabled Safe Abuse and neglect are cited as factors in the deaths of dozens of developmentally disabled in state care since reforms were instituted a decade ago. Here are some of the lives affected. [Read more of the Courant's investigation.](#) [Josh Kovner](#) , [Dave Altman](#) and [Matthew Kauffman](#)[Contact Reporters](#) After Courant Probe, Feds Find CT Failing To Keep Developmentally Disabled Safe Safeguards for people with developmental disabilities are severely lacking in Connecticut, with private group homes and state officials failing to report or respond to dozens of cases of potential abuse and neglect, a federal audit sparked by a Courant investigation has found. The audit, which analyzed the state's care of 245 developmentally disabled individuals from 2012 through the first half of 2014, found that private group homes frequently failed to report "critical incidents" to state officials, and that state officials almost never forwarded those cases for outside investigation. The cases include a man who suffered a broken spine and a woman who repeatedly ingested razor blades and other dangerous objects. The audit was conducted by the inspector general of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as the result of [a 2013 Courant investigation revealing that abuse and neglect were cited in the deaths of 76 developmentally disabled individuals](#) who were receiving services from the state Department of Developmental Services in group homes, state-run institutions, nursing homes and hospitals. One was placed in a scalding hot bathtub. Several choked to death despite protocols designed to address swallowing issues. A number showed signs of medical distress but received inadequate intervention. The federal probe was requested by U.S. Sen. [Chris Murphy](#) in response to the Courant's reporting. Politics Widget Promoted stories from PoliticsChatter.com [The curious case of South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley Meet Trump's national spokesperson Katrina Pierson 19 things to know about FOX News anchor Megyn Kelly](#) DDS, the state agency responsible for protecting individuals with intellectual disabilities, acknowledged serious flaws in the tracking of, and response to, serious injuries of people in its care. [Details On Deaths Of The Developmentally Disabled In State Care](#) [Matthew Kauffman From 2004 to 2010, state investigators cited abuse and neglect while investigating the deaths of 76 Connecticut men and women with developmental disabilities. This timeline provides information on the circumstances of each death, culled from summaries of investigations conducted by the state Department...](#) From 2004 to 2010, state investigators cited abuse and neglect while investigating the deaths of 76 Connecticut men and women with developmental disabilities. This timeline provides information on the circumstances of each death, culled from summaries of investigations conducted by the state Department... ([Matthew Kauffman](#)) The agency "agreed that the ... incident reporting system needs to be revised to ensure the health and safety" of clients, the audit stated. The federal investigators found DDS and some group homes did not comply with federal and state requirements for caring for developmentally disabled [Medicaid](#) beneficiaries. The audit found: • DDS failed to record more than one in five "critical incidents" reported by group homes. Critical incidents are those involving death or serious injury. Because DDS did not record these incidents, state investigators could not determine whether abuse or neglect contributed to the injuries. [For Parents Of Developmentally Disabled Adults, The Wait For Help Never Ends](#) [JOSH KOVNER Three families. Three different paths. Same commitment. Each is raising a son or daughter with a profound intellectual disability. There were times that were filled with joy for all of these parents. Relief washed over Dawn DeMatteo of East Haven when she found the right weekday activity program... Three families. Three different paths. Same commitment. Each is raising a son or daughter with a profound intellectual disability. There were times that were filled with joy for all of these parents. Relief washed over Dawn DeMatteo of East Haven when she found the right weekday activity program...](#) (JOSH KOVNER) • DDS alerted the state's Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities to possible abuse or neglect in just one of 152 critical incidents. The federal agency said all the critical incidents raised a reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect and should have been reported. After federal investigators reported the critical incidents to the Office of Protection and Advocacy, the office issued immediate protective-service orders in 14 cases and opened new investigations in 24 others. • Group homes failed to report 14 percent of critical incidents to DDS, and when incidents were reported, the homes mischaracterized the severity of the incident more than half the time. • DDS "did not adequately safeguard 137 out of 245 developmentally disabled Medicaid beneficiaries because the DDS system of reporting and monitoring critical incidents did not work as expected." That breakdown occurred, the audit reported, because staff at DDS and group homes lacked adequate training to correctly identify and report critical incidents and reasonable suspicions of abuse or neglect," the audit said. • Although DDS provided abuse and neglect training to its employees once a year, this training included limited examples of potential abuse and neglect. The audit also revealed that only about 10 percent of the state's private group home operators requested abuse and neglect training from the state for their staffs. • DDS only provided abuse and neglect training to 102 out of 961 private group homes. Advocates said that deep budget reductions over the last four years have left the state's safety net in tatters. Nearly \$100 million has been cut from DDS' \$1 billion budget, and group home operators and other private providers have not had an increase in funding in more than seven years. The result is a high turnover among workers and a dearth of new training opportunities in the private sector, which serves the large majority of DDS clients. Meanwhile, state-run institutions absorb a disproportionate amount of the public money. "What we're seeing here is the consequence of the chronic underfunding and slow starvation of the providers," said Leslie Simoes, executive director of The ARC Connecticut. She said the audit findings will reverberate nationally. "The report is a small piece of a larger systemic issue in Connecticut," said Simoes. "There is money in the system; there is just no public policy to shift it around to where it needs to go." She said that following the Courant's 2013 report on the string of preventable deaths, "policymakers have continued to allow devastating cuts to a system that was already exposed as broken." Murphy said the audit revealed an intolerable situation. "These residents are society's most vulnerable — they need us to speak up because they often cannot advocate for themselves," Murphy, a Democrat from Connecticut, said Tuesday. "The results of this investigation are worse than I could have imagined, and clearly the oversight agencies have failed in their responsibility to prevent and investigate incidents of abuse. The state needs to take action as quickly as possible to address the issues raised in this disturbing report." DDS officials said Tuesday that they have been working with federal authorities on a corrective plan since Commissioner Morna Murray was appointed by Gov. Dannel P. Malloy on Feb. 2, 2015. The agency "has taken this investigation with the utmost seriousness," Deputy Commissioner Jordan Scheff said in a statement, stressing that the audit covered the period of 2012 through mid-2014. "DDS has reviewed the preliminary findings, provided feedback and continued to monitor and make changes to this system as findings indicate and require," Scheff said. "We continue to work intra-departmentally and with [the office of the inspector general] ... so that we can ensure the health and well-being of all individuals we support." The federal audit also found circumstances outside the scope of the review "worthy of further discussion" and action with various state agencies. One issue was that individuals required by law to report suspected abuse or neglect, including hospital employees, police officers and group home workers, routinely failed to report potential incidents. For example, the federal investigators found that of 310 emergency room visits across 25 hospitals involving 245 developmentally disabled people, hospital employees reported only one of these incidents for potential abuse or neglect. The audit cited the example of a group home resident with developmental disabilities and behavioral issues that included aggressive outbursts who was brought to a hospital with a lacerated scalp and fractured cervical spine. The unnamed hospital's emergency room treated his injuries, which group home staff attributed to falling down a flight of stairs. The resident's medical history indicated that his clavicle appeared to have been fractured at least once before. "Because the hospital staff had reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect of this resident, the hospital physician and nursing staff, as well as group home staff, should have reported this incident to [the Office of Protection and Advocacy] or an appropriate State agency," the audit said. The audit also highlighted the case of a group home resident with developmental disabilities and a variety of psychiatric disorders, including self-injury and suicidal ideation. Two hospital emergency rooms treated the woman on 19 separate occasions from May 2010 through August 2011. She also was treated three more times in 2013 and 2014. Medical records show that the woman swallowed

pieces of razor blades, ingested other patients' medications, suffered self-inflicted burns and inserted numerous items from eyeglasses to batteries and cigarette lighters in other orifices. However, the group home that cared for her reported only six of the 19 incidents to DDS, which in turn reported none of the incidents to the Office of Protection and Advocacy. Instead it was federal officials who informed the Office of Protection and Advocacy of the cases. The office issued a request for an immediate protective service order citing the group home's inability to properly protect the woman from further injury. It also initiated an in-depth review of her care at the group home. In the time period covered by the audit, 85 people who received Medicaid benefits died while under DDS care. The agency did an in-depth investigation of 27 of the deaths and concluded that in 10 of those cases, the care that people were receiving before they died was inadequate. DDS officials agreed that the agency's incident-reporting system "needs to be revised to ensure the health and safety of individuals" who receive its services. "Critical incidents involving beneficiary visits to emergency rooms in general should have created reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect." But the agency disagreed with the audit's assertion that every emergency-room visit must be reported to the Office of Protection and Advocacy. "We do not agree that every beneficiary visit to an emergency room creates a reasonable cause to suspect abuse and neglect, as illustrated by beneficiary visits to an emergency room for a known chronic medical condition, such as a seizure disorder, the acute onset of symptoms resulting in a diagnosis of pneumonia, or for a precautionary evaluation following a fall or motor vehicle accident where there is no apparent injury to the beneficiary," DDS officials wrote in their response to the audit. Source: <http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-abuse-neglect-developmentally-disabled-investigation-20160524-story.html>

Jermarro Dantzler, accused of sexually assaulting teen at gunpoint, faces new charges Posted 4:57 pm, May 24, 2016, by [A.J. Bayatpour](#). Updated at 06:39pm, May 24, 2016 [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Reddit](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Pinterest](#) [Email](#) MILWAUKEE -- A man accused of sexually assaulting a teen at gunpoint is now charged with perjury and bail jumping. Jermarro Dantzler Prosecutors say Jermarro Dantzler, 37, tried to get others to testify with a false alibi -- one that took Dantzler away from the scene where the 15-year-old boy was raped in July 2015. On Tuesday, May 24th, Dantzler was appointed a public defender in the perjury case. **Dantzler had been running a group home for troubled boys.** He was appealing a state decision to revoke his license -- when the sexual assault allegation came to light. FOX6 News has been investigating the group home's history -- and found a long list of serious complaints that go back years. For about six years, Dantzler ran the "Rights of Passage" group home out of a house on Milwaukee's northwest side. Jermarro Dantzler Wisconsin's Department of Children and Families (DCF) removed the teenage residents after Dantzler's arrest for the alleged sexual assault of the 15-year-old boy. "The source of the DNA that was found on the victim was Jermarro Dantzler's specifically," said Amy Koeppel, Brown Deer police sergeant. It turns out, DCF had been getting complaints for years about "Rights of Passage." Jermarro Dantzler FOX6 News went to Madison and reviewed dozens of documents through an open records request. Here's what we found: In 2010, Dantzler was fined for secretly paying a resident's sister to keep the boy at her apartment. In early 2011, Dantzler got a 'non-compliance statement' over 'failed oversight by the group home manager.' One month later, Children's Hospital of Wisconsin called a case worker. A boy was discharged after being seen -- no one was there to pick him up. 'The group home left no contact information...they did not even wait,' read the complaint from a case worker filed on March 28, 2011. Less than two months later, DCF received allegations of abuse and neglect on May 3rd and May 5th. On May 7th, Milwaukee police investigated a burglary at the group home. Two computers and other property were stolen. DCR concluded there were 'conflicting stories' and because 'records were stolen, there is nothing for this licensor to review.' No further action was taken. Milwaukee police say no one was ever arrested for the burglary. Jermarro Dantzler A DCF spokesman says the agency took "took aggressive action to address issues that were discovered about the facility." "These penalties ranged from issuing non-compliance statements to imposing fines," said DCF spokesman Joe Scialfa. DCF moved to revoke Dantzler's license in April 2015 over "unallowable expenditures." But the home remained open as Dantzler appealed. During that time, the alleged sexual assault occurred. A review of the home's financial documents revealed multiple red flags, including past due notices for the water bill and billing statements from payday lenders with an interest rate of 250%. Dantzler now awaits trial for that -- and the new perjury charge stemming from it. The sexual assault trial is scheduled to begin in June. DCF tells FOX6 News that despite the financial issues, Dantzler was able to pay back the nearly \$27,000 worth of fines his group home received. Source: <http://fox6now.com/2016/05/24/jermarro-dantzler-accused-of-sexual-assaulting-teen-at-gunpoint-faces-new-charges/>

Teen's death at residential center emblematic of 'system problem': DCFS Allendale Family photo | Joe Shuman / News-Sun Shortly after leaving Allendale Association's residential treatment center in Lake County, 16-year-old Shaquan Allen (inset) was pronounced dead on March 30, 2016. Shortly after leaving Allendale Association's residential treatment center in Lake County, 16-year-old Shaquan Allen (inset) was pronounced dead on March 30, 2016. (Family photo | Joe Shuman / News-Sun) [Duaa EldeibContact Reporter](#) Chicago Tribune Trouble had dogged Shaquan Allen for much of his life, but after about a year at a facility that houses wards of the state, the teen had made enough progress to be cleared for discharge. A few months later, the Illinois Department for Children and Family Services placed him on a priority list of wards who could be moved to less-restrictive housing. When Shaquan did finally leave Allendale Association's residential treatment center in Lake County one year later, it was in an ambulance. The 16-year-old was pronounced dead at a nearby hospital the same day, March 30, and two Allendale employees now face criminal charges: One is accused of placing him in a chokehold; the other allegedly helped to mislead authorities about what happened. A Tribune investigation into Shaquan's history and his death reveals a series of missteps and missed opportunities and a system that ultimately failed to protect a child in its care. His prolonged placement at Allendale stemmed in large part from lengthy waiting lists, and his behavior spiraled down as his disappointments mounted over the delays, the newspaper found in its review of thousands of pages of court, police and DCFS records. Paid Posts What's This? Paid Posts are created by our advertisers. Our editorial and reporting staffs are not involved in the creation or production of Paid Posts. [Think you have HS symptoms?](#) A Message from [AbbVie](#) Red bumps? Recurring abscesses? It could be Hidradenitis Suppurativa—HS—a chronic, inflammatory skin condition. Sign up and get information at noBSaboutHS.com and visit a dermatologist. [See More](#) Shaquan Allen Antonio Perez / Chicago Tribune A program from Shaquan Allen's funeral service. A program from Shaquan Allen's funeral service. (Antonio Perez / Chicago Tribune) What's more, the chokehold allegedly used on Shaquan is strictly prohibited by DCFS and is against the protocols of Allendale, a private nonprofit that contracts with the state child welfare agency to provide round-the-clock supervision and intensive therapy to some of the system's most troubled kids. Experts and internal DCFS documents also raise questions about Allendale's use of physical restraints on Shaquan and other similarly traumatized youths. In addition, it remains unclear why Allendale's clinical staff cleared Shaquan to stop taking psychiatric medication in late 2014, despite his "severe mental health diagnoses" cited in a DCFS report about his death. "We thought he was going to be safe," said his grandmother Asiele Jones-Ayodele, who raised Shaquan for much of his life. "He didn't deserve to die. We never thought this was going to happen, especially because this was not a family that had him. This was a facility." DCFS Director George Sheldon called the delays in Shaquan's case unacceptable and emblematic of a larger problem. "We have to reduce Illinois' reliance on (residential centers), and these kinds of cases just prove it," Sheldon said. "It proves there's a point of diminishing returns. There's a point where it's no longer helping a child, and, frankly, I think that happens long before 12 months." Illinois' average length of stay at residential facilities is 18 months, DCFS officials said. That's higher than most states, where the estimated averages are seven to 12 months. Shaquan was in Allendale's care — split between its Lake Villa and southern Wisconsin campuses and a brief stint of weekday home visitation — for 2 1/2 years. State wards languishing at taxpayer-funded residential centers is a problem Sheldon and other experts recognize. A 2014 Tribune investigation found that attacks and abuse were rampant at some centers. In the past year, DCFS has sought to speed up the process of discharging eligible youths who've been at residential centers at least a year and has moved out nearly 350 youths. Although Shaquan was on that list, he never made it to another placement. The problem also highlights the state's drastic shortage of community-based alternatives. A DCFS program underway to shore up therapeutic foster homes is still in its pilot stages. "Early on, I think there was a lack of capacity, but I also think there may not have been a sense of urgency, not just on our part, but everyone's part in the system," Sheldon said. "We're talking as much about a system problem as we are an Allendale problem." Willie Mae Allen Antonio Perez / Chicago Tribune Willie Mae Allen talks about the life and death of her son Shaquan Allen, at her attorney's office in Chicago on May 12, 2016. Willie Mae Allen talks about the life and death of her son Shaquan Allen, at her attorney's office in Chicago on May 12, 2016. (Antonio Perez / Chicago Tribune) 'A sweet little boy' DCFS involvement in Shaquan's life began at birth when it was suspected he had drugs in his system, records show. His mother, Willie Mae Allen, acknowledged in a recent interview that she has battled drug addiction and mental illness. Jones-Ayodele stepped in to assist her daughter and when Shaquan was 4 became legal guardian to him and his younger sister. Church outings and sports filled their early years together, Jones-Ayodele said. "He was a sweet little boy," she said. "He sang in the choir. He loved playing basketball." Shaquan Allen Courtesy of the Allen family Shaquan Allen is seen in a 2005 family photo. Shaquan Allen is seen in a 2005 family photo. (Courtesy of the Allen family) But as he got older, she felt her grip on him slipping. She tried to keep him far away from the drugs and gangs outside their Englewood home. It wasn't easy. Shaquan had said he tried to join a gang at 7 but was turned away, DCFS records show. His father's death when Shaquan was

8 was another source of anguish. By the time Shaquan was 11, he was getting in trouble regularly at school. His grandmother sent him back to live with his mother. They stayed together for about two years, but Shaquan's problems continued: violent outbursts, school suspensions, psychiatric hospitalizations, a threat of harm against a teacher, an alleged attack on his mother and brother, records show. Doctors diagnosed him with a long list of mental health and behavioral disorders. He was at the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center when, DCFS and court records show, his mother asked the agency to take custody of him because she was "unable to control" him. Allen said she reached out to DCFS because she feared the gangs that relentlessly recruited her son. At 13, he bragged about his gang affiliation, according to DCFS records. "I believed at the time (DCFS) was the best thing for my son," Allen said. "I wanted them to get him set on his medication and show him there's a different way than being in the streets." Shaquan became a ward of the state in 2013; months later, just weeks after his 14th birthday, he was placed at Allendale. At first, he struggled. He lashed out physically at staff members, smoked, went AWOL. But eventually he seemed to settle in and showed signs of improvement, records show. He took pride in completing tasks he set his mind to, staff members reported. Though his reading and math abilities were well below his grade level, his teacher at Allendale called him a "pleasure" to have in class. He worked hard to finish his science projects and earn good grades, documents show. He tossed aside pro basketball dreams for more practical goals of getting a diploma and learning a construction trade. He made such strides that he was cleared to transfer to a group home, where he would have more freedom but still receive treatment, court records show. Although he had expressed a desire to return home to his mother on a number of occasions, it was a rare bit of good news. In anticipation of the move, he did what was asked of him. He went to school. He didn't run away. I miss everything about him. The phone calls, the 'Mommy, I love you.' I miss it all.—Willie Mae Allen, mother of Shaquan Allen

Lengthy delays, risky behaviors But Shaquan never made it to a group home. He had been accepted at two such programs, but both had monthslong wait lists. Meanwhile, his mother vacillated between wanting him back home and keeping him in DCFS custody, records show. In March 2015, she said she wanted to remain involved in his life, but she felt she could not "effectively manage Shaquan's needs in her home" because of her own mental and physical health, according to court records. Shaquan's discharge date was repeatedly pushed back. The setbacks seemed to all but wipe away the progress he'd made. The "lengthy" delays "may be the reason Shaquan continues to display risky behaviors," a June 2015 Allendale report said. He was back to missing school, getting arrested and running away, once disappearing for a week. Court records show he vented his frustration to child welfare officials that he had done his part and completed his treatment but still didn't have a placement. He said he wanted to be returned to his mother, who had also at this point requested that Shaquan come home for his safety. Though still formally in the state's care, he was then allowed to stay with his mother weekdays, returning to Allendale on weekends. That arrangement "deteriorated" after only a few months and he was sent back to Allendale full time, a DCFS report said. The report cited several factors, including both Shaquan's and his mother's mental illnesses and Shaquan's habit of running away. But in yet another breakdown of the system, it does not appear that DCFS conducted sufficient follow-up visits or provided adequate support to Allen once Shaquan moved back home with her. "It's not enough to say, 'OK, we're going to send this kid home,' and say, 'Thanks, have a good life,'" DCFS chief Sheldon said. "The real question is, were we actually actively engaged in providing those services, and I don't think there's anything in the records that indicates that we were." When Shaquan returned to Allendale, he refused to participate in treatment, records show. Around this time, Shaquan was charged with battery after he allegedly bit an Allendale staffer in December during a restraint. In February, the staff determined that he "could no longer benefit from services at Allendale," records show. Once again, efforts were made to find him a new placement — only this time it would be at another residential treatment center. He remained at Allendale until his death more than a month later. Allendale Association Joe Shuman / News-Sun Joe Shuman / News-Sun Other wards also restrained This was not the first time that youths at Allendale alleged they were harmed or choked during restraints. In December, a resident anonymously complained in writing that an Allendale employee "likes to choke you ... until you pass out," according to records obtained by the Tribune through a [Freedom of Information Act](#) request. That employee, who was on leave because of another incident, was let go, according to Allendale. Around the same time, a female ward said that an employee punched her in the eye, put her in a chokehold and slammed her head to the ground, though DCFS deemed her allegations unfounded. DCFS licensing records show that, in 2013, another employee had to agree to refrain from excessive restraints and complete a refresher course. As of March 31, Allendale reported seven pending investigations into claims of inappropriate staff conduct. Between April 2015 and March of this year, Allendale sent DCFS more than 1,500 so-called Unusual Incident Reports. Almost half involved allegations of aggression by wards, records show, and about 1 in 5 involved physical restraints of wards by staffers. In fewer than 1 percent of those cases, wards were reported to have been injured. The incident reports reveal that several youths needed medical attention following restraints, including one restraint last year that lasted 75 minutes. In another case, a girl was taken to the hospital after being restrained face down in the prone position — a tactic several advocates and experts have said should be avoided because of the risk of serious injury. Some agencies have banned prone restraints in youth residential centers. In addition, one girl's arm was broken during a restraint, records show. DCFS faulted one of the employees involved, but that finding was overturned on appeal. Allendale President Mary Shahbazian said in an emailed response to questions from the Tribune that the organization has seen a drop in overall restraints in the past year since focusing on reducing their use. She said also Allendale's practice is to notify a supervisor before or soon after a restraint and contact a nurse if there are any physical concerns. Lake Villa police officers, whose station is about a mile from Allendale's campus, are regularly called there — more than 130 times in 2015 alone — for reports including kids running away, battery and criminal damage to property. An Allendale attorney said the organization is cooperating with authorities and complying with subpoena requests in the criminal case resulting from Shaquan's death. "We remain devastated for the loss of Shaquan's life and are completely committed to doing all we can to cooperate with the reviews being conducted," Shahbazian said. "We will take all findings seriously. Improving safety and practice is our paramount goal." DCFS suspended its placements of wards at Allendale on April 1 and has increased monitoring to ensure the well-being of the wards who remain there. Allendale death Lake County Sheriff's Office James Davis, left, and Justin Serak. James Davis, left, and Justin Serak. (Lake County Sheriff's Office)

Chokeholds banned Authorities have released few details surrounding the events immediately leading up to Shaquan's death. Prosecutors said he became combative and employees James Davis and Justin Serak attempted to restrain him. Davis allegedly grabbed Shaquan's upper body and neck, putting him in a chokehold, and Serak held his legs. When Shaquan became unresponsive, authorities allege, one of the two employees threw a cup of water on his face, trying to revive him. When he did not respond, the men collaborated on a false story that Shaquan slipped on water and fell, according to authorities. No one called 911 for about 15 minutes, though a nurse at some point administered CPR, according to a spokesman for the Lake County Major Crime Task Force, which investigated. The cause of death was ruled suffocation due to asphyxiation, prosecutors said. Davis, 37, is charged with involuntary manslaughter, and he and Serak, 27, are both charged with obstruction of justice for the alleged coverup. Both have pleaded not guilty. Their attorneys declined comment. DCFS policy bans the use of chokeholds as does Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, a model in which workers at Allendale and a number of other residential centers are trained. Martha Holden, who helped develop the model and is director of the Residential Child Care Project at [Cornell University](#), said a chokehold is never appropriate. She said there are so many preventive and de-escalation techniques that physical restraints should be a last resort. When they are used, joints, airways and pressure points are to be avoided, she said. Allendale officials said all employees are up to date with their TCI training. DCFS's report recommends a thorough review of Allendale's restraint policy, saying it seemed "counterintuitive" to use a restraint to manage Shaquan's behavior, given his history and diagnoses. Shahbazian also said that restraints should be used as a last resort and only to maintain safety. She noted that all youths who end up in residential care have been victims of trauma, often including prior abuse. "We would love to be a 'restraint-free' agency — but absent serving a less severe clientele, that goal is a difficult one to achieve," said Shahbazian, who added that employees will undergo additional training this summer. Sheldon also called into question what steps Allendale staff took before using physical restraint against Shaquan. "Knowing that (Shaquan's) return home was disrupted, knowing that he was beginning to act out, to some extent should we anticipate what the behavior is going to be and have a plan in place to deal with it?" Sheldon asked. "I think that's where the department shares the burden of responsibility for making sure that facilities like Allendale ... really make sure their front-line staff knows those issues." Shaquan Allen Family photo Shaquan Allen in an undated photo. Shaquan Allen in an undated photo. (Family photo) In wake of Shaquan's death, Sheldon has recommended that residential centers including Allendale install surveillance cameras. Shahbazian said she supports the concept but said a funding source would need to be identified. Questions also surround why Shaquan was taken off the medication intended to manage his mental health diagnoses and how that decision might have affected his ability to deal with adversity. "It is unclear what the rationale was for the medication changes," the DCFS report stated. "These information gaps lend concern to the management of Shaquan's mental health stability ..." Shahbazian said health privacy rules prevent her from commenting. DCFS officials in their report also lamented a failure to connect "Shaquan's early drug exposure and trauma history ... to his behaviors." A "timely (psychological) evaluation" could have provided a more appropriate treatment plan, the report said. Allen said she sensed something was wrong when an Allendale administrator called to tell her there had been an accident and that her son had hit his head. At the hospital, she cried when the chaplain approached,

knowing then that Shaquan was dead. She said she was not allowed to view his body at the hospital. "I miss everything about him," she said between sobs. "The phone calls, the 'Mommy, I love you.' I miss it all." deldeib@tribpub.com Twitter @deldeib Source: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/watchdog/ct-allendale-shaquan-allen-death-met-20160526-story.html>

For Many of Connecticut's Disabled, Home Is Where the Harm Is Again and again, the disabled turned up in emergency rooms only to have the injuries they'd suffered in the state's group homes go uninvestigated. by [Joaquin Sapien](#) ProPublica, May 27, 2016, 7:59 a.m. [0 Comments](#) [Print](#) [Print](#) This is part of an ongoing investigation [Level 14](#) How a home for troubled children came undone and what it means for California's chance at reform. Spur Reform in 2016 Support ProPublica's mission to expose abuses of power and corruption. The woman was sent to a Connecticut emergency room 19 times in 15 months. Her injuries were ghastly. She swallowed pieces of razor blades. She burned herself. She inserted pins, nails, metal can lids and other objects inside her vagina and rectum. She was developmentally disabled; living in a group home overseen by Connecticut state authorities. Each of her injuries should have been investigated by the state. None of them were. The woman's experience is part of a [federal report](#) formally released Wednesday by the Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General. Hers were among more than 300 emergency room visits examined by federal investigators between January 2012 and June 2014. The report found that on dozens of occasions, Connecticut group home workers failed to uphold their legal obligations to report incidents of abuse, injury, and neglect to authorities. Even when such reports were made, the state rarely took appropriate steps to find out what happened. "The results of this investigation are worse than I could have imagined, and clearly the oversight agencies have failed in their responsibility to prevent and investigate incidents of abuse," said Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., who ordered the report following a [2013 investigation of Connecticut homes for the disabled by the Hartford Courant](#). "The state needs to take action as quickly as possible to address the issues raised in this disturbing report." Group home workers are required by law to report all injuries and signs of abuse or neglect to a state social services agency. In Connecticut, the Department of Developmental Services is then supposed to pass on particularly alarming reports—those of severe injury or that might suggest abuse at the hands of staff—to an independent state agency called the Office of Protection and Advocacy, which employs specially trained investigators. But [the federal investigation](#) found that Connecticut's oversight system failed at almost every level. The Inspector General reviewed 152 "critical incidents" where residents came to harm. It found that group home workers understated their severity in more than half the cases; that the state failed to appropriately follow up on 99 percent of incidents that should have raised "reasonable suspicions of abuse or neglect," and that hospital workers, who are also required to report such incidents, failed to do so in all but one of 310 emergency room visits. As in many other states, Connecticut's developmentally disabled were once held in large institutions with hundreds, even thousands, of beds. Some of those facilities became notorious for abusive conditions, with patients suffering severe injuries and even death. Many of them were shut down and Connecticut has moved people into smaller group homes meant to resemble a family atmosphere and provide better supervision. The report looked specifically at people whose care is paid for with federal Medicaid dollars. Currently there are more than 2,000 such beneficiaries living in scores of group homes throughout the state. "The goal of these programs is to improve the quality of the lives of people with developmental disabilities by moving them out of large institutions and into homes in their own communities," said Mary Kahn, a spokeswoman for the Inspector General. "The findings in this report suggest there is more work to be done to assure that dream is realized." The Inspector General is conducting similar investigations in other states. Curt Roy, the auditor who authored the Connecticut report, told ProPublica that those probes have thus far unearthed similar problems. The results of these investigations are particularly disturbing for Jim Conroy. In 1995, he appeared on a "60 Minutes" episode that focused on an array of abuse allegations at a large Connecticut institution called the Southbury Training School. In a recent interview with ProPublica, he recalled crying over the level of care being offered thousands of disabled residents. "I told my parents I saw 3,000 American citizens living in a place where we wouldn't put our dog for the weekend," Conroy said. Conroy, who today is a Pennsylvania-based consultant, has spent the intervening decades helping U.S. states and foreign countries improve quality of care for the disabled. He has long supported the transition to smaller, community-based group homes, pointing at reams of data he has collected showing better outcomes for residents. That neglect is now happening to residents in those alternative settings disturbs him greatly. "What we did in institutions was overcrowd, understaff and underpay," he said. "And I am fearful that we are repeating the exact same pattern in our community support systems now." For its part, the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services agreed with many of the findings in the report and an official with the agency told ProPublica it will continue to "make changes to this system." As for the woman who was hospitalized 19 times in 15 months, the Office of Protection and Advocacy issued a protective order for her after being confronted by federal investigators. It also initiated a review of her care at the group home. Peter Hughes, the director of the OPA's abuse division, said he could not comment on the status of that review due to privacy restrictions. Of the report as a whole, Hughes called it an "eye opener" and said his agency "worked for many, many hours on the report" with the Inspector General and "ultimately everyone wound up agreeing that we really need to do a better job of making reports and evaluating them." Help us investigate: If you have experience with or information about care for the developmentally disabled, the mentally ill, or troubled children email joaquin.sapien@propublica.org. Source: <https://www.propublica.org/article/for-many-of-connecticuts-disabled-home-is-where-the-harm-is>

Former Middletown Group Home to Pay \$1.5 Million to Settle Overbilling Allegations The group home, which provided residential and day services to the intellectually disabled and at-risk youth, settled with the government. Middletown, CT By [Vincent Salzo \(Patch Staff\)](#) - May 31, 2016 10:50 am ET MIDDLETOWN, CT — A former Middletown group home that provided residential and day services to the intellectually disabled and at-risk youth has agreed to pay \$1.5 million to settle overbilling allegations with the government, according to authorities. REM Connecticut Community Services, Inc. (REM), which ceased operating in Connecticut at the end of 2014, has entered into a civil settlement agreement with the federal and state governments in which it will pay \$1.5 million to resolve allegations that it received overpayments from the Connecticut Medicaid Program, U.S. States Attorney Deirdre M. Daly and Connecticut Attorney General George Jepsen announced in a joint statement. The allegations against REM arose from its submission of "cost reports" to the state related to its operation of group homes during the period from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2014, according to the press release. The government contended that REM reported certain interest expenses as allowable costs in the cost reports that were in fact not allowable under the state's Cost Standards. As a result, the government alleges that REM received overpayments that it was not entitled to receive from the Connecticut Medicaid Program. "Providers who bill government health insurance programs, such as Medicaid, must scrupulously follow the rules and regulations, and the failure to do so will have serious consequences," Daly said in a statement. "The U.S. Attorney's office will vigorously pursue health care providers who receive payments from federal health care programs that they are not entitled to receive." To resolve its liability, REM will pay \$1.5 million to the federal and state governments. Part of the settlement amount will be satisfied by the government retaining \$1,189,025 that had been suspended by the state of Connecticut because of REM's questionable billing practices, according to Daly. The additional \$310,975 will be paid by REM collectively to the federal and state governments at the time the settlement agreement is executed. Source: <http://patch.com/connecticut/middletown-ct/former-middletown-group-home-pay-1-5-million-settle-overbilling-allegations>

Russell Home faces fines, closure over licensing Lacking a proper state license, the Russell Home for Atypical Children faces closure Located on Holden Avenue, the Russell Home for Atypical Children has been serving Orlando for 67 years, albeit without any official licensing from the state. With more licensing challenges ahead, the home now faces closure. Located on Holden Avenue, the Russell Home for Atypical Children has been serving Orlando for 67 years, albeit without any official licensing from the state. With more licensing challenges ahead, the home now faces closure. [Kate SantichContact Reporter](#)Staff Writer This family-run nonprofit has been helping kids and adults for 67 years without incident. For 67 years, the Russell Home for Atypical Children has cared for Central Florida's most vulnerable individuals — people who may not see, hear, walk, read, speak or otherwise fend for themselves. By most accounts, it has done an exceptional job. The home doesn't charge anyone and doesn't accept any government funding. But now, state officials have warned that the home needs to become a licensed facility — or shut down. If it doesn't, the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration wrote in its most recent letter to the Russell Home, it will face a cease-and-desist order and fines of up to \$1,000 a day. "We're baffled," says executive director Vantrease Blair, whose grandmother, Vantrease Russell, started taking special-needs children into her family home in 1949. "I know there are bad people in this world who would take advantage of others, but we're not trying to do that. We're just trying to do what my grandmother did her whole entire life." The state began investigating the home last October following an anonymous complaint that it was operating without a license, says AHCA spokeswoman Mallory McManus. Negotiations with the home since then haven't resolved the state's main point of contention: "By law the facility would need a license to continue operations," McManus says. The problem, it seems, is in the limits a license might impose. There isn't a category that the home neatly fits into: It no longer qualifies as a

child-care facility as it once did — the children taken in by "Grandma" Russell, who died in 2003, are now adults. And if it operates as an assisted living facility, it would have to reject the more recent clients who are younger than 18. If it is licensed as a group home, it's limited to 15 residents; the Russell Home has 25. "We don't want to turn anyone away," Blair says. "And choosing who can stay and who has to go? That's like telling me which sisters and brothers I can keep." Late Friday afternoon, the Russell Home's board of directors voted to file the group home application to avoid a cease-and-desist order but requested that AHCA sign an agreement promising not to move any of the current residents. It was not immediately clear how state officials will respond. A registered nonprofit organization, the Russell Home has earned a large and loyal following over the years. Last week, a supporter launched a Change.org petition asking state officials to make a licensing exception for the home, and the group's Facebook page has filled with messages from outraged fans of the charity. But Blair says she doesn't object to licensing on its face. In fact, the Russell Home has had licenses under various state agencies in the past, though state officials sometimes struggled to define the home. A 2006 letter from the Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities, for instance, states the home's "size, nature and structure ... precludes APD licensure" under any of its categories. The home doesn't charge the residents who live there full time — some of whom are now middle-age and have no other family. Nor does it charge the handful of clients who come for day care, or those whose families simply need a reprieve of a week or two from round-the-clock care-giving. Instead, it raises \$93,000 a month through donations and its thrift shop to cover licensed certified nursing assistants, cooks, custodians and administration costs. In addition, the home spent the past eight years raising \$1.8 million to triple its cramped facility and upgrade everything to modern building codes. That construction is due to be finished this fall. "To have all this come up now..." Blair says, her voice trailing off. As she speaks, the women in the home are taking a dance class, and the sound of laughter and chatter spills into Blair's office. A nurse in the front room cradles a 12-year-old boy who was born without most of his brain. Other residents and day clients are in class or playing games. "They interact like that all day," says Kathie Post, a Winter Garden resident whose 37-year-old daughter attends day care there while Post works. "If my daughter were in some state-run facility, she'd be sitting in a chair all day. I can't say enough about the place." Jeannie Flynt of Orlando started bringing her son, Matthew, there in 2009. Born with a chromosomal disorders, he is now 29 and has severe intellectual and physical limitations. But Flynt was so impressed by his progress that, in 2013, she quit her corporate management position to become a teacher there. "Before I found the Russell Home, some of the places I checked out I wouldn't take my dog to," she says. "But you can come here any time, just drop in, and you will see the people like Matthew laughing, having fun, having a life that matters. To me, the Russell Home should be a model." The charity still hopes to resolve the matter amicably, says Tampa attorney Robert Williams, a senior litigator who has volunteered his services for the cause. "I'm prepared to go to court if it becomes necessary," he says. "But we're trying to avoid that." ksantich@tribpub.com or 407-420-5503 Source: <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/os-russell-home-for-children-facing-closure-20160531-story.html>

Audit: NYC agency didn't properly monitor troubled minors June 2, 2016 11:35 PM By The Associated Press By MICHAEL BALSAMO (Associated Press) [Reprints +](#) advertisement | [advertise on newsday](#) NEW YORK - (AP) -- New York City's child welfare agency failed to properly oversee a citywide juvenile justice program when its workers didn't make required visits to group homes or routinely check on the condition of children who were sent to the homes, the city's comptroller said in an audit released Thursday. The audit alleges that workers for the city's Administration for Children's Service, which oversees a program known as Close to Home, routinely failed to meet with children in the program and their families, or ensure that they were getting help from the providers who were contracted by the city. The program tries to house minors between 7 and 15 years old in residences near their relatives and schools instead of in far-off detention centers. The agency "abdicated its responsibility to oversee this program and robbed hundreds of New York City children of the opportunity to get back on the right track," New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer told The Associated Press. "It is outrageous that ACS has no idea if windows are locked, if children are receiving care or providers are doing their job. They are sounding a loud message that these kids don't deserve the necessary follow-up." Stringer said two-thirds of Close to Home group homes didn't receive a single unannounced visit in 2014, even though workers were required to make both announced and unannounced visits to every site. He also alleged that workers often failed to make required phone calls and didn't show up for required visits to check on the children. "The safety of our young people -- and communities -- is paramount," ACS Deputy Commissioner Jill Krauss said in a statement. "Over the past year, ACS has added experienced staff to monitor the safety of programs, enlisted the NYPD to assess security at all Close to Home sites, and, since 2013, we have shut down three programs that were unable to adhere to our standards." advertisement | [advertise on newsday](#) Last year, authorities arrested a worker at a now-closed Close to Home program group home after three teenage boys escaped on his watch and raped a woman. Prosecutors said the worker had made false entries in a group home logbook indicating he checked on the boys every half hour and that they were in their beds. Three additional group home staffers were arrested in April. They have all pleaded not guilty. The boys were charged as adults with raping a 33-year-old woman in Manhattan. Follow Michael Balsamo on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/MikeBalsamo1>. Source: <http://www.newsday.com/news/region-state/audit-nyc-agency-didn-t-properly-monitor-troubled-minors-1.11871326>

Lawsuit demands safer conditions for S.C. foster children [Lauren Sausser Email @laurenmsausser](#) Jun 3 2016 12:05 pm The 2015 investigation "Warehousing our Children" shows South Carolina places its youngest foster children in group homes and institutions at a higher rate than any other state in the country. [x](#) The Department of Social Services announced Friday it settled a class-action lawsuit that alleged 11 children in foster care were abused, neglected, separated from their siblings and over-medicated. Part of the settlement will require South Carolina to find alternatives to group homes and institutions for children. The Post and Courier published a series of articles in 2015 titled "[Warehousing our Children](#)" that showed the state places its youngest foster children into group homes and institutions at a much higher rate than any other state in the country. Many experts find this practice troubling because research proves children tend to thrive when they live with families, not in a group setting. More than 3,000 South Carolina children have been placed in state custody. Data provided by the Department of Social Services last year shows more than 20 percent of them lived in a group home, institution or orphanage. Friday's settlement also requires the Department of Social Services to reduce caseworker loads, to improve safety oversight and to make sure foster children receive adequate medical care. "We think it's a wonderful step forward for children in foster care," said Sue Berkowitz, executive director of the South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center. The settlement does not award money to the foster children, Berkowitz said, adding, "It's all systemic relief. It's class-action relief for all of the kids who are in foster care." Her group, in partnership with Children's Rights, a national advocacy organization, filed the lawsuit against South Carolina on behalf of the foster children last year. Camden attorney Robert Butcher represents former foster children who say they were sexually abused by adults and other children in state custody. He called Friday's settlement "dramatic." Similar settlements in other states have prompted major changes, he said. "In those states, they've had legislatures that have had the desire to make the changes," said Butcher, who was not involved in the class-action lawsuit. "We always talk about unfunded mandates. If it's a mandate that no one's supporting, we've got some big problems." Foster children have no voice in the Statehouse, Butcher said. "Foster kids don't have lobbyists. They don't have special interests," he said. "They're going to be the first ones our politicians drop when they need to cut costs." Berkowitz agreed that the settlement will require the state to spend more money. "They cannot help kids if they don't put resources into the services that they need," she said. "That's part of the reason they're in such a big mess to begin with." In a press release, the Department of Social Services said the settlement will avoid "prolonged, expensive litigation and allows DSS to continue to focus on implementing reforms that will improve the quality of care for children in foster care in South Carolina." Gov. Nikki Haley, a named defendant in the lawsuit, issued a prepared statement Friday through her spokeswoman. "There is nothing more important than the safety of our children and our most vulnerable citizens, particularly those under the care of DSS. Whether it's increasing the number of caseworkers or working with partners across state government and in our communities, we remain focused on strengthening DSS," Haley said. "This settlement agreement represents yet another step in this process, and I applaud the work Director (Susan) Alford and her team do everyday." Department of Social Services spokeswoman Karen Wingo said Alford was not available to discuss the settlement Friday. Alford also offered a prepared statement: "We will not reach these outcomes overnight; but our goal is to establish a strong foundation which builds a continuum of services for children that will be sustainable." Reach Lauren Sausser at 843-937-5598. Source: <http://www.postandcourier.com/20160603/160609795/lawsuit-demands-safer-conditions-for-sc-foster-children>

'Supergirl' Star Jeremy Jordan Begg Fans to Help Rescue Cousin From 'Ex-Gay' Camp TV | By [Itay Hod](#) on June 7, 2016 @ 4:55 pm Follow [@ItayHod](#) [Email](#) [Print](#) Related [CBS's 'Supergirl' Casts 'Last Five Years' Star Jeremy Jordan Watch Anna Kendrick and Jeremy Jordan Sing While Driving Recklessly in 'The Last Five Years' \(Video\) Jeremy Jordan's Followup to 'Smash' Begins Production With Anna Kendrick as Co-Star](#) "Sarah's parents... sent Sarah away against her will to an East Texas Christian boarding facility for troubled teens to 'pray away the gay,' actor writes "Supergirl" star [Jeremy Jordan](#) is asking fans to help rescue his 17-year-old cousin from an "ex-gay" conversion camp in Texas where she has been placed against her will. "Meet my cousin Sarah. At

17, her future looks bright. She is in the top 10% of her class, runs cross-country and belongs to the National Honor Society and the debate team. She is also gay," Jordan wrote [on his Facebook page](#). "Like any high school kids in a relationship, Sarah and her girlfriend wanted to go to prom together," he wrote. "But when they did that, Sarah's parents, who believe that homosexuality is a sin and abnormal, sent Sarah away against her will to an East Texas Christian boarding facility for troubled teens to 'pray away the gay.'" Also Read: [Nick Jonas, Demi Lovato Cancel North Carolina Concerts Over Anti-LGBT Bill](#) Jordan also set up a [GoFundMe](#) campaign to help cover legal expenses to get Sarah released from the facility. So far, the page has raised more than \$33,000 toward its \$100,000 goal. At least one Hollywood friend has already agreed to help. Colton Haynes, the former "Arrow" star who recently came out as gay, has contributed \$5,000 to Jordan's campaign. This absolutely breaks my heart. Pls help [Jeremy Jordan's](#) cousin be her true self. [#FreeSarah](#). Join me & donate. <https://t.co/Iroz5nN8W4> — Colton Haynes (@ColtonLHaynes) [June 6, 2016](#) And gay dating app Grindr asked its Twitter followers to help. Help [#SaveSarah](#) from a year of useless, damaging therapy. <https://t.co/fb33X4tqJ2> — Grindr (@Grindr) [June 7, 2016](#) Texas State laws allows parents to place their children in a residential boarding facility until they turn 18. Also Read: [North Carolina, Mississippi's Anti-Gay Laws Prompt UK Warnings to Citizens Traveling to America](#) According to the [National Center for Lesbian Rights](#), conversion therapy can be extremely dangerous: "Research shows that lesbian, gay, and bisexual young adults who reported higher levels of family rejection during adolescence were more than eight times more likely to report having attempted suicide, more than five times more likely to report high levels of depression, more than three times more likely to use illegal drugs, and more than three times more likely to report having engaged in unprotected sexual intercourse compared with peers from families that reported no or low levels of family rejection." A handful of [states have banned conversion therapy](#), including California, New Jersey, Oregon, Illinois, New York, and Vermont. Also Read: [Mumford & Sons Donate Proceeds From North Carolina Show to Charity](#) Here's Jordan's emotional plea in full: Meet my cousin Sarah. At 17, her future looks bright. She is in the top 10% of her class, runs cross-country and belongs to the National Honor Society and the debate team. She is also gay. Like any high school kids in a relationship, Sarah and her girlfriend wanted to go to prom together. But when they did that, Sarah's parents, who believe that homosexuality is a sin and abnormal, sent Sarah away against her will to an East Texas Christian boarding facility for troubled teens to "pray away the gay." Not only does this type of "therapy" not work, mental health professionals from organizations like the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics have found it to be psychologically damaging, especially for minors. And Sarah has been told that she must stay in this facility for a whole year. So instead of being surrounded by friends and extended family who love and support Sarah for who she is, she'll be isolated in a place where the fact that she is gay is treated as a sin and an illness. Instead of preparing for college and competing in the state debate tournament, she'll be doing forced labor every day and enduring Bible-based "therapy" for her "disease." She is not allowed phone calls or email or any form of computer communication. She is also not allowed visitors and cannot leave the property. She is completely cut off from the outside world. She tried to run away, but was caught by the staff and returned to the facility. Sarah's extended family and close friends are trying to win her release through the legal system, but it's not cheap. Attorney's fees in the first few weeks have already exceeded \$20,000, and they are continuing to mount, with a full hearing set for July. Sarah needs your help. But this is about more than just one gay kid — if we free Sarah we can help show that it's not okay to try to make gay teens straight by sending them away and using the threat of God against them. Spread the word so being gay doesn't mean losing freedom for Sarah. [#savesarah](#). Source: <http://www.thewrap.com/supergirl-jeremy-jordan-cousin-ex-gay-camp/>

New sex charges filed against ex-MK Place staff member By Debbie Bryce For the Journal Jun 7, 2016 [\(6\)](#) prev next POCATELLO — Prosecutors filed new charges against a former MK Place worker accused of having inappropriate sexual contact with underage clients at the adolescent residential center. Charges were dismissed against Julie Ann Gewarges, 30, in April. She was originally charged with two counts of felony lewd conduct related to one underage male victim. Following a preliminary hearing, Sixth District Magistrate Thomas C. Clark dismissed one count, and Gewarges was bound over to the trial court for the second charge. According to court records, the second charge was later dismissed by the prosecutor. Story continues below video The former MK Place staff member is now charged with four felony counts of sexual abuse by soliciting a minor under 16 to take part in a sexual act. Bannock County Deputy Prosecutor Zach Parris said if convicted of the charges against her, Gewarges could be sentenced to up to 25 years in prison for each count. Parris said the new charges were the result of additional investigation in the case and the new complaint involves a second victim. The deputy prosecutor said authorities are in contact with both victims and their families. The new charges were filed on June 1, and Gewarges will make her first appearance in court on June 17 when she be arraigned on the new charges. Gewarges was previously represented in the case by Shane Reichert of Pocatello. The charges against Gewarges stemmed from an incident on July 4, 2015, inside a van en route back to MK Place, 110 19th Avenue, following a Fourth of July celebration at the North Bannock County Fairgrounds. During the preliminary hearing in April, a 15-year-old male victim told the court that Gewarges made several sexually explicit comments to teens inside the van and engaged in lewd behavior with his friend. The boy's father, who asked to remain anonymous to protect his son, said he's pleased that charges were refiled in the case. "Gewarges needs to be exposed," he said. "It's like she went on a rampage against children." The underage male is currently receiving counseling, and his father said the teen is prepared to take the stand again. The man has taken no civil action against MK Place or Gewarges, but he said he wants the juvenile treatment center and the former staff member held accountable. MK place is a residential treatment center specializing in young people 13 to 17 years of age. The center has not released any statement regarding the July 2015 incident or the charges against Gewarges, and the director did not respond for this story Tuesday. Source: http://idahostatejournal.com/members/new-sex-charges-filed-against-ex-mk-place-staff-member/article_eccce4e8-5a05-54ed-9bfe-1efe5abc7652.html

Lawsuit alleging abuse, neglect of teen filed against Zelenople group home Updated: May 11, 2016 - 7:32 PM 140 Share this with your friends! From To Compose your message Thanks for sharing with your followers! Lawsuit alleging abuse, neglect of teen filed against Zelenople group home <http://on.wpxi.com/1TbutGy> ZELIENOPLE, Pa. — A family is suing Glade Run Lutheran Services, a group home in Zelenople, claiming that a 13-year-old boy was abused and neglected at the facility. Attorneys for the boy and his family spoke Wednesday with Channel 11 News after filing the civil lawsuit. "The thing that gets this little boy excited is the thought that Glade Run will no longer exist," Nick Indovina of the Pisanchyn law firm said. Glade Run Lutheran Services in Zelenople Channel 11 News has covered the residential treatment facility, which cares for children and teenagers with severe mental health issues, for months. State inspectors found evidence last October of children having sex with other children on campus. As a result, the state Department of Human Services stripped the 56-bed facility of its license, which Glade Run is attempting to get back through an appeals process with the state. The campus has three additional facilities that have remained open pending the appeal decision. No criminal charges were ever filed, but the state mandated changes, including firing the staff, hiring new employees and adding security cameras. Indovina said the changes are not enough. The lawsuit filed Wednesday details allegations too graphic for Channel 11 News to report about what the boy, now 15, endured from March to July 2015 while he was being treated at the group home for severe mental health issues. The suit alleges that the staff failed to keep him safe from other children. While Glade Run had yet to see the lawsuit, officials issued the following statement to Channel 11 News: "Glade Run Lutheran Services serves our communities' most challenging and traumatized youth, providing residential, school-based and community-based offerings to thousands throughout Western Pennsylvania each year. Many have complex mental health issues and behaviors that necessitate residential treatment for stabilization and healing. The safety of our clients remains our first priority, and we are committed to providing the safest environment for their treatment and recovery. "The provision of human services to individuals with mental health issues is not without risks. These risks include physical harm to staff and potential litigation. The privacy rights of our clients preclude us from discussing any allegation that may arise. Glade Run has a longstanding track record of more than 160 years of successful care and treatment of traumatized youth, and is dedicated to protecting the best interests of those we serve." Source: <http://www.wpxi.com/news/lawsuit-alleging-abuse-neglect-of-teen-filed-against-zelenople-group-home/276616277>

Oregon plans to revoke another foster care license 1 / 6 foster care feb. 3, 2016 Oregon's then-interim human services director Clyde Saiki, left, and Dani Ledezma, a policy adviser for Gov. Kate Brown, prepare to testify to lawmakers in support of foster care reform legislation. Saiki is among those sued Thursday over treatment of two vulnerable preschoolers. Denis C. Theriault/staff [Denis C. Theriault | The Oregonian/OregonLive Print Email](#) By [Hillary Borrud | The Oregonian/OregonLive](#) The Oregonian Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#) on June 09, 2016 at 12:14 PM, updated June 09, 2016 at 1:30 PM 0 shares OAnother state-licensed facility for foster children could soon shut down, after investigators found neglect, maltreatment and failures to protect health and safety. The Oregon Department of Human Services plans to revoke the state license of Chehalem Youth and Family Services in Newberg, which currently provides behavioral rehabilitation for 16 children. The agency sent out a notice of intent to revoke the license on Wednesday. According to that notice, obtained by The Oregonian/OregonLive, investigators found youth went missing from the facility overnight without the staff noticing, staff failed to notify emergency

personnel when a youth was unconscious for nearly an hour, and staff did not file mandatory reports on sexual assault allegations. Gene Evans, a spokesman for the department, said Thursday morning that Chehalem was "one of those where I think the agency's finally reached an 'enough is enough.'" The state's Office of Adult Abuse Prevention and Investigations conducted multiple investigations of the facility starting in September. Human Services officials took action after an increase in reported problems at Chehalem Youth and Family Services starting last fall, according to the notice of intent to revoke the facility's license. The state also discovered Chehalem Youth and Family Services had financial problems and "is on the path to insolvency," according to the state. All of the residents are wards of the juvenile court, according to the state's notice. Evans said the state has begun seeking other placements for children at the facility, which serves children with debilitating psychosocial, emotional and behavioral disorders. Human Services officials had been tracking issues at Chehalem Youth and Family Services for a while, and had placed it on a watch list of licensed facilities with recurring problems. Evans said Chehalem Youth and Family Services was one of the facilities that spent the longest time on the department's so-called "radar list," which was created in 2012. Chehalem Youth and Family Services has 30 days from the notice to request a hearing to make the case to licensing staff that the facility should be allowed to keep its license. If the facility does not, DHS will revoke its license. — Hillary Borrud hborrud@oregonian.com Source: http://www.oregonlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2016/06/dhs_revoke_license.html

NY group home operator sued in probes of alleged abuse By - Associated Press - Thursday, June 9, 2016 ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) - A federal judge has ordered an upstate New York group home operator to provide records and access to a legal services organization representing two youths allegedly attacked by staff. Judge Glenn Suddaby says Thursday that **Northern Rivers Family Services** cannot block Disability Rights New York from its federally authorized monitoring of the disabled. Disability Rights received complaints about a 13-year-old punched and choked at a Schenectady group home in 2014, and a 15-year-old left unattended at a bus stop and choked there in early 2015. Northern Rivers, which initially denied access, says it's committed to protecting the rights of people in its care and welcomes any group with legal authority to monitor its efforts. It told the judge both youths left the home last year and two staff were fired. Source: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/jun/9/ny-group-home-operator-sued-in-probes-of-alleged-a/>

Questions surround death of 2-year-old child in foster care By Danielle Taylor June 11, 2016 Updated Jun 11, 2016 at 12:07 AM CDT Cloquet, MN (NNCNOW.com) -- A funeral was held Friday morning on the Fond du Lac Reservation for a two-year-old girl who drowned in a plastic laundry bin in a Bemidji Foster home last Sunday. According to a criminal complaint, Kira Friedman was placed in the shower and left unattended by her foster dad, who is now facing manslaughter charges. "This didn't have to happen. This little girl didn't have to die. She should be right here with her parents at this time," said Patti Larsen, a family spokesperson. Larsen, who serves as the Sacred Hoop Coalition Director, was shepherding 2-year-old Kira Friedman's case through the St. Louis County Court system on behalf of the little girl's family, and believes her death was preventable. "The maternal grandmother identified numerous people who would be potential placements for the child," she said. Larsen wanted to ensure Kira was placed in a Native American home. Therefore, she says the County let this child down when they removed her from a Native foster home, and placed her with a white foster family in Duluth. "Kira was just a number, was shipped off to a place," Larsen said. At the family's request, Leech Lake Reservation got involved to find a Native foster home. When Kira was placed in a home in Bemidji, red flags were sent up right away. "There was too many children in that place to properly care for a child with special needs, such as Kira," said Larsen. Larsen says keeping Kira in the hands of the St. Louis County Court System is where her parents went wrong. However, a spokeswoman with the county says the child was no longer in their custody. In a written statement the county said, "This case has been under the jurisdiction of Leech Lake Tribal Court for close to a year and custody has been with the Leech Lake Band. This matter is under active investigation by the authorities involved, so we would have no further comment on it." Nonetheless, Larsen stresses the importance of applying the Indian Child Welfare Act to foster children. The act is a federal law that seeks to keep native children with native families. "Follow ICWA. It's there for a purpose. It was placed there for a purpose in 1978 when so many kids were being lost," said Larsen. In addition to the Indian Child Welfare Act, Larsen also mentioned the Minnesota Indian Preservation Act should be followed by government agencies, when dealing with Native foster children. Source: <http://www.northlandsnewscenter.com/news/local/Questions-surround-death-of-2-year-old-child-in-foster-care-382559811.html>

Three central Ohio residents who endured horrific foster care child abuse have joined several young survivors going public with their stories THE ASSOCIATED PRESS June 11, 2016 - 9:36 am EDT [AAA](#) COLUMBUS, Ohio — Three central Ohio residents who endured horrific foster care child abuse have joined several young survivors going public with their stories. The Columbus Dispatch reports (<http://bit.ly/1YP0lCx>) that Julius Kissinger and his siblings, Jermaine Ferguson and Valnita Ferguson—all in their 20s—have posted accounts of their experiences online as part of a nationwide foster-care awareness campaign. Their adoptive parents, James and Vonda Ferguson, are serving 65-year sentences for the abuse. Five of the couple's children were tortured and beaten until they bled at the couple's Springfield and Marysville homes. They were rescued in 2004 and later scattered to different homes. Sandy Santana, the executive director of the New York City-based legal advocacy organization Children's Rights, says part of the campaign's aim to put a real face on foster care. Source: <http://www.dailyjournal.net/view/story/07d4bae256b0451488890d1d32c1e879/OH--Child-Abuse-Survivors>

Former pill mill doctor's home to become drug treatment center By WSAZ News Staff | Posted: Fri 4:26 PM, Jun 10, 2016 GREENUP COUNTY, Ky. (WSAZ) — A new treatment center is opening at a mansion owned by a former pill mill doctor who spent time in prison. Recovery Works has announced it will open its second treatment facility in Kentucky. The facility will be housed in the former home of David Procter, a doctor who ran a pill mill out of his South Shore practice. Procter moved to the US from Canada, opening his practice in the early 1980's. His practice was then converted to a pill-mill in the mid-1990's with the help of 3 former associates. Dr. Procter, as well as two other partners, traded pills for cash regularly, with prices ranging from \$80 to even \$120 per prescription. During the trial of one of his former business managers, Procter testified he saw as many as 80 patients per day. Procter pleaded guilty to charges of conspiring to illegally distribute substances in 2003. In 2006, Procter appealed his conviction and his 200-month sentence was reduced to 141-months. He finished his sentence in 2013. Procter's old mansion will hold 32 beds once it is converted to a treatment facility and it will be an unlocked facility, meaning patients will be able to come and go. Recovery Works says, on average, their patients stay three weeks. They offer residential, outpatient and transitional living programs and 24 hour nursing coverage. The center, which will operate under the Pinnacle Treatment banner, says they plan to hire locally in order to staff their workforce. The organization says they will break ground on the new facility June 15th, with an expected opening date set for July 2016. Source: <http://www.wsaz.com/content/news/Former-pill-mill-doctors-home-to-become-drug-treatment-center-382519111.html>

A staffer at a state-run treatment center for troubled youth is accused of having a sexual relationship with a teen who made headlines in 2013 after shooting and killing his parents and three younger siblings THE ASSOCIATED PRESS June 15, 2016 - 4:37 pm EDT [AAA](#) ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico — A staffer at a New Mexico-run treatment center for troubled youth is accused of having a sexual relationship with a teen who made headlines in 2013 after shooting and killing his parents and three younger siblings. Amber Lucero, 35, made her first appearance in court Tuesday. She's charged with sexual contact of a minor by a person in a position of authority. It was not immediately clear if she had an attorney. Lucero works at the Sequoyah Adolescent Treatment Center where Nehemiah Griego — now 19 — had received therapy prior to pleading guilty to charges stemming from the slayings at his family home just south of Albuquerque. According to a criminal complaint, some of Griego's family members learned of the relationship and reported it last week to administrators at the Albuquerque treatment center. State Health Department spokesman David Morgan said the allegations are troubling and that the agency, which oversees the center, is taking them seriously. "DOH placed the employee on leave Monday and we are moving forward with termination," he told The Associated Press in an email. "We have also been cooperating with state police on their criminal investigation and will continue to do so." Albuquerque television station KRQE first reported allegations about the relationship. The criminal complaint stated that Griego confirmed for investigators that he was in a romantic relationship with Lucero and that the relationship began in the latter half of 2014. The two began spending time together. Walks around the facility led to holding hands and kissing, and Griego told investigators that he had touched Lucero's breasts over her clothing. Griego was reluctant to talk about their relationship because he cared for Lucero and didn't want to get her in trouble, according to the complaint. When Griego was moved to another facility, authorities said, the two continued to exchange letters. In an interview with police, Lucero said she believed she loved Griego and that she "weakened" when he asked for a kiss. She went on to say that she overstepped her boundaries by becoming "too much of a friend with him and caring too much." During Tuesday's court hearing, the judge ordered Lucero not to have any contact with Griego or return to the treatment center. Griego will remain in state custody until he is 21 as part of a

sentence handed down in March for the shooting deaths of his parents and siblings. He was 15 when he opened fire inside the family home. Prosecutors are appealing the sentence. Source: <http://www.dailyjournal.net/view/story/8dbd234b071f4b649928c5b100e17666/US--Teen-Killer-Relationship>

Rapes, Daily Beatings, and No Escape: Christian School Was Hell For These Boys Blue Creek Academy was an abusive hell on earth, former students say—and the principal who ran it is now heading up a new Bible school in another state. Jacob* dressed himself in a camouflage jacket and a matching beanie on the summer morning he ran away into the West Virginia hills. At 14 years old, he was one of the youngest, smallest, and longest-attending students at [Blue Creek Academy](#), a religious reform school for boys from which he was desperate to escape. Blue Creek Academy was made up of an old schoolhouse and several cabins situated on a remote campground in central West Virginia. A mission of the nearby [Independent Fundamental Baptist](#) church, pastor James Waldeck advertised Blue Creek as an “alternative to today’s degenerate, secular culture and education methods,” and took in boys who had been in trouble at home—both locally and from as far away as Texas—to be reformed. Its principal, 35-year-old JR Thompson, had reopened the church’s campgrounds in 2010, renamed it Blue Creek Academy, and [marketed](#) the boarding school, which he ran with his wife, Hannah, as a godly answer for “at-risk” teens with emotional and behavioral disabilities and Christian parents with \$1,000 a month to spend on their salvation. “We can’t wait to watch God move as he helps us snatch troubled souls out of Satan’s hand,” Thompson wrote on the school’s now-defunct website. What the boys found when they got to Blue Creek Academy was something else entirely—an all-too-common story for victims of [Lester Roloff-inspired homes](#), which thrive as part of the unregulated [religious teen reform industry](#). Along with a strict Bible-based curriculum, boys at Blue Creek Academy were allegedly subject to isolation, physical beatings and mistreatment, and at least two students reported sexual abuse by another student, according to court documents from [a pending civil case](#) brought against the school by one boy’s guardian; complaints and reports from West Virginia’s Department of Health and Human Resources obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request by The Daily Beast; and interviews—with a lawyer representing three Blue Creek Academy students, three other former students, one parent, and the Kanawha County Sheriff’s Office. Once at Blue Creek, the boys were cut off completely from the outside world, former students and their representatives claim. Bunkered in dilapidated quarters that were [infested with rats and mice](#), the boys weren’t permitted to speak in public unless it was to sing hymns for local churches and the elderly. They weren’t taken to [the doctor](#), and their calls home were [monitored](#) to intercept any unhappy tidings. When the boys weren’t going to church, doing manual labor, or [memorizing Bible verses](#), they were in a kind of school—seated in desks facing the wall, completing [Bible-based academic workbooks](#) for hours. Staff at Blue Creek Academy educated children using the Accelerated Christian Education (A.C.E.) curriculum, from a homeschooling supply company whose workbooks promote the Bible as a literal history book and stress Creationism as science. (At one time the company even used [the Loch Ness Monster](#) to “disprove” Darwin’s theory of evolution.) [Following A.C.E. guidelines](#), desks faced the wall, and were usually surrounded by dividers to block out any distractions. “They basically handed you a book and said, ‘Learn,’” one former student, who asked not to be named, told The Daily Beast. In lieu of teachers, ACE only requires “facilitators” to check students work and record grades, but even that was neglected at Blue Creek, according to several students who told The Daily Beast their time at Thompson’s school had to be made up once they returned to public school because none of their work “counted.” Even the director’s adopted son, 19-year-old Justin Thompson, who lived at Blue Creek starting in 2010, told The Daily Beast over Facebook chat, “I passed high school but [JR Thompson] never kept a lot on record, so I have no proof.” But the educational neglect was nothing compared to the punishments given by Thompson, former students allege. Get The Beast In Your Inbox! Daily Digest Start and finish your day with the smartest, sharpest takes from The Daily Beast Cheat Sheet A speedy, smart summary of news and must-reads from The Daily Beast and across the Web By clicking “Subscribe,” you agree to have read the [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) Thank You! You are now subscribed to the Daily Digest and Cheat Sheet. We will not share your email with anyone for any reason Boys who acted out, or refused to obey, might have their heads shaved [like Jacob](#). Attempts to run away were [allegedly](#) penalized with food: an all-bean or asparagus diet or being made to chug water then denied use of the bathroom. They were all allegedly beaten—with bare hands, paddles, and boards. Jacob—whose new guardian is [now suing](#) Thompson and Waldeck for the maltreatment the boy allegedly endured there—said he was thrown into a wall when he wouldn’t confess to breaking a bench. “Mr. Thompson was very aggressive when it came to paddlings,” said one former student, reached through Facebook, who says he was sent to Blue Creek Academy for drinking and smoking pot. The boy, who asked not to be named because of his remaining ties to Blue Creek staff, said that he was hit nearly every day with Thompson’s bare hands or a two-inch thick wood plank with holes they called “[The Hillbilly Hot Seat](#)” for lying, or cursing, even singing a secular song in the shower. “It was hell,” he said. “They forced unwanted religion on us, made us do labor that we hated, and made us run up and down the driveway. They used a board to hit us if we didn’t do what we were asked,” he said. At least two of the boys there were [the victims of sexual abuse](#). As detailed on an intake form from the division of Child Protective Services, obtained by a FOIA request from The Daily Beast, a 17-year-old boy—who was sent to Blue Creek from another teen reform school in Wisconsin where he had been originally placed and subsequently booted for molesting boys—was sexually abusing two of the younger students in 2012. Thompson—whom two former Blue Creek families [fault](#) with failing to supervise a known abuser—did report the older boy to police. When questioned, the older boy admitted to Thompson and police that he had raped one boy and molested another; he was arrested and sent to a juvenile detention center, where he was charged with four counts of 3rd degree sexual assault and three counts of 1st degree sexual abuse. A separate allegation of sexual assault by a different boy at Blue Creek Academy is still currently under investigation, according to Sgt. Brian Humphreys, the public information officer for the Kanawha Sheriff’s Office. Blue Creek administrators had [their own personal history with CPS](#): one had been investigated for the alleged sexual abuse of his biological children, while another had been reported for unspecified allegations against his adopted son. Both investigations were closed as “incomplete.” [On the intake form](#), the CPS investigator noted there was not enough supervision at the school and took issue with the policy of corporal punishment, but neither concern was enough to remove the children. Besides, where would they go? “The parents of all the boys do not seem interested in coming to get any of them,” [the worker wrote](#). Handout But Jacob wanted out. So he waited until the morning of June, 10, 2014 when Thompson would be off campus. As the other boys gathered for prayers and school, Jacob went back to his cabin, telling them he had forgotten to brush his teeth. Then he made a run for it. When the staff at BCA realized Jacob had run, they called Thompson back to look for him. After hours of fruitless searching, Thompson called local law enforcement, who helped him search the surrounding woods—but Jacob was gone. The next evening, a man found Jacob begging for change at a neighboring county supermarket 10 miles from Blue Creek and called Clay County Child Protective Services. Jacob smelled foul and the [soles of his shoes](#) had been worn bare from running. He was hungry, dirty, and [scared](#), according to the CPS intake form. Jacob begged the sheriff not to send him back. Kanawha County Child Protective Services went out to investigate Jacob’s abuse allegations and [interview the boys](#) at Blue Creek. When they got past Thompson, who initially refused to let them in the door, they found seven boys who [all disclosed allegations of abuse and neglect](#) by Thompson. The caseworker wrote that, in her interviews, the children told her Thompson had left marks from beatings and his poor supervision allowed for the molestation of several children; guns, drugs, and alcohol were also being brought on campgrounds. The official finding was [maltreatment](#). “There was a lack of oversight,” said Troy Giatras, the attorney [litigating a case](#) for Jacob’s guardian against Thompson, Waldeck, and Blue Creek Academy. “The corporal punishment, the manual labor, the isolation, and the allegations of abuse that were never investigated? Other kids have reached out to us, so I know this isn’t an isolated incident.” “You have a place that is operating without a good charter and not well supervised by the Department of Health and Human Resources, and parents with troubled kids who are expecting a religious school to help.” No one from Blue Creek chose to comment for this story. Calls to Wadeck and Bible Baptist Church, and calls and emails sent to JR Thompson, his wife Hannah, and two other couples who worked at the camp during the time of alleged abuse were also not returned. In answers to a number of pending lawsuits, however, including one on behalf of Jacob, Waldeck and Thompson deny all charges of neglect or mistreatment of the boys at Blue Creek Academy. After her interviews, with the help of the Kanawha County Sheriff, the Child Protective Services caseworker brought the kids to a pizza parlor while they organized a return to their homes. While the children could be removed—because Blue Creek was unlicensed as a residential home—the Department of Children and Families had [no power to shut the boarding school down](#). Like thousands of other religious private schools around the country—many of which become havens for abuse—Blue Creek Academy operated unlicensed, unregulated, and wholly unmonitored by the state. The only avenue for closure rested with the Board of Education, an entity that until then, had also had minimal interaction with the school. As in many other states, religious private schools in West Virginia aren’t held to the same standards as their nonreligious counterparts. Though [the ways in which they are exempt](#) varies from state to state, for many schools that operate with a religious mission—80 percent of private schools nationwide—accreditation or licensing, the hiring of certified teachers or the approval of curriculum, or even simply notifying the state as to its existence is completely voluntary. “It’s a little scary when you think about it,” Betty Jordan, executive assistant to West Virginia’s Education Superintendent told The Daily Beast, explaining Blue Creek’s “Exemption K status,” a category that simply requires any religious school to send a letter to the state of its intent to operate and file annual test scores. “There is very very limited oversight. Actually there is no oversight. So basically if I wanted to tomorrow, I could write a letter to the state saying I want to open a

school and I could open a school.” There are 130 such schools in West Virginia. Jordan said the exemptions are “hardly ever” revoked. State superintendent Michael Martirano did initiate Blue Creek’s closure, by revoking Blue Creek’s exemption status shortly after the children were removed. And in his [September 2014 revocation letter](#), Martirano ostensibly put an end to any ideas of Blue Creek reopening. He wrote: “Due to the egregious nature of the non-compliance, children’s health, safety and welfare, any future attempts by the school to seek reinstatement of the exemption status will be denied by this office.” Notably, the superintendent [had shuttered](#) another school 75 miles south of Blue Creek Academy the month before, after 26 years of operation. Martirano forced Miracle Meadows, a Seventh Day Adventist boarding school for “at risk” boys and girls from 6 to 17 years old, to close after a DHHR investigation found that school officials had failed to report an instance of sexual abuse of one student by another and that a school janitor had restrained students in handcuffs until their wrists bled and choked others who misbehaved. The Department of Health and Human Resources had received 13 formal complaints about the school since 2009, four of which alleged sexual misconduct, [according to an Associated Press report](#) on records obtained under the Freedom of Information Act. Miracle Meadows’ former director Susan Gayle Clark, 69, pled guilty this year to three misdemeanors counts of child neglect creating a substantial risk of injury, failure to report by a mandated reporter, and obstructing a law enforcement officer. She was [sentenced](#) to six months and 30 days in prison. Abuse at religious schools like Blue Creek Academy and Miracle Meadows is underreported and frighteningly prevalent, according to Marci Hamilton, a professor at the Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University and author of *God vs the Gavel: The Perils of Extreme Religious Liberty*. “These small institutions can be very dangerous to kids because they are isolated and fly under the radar,” Hamilton told The Daily Beast. Because some fundamentalist parents agree with physical abuse as discipline and sexual abuse is often dealt with internally or covered up, Hamilton said, it can be “easy for these groups to get away with it for quite a while, while endangering a series of children.” “This is a common problem, which calls for a National Commission on child sex abuse and for states to work more cooperatively on tracking entities that permit and foment child sex abuse and neglect.” Indeed, a lack of cooperation by states is the very thing that allows abusive Christian teen reform homes closed by authorities in one state to be reopened in another, sometimes using the same name, and frequently run by the same operators. via Facebook After Olin King [pled “no contest”](#) to charges in South Carolina stemming from [the isolation, imprisonment, and beatings of children](#) in his care at The New Bethany Baptist School for Boys in 1984, he packed up and moved, opening the aptly-named [Second Chance Ranch](#) in Danbury, North Carolina. A [state bill](#) that would have licensed such boarding schools proposed in response to New Bethany’s closing was protested by local pastors who called it an “intrusion into freedom of the church’s rights.” Today South Carolina is one of the states that exempts religious schools from [licensing rules](#) that govern other residential youth homes. In 2009, a [Lester Roloff disciple](#), Pastor Jack Patterson, was forced to close his tough-love boarding school, Reclamation Ranch in Alabama, after [allegations of torture](#) and a police raid that turned up guns and shackles. As part of a plea deal, Patterson traded in a felony aggravated child abuse for [a verbal harassment misdemeanor and a \\$500 fine](#). Though he did close Reclamation Ranch, Patterson opened a home for adult men in its place, maintained his school for girls nearby, and told a [Mother Jones reporter](#) in 2011, he planned to open more homes in Ohio, Florida, and Michigan. In 2012, Alexandra Zayas, a Pulitzer Prize finalist for [her reporting on religious boarding schools in the state](#), wrote that Florida preacher Clayton “Buddy” Maynard was housing five children when, just two years earlier his isolated [Heritage Boys Academy](#) had been closed after a state investigation found that boys had been abused there, including one boy who was whipped 1,330 times. “None of the state agencies that oversee such facilities were aware the church was caring for children,” Zayas wrote. And Florida pastor Russ Cookston’s Lighthouse ministries school was closed in 2013 after being plagued [with allegations](#) of physical and sexual abuse and solitary confinement. According to his Facebook and LinkedIn pages, though, one month after he closed up his shop in the small town of Jay, he was working as an associate pastor at a Master’s Ranch, a home for troubled boys in Missouri, a state with [notoriously lax child welfare laws](#). In an interview with The Daily Beast, Master’s Ranch administrator David Bosley confirmed Cookston’s position as a senior staff member, praising him as “almost too gentle for this job,” “extremely kind,” and “extremely patient.” “I do know when you get in this business—and I’ve been working with kids for almost 30 years—that you will always be accused of abuse by someone,” Bosley said. “I firmly believe every student should be heard and every allegation thoroughly investigated for the safety of all kids, but you’re always going to have one or two disgruntled kids or parents who are trying to find a way out of the program or who just hate you for trying to help him.” [The Government Accountability Office](#) found thousands of allegations of abuse at teen reform homes and camps from 1990 to 2007, some of which involved the death of a young person. The 2007 report was unable to provide a specific number however, as “it could not locate a single Web site, federal agency, or other entity that collects comprehensive nationwide data.” In fact, the only tracking of these types of homes and the abuse that often occurs in them, comes from bloggers and advocacy groups. Angela Smith, 42, runs HEAL, one of the most prominent organizations working to expose and ultimately close abusive youth facilities. Blue Creek Academy is one of some 500 past and present residential programs in the U.S. that currently make up HEAL’s [watch-list of fraudulent and abusive programs](#) in the U.S. “Abuse is rampant because many of these facilities operate with little or no oversight and accountability,” Smith said. Even in the states with licensing boards like Montana and Utah, she said, “the people who own and operate these youth programs are the ones doing the oversight.” “The fox is watching the hen-house so to speak.” Nobody seems to be watching JR Thompson. By the time the Department of Education mailed the revocation letter to Blue Creek Academy, principal Thompson had moved to Montana, to a three-bedroom single family house on 11 acres in De Borgia, a six-mile-wide town near the Idaho border that, as of the last census count, was home to 78 people. Within a year, and with the blessing of his [“sending church”](#) in West Virginia, Thompson had registered his new home as Canaan’s Land Baptist Church with the Secretary of State. By August 2015, the Canaan’s Land Boy’s Ranch, a non-public secondary school, was registered as a business. “Even though our name is Canaan’s Land Boys Ranch, we are not currently in a ranch setting,” Thompson says in a video advertisement for the \$900-a-month boarding school running out of his new home. “We do plan to expand and move to a location where we will be able to acquire animals for the boys to work with.” There is space for eight children, according to the Canaan’s Land Boys Ranch website, and so far, two boys, ages 14 and 15, currently live, go to church with, and are educated by the Thompsons. The minors both appear in promotional videos for Canaan’s Land Boys Ranch, where they decry their past lives of “doing the wrong things,” and being disrespectful to their parents. They’re wearing bowties in Facebook photos as they sing hymns with the Thompsons for a church audience. The existence of Thompson’s new endeavor came as a surprise to Montana school officials. “This is the first I’ve heard anything about Canaan’s Land Boys Ranch,” said Mineral County Superintendent of Schools Mary Yarnall, who explained Thompson has yet to fill out the minimal paperwork the state requires from the operator of a boarding school. “I will try figure out an address and send him a packet. If he doesn’t acknowledge that, I can send the sheriff to at least make him sign, but in Montana there isn’t a whole lot of consequence for not registering.” Montana’s negligible yet unenforceable education requirements for religious private schools no doubt appeal to Thompson, who according to his pseudonymous activism on social media, seems particularly keen on separating himself and his boys’ home from any more government meddling. Thompson blogs under the the alias Nehemiah Flynt, “a Christian author determined to expose the evils of Child Protective Services,” according to his [Facebook page](#), which he made private following a request for comment for this story. In [a YouTube video](#) reading from his book, “Legal Discrimination,” Thompson—speaking as Flynt, with his face blurred, but with his characteristic southern drawl intact—does speak to the controversy at Blue Creek saying, “Flynt took charge of a successful Christian-based facility for at-risk youths. He soon, learned, however, that the government of the United States is so narrow-minded that they would stop at nothing to close any facility operating under moral or religious principles differing from their own devilish agendas.” “One allegation from a non-credible source changed everything,” he says in the video. Now, attorney Troy Giatras says he’s representing at least three former students and their parents, who are hoping someone at Thompson’s former boarding school will have to answer for what went on there. Since being reunited with her son after the raid at Blue Creek, one of Giatras’ clients, Carolyn*, 32, from Evansville, Indiana, has written and called every local, state, and federal law enforcement office and lawmaker that she knows, looking for someone who will hold the operators of Blue Creek Academy accountable for the abuse she says her son withstood there for 17 months, and to make sure it doesn’t happen to other children. “They dodged my calls,” she said. “They told me that me and my son should be lucky, that I got him back and they don’t have time to do anything else, that their work is for active cases.” As for her son’s well-being, she said, “It’s a process. The damage is overwhelming. He’s been in counseling ever since he left.” Meanwhile, Thompson is being careful with his new school. The [website for Canaan’s Land Boys Ranch](#) used to have his and his wife’s names on it, but they’ve since been scrubbed clean and a warning for prospective parents has been added: “Our Ranch Isn’t For Everyone!” it says, along with the caveat that boys with a history of “sexual acting out (molestations, rapes, etc)” and “students who come from families who would not be supportive of the day to day operations of Canaan’s Land Boys Ranch” will not be admitted. *Names of children and parents have been omitted or changed to protect child victims of sexual abuse. Source: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/06/12/rapes-daily-beatings-and-no-escape-christian-school-was-hell-for-these-boys.html?via=desktop&source=facebook>

--> **California's Addiction Rehab System Desperately Needs a Fix** Details Beth Cone Kramer 20 June 2016 -Last Friday, ABC's 20/20 detailed the unfathomable saga of rehab mogul Chris Bathum, (photo above) subject of an April expose in LA Weekly written by [Hillel Aron](#). Bathum's company, Community Recovery, Inc., took in over \$30 million in revenue last year, despite his record as a convicted felon and, by his own admission, that he is neither a licensed drug counselor nor a therapist. Bathum doesn't even have a college degree and the only certification he holds is from a hypnotherapy institute. His legal troubles had been the subject of an LA Weekly cover story back in December. The founder and board chairman of a chain of over 20 sober living houses and outpatient clinics in California and Colorado has been the target of three lawsuits in early 2016 for allegations ranging from wrongful termination to sexual battery. A pair of former patients at Bathum's Community Recovery Los Angeles (CRLA) facilities alleges that Bathum had "isolated and targeted (the) plaintiffs and other women to prey on their addictions by using and supplying drugs around them, moving them to isolated hotel rooms and remote locations, encouraging them to use drugs with him, and sexually molesting them when they were high and/or incapable of consent." According to various reports, Bathum is the subject of over 50 lawsuits, including former client Amanda Jester who filed a suit that he had molested her in a sweat lodge during a meditation session. Another client, Erika Bruakis, claims he provided her with crystal meth and made sexual advances toward her. Dana Reardon, the most recent patient to file a suit, claims he provided her with meth and heroin, forcing her to watch him engage in sex acts with two of his other patients. 20/20 and LA Weekly both reported that Bathum overdosed on heroin and was taken by ambulance from a Malibu motel in December, which he denies. In fact, when questioned during the 20/20 report, he denied all charges and claimed his identity had been stolen. The Los Angeles County sheriff's department says he never filed a report. He is currently countering multiple women who have filed lawsuits against him for libel. Bathum's troubles didn't start at CRLA. Last July, one of his former patients, Julie Hluchota, died of an overdose. Hluchota had entered a Malibu rehab clinic, Seasons, where Bathum was the co-founder and the director. After spending 90 days in the program, she began to work at the facility and relapsed just two months later. Hluchota alleged that Bathum made unwanted sexual advances toward her, which is denies. Just how does a convicted felon without a degree or credentials open and run a chain of sober living facilities and rehab clinics, preying upon young women in the most dire of conditions? Kenneth Whoridaz Whitfield has a lot to say about it. The 46-year old military veteran has been in recovery since 1993 and has been sober for the past six years. He shares that he made some bad decisions and relapsed in 2008, serving time in County and as a result, awakened to what recovery really is and what it isn't. "People in the Inland Empire, San Bernardino, and other areas aren't as affluent," he says. "They might not have as many resources other than 12 step-programs. It was a real culture shock when I arrived in LA in May 2010. After I was incarcerated, I got clean and sober, thanks to the VA in West LA and Henry Waxman who was committed to staying on top of things to get veterans the best care possible," he shares. "My experience at the VA wasn't perfect but they did the best with limited resources and I'm back to being a productive member of society." Following his time at the VA, Whitfield got into the field of recovery, managing a sober living facility in Mar Vista and working in marketing for another facility. When his last contract was up, he says he "didn't like the direction the treatment world was going." The U.S. is the most addicted country in the world, he says, and the consumer of 90 percent of prescription drugs worldwide. As a result, the addiction treatment centers and rehab have become a multimillion dollar industry. "Until society looks at prescription and illegal drugs as drugs anyone can get addicted to, nothing will change," says Whitfield. He continues, warning, "Big names in rehab are just about making money. It's easier to get a license as a rehab owner in California than it is to get a contractor's license. If you have a felony record, you just have to write to the governor. Doctors who have had their medical licenses revoked can open clinics and rehab facilities. There's no process to make sure they are legit and they are given carte blanche to scam insurance companies." What can be done to change the broken system? Whitfield points to the Governor. "When it comes to this issue, he's dropped the ball. He needs to put his foot down and say if you're a sober living facility, you need to be non-profit," he advises. "The East Coast has far more regulations. In New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, they don't have this stuff going on. To open a treatment center there, you have to get a license like a hospital or mental health facility." If someone owns an outpatient treatment clinic, he or she should not be able to open a sober living facility and the facilities need to be licensed, he suggests. There should be some oversight and regulation to check up on non-licensed employees handing out medication, as well. Residential treatment centers must have doctors and nurses present to provide the level of care necessary. Substance abuse and addiction come at a tremendous cost to individuals, families, and society. As the need grows for rehab and sober living facilities, it's crucial that we don't allow unscrupulous entrepreneurs to take advantage of Californians in the most dire straits. California should follow the lead of other states that place more restrictions on who can open and operate facilities, as well as how the facilities operate. (Beth Cone Kramer is a successful Los Angeles writer and a columnist for CityWatch.) Photo: LA Weekly. Edited for CityWatch by Linda Abrams. Source: <http://www.citywatchla.com/index.php/the-la-beat/11315-california-s-addiction-rehab-system-desperately-needs-a-fix>

Nurses at Illinois hospital file complaint over recent 'boot camp' training Written by Kelly Gooch | June 21, 2016 0 [inShare](#) Nurses at Presence Saint Joseph Medical Center in Joliet, Ill., are alleging that a recent "boot camp" training was punitive and humiliating, [The Herald-News](#) reports. The Illinois Nurses Association, which represents the workers, said the emergency room training involved forcing nurses to drink water without access to restrooms, as well as nurses sitting on a bedpan in a patient bed for 30 minutes in a public hallway while wearing goggles and headphones to simulate poor vision and hearing, according to the report. The union claims the training was disciplinary after certain patient satisfaction scores. In response to the experience, the union filed a petition with the hospital contending that the training session violated scheduling provisions in the union contract, [The Herald-News](#) reports. "I think they're looking for better dialogue on these kinds of matters going forward," Chris Martin, spokesman with the INA, said, according to the report. In a statement provided to [The Herald-News](#), hospital officials said nurses "are held in the highest esteem," and participants found the training "a positive and productive experience." The hospital said the training provided "new best practice insights" that the nurses are eager to implement. Source: <http://www.beckershospitalreview.com/human-capital-and-risk/nurses-at-illinois-hospital-file-complaint-over-recent-boot-camp-training.html>

Mandatory treatment not effective at reducing drug use, violates human rights, researchers say Date: June 21, 2016 Source: Boston University Medical Center Summary: Clinician researchers assessed current global evidence and found that mandatory treatment for people with substance use disorders is not effective in reducing their drug use. S In an analysis recently published in BMJ, which coincided with the UN High Level Meeting on HIV in New York, Boston Medical Center (BMC) clinician researchers assessed current global evidence and found that mandatory treatment for people with substance use disorders is not effective in reducing their drug use. In addition, mandatory treatment, which is defined as treatment ordered, motivated or supervised under the criminal justice system, done without a patient's informed consent violates their human rights and does more harm than benefit to the patient. Bulat Idrisov, MD, MSc, and Karsten Lunze, MD, MPH, DrPH, from the Clinical Addiction Research and Education Unit at BMC and Boston University School of Medicine, in collaboration with researchers in Canada and Malaysia, assessed global data and found that countries often lack the capacity to treat substance use disorders. This happens because they are not able to offer the diagnostic and therapeutic modalities and providers trained in addiction medicine that are necessary for effective treatment. The authors argue that in order to reach successfully reduced substance use disorder rates, countries should consider implementing approaches that have been shown to be effective in rigorous scientific studies. These strategies include community-based opioid treatment, including methadone and buprenorphine. In addition, they suggest that offering harm-reduction programs like needle exchanges and providing education about overdose medications such as naloxone to people with substance use disorders, as well as to their friends and family members. "The evidence presented in this article provides additional argumentation supporting the position of all UN organizations that mandatory treatment settings do not represent a favorable or effective environment for the treatment of drug dependence," said Fabienne Hariga, MD, MPH, senior adviser to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime during the recent meeting in New York. "The United Nations therefore calls on States to transition from mandatory drug treatment and implement voluntary, evidence-informed and rights-based health and social services in the community." Source: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/06/160621115655.htm>

How children in foster care could benefit from the new federal education law - The Washington Post How children in foster care could benefit from the new federal education law The inside track on Washington politics. Be the first to know about new stories from PowerPost. Sign up to follow, and we'll e-mail you free updates as they're published. You'll receive free e-mail news updates each time a new story is published. You're all set! Sign up *Invalid email address Got it Got it "We cannot allow the students who need our attention the most to be treated unfairly under the law," Education Secretary John King Jr. said Wednesday. (Susan Walsh/Associated Press) By [Emma Brown Education](#) June 23 at 12:01 AM The Obama administration on Thursday released new guidance explaining what states and school districts must do to meet new legal obligations to students in foster care, who are often among the nation's most vulnerable children. For the first time, schools, districts and states must publicly report on the performance of children in foster care, a requirement that

advocates hope will help shine a light on the need for more attention and help. Also for the first time, schools are legally bound to work with child welfare agencies to ensure that children in foster care can stay in their school if it's in their best interest, even if they move — a measure meant to provide stability for children who often otherwise lack it. If school district and child welfare agency officials decide that moving to a new school would be in a child's best interest, then the receiving school must allow immediate enrollment, even if the child cannot produce the required paperwork. [\[These are the faces of America's growing youth homeless population\]](#) The new provisions were written into the Every Student Succeeds Act, which replaced No Child Left Behind as the nation's main education law in December. They are meant to protect the approximately 270,000 children in foster care who are enrolled in U.S. public schools; foster children are more likely than their peers to be retained in a grade level and to drop out of high school. "For far too long, we as a country have failed so many of our most vulnerable students," Education Secretary John King Jr. told reporters Wednesday. "We cannot allow the students who need our attention the most to be treated unfairly under the law." The new guidance, released Thursday by the departments of Education and Health and Human Services, explains with more specificity how states and schools should live up to the law's provisions on children in foster care. local education Orlando Shooting Updates News and analysis on the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history. post_newsletter348 follow-orlando true endOfArticle false Please provide a valid email address. You're all set! [See all newsletters](#) It recommends, for example, that states, districts and child welfare agencies set up a process for dispute resolution in cases in which there is disagreement over whether a child would be best served by staying in their original school or moving to a new one. And it clarifies that if an agreement cannot be reached, then the child welfare agency should have the final say. The guidance does not, however, clear up an important ambiguity in the law: who must pay for transportation to a child's original school if the child moves outside that school's attendance zone. [\[Obama signs new K-12 education law\]](#) The law requires that transportation be provided but does not say what should happen if a school district and a child welfare agency disagree over who should cover the bill. The Education Department has proposed regulations that would require the district to pay if negotiations over sharing the cost fail. The department is accepting public comment on those draft regulations, and officials said they would incorporate feedback as they write the final rule. The department also issued guidance Thursday outlining how states and school districts should solicit feedback from their communities as they figure out how to implement the Every Student Succeeds Act. The guidance is meant to ensure that everyone with an interest in education — including parents, teachers and members of historically underserved communities — have a chance to chime in. Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/how-children-in-foster-care-could-benefit-from-the-new-federal-education-law/2016/06/22/397c409c-38ac-11e6-8f7c-d4c723a2becb_story.html

Former foster parents indicted for abuse, drug charges Forest Gove couple accused of child abuse Forest Gove couple accused of child abuse Share Video Researchers test vulnerability to major quake Brexit impact on stock market Top Stories: Sunrise 6-24-16 Top Stories: 11 p.m. 6-23-16 Patron and manager help stop bar robbery Man searching for stolen car and dogs Top Stories: 6 p.m. 6-23-16 Garden designed to give helpful tips Woman wants justice for dog shot in back yard Man shot by Portland homeowner is former NFL player Feds blame Union Pacific in Mosier derailment Forest Gove couple accused of child abuse Related Videos Share Video Related Videos 00:00 00:00 Forest Gove couple accused of child abuse KGW.com Staff and Christine Pitawanih, KGW 1:42 PM. PDT June 24, 2016 170 1 Darren and Dawnyle Durham CONNECT TWEET LINKEDIN GOOGLE+ PINTEREST A Washington County grand jury indicted two former Department of Human Services foster parents accused of abusing children and forcing them to ingest drugs. Dawnyle and Darren Durham were arrested June 9. They face charges including criminal mistreatment, delivery of a controlled substance to a minor and causing another person to ingest a controlled substance. Dawnyle Durham was also charged with possession of methamphetamine. The Durhams were DHS certified foster care providers from 2001-2013. The couple adopted four of the foster children prior to their certification being revoked in 2013. "There was yelling but they kept to themselves pretty much," said neighbor Donnie Long. Long and other neighbors aren't surprised that Dawnyle and Darren Durham are in jail. The couple's four adopted kids, ages 11-17, were taken away earlier this year. Court documents described horrific living conditions. The children said the Durhams' Forest Grove home was filled with drug use, from meth to prescription pills. Neighbors, took note. "We had some challenges in the neighborhood with some unsavory characters coming in at early hours and so contacted the police a couple of times," said Michelle Rydman, who lives behind the Durhams. The kids told investigators they found syringes inside their home, and that their mother Dawnyle hit them. The children described one instance where their mother used a belt and hit one of her daughters so hard "that one child was unable to stand." The children said one of the daughters was even forced to take percocet and do a urine test for her mother. In an interview with police, Dawnyle admitted to having her daughter to a urine test for her because she was using marijuana and would not be able to get any other prescriptions if it showed up in the test. When asked if she told her daughter to take Percocet, she said she could not recall. Another child said he had thought about killing himself, telling investigators "hell would be better than my life." Washington County detectives learned that Dawnyle pawned off a wheelchair belonging to one of the children, along with some video games, according to Sgt. Bob Ray with the Washington County Sheriff's Office. "The kids were sad all the time," said Long, whose children also played with the Durham's kids. Long said the kids appeared lonely and didn't spend much time outside. "They weren't allowed to play sports, no after school activities, things that kids like to do," said Long. "They were always very sweet and polite to us. They would say hi through the fence," said Rydman. The children also said they didn't get enough food and sometimes would have to steal food from their home. The kids said they were made to stay home and clean before DHS came to their house. "I hope the state helps these kids and ... doesn't let this happen again," Long said. Washington County investigators couldn't go into many details, but said the case is complex. "They were foster parents from 2001-2013 so we have a 12 year time span there. During that time span they were foster parents for more than 50 children," said Ray. Ray said they've contacted half of the kids so far and are looking for other possible victims. "We really don't know how far reaching it may be," he said. DHS said they've asked for a review of the case because abuse in foster care continues to be an issue in the child welfare program. Both parents are still in jail. Bail for each of them is at more than \$100,000. In court documents, Dawnyle denied the allegations. She said the syringes weren't hers and that they belonged to a homeless couple she allowed to stay in the family's guest house. She said her kids had plenty of food and she did not abuse her kids. Though she told an officer she "is not a bad mother but she is not proud of what she's done." According to court documents, Dawnyle's mother said her daughter's son was murdered 16 years ago and she has also been going downhill ever since her brother died three years ago. She also said Dawnyle struggles with mental health issues. Washington County detectives are asking anyone with information about unreported crimes by the Durhams to call 503-846-2500. Source: <http://www.kgw.com/news/crime/former-foster-parents-indicted-for-abuse-drug-charges/254026103>

City Files Lawsuits Against Two Alcohol and Drug Treatment Facilities by [Dana Point Times](#) on June 23, 2016 in [EYE ON DP](#), [News Headlines](#) [Leave a comment](#) By Kristina Pritchett On Wednesday, the city filed two lawsuits against two properties that the city says are alcohol or drug abuse treatment facilities. Both lawsuits were filed with the Superior Court in Orange County, calling the properties public nuisances and stating they do not have required state license. On Tuesday night during the City Council's closed session, Council members approved for the city attorney to file the two lawsuits against Capo By the Sea and Sobertec LLC. Capo By the Sea is an exclusive drug addiction and alcohol rehab center that offers customized recovery programs. Along with Capo by the Sea, John T. Kahal is also named as the defendant. The city states in the lawsuit against Capo by the Sea that the corporation has been operating a treatment facility at the property. In the lawsuit against Sobertec LLC, the defendants are listed as Sovereign Health Group, Sober Network Properties, Edward Smilde and Grace Smilde. In both lawsuits, the City also states the properties are located in city zoning areas that do not permit the use of a treatment facility. "Alcoholism or drug abuse recovery or treatment facilities are prohibited in certain zones and are allowed in other zones within the city with the issuance of a conditional use permit," the lawsuit states and adds that the location of Sobertec is not permitted in the zone in which it resides. The lawsuits state "any facility that provides non-medical alcoholism or drug abuse recovery, treatment, or detoxification services to adults must obtain a license from the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs. Facilities licensed by the Department must comply with the requirements proscribed by state laws." According to the lawsuits, some facilities that are known as "sober living homes" do not need to be licensed if they do not provide any care or supervision of the residents. However, if the home serves seven or more clients and provides "alcoholism or drug abuse recovery or treatment service[s]," they must obtain a license from the state. The City believes that both of the properties are being used as a facility which provides recovery or treatment services to seven or more paying clients, who are either onsite or using the property as a residential component of a treatment facility. The city also believes the properties do not have the state-issued license. In the lawsuit against Sobertec, the city states they believe "the defendants are operating a Drug Abuse recovery or treatment facility that provides treatment services to seven or more clients in violation of state law, because it failed to obtain the necessary state-issued license, and in violation of the city's zoning code, because such uses are prohibited in the zoning district in which the treatment facility is located." During the Tuesday night meeting, City Attorney Patrick Munoz said the Council authorized for code enforcement activity against one particular licensed facility in the city. "We have reason to believe they're

not complying with their licensing requirements," Munoz said on Tuesday. Munoz said the city cannot and will not discriminate, or take any action, against disabled persons. But, they can take action to ensure licensing requirements are met. They can take action to enforce laws that apply to all residences, and if the city has a legitimate reason to believe that licensing laws are being violated. Munoz said the city staff has been keeping watch on efforts made by other cities "to address the concerns that sober living home concentrations detract from the character of the community, as it is a current issue of statewide concern." Munoz said the city has received multiple emails and phone calls related to several homes and facilities in towns, and have been investigating their compliance with city and state regulations. The city instructed staff to schedule a study session to be able to explain more details during a public forum. Source: <http://www.danapointtimes.com/city-files-lawsuits-against-two-alcohol-and-drug-treatment-facilities/>

Foster Parents Under Investigation For Abuse By Genevieve Reaume Jun. 26, 2016 Video Photos PORTLAND, Ore. -- Certified foster parents for dozens of children are now facing several charges for abusing their four adopted children. This is all according to court documents. One foster father, Darren Durham's record includes arrests for drugs, assault and harassment. Despite his record, DHS placed 54 children in his care from 2001 to 2013. In 2013, his certification was revoked, but by then he had adopted four children. One of the kids told investigators that she was beaten so badly she could barely stand. Detectives are now looking for more victims. - See more at: <http://www.kdrv.com/news/Foster-Parents-Under-Investigation-For-Abuse.html#sthash.VaUTBgbz.dpuf>

Prison officials fail to review rape allegations Catie Edmondson, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel 2:19 p.m. CDT June 26, 2016 **Federal authorities are investigating a range of potential crimes at Lincoln Hills School for Boys, including second-degree sexual assault, physical child abuse, child neglect, abuse of prisoners, and intimidation of victims and witnesses.** (Photo: Mark Hoffman) - Officials at a troubled youth prison failed to properly oversee more than two dozen rape and sexual assault investigations as required by federal law, with one prison leader admitting to ignorance of even basic details about the facility's system to root out abuse. The security director at Lincoln Hills School for Boys acknowledged to state investigators that he had failed over 7½ months to review any investigations of sexual abuse and had met just once with the staff tasked with probing allegations of assault, according to documents released to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel under the state's open records law. That official, Rick Peterson, was demoted in February after an investigation showed he was unable to correctly identify who on his staff was trained to investigate sexual assault allegations, the records show. With more than 30 internal sexual assault investigations open at the prison 30 miles north of Wausau, the facility's handling of abuse claims remains as critical as ever. "There are clear signals the institution isn't taking allegations seriously. They should be acting immediately (on reports of assault)," said Amy Fetting, the associate director for the Prison Project at the American Civil Liberties Union. "When you don't have leadership and supervisors taking responsibility for what's happening, there's no way they're going to effectively prevent abuse from happening. It sends a signal to other people, both staff and those in custody, that nothing is going to happen, that (assault) is not serious." Fetting, senior legal counsel for a group that frequently sues state governments, said that any facility that fails to properly investigate abuse "is exposing itself to serious litigation liability." The Federal Bureau of Investigation is probing alleged abuses at the prison, including sexual assault, abuse of prisoners and destruction of public records. The failure to review sexual abuse investigations under a key federal law could play a role in that probe or a separate U.S. Department of Justice investigation into whether the prison violated inmates' civil rights. A summary of the internal investigation of Peterson includes findings in keeping with critics' claims that allegations of sexual abuse are met with indifferent or botched responses. After he failed to provide oversight of investigations of sexual abuse under the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act, Peterson was demoted from security director to a supervisory position, and his pay was cut from about \$76,000 to about \$68,000 a year. A new security director — the No. 3 post at the facility — has not yet been hired. The Department of Corrections is currently developing a database that "will significantly enhance tracking and reporting of (sexual assault) allegations and investigations," according to agency spokesperson Tristan Cook. According to the investigation report, Peterson told Department of Corrections investigators that the prison did not track ongoing investigations of rape and sexual assault. He said that no such mechanism was in place because the longtime security director before him, Bruce Sunde, also failed to track such investigations. Sunde, who retired last year, declined to be interviewed for this story and Peterson didn't respond to a request for comment. Peterson acknowledged to DOC investigators that someone needed to review investigations, but said he was unable to because "there were lots of stuff going on" at the prison and he was "busy putting out fires and pulled in different directions." Despite what Peterson told investigators, Cook contended there is a tracking system for abuse allegations at Lincoln Hills and its sister facility on its campus, Copper Lake School for Girls. "DOC strongly disputes any suggestion that (sexual assault) investigations at (the youth prisons) are not being tracked, as both institutions and DOC's PREA unit track PREA investigations," Cook said in a statement, using an abbreviation for the Prison Rape Elimination Act. When asked why the prison's security director and investigator as well as DOC investigators were unaware of such a tracking mechanism, Cook repeated that "allegations were being reported and routed for investigation, investigations were being assigned, investigations were being completed, and investigation information was being provided to the PREA unit for record-keeping purposes." The lack of oversight from correctional leaders is underscored in one instance described in the report. DOC investigators found that a staffer at the prison tasked with looking into allegations of assault took it upon himself to review and approve his own report on the subject. Investigators are not vested with that authority — they are supposed to present their findings for review to their supervisor. "That should never happen in a chain of command," the ACLU's Fetting said. "There needs to be oversight to guard against bias and, frankly, sloppiness in the investigation. The fact that they're not paying attention is a big problem." Though Peterson admitted he had not reviewed any investigations of assault at the prison, he told investigators he was unaware that reports were being finalized without his oversight. In violation of the standards established by federal law, the facility also failed to conduct formal sexual abuse incident reviews following each investigation of sexual abuse and did not annually review sexual assault data, a federal audit found in February. Those two practices are intended to compel senior management to consider whether the investigations and data indicate a need to change policy or practice to better prevent, detect or respond to sexual assault. Staff at Lincoln Hills were given 180 days to meet those standards. The auditor found that after her initial visit, the facility compiled a report of aggregate sexual assault data and began holding incident reviews. Even though Lincoln Hills worked to comply with those basic federal standards, multiple reports of failing to properly respond to allegations of sexual abuse open the state up to serious risk of litigation, according to Brenda Smith. Smith, a professor at the Washington College of Law at American University, served on the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission from 2004 to 2009. "To the extent you don't take care of these things and there's a pattern of not following up on complaints, it puts the agency and the state in a place of peril with regard to liability," Smith said. "This is something that the governor's office should be looking at. There should be oversight not just from the federal level but local and state oversight." Gov. Scott Walker has defended or not commented on the way his administration responded to a year of warnings from county officials and judges about assaults at the prison. When asked if Walker was aware that staff at Lincoln Hills failed to track or oversee investigations of rape and sexual assault at the facility and whether he believed his office had appropriately responded to problems at the youth prison, spokesman Tom Evenson said that Corrections Secretary Jon Litscher "has Governor Walker's full support in addressing agency issues and instituting reforms." Last month in his first interview since returning to the Corrections Department after heading it from 1999 to 2003, Litscher told the Journal Sentinel that he believes the agency is getting past problems at the youth prison. The newly released records are the latest to document a pattern of what one judge four years ago described as "inexcusable" responses to sexual assault and inmate safety at the Northwoods facility. The Journal Sentinel reported in February that Racine County officials pulled their youth offenders from Lincoln Hills after the institution botched its response to the 2012 sexual assault of an inmate. Staff waited to take the victim to the hospital until after a basketball game finished and failed to inform law enforcement of the assault. It has also been reported that the facility has no central mechanism for tracking assaults, fights and other incidents. Many key reports are handwritten. When a female worker was groped by an inmate last fall, corrections officials initially did little in response, and instead subjected her to a seven-week probe into whether she invited the touching. Peterson, the security director, told a Lincoln County detective that he was considering formally referring the assault to law enforcement but did not provide additional paperwork for months, according to the Sheriff's Department. A former supervisor at Lincoln Hills reported that corrections officials mishandled a case of sexual assault when they dropped charges against a juvenile inmate accused of molesting his roommate after a witness claimed the act was consensual. Source: <http://www.wausaudailyherald.com/story/news/2016/06/26/prison-officials-fail-review-rape-allegations/86408746/>

Report: More Sex Abuse at Understaffed Juvenile Facilities By rebecca boone, associated press BOISE, Idaho — Jun 29, 2016, 7:45 PM ET 22 Shares [Email](#) Star 22 Shares [Email](#) A new report from the U.S. [Department of Justice](#) shows that youths are sexually abused more frequently in juvenile detention centers that are understaffed, have more gang violence and more offender complaints. The report, released Tuesday by the department's Bureau of Justice Statistics, examined the impact juvenile facilities have on sex abuse rates as well as the risk factors for victims. The work was intended in part to measure how effective federal rules designed to stop sex abuse behind bars actually are at reducing victimization inside youth detention centers. The study found that lower

rates of sexual victimization were reported in facilities with higher staffing levels, less violence and fewer overall complaints. Lovisa Stannow, the executive director of prisoner advocacy group Just Detention International, said the findings are encouraging and exasperating. "They are encouraging because they confirm that sexual abuse is a problem that strong youth detention leaders can solve, if they want to, and exasperating because so many leaders continue to insist, against all evidence, that sexual violence is outside of their control," Stannow said in a statement released Wednesday. Congress passed the Prison Rape Elimination Act in 2003, and experts across the country worked over the next decade to create rules designed to stamp out rape behind bars. All states were supposed to be fully compliant with PREA in 2014, but some, such as [Idaho](#), initially refused to meet the standards. Idaho officials later reversed course, and in 2015 announced that three state juvenile detention centers passed audits showing they were compliant with PREA standards. The Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections is currently facing several lawsuits from nearly a dozen current and former juveniles who say they were sexually abused by staffers while at a detention center in Nampa. Compliance with many of the standards spelled out in the Prison Rape Elimination Act were associated with lower rates of staff sexual misconduct, the study found. Youth who have previously been sexually assaulted are more likely to be assaulted in detention, the study found, as were kids who identified themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual. Males and black youth were much more likely to be victims of sexual abuse by staff members. The study included mostly state-owned facilities for youth being held in custody, including residential treatment centers, detention centers, training schools, group homes, boot camp or farm programs and youth homeless shelters. The highest rates of youth-on-youth sexual assault were found in facilities that only housed females, and male-only facilities tended to have higher rates of staff sexual misconduct. Source: <http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/report-sex-abuse-understaffed-juvenile-facilities-40235283>

Richard Wexler: Family First Act Institutionalizes Institutions, Sets Up Prevention to Fail by Richard Wexler June 30, 2016 | [Guest Writer](#) Now that there finally is a bill, it is clear who has the greatest reason to oppose the so-called Family First Prevention Services Act: environmentalists. That's because of how many forests will be destroyed to provide the paper for all the new plans, reports and assorted other documents that the bill mandates as a substitute for real change. In some respects, discussed below, the bill is an improvement over previous versions, and I'm sure those who worked so hard to craft this legislation meant well. But mostly, the Family First Act proposes to solve the problems of child welfare by throwing paperwork at them. Provide a plan for this, a certification for that, and a report on something else, and America's foster-care-industrial complex can keep doing what it's been doing for more than a century: failing vulnerable children. The bill also enshrines in law the double standard that pervades American child welfare: services to keep families together must meet tests that are almost impossibly high before being deemed "evidence-based." But to keep right on using the worst form of care, group homes and institutions, no evidence is required; just more paperwork. So it's no wonder most of the foster-care-industrial complex favors the bill, and those who don't want to make it even weaker. One major supporter of the bill is the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities, a group that has little to do with either one. Rather, it is a trade association made up largely of private agencies that oversee foster homes and run group homes and institutions. These agencies typically are paid for each day they hold a child in foster care. They know a good deal when they see one. Institutionalizing Institutionalization In the earliest stages of developing what would become the Families First Act, there was an idea for dealing with the misuse and overuse of institutions that was simple and smart: Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) suggested simply refusing to fund such placements for any child under age 13. Other smart proposals over the years have included reducing federal aid for institutionalization month by month – the longer the placement the fewer the dollars. But once the foster-care-industrial complex got through with it, what emerged was a muddled mess. If the bill becomes law, the federal government would stop reimbursing states for part of the cost of group home and institutional placement after two weeks. But it creates a giant loophole: funding would continue for something called a "Qualified Residential Treatment Program." What does it take to become a Q RTP? [Very little](#): Write lots and lots of plans filled with appropriate buzzwords. (Drop the word "trauma-informed" into every third paragraph and you should be fine.) Hire nurses during working hours and have them on call the rest of the time. Get a rubber-stamp seal-of-approval from an accrediting agency. I say rubber-stamp because one of the groups a Q RTP can choose is the so-called "Council on Accreditation." COA is a creation of another agency trade association, the Child Welfare League of America. Its "site visits" are announced well in advance and "accreditors" interview people who can be hand-picked by the agency under examination. Everything else is based on the agency's paperwork. COA doesn't accredit agencies, it accredits file cabinets. Perhaps that's why, in the 1990s, COA accredited a private agency in Ohio in which, the Dayton Daily News found, children lived in squalid group homes and the agency director had a conviction for contributing to the delinquency of a minor. More recently, COA accredited [this agency](#). Take these simple steps and voila! That crudely old group home is now a "Qualified Residential Treatment Program!" Similarly, the Family First Act goes on for paragraphs about how an independent "qualified individual" will determine if a child needs to be institutionalized; unless, that is, the public child welfare agency gives its solemn word that someone associated with the institution itself can do the evaluation and still be objective. Then, the independence requirement can be "waived" by the Department of Health and Human Services. In short, the Family First Act institutionalizes the process of institutionalization. Perhaps that's why the Congressional Budget Office [estimates](#) that, were it to become law, the Family First Act would barely reduce the proportion of institutionalized foster children on any given day. It would decline from the current 14 percent to 11 percent, over ten years. Yet even these minimal requirements apparently are [too onerous](#) for some providers of institutional care and their acolytes in government. Whatever Happened to "Evidence-Based"? What is missing in these requirements for becoming a "Qualified Residential Treatment Program" is anything forcing the "providers" to prove that what they provide actually helps children. There's a reason for that, namely [a review of the scholarly literature](#) by the office of the U.S. Surgeon General found only "weak evidence" for the success of residential treatment. A [second review](#), by the University of North Carolina, found "when community-based services are available, they provide outcomes that are equivalent, at least [to residential treatment]." [Still another study](#), of children institutionalized for mental health problems, found that seven years after discharge from residential treatment, 75 percent of the children were back in the only settings they could understand: institutions. They were in psychiatric centers or jails. Even former CWLA President Shay Bilchik [admitted](#) there is a lack of "good research" showing residential treatment's effectiveness and "we find it hard to demonstrate success..." (though he claimed this was only because foundations don't want to fund the research and children aren't institutionalized soon enough.) Some of those who think even the minimal restrictions in the Family First Act go too far don't even pretend that institutionalization is good for children. Rather, they claim there's no alternative because they can't recruit enough foster homes. But, [as I've noted before](#), the real problem is not too few foster parents, it's too many foster children. For example, Los Angeles seems to be the [epicenter of the whining](#) about the congregate care restrictions. But Los Angeles takes away children at [triple the rate of Chicago](#), even when rates of child poverty are factored in. Yet it's Illinois where independent court-appointed monitors have found that reforms emphasizing family preservation improved child safety. No Real Help for Prevention That brings me to the second set of failings in the bill: the increased support for prevention is minimal and largely misdirected. For starters, while residential treatment programs need provide no evidence at all of effectiveness to be funded, 50 percent of all new prevention spending under the bill would have to go to programs that meet a standard, created for clinical trials in medicine, so high that almost nothing qualifies. (This is an improvement from previous drafts, where it was 100 percent.) Lisbeth Schorr, senior fellow at the Center for the Study of Social Policy, has [several excellent articles](#) on why this is an unwise approach in human services. And in child welfare, there is the additional problem of a [profound bias](#) among many of the "scholars." Even worse, the kinds of programs that can be funded are limited to three categories, two of which, mental health and parenting skills, are precisely [the "public health approach" that has failed](#) for more than a century. So after the reams of new paperwork required under this section are filed and it turns out that this failed approach failed again, it will become an excuse for the advocates of traumatizing children with needless foster care to run back to Congress and demand even more money to warehouse even more children in foster care. This bill doesn't aid alternatives; it sets them up to fail. In contrast, even though study after study finds that 30 percent of America's foster children could be home right now [if their families simply had decent housing](#), housing aid was eliminated from the bill early on. There is not even funding for the kinds of [simple, sensible and very inexpensive approaches](#) advocated by Joanne Samuel Goldblum in the Chronicle last month. So again, it's no wonder the CBO thinks the new spending on prevention will be a drop in the bucket – an average of \$130 million per year. Even with that new funding, the federal government still would spend vastly more on tearing families apart than on trying to keep them together. What's Good About the Bill There is one thing the bill gets right: the third category of funds for which states could get reimbursement under the Families First Act is drug treatment. That almost certainly got into the bill, and probably has appeal to most members of Congress, because the latest "drug plague" – opioid addiction – [has a whiter, more affluent face](#) than the drug plagues that preceded it. The other argument for the bill is that it's better than nothing, and a floor on which one can build in the future. But it's not better than the waivers available to states now, which allow them to spend a lot more money on a much wider variety of alternatives to foster care. The waiver process, which is set to expire in 2019, also includes a vital incentive that Family First Act lacks: it caps the giant open-ended entitlement to foster-care funding. This bill is more likely to be a ceiling than a floor. Once the bill becomes law, all the pressure for real reform would

go away, and the ceiling will only get lower. Because from here, the bill can only get worse. Having come so far, the members of Congress behind this bill are likely to appease those who want to make the congregate-care restrictions even weaker, rather than see the whole thing fall apart. Better Alternatives I've written elsewhere about the best long-term alternative: [end the foster-care entitlement](#) and turn it into grants indexed to inflation that states can use for foster care and for better alternatives. Short term, Congress should Salvage the one part of the Family First Act everyone seems to agree on and provide \$130 million per year in additional funding for drug treatment – targeted toward families at risk of losing their children to foster care. Restore the federal government's authority to grant child welfare waivers, which has expired, with current waivers scheduled to end in 2019. As for whether we ever can really get major reform, there is one hope: the lookback. That's the [clumsy, bureaucratic detail](#) that has the effect of reducing the number of children eligible for federal foster-care assistance by a tiny amount each year. If nothing at all is done, the federal government will be out of the foster-care funding business in about half a century or so. The longer this persists, the greater the pressure on the foster-care-industrial complex to accept real reform, not a pale imitation like the Family First Act. Richard Wexler is Executive Director of the National Coalition for Child Protection Reform, [www.nccpr.org](#) Source: [https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/opinion/family-first-institutionalizes-institutions-sets-prevention-fail/19342](#)

New York is plagued by diploma-mill high schools By Post Editorial Board June 30, 2016 | 8:59pm [Modal Trigger](#) Photo: Getty Images A landmark report by StudentsFirstNY just tore the mask off the supposed "success" of many city high schools: They're graduating kids without actually teaching them. Mayor de Blasio touts a 70 percent graduation rate as proof his policies are working. Problem is, half the grads aren't ready for college (or a career in the workforce). CUNY deemed only 35 percent of New York City high-school graduates college-ready last year. And some schools seem to specialize in awarding worthless diplomas to young men and women. The SFNY report flagged 65 schools with above-average graduation — but college/career-readiness rates 50 points lower. The HS for Medical Professions boasts that 95 percent of students graduate — yet only 15 percent are college-ready. The UFT Charter School sports a 78 percent graduation rate, but only 11 percent are college-ready. Chancellor Carmen Fariña just spoke at the Academy for Young Writers, whose graduation rate is 75 percent, yet with a college-readiness rate of just 6 percent. In short, the problem goes far beyond the grade-fixing and bogus credit-recovery programs The Post has exposed in recent years. It's a citywide plague of diploma mills — many of which face no pressure to improve. Of the 10 high schools with the city's worst college-readiness rates, only two are in de Blasio's Renewal program for failing schools. CUNY Chancellor James Miliken calls the lack of college readiness his system's top challenge. It's a nightmare for the kids, too: They have to waste their first year (or more) in college on catch-up classes. We don't blame de Blasio or Fariña or even the United Federation of Teachers for all the system's failings. No, we blame them for their fight against reform, and all their lies and spin as they pretend everything's just fine. Source: [http://nypost.com/2016/06/30/new-york-is-plagued-by-diploma-mill-high-schools/](#)

Care worker at Northland Recovery Center abused two teens, DHS finds Report finds procedures are adequate but were not followed. By [Brandon Stahl](#) Star Tribune July 1, 2016 — 8:09pm Melanie Lynn Peterson A care worker at a northern Minnesota drug treatment center for juveniles helped two teen residents escape to get drugs, got high with them while at the facility, and had sex with them more than two dozen times, according to court and state records. The staff member, Melanie Lynn Peterson, 30, who court records say "was responsible for the care and well-being of juveniles housed at the facility," pleaded guilty in June to three counts of criminal sexual conduct and three controlled substance crimes. On Friday, the Minnesota Department of Human Services found Peterson responsible for sexual abuse of the two minors while she worked at the Northland Recovery Center's Adolescent Unit in Grand Rapids. Peterson's relationship with the two teens began sometime in March, according to court and DHS records. One of the boys, who was 15, had been at Northland Recovery since the start of the year. The teen told police Peterson would often help him leave the unit and not trigger the alarms so he could find drugs. He said they snorted pills and had sex about 20 times in the facility and four times at her home. When confronted, Peterson admitted to police that she used drugs with one of the teens and had sex with him. The other boy was 17 and considered a "smart and tenacious person" diagnosed with substance abuse disorders and considered vulnerable to neglect and abuse, according to the DHS report. He said Peterson helped him escape from Northland Recovery, that Peterson had sex with him at least twice in the facility and was "high for a week" from the drugs she gave him. The teen told DHS investigators that he suspected Peterson tampered with their drug tests because "none of us were getting in trouble." A staff member at Northland Recovery referred all questions to the Director of Services, Colleen MacKay, who was on vacation Friday. According to the DHS report, following an internal review Northland Recovery "determined that policies and procedures were adequate but not followed," and that "the incidents were not similar to past incidents." Still, Northland Recovery said staff members were trained on boundaries and that surveillance cameras would be "pursued." Peterson is scheduled to be sentenced at the end of the month. This is the second time in two months DHS has found a juvenile was sexually abused at a child residential center. In May, the agency determined that a staff member of a Minnetonka facility for troubled teenage girls raped a 14-year-old resident. That person was not charged. Source: [http://www.startribune.com/two-teens-sexually-abused-at-drug-treatment-center/385246471/](#)

Texas Accused of Ignoring Mentally Disabled in Nursing Homes By betsy blaney, associated press LUBBOCK, Texas — Jul 3, 2016, 2:21 PM ET 0 Shares [Email](#) Star 0 Shares [Email](#) It took more than 40 years for Leonard Barefield to finally get to choose where he lived. The intellectually-disabled Texas native moved to a group home in Lubbock in September after he had first lived in near slavery conditions for more than three decades in a squalid house in Iowa and worked at a turkey processing plant there for 41 cents an hour. After being freed by social workers from that situation, he was sent in 2008 to a nursing home in Midland, Texas. His plight is not uncommon in Texas, where people with such disabilities are routinely warehoused in nursing homes, according to a lawsuit brought by Barefield and other disabled people. Advocates for the intellectually-disabled — a condition affecting reasoning and learning — say Texas is violating the Americans with Disabilities Act and other federal laws by denying services that could allow more than 4,000 people to live in the community. The state denies it is exploiting the disabled, saying it is committed to providing them with the highest quality of services. The 71-year-old Barefield has a developmental disability, suffers from depression and other mental health and medical conditions, and has [high blood pressure](#), court records show. He wears a hearing aid and his speech is significantly impaired. But he can read, write and drive a truck. Barefield lives with three other intellectually disabled men in a well-maintained and spacious home. "It's better here," he said, nodding his head emphatically. Barefield leaves the home several days a week for a day center where he can play games and work on small projects. Even though he was exploited for decades, the outcome of Barefield's case is better than some. Andrea Padron, who suffered a severe head injury in a car accident when she was 10, died in 2013 after getting an inaccurate evaluation to determine the care she needed in a nursing home, court documents show. Padron's mother put her in a nursing home when she could no longer afford to care for her. Her mother then was deployed to the [Iraq war](#) with the military. The services promised for Padron were not provided during the mother's absence. When her mother returned to Texas, Padron couldn't even sit in her wheelchair. Padron was left to lie in bed for about 165 hours a week — without specialized services, including physical therapies. She eventually was unable to straighten her wrists, ankles, shoulders, legs or hips and developed a spine deformity, court records show. She was 29 when she died. The lawsuit against the state by Barefield and the other disabled patients was filed in 2010 and has crawled through the legal system. The federal Department of Justice joined the suit on the side of the disabled in 2012. In 2013, the state and lawyers for the disabled reached an "interim settlement agreement" that in part called for Texas to expand community services and create a service team for each disabled person. In return the suit was put aside for two years. But without explanation, the agreement was ended in 2015. Neither side will talk about why this happened because they say confidentiality rules prevent comment. The lawsuit has been reactivated. A federal judge in San Antonio ruled in May that the case could go ahead and granted class-action status to include more than 4,000 intellectually-disabled people in nursing homes. Barefield and the others aren't asking for any money in compensation. "All we're asking the state to do is comply with the (federal) law," said Robert Velevis, an attorney for the disabled clients. State aging and disability department spokeswoman Cecilia Cavuto declined to comment on the case but said the state is "committed to ensuring Texas nursing home residents, including those who have intellectual and developmental disabilities, receive the highest quality services." She said Texas care providers do evaluations for each person entering a nursing home to determine what specialized services might be needed and whether a resident wants to transition into a community-based setting. Lawyers for the disabled say the state excludes them from "any meaningful access" to Texas's system of community-based services needed to be able to live in the community. Lenwood Krause, whose 36-year-old son has a condition related to a developmental disability from a traumatic brain injury, said the state has mishandled the care of his son for years. "I can't exactly express the sentiments I feel about them," the 72-year-old said. "It's that bad." Texas was ranked in the bottom one third of states for the comprehensiveness of evaluations conducted on intellectually-disabled patients, according to a federal report by the Centers for [Medicare](#) and Medicaid Services last year. "Our belief is that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have just as much right to live in the

community as anyone else," said Yvette Ostolaza, another attorney for the disabled clients. Source: <http://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/texas-accused-ignoring-mentally-disabled-nursing-homes-40314250>

Man with autism beaten, allegedly by group home employee Posted: Jul 05, 2016 6:03 AM PDT Updated: Jul 05, 2016 11:23 AM PDT By Laura McCallister, Digital Producer Email Connect laura.mccallister@kctv5.com By Emily Rittman, News Reporter BioEmail Connect Biography Emily.Rittman@kctv5.com Scottie, 25, lives at the Preferred Family Healthcare Kansas City's south location off of James A. Reed Road. Staff members help him complete his day-to-day activities. (Richard Skillman) KANSAS CITY, MO (KCTV) - A group home employee is under investigation, accused of beating a man who has autism with a belt. MOREAdditional LinksPoll The man's family is sharing their story in hopes of raising awareness. They said staff members discovered the abuse Sunday night and reported it to Kansas City police. The victim's brother also made a hotline call to state investigators. Scottie, 25, lives at the Preferred Family Healthcare Kansas City's south location off of James A. Reed Road. Staff members help him complete his day-to-day activities. "He's very quiet. He likes to keep to himself. He enjoys his Legos," said Scottie's brother, Richard Skillman. Skillman said a staff member called his mother to report that another employee not only hit Scottie with a belt, but admitted to it. He said overnight staff took photos of Scottie's injuries, sent them to his mother and filed a police report. "I was devastated. Scottie can't fend for himself. Not only that but he can't tell anybody he got hurt. He just doesn't have that communication," Skillman said. Scottie's brother said the company fired the employee after calling him to ask about the marks discovered by overnight staff. "It's kind of chilling to think when the manager called him and talked to him about it, I got the feeling he was very nonchalant about it," Skillman said. Scottie was still at the hospital Monday night where doctors examined him. The Department of Mental Health is investigating. His brother hopes, after the police investigation is complete, the employee will be held accountable. "I hope he faces charges and understands how horrible of thing he has done," Skillman said. If you suspect a senior or disabled adult is being abused or financially exploited, you can call 1-800-392-0210. Source: <http://www.kmov.com/story/32372729/man-with-autism-beaten-allegedly-by-group-home-employee#>

Sierra Tucson fined over deficiencies in psychiatric care By Stephanie Innes Arizona Daily Star Stephanie Innes Updated Jul 5, 2016 (1) prev next The local rehab center Sierra Tucson has agreed to pay a state fine of \$4,000 for failures in caring for its most seriously ill psychiatric patients. In its investigation, the state found that Sierra Tucson had repeat and ongoing deficiencies with the services provided in its acute psychiatric unit. The deficiencies "posed a high potential risk to the health and safety of patients," a state survey says. The facility holds two state licenses — a medical license for its 15-bed psychiatric unit and a residential facility license for its lower-level, 124-bed residential treatment center. The for-profit center, owned by Tennessee-based behavioral health giant Acadia Healthcare, has paid prior fines to the Arizona Department of Health Services for violating its own policies. It is also the defendant in two pending wrongful death lawsuits involving patients. In agreeing to pay the latest fine, Sierra Tucson's executive director, William D. Anderson, signed an enforcement agreement with the state, acknowledging that the facility is subject to frequent state monitoring visits and that further violations could result in further action, including losing its license. As of now, the facility is in compliance with all state rules and regulations, Arizona health officials say. In a statement to the Star on Friday, Anderson said the safety and well-being of its residents is Sierra Tucson's "utmost priority." Anderson also said his facility has a good working relationship with the Arizona Department of Health Services. "We are very proud of the care we provide and the thousands of lives that we have improved and saved because of the treatment received at Sierra Tucson," the statement says. "All of our clinicians and staff are committed to our patients and continuously work towards providing higher quality, clinical care in accordance with Arizona Department of Health Services standards." The latest civil penalty was determined after a state investigation conducted in January. The facility paid the fine May 9, state documents show. Five Sierra Tucson patients have died since 2011, all of them men. Autopsy reports concluded that three of them died of suicide. Autopsies on the other two — a man who died of drug toxicity and another whose body was discovered two weeks after he disappeared from the facility — were inconclusive. The facility helps patients with addictions, mood disorders, chronic pain, eating disorders and trauma through its "Sierra Model" of integrating therapies such as massage, yoga and acupuncture with traditional psychiatry. Sierra Tucson, on 160 acres north of Tucson, has earned a reputation as "rehab to the stars." The cost to patients starts at more than \$1,000 per day. Since not all insurers cover it, many families must pay out of their own pockets. The state's findings about Sierra Tucson's care for patients, outlined in its Jan. 6 survey and supporting documents: Failed to ensure a patient with multiple medical problems, including a history of head injuries, had a physical examination within 48 hours of admission. This posed a "high risk" that the patient's medical needs would not be met, the state report says. Failed its own policy on patient rights by threatening a patient with law enforcement if she did not follow a registered nurse's instructions to be discharged and enter a transport vehicle. Failed to ensure a patient with anorexia nervosa was appropriately discharged from acute psychiatric care to a lower level of care. Failed to complete a medical discharge summary for three patients who left treatment against medical advice. Intake and meals for a severely anorexic patient were not recorded, and Sierra Tucson did not ensure a registered nurse assessed and directed the patient's care. Did not ensure a registered nurse completed an updated assessment for a patient who was readmitted to Sierra Tucson's psychiatric unit after transfer to an outside hospital. A patient was discharged and sent to an airport with no money and no identification. Sierra Tucson's lower-level residential facility was on a provisional license, with stepped-up monitoring by the state, from June 10 through Oct. 31 of 2015 after state officials found it had not been following its own policies on keeping track of patients' whereabouts. The state could have decided not to license Sierra Tucson at the end of the provisional period. Surveyors from the state ultimately determined there were enough improvements to restore the license. As part of restoring its license in October, Sierra Tucson had to pay the state \$35,000 in civil penalties — \$27,000 related to an investigation into the Aug. 27, 2015, patient suicide of a 59-year-old California man, plus \$7,500 following an investigation into the Jan. 23, 2015, suicide of 55-year-old Richard Lecce, a Pennsylvania man whose family has since sued the facility for wrongful death. Sierra Tucson at the time also agreed to some new rules, including excluding certain patients from admission — those with a current or active diagnosis of schizophrenia; a current or active diagnosis of dementia; five suicide attempts in a lifetime; three attempts in the previous 12 months; or an attempt within 72 hours of the requested admission date. The facility has had to pay other, smaller fines to the state, including \$1,000 for transferring Lecce from one of the high-level psychiatric beds to the lower-level residential facility. Lecce had been assigned one-on-one observation by a staff member while in the acute high-level psychiatric unit. When he was transferred to lower-level care, the one-on-one monitoring stopped, though there was no note in his record to discontinue it, a state report says. The other wrongful death lawsuit against Sierra Tucson was filed by the mother of a 20-year-old East Coast man who was at the facility for drug rehabilitation. He was found unresponsive at 8:45 a.m. on April 13, 2014, and died two days later. An autopsy report said he died from drug toxicity and that it was unclear whether the death was intentional or accidental. A 2014 state report into the young man's death found problems with the facility's pharmacy services, and found that staff members did not adequately check on his vital signs or follow the facility's suicide assessment protocol. The state report did not offer any clues as to how the 5-foot-8, 162-pound man acquired a toxic level of drugs in his system while in treatment. Contact health reporter Stephanie Innes at 573-4134 or email sinnes@tucson.com. On Twitter: @stephanieinnes Sierra Tucson history Sierra Tucson was founded in 1983 by recovering cocaine addict William O'Donnell Jr. at the former Brave Bull Guest Ranch. The center has had a reputation as a rehab center to the stars, with reports of celebrity patients. Most patients are in their late 30s and early 40s. A majority of patients self-pay at a cost of about \$1,300 per day or about \$40,000 per month. In 2002, Sierra Tucson went from a publicly traded company to a private concern in an \$82.5 million deal that consolidated ownership of Sierra Tucson and the Miraval, Life in Balance health resort under one company, NextHealth Inc. Sierra Tucson was sold to California-based CRC Health Group in 2005 for \$130 million. The following year, CRC Health Group was purchased for \$723 million by Boston-based Bain Capital Partners. In October 2014, Acadia bought CRC Health Group from private equity firm Bain Capital for \$1.2 billion, according to Becker's Hospital CFO Report. Publicly traded Acadia has inpatient behavioral health facilities in the United States, England and Puerto Rico. In 2015 O'Donnell's younger brother, Jack O'Donnell, co-founded Sabino Recovery, a residential facility 15 miles northeast of Tucson that specializes in treating trauma as the core cause of drug addiction and other problems. Between 2002 and 2005, the younger O'Donnell served as the CEO of NextHealth Inc., the company that once owned Sierra Tucson. Statement from Sierra Tucson The safety and well-being of our residents is our utmost priority. As part of our continuous efforts to improve patient care, we conduct reviews of all facility policies and procedures and implement measures designed to improve patient safety in our residential programs. Sierra Tucson has a good relationship with the Arizona Department of Health Services and we continually work in partnership with this organization to understand guidelines for any changes with state rules and policies. Additionally, we implement extensive employee training on patient monitoring, transitioning communications and additional patient safety measures. Sierra Tucson has a longstanding legacy of clinical excellence and care for the past 32 years, resulting in recovery for thousands of people struggling with substance use disorders, trauma-related issues, eating disorders, chronic pain and mood and anxiety disorders. We are very proud of the care we provide and the thousands of lives that we have improved and

saved because of the treatment received at Sierra Tucson. All of our clinicians and staff are committed to our patients and continuously work towards providing higher quality, clinical care in accordance with Arizona Department of Health Services standards. Source: http://tucson.com/news/local/sierra-tucson-fined-over-deficiencies-in-psychiatric-care/article_8a709016-95fc-5245-a7e5-4d015f4d8a93.html

Storytellers: Teachers turn to the guitar to reach at-risk kids 9NEWS at 10 p.m. 07/10/16. Nelson Garcia, KUSA 10:50 PM. MDT July 10, 2016 89 1 Chris Van Noy and Steve Cram offer lessons to student Michael Gabriels. (Photo: Mike Grady) JEFFERSON COUNTY - Sometimes the only way to reach a troubled teen is through the language they understand -- music. "A couple of years ago, I started working with some kids that were at risk, at risk from a lot of things, dropping out of school, running away from home," teacher Chris Van Noy said. Van Noy wanted to go beyond the walls of the classroom to try to change the path of students making bad choices. He teamed up with another teacher Steve Cram and they formed the Music Appreciation Project. "A lot of at-risk youth, they don't feel comfortable talking with adults," Cram said. Music Appreciation Project is a non-profit that provides instruments and lessons to students like Michael Gabriels. "I guess I get stressed out over a lot of things. I've always struggled with like depression, anxiety, stuff like that," Michael said. "It's very difficult for me to talk to people and express myself." But, when Michael plays guitar, he says, things change. "It just comes naturally to me and it feels like talking," Gabriels said. Van Noy says music can break barriers. "Working with the kids that we do, when they're depressed, when they're sad, when they're having a hard time, they put their earbuds in," Van Noy said. "They're listening to music and music helps them through difficult times." Michael used to just play at home. He has can play all styles of music, but he has learned to solo on his electric guitar with the energy and creativity of a heavy metal band. "It's kinda like my escape, you know, cause, I don't feel emotionally or passionately connected to anything else, you know," Michael said. But, when he started working with Van Noy and Cram, things started to change. "The relationship piece is the deal maker," Cram said. Michael says he now cares about school and feels like his mental health is improving. "It's changed my life completely, something completely different, you know," Michael said. "I feel like a completely different person, even." His father Mike says the change since becoming involved with the Music Appreciation Program is astonishing. "It has flipped his entire demeanor and his life in general, night and day," Mike Gabriels said. "Bad grades to good grades, feeling horrible, feeling exhilarated." Van Noy and Cram offer lessons to students. The nonprofit purchases equipment and instruments for needy students who cannot afford it. They want to give kids a chance to find the guitar hero inside themselves. "You can see the signs," Van Noy said. "You can see the signs that they need something else." Now, instead of just playing at home, Michael is actively pursuing a career in music. "Just a tremendous blessing to see that he's been lifted out of that place and using music as an outlet," Toni Gabriels, Michael's mother, said. Instead of being lost, Michael wants to mentor other kids who once felt like he did. "If we're teaching kids to give to help other people, that's beyond the scope of anything we could do and that's been amazing," Van Noy said. If you want to find out more about the Music Appreciation Project and its fundraising efforts, click here, <http://www.musicapro.org/>. "To give them something that they can be good at, I think is what really helps them a lot," Van Noy said. Source: <http://www.9news.com/news/local/storytellers/storytellers-teachers-turn-to-the-guitar-to-reach-at-risk-kids/239520746>

16 placements in eight years Teen details life in foster-care system [Story Comments \(1\)](#) [Print](#) [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size 9](#) [Previous](#) [Next](#) Aaric Bryan/Daily Inter Lake Johnny Perez Jr. Johnny Perez Jr., a 2016 Whitefish graduate, has spent most of his life moving from foster home to foster home. Posted: Monday, July 11, 2016 6:00 am [Teen details life in foster-care system](#) By HILARY MATHESON/Daily Inter Lake Daily Inter Lake | [1 comment](#) Johnny Perez Jr. spent most of his life trying to be "normal" as he was moved 16 times in the foster-care system. Perez counts on his fingers, saying the name of each placement out loud during an interview at his current foster family's Whitefish home on June 7. Subscription Required An online service is needed to view this article in its entirety. You need an online service to view this article in its entirety. "Yes, 16 placements," Perez said. "I think throughout those 16 placements only five, possibly seven were in foster homes with foster families." Despite his success as a recent Whitefish High School graduate, state track star and talented musician, the 17-year-old had to adapt to a feeling of impermanence. To get his diploma, Perez had to attend nine different high schools. "I've been in nine high schools — nine major moves. Some high schools I've been to twice [back and forth], so I guess 11 moves," Perez said, noting that his freshman year alone he moved four times. "The last time I finished out a year at a single school was in third grade," he said. "I attended Evergreen Elementary." Because of his top achievements in sports and academics and plans to attend Grand Canyon University in the fall, Perez said he is considered a success in the foster-care world, but it hasn't been easy. "I kind of get looked at as a success story," Perez said noting that he went from punching holes in walls to playing sports such as football and competing at state in track. For a foster child to have more than 10 placements is unusual, Child and Family Services Family Resource Specialist Daniel Donnelly said, but it's always a case-by-case basis. The average number of placements for foster children in Montana is three. "I teach foster-care classes as part of licensing. Our focus is not moving kids around because of the damage it causes," Donnelly said. Underneath Perez's positive and confident disposition are the damaging effects of moving from placement to placement and facing hopelessness. "It hasn't always been the 'I can succeed mentality,'" Perez said. "I attempted suicide twice." Perez paused when asked what pulled him through, pondering the question. "If I knew I'd bottle it up and sell it — I think the strong people in my life," Perez said. What he pinpointed were the staff members of various institutions in which he's been placed in, and other kids like him. "I use the term 'family' loosely because my family is very large and I'm unrelated to almost all of them. They are mostly group-home staff and foster family and siblings and other kids in group homes I've built these life-long bonds with," he said. Placed in foster care at 9, Perez became an expert at having his bags packed at a moment's notice and moving to a group home or foster family. "When I got put in foster care my mom was put in jail," Perez said. "That began my 16-placement journey throughout the foster-care system." At first, Perez said he was upset at being taken from his family in spite of a rocky home life. "When you're that young you want to be with your family," Perez said. The ultimate goal, Donnelly said, is to reunite children with their biological families. "First and foremost, the goal is to create a reunification and treatment plan to help the family become a safe place and overcome obstacles," Donnelly said. Reunification is attempted through supervised visits, working toward unsupervised visits and onto a trial home visit. Only if a parent makes significant progress or achieves treatment goals is reunification possible. Yet supervised visits, therapy sessions and a month back with his mother when he was 10 or 11 couldn't mend a broken relationship from Perez's perspective and he went back into foster care. He said a lot of anger remained, eventually leading to expulsion from school. "That was in the heat of abuse from my family. I was acting out," he said. Perez had to learn how to make sense of and deal with emotions such as anger without parental guidance, which is something therapeutic youth group homes helped provide. "When I first got put in care, something a lot of kids go through is they have anger issues, so a lot of the stuff was for behavioral health," Perez said. "Group homes try and help us with that, however difficult to get used to, they definitely were a significant help. Some of the staff were some of the most genuinely caring and influential people I've met in my life." Being in a foster family was very different from the structured therapeutic youth group home environment. Perez described it as going from a "super tight ship" to a less-structured routine. "I've never had a foster family I didn't mesh with. I did try very hard to make everything succeed because everybody wants that next placement to be their last placement. No kid enjoys being bounced around," Perez said. For the rare occasions when children are moved to more than 10 placements Child Protective Services Specialist Melissa Cichosz said the goal is to convey to the child that the move is not their fault. "Sometimes a child is unable to understand why they are moved," Cichosz said. The length of time a child stays with a foster family is dependent on a lot of factors that a child cannot necessarily control. "I've had foster homes fall apart because the foster family got a divorce and so all of us kids were disbanded. I've had foster homes where I just showed up after school one day and everything I owned was packed," Perez said, noting one instance that happened after placed in a home for a long time. "I was told my case worker was coming in an hour and I had no idea why and that's after I had been there for two and a half years." Although he said he's remained in contact with the family, Perez still seems hurt. "I beat myself up so much for that for so long [why it happened] I just don't want to open that up again. It's six years ago. I don't mind," Perez said glancing out a window. His current placement has spanned nine months with first-time foster mother Cheryl Sausen of Whitefish. With 3,206 children in Montana's foster-care system, 6 percent are youths ages 15 and over and there is a need for families to foster and adopt teenagers. "People saying they'd only adopt 0 to 4-year-olds is very common. We've had people say 'those teenagers are broken — too much trouble' — which is not the way to be thinking," Donnelly said. Fostering a teenager hadn't occurred to Sausen, 54, until she met Perez, who had been a friend of her son, Tommy, the youngest of four children. "Tommy went off to college and I just still had Johnny in my heart to help him," Sausen said. "When I met him I didn't know if he was officially in foster-care system; I just knew I wanted to get him in a better place and get him through high school." Sausen was able to take Perez in under kinship care. Eventually she took classes to become a licensed foster parent through Child Protective Services. "We've had good stuff, some not so good, normal teenage stuff," Sausen said. She recalled one time when they had a "big blowout" where an average teen would see a disagreement or argument between parent and child as something that's normal and bound to happen. Perez

was ready to pack his bags. "He was already making his plans and knew he would have to move out and go somewhere, so I guess that's kind of the norm that he was expecting; he would just have to move onto the next thing," she said. Sausen said she knew Perez seemed to be stuck in "fight or flight" mode. "So we talked in the beginning, I'm sure you are used to fighting or flighting, I know you may self-sabotage, but hopefully, eventually you'll learn you don't have to go to that old stuff," Sausen said. And so far, it's been a good work in progress. Sausen said the classes were very helpful in opening her eyes to the reality of what some foster children are facing and how to handle different situations. "From my own background I kind of know how kids can react — even how adults react from not-so-good childhoods," Sausen said. "The classes, whew, the classes really open up your eyes to the reality of some severe things." And if she ever needed assistance there are caseworkers for families. To maintain what he considered a normal life, he kept his past and the fact that he was a foster child, to himself. "I kept very few kids from knowing my life — never told anybody any of the things I've been through. Never told them where I lived," he said. "People would ask to hang out after school and I'd tell them that I couldn't. I would say 'oh I'm grounded,' when it was because I was living in group homes where you weren't allowed to have people spend the night," Perez said. What gave him a sense of normalcy was playing sports such as football, basketball and track. He could simply be known as "Johnny the good athlete" rather than "Johnny the foster kid." What Perez considered normal was "just that kid who could go to football games without having to get it approved a week in advance first. Or go do anything on [your] own in the community without having a staff member watch [your] every action, I mean, even down to the cliché of sitting down for dinner at night with your family." Perez kept his life in foster care from most of his friends until he became a junior in high school, when he didn't see a reason anymore to be self-conscious about stigmas. "When I moved back to Whitefish I chose a more open approach. If people asked about my past I would tell them," Perez said. On social media he would share some of the hardships he went through, not always resulting in positive comments. "I started getting called Pity King. I just want understanding. There are kids who put on the facade of the happiest kid on earth when in reality they aren't," Perez said, petting his Chihuahua, Paca. "She was the runt of litter," said. "Her mom wouldn't let her feed ... I bottle-fed her; the first two months of her life she slept in my shirt to maintain her body heat." Perez said his motivation for sharing his story is to tell the public there are talented and successful foster children out there. "I want to share that foster kids are normal kids and we exist," Perez said. "You don't hear the success of foster kids. You hear foster kids live in low-income housing, don't go to college, drop out of high school, when there's so many talented kids from the foster system." In less than a month Perez will celebrate his 18th birthday and "age out" of foster care, but there are supports available such as the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, to help foster children transition into adult independence. "The foster-care system is trying to help me with college stuff and after high school plans," Perez said. "They have independent living, which is what a lot of kids do, but I'll be living in the dorms. I have my next four years basically planned out. In the summers I'll live here with my foster family." And Perez still needs a connection to the foster-care system. He doesn't necessarily want to push the system behind him yet. Perez would like to help change the foster-care system. "Child advocacy is something I feel is not strong enough," Perez said. In college, Perez plans on studying psychology and eventually working in the foster-care system to "help kids out like myself." He would like to strengthen awareness and community involvement with foster children and families. Perez understands what the difficult job entails. "Do you think you have a heart to walk into a family and say 'I deem you unfit as a parent and I have to take your child'?" People who work at CPS have to do that. It is so difficult to do that job. It's just gut-wrenching," he said. For more information on becoming a foster parent call 1-866-936-7837 or visit <http://dphhs.mt.gov/CFSD/Fosterparent.aspx>. To report a possible case of child abuse or neglect, call 1-866-820-5437. Source: http://www.dailylnterlake.com/members/teen-details-life-in-foster-care-svstem/article_4e4d1368-470f-11e6-a7db-abbac31d73d5.html

WA State Now Implementing E2SSB 6564: A law passed to protect the developmentally disabled from institutional abuse. This law reads in part: "Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill: Within funds dedicated for this purpose, DDA must increase home visits for clients identified as having the highest risk of abuse and neglect. DDA must develop a process to determine which of its clients who receive an annual developmental disabilities assessment are at highest risk of abuse... and neglect. Factors which DDA may consider in making this assessment are specified in the bill. DDA must visit these clients at least once every four months, including unannounced visits as needed. If an unannounced visit takes the place of a scheduled visit and is unable to be completed, the case manager must schedule a follow-up visit." Read this new law now at: <http://lawfilesexulteg.wa.gov/biennium/2015-16/Pdf/Bill%20Reports/Senate/6564-S2.E%20SBR%20HA%2016.pdf>

How Education Fares In The Democratic Party Platform Although [education policy](#) has not been a prominent issue in the current presidential race, the Democratic Party's platform gives the subject some of its just due with a fairly extensive treatment. In the [current draft](#), which will be [finalized on June 8 and 9](#), there are numerous mentions of education and a special section with over 1,000 words devoted to the topic. [Many are saying](#) this platform "may be most progressive platform the Democratic Party may have ever had." But is it progressive on education? Let's weigh the evidence. First let's examine how the Democratic Party platform differs from what's proposed in the Republican Party's platform. The Republican [document](#) gets education policy wrong from with the very first sentence by asserting, "Parents are responsible for the education of their children." Although it's true parents certainly need to be involved in their children's education, have a voice in how schools are run, and take responsibility for encouraging and maintaining their children's educational development, putting the sole burden for education on parents guarantees inequity of education opportunity and is, frankly, un-American. Relegating education opportunity to "consumer rights" and "choice," as the Republicans do, [ensures](#) those who are the wealthiest and most enabled in the system have the most opportunity, while less-well-off parents have the least. And [since our country's founding](#), the American tradition is for education to be a shared burden taken on by the entire population. Virtually every state's constitution asserts government's responsibility to provide for an education for elementary and secondary students, a precedent established by the [Ordinance of 1785](#), which predates our national Constitution. The rest of the Republican platform is studded with the usual bromides about "high standards," "high expectations," "accountability," and "choice" with very little attention to governmental responsibilities for education. In fact, Republicans bash government's role in relation to spending on education, making a false assertion that \$2 trillion expenditure by the federal government since 1965 has resulted in "no substantial improvement in academic achievement." According to the best measure available, the National Assessment of Education Progress, scores are [up over the past 40 years](#), and black and Hispanic students have made the greatest gains over that period. Specific proposals in the Republican's platform range from removing government financial support for higher education, to providing parents with vouchers to transfer their children out of the public system at taxpayer expense, to getting tough on teachers while leaving the profession open to un-credentialed, untrained recruits. In other words, remove government's responsibility to provide for a universally accessible, high quality, and equitable education for every child. Nothing progressive here. Are Democrats any better? Unfortunately, the Democratic Party's platform falls short of asserting a bedrock philosophy for education. Although, those who drafted the document include a statement about the federal government's role in "working towards an America where a world-class education is available to every child," what's missing is a statement defining education as fundamental right and a collective responsibility. As public education advocate [Jan Resseger](#) writes on her personal blog, Democrats should, at the very least, declare education to be a "common good" and call for "a comprehensive system ... that serves all children and is democratically governed, publicly funded, universally accessible, and accountable to the public." But instead, the platform highlights a series of isolated issues that, although important, further the perception that education is mostly a technocratic endeavor rather than a moral and political imperative. So, without a rudder to guide its education positions, how do the Democrats fare in their treatment of specific policy points? The section devoted to education begins with higher education, which certainly has been a prominent issue in the presidential campaign. The writing is mainly focused on addressing the dramatic increase in the cost of higher education, calling it a "barrier" that government needs to help students overcome. Specifically, the platform calls for free community college, which would guarantee at least a basic access to higher education opportunity. This idea has some practical validity, as is being demonstrated by the free community college program currently being run in [Tennessee](#). Nevertheless, the call for tuition free community college, without extending it to four-year university, falls short of the proposal made by Democratic presidential candidate [Bernie Sanders](#) to provide for universal tuition free college. Although the party's presumptive nominee Hillary Clinton initially eschewed what Sanders proposed, [she has since reconsidered and embraced](#) the idea. So on the subject of higher education, the Democratic platform needs to catch up with its candidates. On the subject of college student loan debt — a key issue in turning out the vote from millennials — Democrats call for a Student Borrower Bill of Rights and a pledge to allow borrowers with student loans to discharge their debts in bankruptcy. These are admirable proposals but again fall short of the student debt ["jubilee"](#) that would reflect both the values upon which this nation was founded and the economic principles that have sustained it through its greatest periods of growth and prosperity. The platform's pledge to support "minority-serving" universities, such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities, is worthy, although as classroom teacher and popular blogger [Peter Greene](#), on his personal site, advises those who drafted the document, "You guys may want to take a look at that whole 'minority' thing, since

particularly in schools ‘minority’ also means ‘white’ at this point.” The platform’s pledge to crack down on predatory for-profit colleges is also generally worthwhile; although, it’s not clear whether this puts them at odds with the [Obama administration’s current effort](#) to include [Navient](#) – the loan servicing giant with one of the worst track records for ripping off students – as one of the finalists to help overhaul federal student loan collection practices. Regarding early childhood education and K-12, the platform lumps the two issues together, a mistake because states generally have no constitutional obligations to provide for ECE. For sure, providing high quality pre-K education to little kids is vital but not just for the sake of the “workforce,” as the platform seems to suggest. Much of what is stated about K-12 education amounts to generalities that few can object to but don’t have much of a basis in research and enduring practice. Having “great Pre-K-12 schools in every zip code” is important but not without some consideration of [what makes them “great.”](#) Few would object to high standards but standards [do little to actually ensure outcomes.](#) One of the few specifics in the platform is the call for mentoring programs, which certainly have some merit but seem an odd proposal to highlight in a document with national significance. One wonders, as Greene does in his assessment, “Which genius on the committee has a bunch of money sunk in some mentor-consultant business?” The Democratic proposal wraps up with attention to the issue of charter schools, declaring support for “high-quality public charter schools” (who would support bad ones?) and opposition to “for-profit charter schools focused on making a profit off of public resources” – an empty rhetorical phrase because charters can operate as non-profits while being connected to [all sorts of profitable enterprises.](#) The issue of charter schools is complicated and hard to address in a broad document like a party platform. But here again, the platform authors could have reasserted the need for schools to be democratically controlled by and accountable to the entirety of the population that the school is intended to serve – which would be a clear statement of opposition to the rapidly expanding industrial approach to schooling being spread by large [charter management companies.](#) In sum the platform’s authors would be wise to consider advice of California education professor Julian Vasquez Heilig to focus on the [solutions that have some basis in research.](#) So does the Democratic platform support education policies that are progressive? Currently, the best answer to that question is, “Maybe.” Source: <http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/how-education-fares-in-the-democratic-party-platform/>

Don’t Make Our Most Vulnerable Children Wait Longer! 07/12/2016 10:37 am 10:37:16 | Updated 3 days ago [Marian Wright Edelman](#). In an important show of bipartisanship, Congress is on the cusp of an historic step to help many of the most vulnerable children in our nation who are abused and neglected and at risk of entering foster care and lingering in group care. The U.S. House of Representatives passed the Family First Prevention Services Act (H.R. 5456) on June 21st to help keep these children safely with their families and out of foster care. I hope the Senate will do the same this week before it leaves for summer recess and not keep vulnerable children waiting and waiting longer. Alumni of foster care frequently say the most important step the state could have taken was to help their family early on to keep them out of foster care. They talk about what a difference it would have made if drug treatment or other supports were available to keep their families together and offer them needed stability in their lives. We often overlook the trauma children experience when they are uprooted from their home, family and school and are expected to adjust to new environments. My mother was a wonderful foster parent to nearly a dozen children, yet many of her foster children yearned for their birth families. This separation trauma can be intensified for children in group homes and lead to worse life outcomes than experienced by children in family foster homes. Many children who move frequently from family to family or one group setting to another and from school to school wish they could have a stable family all children need growing up. “You don’t age out of families,” they say, underscoring a fundamental problem with having only the state as a parent. Passage of the Family First Prevention Services Act, identical to the Senate bill introduced by Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-OR), will make historic and crucial investments in prevention for children and families. Currently major federal child welfare funding is available to states only after a child has been removed from their home and placed in foster care. This has created a disincentive to help families at the front-end. For many years state child welfare agencies and a range of other providers and advocates have challenged this misalignment in federal funding which undermines the best interests and outcomes for vulnerable children and urged federal investments in prevention. The Family First Prevention Services Act finally does that recognizing that mental health and substance abuse problems bring the majority of children into the child welfare system. It allows federal dollars to be used to prevent and treat such problems and to fund home-based programs to strengthen parenting skills for children in their own families. We know quality prevention programs work and are less costly than group and congregate care. So we urge the Senate to act now. The Family First Prevention Services Act also redirects federal fiscal incentives to states to help children who must enter foster care be placed with families rather than in more expensive and less effective group care. Over the years foster care alumni have shared their experiences in group home settings with members of Congress and explained how they needed the love and support of their parents or extended families, not rotating shifts of staff in a place that felt more like a business than a home. So this long overdue bill acts to reduce the unnecessary funneling of children into group care settings. Federal dollars are available for family foster care or quality residential treatment programs for children with special emotional or behavioral needs — often the most expensive care. The bill includes enhanced protections to ensure children remain in residential programs no longer than treatment requires. States will continue to receive federal support for programs serving pregnant and parenting teens and youth 18 and older transitioning from foster care to adulthood. After more than 35 years of federal support, states and localities will now have to pick up the full tab for the care of children in other group settings to better align federal dollars with prevention and the most family-like foster care settings that offer better outcomes for children. Recognizing that this is a big change, these new funds for prevention and restrictions on group care funding will not take effect until three years after the bill is enacted. This three year delay gives state and local agencies, private providers and child and family advocates ample time to prepare and work with the Department of Health and Human Services to build on the new law’s flexibility in defining who is eligible for prevention services, how the services are defined, and the definition, structure and eligibility for residential treatment programs. There is also initial funding to build on for recruiting and retaining quality foster homes. Could some states get less federal money for group care than they have been receiving? Possibly, but only if they maintain the status quo rather than supporting more family-like settings and treatment for children with special needs. And now all states will be able to use federal dollars for services and treatment to help keep children safely in their families and out of more expensive foster care. The bottom line must be what’s best for children. A number of states already have time-limited federal waivers allowing more flexible use of federal foster care dollars to show the benefits of investments in prevention. The new federal prevention funds in the Family First Prevention Services Act will become available in 2019 as those waivers end. The new federal reforms build on what Congress has learned from states’ efforts to increase prevention investments and move children in foster care to more family-like settings, steps that improve child outcomes. The Senate should approve H.R. 5456 before summer recess in four days. Attempts to change the bill, even technical amendments, will kill it and send a hurtful message to vulnerable children across the country that continued reliance on foster care over prevention is acceptable. I urge passage of this crucial bill to ensure long awaited services and protections for abused and neglected children. Every child deserves to grow up in a safe and loving family. The Family First Prevention Services Act is a critically important step toward this goal for hundreds of thousands of our most vulnerable children. Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/arian-wright-edelman/dont-make-our-most-vulner_b_10941914.html#

Charge: Group home leader punched, kicked resident in vehicle - Eau Claire Leader-Telegram Charge: Group home leader punched, kicked resident in vehicle posted July 13, 2016 12:00 a.m. (CDT) [email article print](#) font size [-](#) [+](#) by / Dan Holtz. [bio](#) | [email](#) | [4 Enlarge](#) Stoner [prevnext](#) A man who runs an adult group home in Eau Claire is accused of punching and kicking one of his residents in a vehicle in Fall Creek. The 46-year-old resident sustained a bruised and swollen left eye in the incident, police said. Clinton E. Stoner, 50, of 716 Kimberly Drive was charged Tuesday in Eau Claire County Court with a felony count of causing bodily harm by intentionally abusing a patient. Stoner is free on a \$5,000 signature bond and returns to court Aug. 23. As conditions of bond, Stoner was ordered not to have contact with the resident or vulnerable adults and children. According to the criminal complaint: A Fall Creek police officer received a report of possible family trouble that occurred just after 4:30 p.m. Monday in the 100 block of Wisconsin Street in Fall Creek. The officer spoke with a witness who said she was sitting on her front porch when a vehicle pulled over. The driver got out, opened the back door and started punching and kicking the passenger and restraining the passenger from getting out of the vehicle. The witness also heard the driver yelling and swearing at the passenger. The altercation lasted about two minutes. The witness got the license plate number of the vehicle before the vehicle headed westbound on U.S. 12. A second witness told the officer the male in the back seat may have been mentally challenged. The officer then spoke with Stoner, the registered owner of the vehicle. Stoner said he runs an adult group home in Eau Claire, cares for two residents and had taken them swimming. Stoner took one of the residents to his mother’s house in Fall Creek to get a swimming suit. The resident wanted to stay at his mother’s house, which he was not allowed to do. Stoner claimed the resident started attacking him in the vehicle and he had to pull over to restrain him. Stoner said the resident pulled his hair and tore off his shirt. Witnesses told police the driver of the vehicle pulled off his own shirt. The resident, who cried when speaking to an Eau Claire police officer, said Stoner hit him with a closed fist. If convicted,

Stoner could be sentenced to up to three years in prison. Contact: 715-833-9207, dan.holtz@ecpc.com Source: <http://www.leadertelegram.com/News/Front-Page/2016/07/13/Charge-Group-homeleader-punched-kickedresident-in-vehicle-nbsp.html>

Report rips State Agency in charge of Group Homes Potential cases of neglect and abuse not reported By [Ryan Walsh, 22News I-Team Reporter](#)

Published: July 14, 2016, 11:04 am Updated: July 14, 2016, 5:54 pm BOSTON (WWLP) - An [Inspector General report](#) rips a Massachusetts state agency for not reporting potential cases of abuse and neglect of developmentally disabled individuals under state care. The report found that the state and group homes staff did not report critical emergency room visits to investigators 58% of the time. The Inspector General reviewed emergency room visits of developmentally disabled individuals living in group homes. The Department of Developmental Services oversees group homes. The Office of the Inspector General found that the Department of Developmental Services did not comply with Federal waiver and State requirements for reporting and monitoring critical incidents involving developmentally disabled individuals. One unnamed woman with developmental disabilities was living in a group home with psychiatric disorders. She was in the emergency room 10 times from May 2013 to May 2014. She was in the hospital for swallowing batteries, screws, bolts, soda can tabs, and a part of a cell phone charger. The Department of Developmental Services only reported one of the ten incidents to the Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC).

The state agency has to report reasonable suspicions of abuse or neglect to the DPPC. Another incident showed that a resident had cuts on their head due to being restrained by the group home's aides on two separate occasions. The state agency did not report that incident to investigators either. The Inspector General's report also says that the state agency did not make sure that Group Homes reported all critical incidents to the Department of Developmental Services.

The report says that Group Homes did not report 15% of the 587 emergency room visits reviewed to the Department of Developmental Services. Group Home providers are required to do so. Due to this, the Department of Developmental Services did not review and analyze data on the 88 critical incidents group homes did not report. One incident involved a group home resident who suffered second-degree burns on his shoulder. Another resident was hit in the head with a metal chair by another resident and suffered a concussion. Neither incident was reported to the state. The Inspector General went through 2964 emergency room claims from the Massachusetts Medicaid Management Information System that the state agency paid for developmentally disabled Medicaid beneficiaries living in group homes from January 2012 through June 2014. Those individuals had 587 hospital emergency room visits that were diagnosed with at least 1 of 149 conditions that were high risk for suspected abuse or neglect. In letters to the Inspector General, the state agency disagreed with many of the findings, but did say they welcome the recommendations made in the report. In a statement sent to 22News on Thursday, the Executive Officer of Health and Human Services, which oversees the Department of Developmental Services had this to say: "DDS is committed to protecting the health and welfare of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are receiving services, has carefully reviewed the findings in the OIG's report and is in the process of implementing recommendations, including additional staff training practices and new guidance on critical incident reports, to ensure quality care for the 36,000 individuals it serves are safe and protected." The Inspector General reviewed this data in several states, including Massachusetts, in response to a congressional request concerning the number of deaths and cases of abuse of developmentally disabled residents of group homes. Source: <http://www.wwlp.com/investigative-story/report-rips-state-agency-in-charge-of-group-homes/>

Scathing report details failings at group homes [E-Mail](#) Share via e-mail To Add a message Your e-mail [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Google+](#) [LinkedIn](#) [29 Comments](#) [Print](#) [The Boston Globe](#) [Tweet](#) [Share](#) [29 Comments](#) By [Michael Levenson](#) Globe Staff July 14, 2016 A [scathing federal audit](#) released Thursday faults Massachusetts officials for frequently failing to alert authorities when developmentally disabled residents of the state's group homes suffer broken bones, burns, and other injuries potentially caused by abuse and neglect. The audit, by the inspector general of the US Department of Health and Human Services, found that 58 percent of emergency room visits that involved reasonable suspicion of abuse and neglect were not reported to investigators between January 2012 and June 2014. Advertisement In one case, a developmentally disabled man had second-degree burns on his shoulder that neither he nor an aide at his group home could explain. In another case, a woman prone to seizures and defiant behavior was brought to the emergency room on two separate occasions with cuts on her head after she was restrained by group home staff. And in a third, an autistic man had a bed sore that was so infected it was possibly gangrenous and in need of extensive surgery and reconstruction. Curtis M. Roy, the audit manager who oversaw the report, said he was flabbergasted and disturbed by the findings. "I shake my head every time I read these reports because I don't quite see how people can see somebody laying there with an infected gangrenous bed sore and not pick up the telephone," he said. "I just don't understand that. I really don't." Advertisement State officials said they disagreed with many of the findings of the report, which they said were overstated. Nevertheless, they said they had issued several new advisories to group home contractors on how to identify suspected abuse and neglect and are developing additional training for group home workers and state officials. The state "is committed to protecting the health and welfare of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are receiving services, has carefully reviewed the findings in the OIG's report and is in the process of implementing recommendations," said Michelle Hillman, spokeswoman for the state health and human services agency. Private contractors operate about 1,800 group homes in Massachusetts, while the state directly runs about 200, according to the Arc of Massachusetts, an advocacy group for people with developmental disabilities. They serve a total of 10,000 residents with disabilities. The federal audit found the lack of action by state officials and group home workers placed developmentally disabled adults – some of whom cannot speak, hear, or see, and many of whom have serious physical and intellectual disabilities – at risk of harm. The state's failure to report the injuries to investigators also violated state and federal rules. "Personally, I would be at least moderately concerned, if not very concerned, if I had a relative in a group home," Roy said. "I just don't think there should be any tolerance of abuse or neglect of anybody, but in particular of developmentally disabled people." US Senator Christopher Murphy, a Connecticut Democrat, requested audits of several states' group homes after [the Hartford Courant reported in 2013](#) that abuse and neglect had been cited in the deaths of 76 developmentally disabled people in Connecticut between 2004 and 2010. As a result, the inspector general's office reviewed the safeguards designed to prevent abuse and neglect in group homes in Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, and Maine. Connecticut's audit, released in May, found that state, like Massachusetts, often failed to report possible abuse or neglect to investigators, [including cases involving a man who suffered a broken spine and a woman who repeatedly swallowed razor blades](#). Massachusetts' audit found that state officials and group home workers, by not acting on possible cases of abuse and neglect, "failed to adequately protect" 146 of the 334 developmentally disabled residents whose emergency room visits were reviewed. The audit also found that the Department of Developmental Services, the state agency that oversees group homes, did not ensure that group homes detail the "action steps" they would take to prevent injuries from occurring again in 29 percent of cases. The report was based on a review of 587 emergency room visits made by 334 group home residents on Medicaid between January 2012 and June 2014 – cases that involved broken bones, burns, open wounds, drug overdoses, and swallowed objects. Christine Griffin, executive director of Disability Law Center of Massachusetts, said she hopes the report prompts officials to overhaul how the state handles potential abuse and neglect – including what she called the chronic underfunding and understaffing of the Disabled Persons Protection Commission, which investigates possible cases in group homes. She said the state should also implement, as others have, a registry of group home workers who have abused or neglected residents, to ensure they can't be hired again at another group home. "It's startling to me that we're this behind," Griffin said. "Especially someone who is nonverbal, we just discount what happens to them in some way. If they can't say, 'Somebody did this to me and this is who that person is,' then things that happen to them get ignored by everybody." Nancy A. Alterio, executive director of the Disabled Persons Protection Commission, said the agency fields 10,000 reports of potential abuse and neglect a year, has a \$3 million budget and five investigators. Each investigator typically has 50 open cases. "In Massachusetts, we work very diligently and vigilantly to ensure the protection of persons with disabilities," she said. "We're far from a perfect system, but we're often seen as a model across the country because of our collaborative efforts and focus." Roy said it is essential that group home workers and officials understand that they must act if they are concerned that the injuries suffered by a developmentally disabled person might have been caused by abuse or neglect. "If you have to even think about it," Roy said, "you should tell someone." Michael Levenson can be reached at mlevenson@globe.com. Follow him on Twitter [@mlevenson](#). Source: <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2016/07/13/scathing-report-details-failings-group-homes/gXx87GpHkixBJTuROkJL1L/story.html>

--> --> **'This is not my room': The harrowing message a five-year-old girl wrote on the walls of a room her mother and stepfather locked her in as they subjected her to cruel bootcamp-style torture** A man and woman will spend time in jail for torturing a five-year-old girl. The woman is the child's mother and the man is her step-father. They began torturing the girl when parenting became 'overwhelming'. Was forced to run behind a car in bushland to simulate being abandoned. The torture was 'punishment' for the girl's misbehaviour, the court heard. By [Belinda Cleary For Daily Mail Australia](#) Published: 09:30 EST, 15 July 2016 | Updated: 09:38 EST, 15 July 2016 [View comments](#) The parents of a five-year-old girl who exposed her to barbaric boot-camp torture and locked her in her room without toilet breaks will spend less than a year in jail. The Caboolture-based mother, 26, and step-father, 30, of the young girl executed a

bizarre torture regime after they became 'overwhelmed' by the task of parenting, Brisbane District Court heard. The five-year-old was forced to run up to 6km, in bushland behind her parents car which would pull away whenever she got close. SHARE PICTURE Copy link to paste in your message +3 The parents of a five-year-old girl who was tortured with an extreme exercise regime and locked in her room for up to 24 hours at a time will see less than a year behind bars. This bizarre method of punishment was supposed to make the child feel like she was being abandoned and was a 'corrective treatment' for her behaviour. Sometimes she would be joined by two other children on these runs. She was also forced to undertake up to four hours of other exercises including situps and stand ups, the Courier Mail Reports. The abuse started after the parents turned to an older man for guidance and would be administered as a form of punishment when she misbehaved. SHARE PICTURE Copy link to paste in your message +3 The parents appeared before Brisbane District Court where they were sentenced for the torture and abuse of the girl. This older man would force the girl to eat curry powder if she did not exercise fast enough. When the girl was at home she would often be sent to her room where the door handles would be removed so she couldn't escape. 'This is not my room, this is not my house,' she wrote on the walls of her room. The words were a 'sad and poignant' feature of the shocking case, Judge Craig Chowdhury said in a hearing on Friday. 'The girl had also smeared her own excrement around the room and suggested her spartan room had become her personal prison,' he said. The step father was ordered to spend eight months behind bars and the girl's mother was given three months. SHARE PICTURE Copy link to paste in your message +3 The girl wrote harrowing messages on the walls and also smeared excrement around the room. The couple, who are no longer together, had their full four and three-year terms suspended. The court heard the woman had also admitted to police she struck the girl across the face on several occasions - once so hard it had hurt her own hand. Summarising her treatment, which also included being forced to exercise excessively and being left outside with pet dogs, Judge Chowdhury said: 'The mind boggles'. 'These acts can only be designed to humiliate, demoralise and destroy whatever happy childhood this girl was ever going to have.' Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3691978/Queensland-parents-jailed-subjecting-girl-5-cruel-bootcamp-style-torture.html#ixzz4EX74DBnn> Follow us: [@MailOnline on Twitter](#) | [DailyMail on Facebook](#)

Groundbreaking human rights of children bill introduced in Congress By Elizabeth Bartholet & Paulo Barroz • 7/16/16 12:03 AM The Washington Examiner [Share](#) [Tweet](#) [Mail Print](#) [SMS](#) [More](#) Tens of millions of children worldwide live without parents, with an estimated 10 to 14 million of these unparented children confined to institutions. And this number is growing. These children are denied their human right to grow up in a family and to be free from the cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, unnecessary detention, and denial of the right to life, liberty, and the security of persons characteristic of institutionalization. Their plight is the largest unrecognized humanitarian and human rights crisis of the 21st century. Human rights legislation addressing this crisis was introduced in Congress recently by Rep. Tom Marino, R-Penn., and Rep. David Cicilline, D-R.I., H.R. 5285 amends the Congressional mandate to the Department of State to prepare and publish annually Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, requiring it to include in those Country Reports violations of the above-listed child human rights. This new legislation is simple. It requires no new resources, and no new office. It creates no new sanctions, and allows the Department of State the same discretion it has traditionally enjoyed in preparing the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. H.R. 5285 simply requires the Department of State to stop discriminating against millions of children worldwide by refusing to count as a human rights violation their denial of family life through adoption and their unnecessary institutionalization. While simple, this legislation would nonetheless be of enormous significance in the debate over whether unparented children should continue to be condemned to institutions whose destructive effects have been documented by leading social and medical sciences research, or allowed to find permanent families through adoption. Adoption gives children the permanent, nurturing, legally stable parents they need. However, few countries with large populations of unparented children have a robust domestic adoption tradition and many countries impose severe restrictions on or altogether prohibit international adoption. This deliberately denies millions of children in need their human right to grow up in nurturing homes. These restrictive adoption policies have resulted in the precipitous decline by 75 percent in the number of adoptions into the United States since 2004, and by more than 50 percent in the number of international adoptions worldwide. This represents the deliberate and unnecessary denial to well over 20,000 children per year of their most fundamental human right other than life itself — the right to grow up with nurturing parents. H.R. 5285 would help shift the U.S. position so that instead of undermining the child's right to family, the United States would take a leading role in advocating for this vulnerable population globally. This landmark legislation has the support of a broad coalition of leading human rights and child welfare experts and organizations, assisted in this endeavor by the Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice and Arent Fox LLP. This coalition includes the National Council for Adoption, the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys, the Center for Adoption Policy, Saddleback Church Orphan Care Initiative, and Harvard Law School's Child Advocacy Program. We call on Congress to join the fight to secure the rights of unparented children worldwide who continue to be unnecessarily institutionalized and denied the opportunity to grow up in stable loving homes by geographical accident and the policies of governments. Also from the Washington Examiner [NIH: Lack](#) Source: <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/groundbreaking-human-rights-of-children-bill-introduced-in-congress/article/2596677>

Editorial: More questions about group home care Greenville News Editorial Page 1:03 a.m. EDT July 17, 2016 5 CONNECT [TWEET](#) [LINKEDIN](#) COMMENT EMAIL MORE A three-day investigative report published last week by The Greenville News begs many more answers about the way South Carolina and its contractors manage the care of the state's most vulnerable adults. Investigative reporter Rick Brundrett spent seven months poring over records and conducting interviews as he explored the deaths of three clients in group homes run by South Carolina Mentor, a division of a national company that operates homes for vulnerable adults. Mentor is overseen by the state Department of Disabilities and Special Needs. --> Play Video Play Mute Current Time 0:00 / Duration Time 3:05 Loaded: 0% Progress: 0% Stream TypeLIVE Remaining Time -0:00 Playback Rate 1 Chapters Chapters subtitles off, selected Subtitles captions settings, opens captions settings dialog captions off, selected Captions Fullscreen Brother and best friend lost in the care of Mentor.m4v This is a modal window. Play Mute Current Time 0:00 / Duration Time 0:00 Loaded: 0% Progress: 0% Stream TypeLIVE Remaining Time -0:00 Playback Rate 1 Chapters Chapters subtitles off, selected Subtitles captions settings, opens captions settings dialog captions off, selected Captions Fullscreen Brother and best friend lost in the care of Mentor.m4v Foreground Background Window Font Size Text Edge Style Font Family [Skip Ad](#) Ad Loading... x Embed x Share Michelle McCarroll talks about her brother, Jamie Rosemond, who died while living in a Mentor group home. Lauren Petracca The investigation looked at a very small sample of cases, but raises important questions about how well the state is fulfilling its duty to care for these adults who have very serious intellectual or other developmental issues, and how well the state is monitoring the companies it authorizes to carry out those duties. By law, the state has a responsibility to care for vulnerable adults. Even when contracted to private companies, the state's responsibility extends to carefully overseeing those companies. Taxpayers have funded a \$17.5 million annual contract (recently increased to \$19.9 million) for Mentor alone, but Mentor is one of multiple companies that serve the state in this capacity. To ensure that money is being spent responsibly there needs to be a high degree of transparency over both the state and its contractors. That has not been the case. Brundrett ran into difficulty obtaining some public records — such as the addresses of group homes in the state. In addition, details about abuse reports and patient deaths in contractor-run group homes often are murky. Such a lack of transparency not only keeps the taxpayers in the dark, but also prevents relatives of vulnerable adults from having any assurance their loved ones are being properly cared for. One example from the Greenville News report provides cause for worry. Brundrett recounted the case of Jamie Rosemond who wandered away from his group home in Mauldin and was fatally struck by two cars in 2012. The window on Rosemond's room had an alarm, but the alarm was disabled when he broke the window several days before his fatal escape, according to a lawsuit. Further, employees were supposed to be checking on Rosemond every 15 minutes, but apparently had not done so — logs showed group home staff had checked on Rosemond at 6:30 p.m. and 6:45 p.m. on the day he died while police reports show he was struck by two cars at about 6:25 p.m. All of this despite that fact caregivers knew Rosemond was prone to wandering off. Families of group home residents as well as taxpayers should demand answers. Systems that are in place to protect group home clients need to be maintained and procedures followed. The state needs to follow up on maintenance. It also needs to ensure policies — those mandated by the state or put in place by the contractors — are being consistently followed. If a procedure is not being followed, it should not be used to give clients' family members a false sense of security. There also are legitimate questions about the finances of these contracts. The state contract with Mentor averages to about \$85,000 per client per year. That is a significant sum for the care of one individual, and though the cost may be legitimate, contractors' books should be open so taxpayers can see how their money is being spent. Further, the quality of direct-care workers needs to be reviewed. Brundrett reported that the starting pay for direct-care staff in South Carolina is \$9.79 per hour. Mentor's workers, who average 3.5 years of service, earn \$9.86 per hour on average. Those low wages are concerning given the responsibility these workers have. It's easy to assume higher wages could improve the quality of care. If true, the state and its contractors should consider providing better pay for these important workers. These questions need to be answered. In the meantime, some help may be on the way. In a story on Tuesday, Brundrett reported that state

Rep. Chandra Dillard plans to introduce or cosponsor legislation to improve accountability by requiring video cameras in common areas of group homes. That would be a good first step. Michelle McCarroll, the sister of Jamie Rosemond, told Brundrett she thinks the state also should ensure there are working alarms on the doors and windows of group homes. These both are needed changes. Dillard and the Legislature should also consider other steps to improve transparency for private contractors and tighten state oversight of privately run facilities to ensure group homes are maintained and procedures are being followed. Caring for vulnerable adults is a vital state responsibility. Families depend on the state to provide care they are unable to provide on their own. These vulnerable human beings deserve to be treated with the same dignity and respect as everyone else. There are simple steps that can improve care where needed or demonstrate to South Carolinians that these standards already are being met. Those steps need to be taken. Source:

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/opinion/editorials/2016/07/17/editorial-more-questions-group-home-care/87032796/>

Foster care survivors fight to improve the system [Story Comments Image \(4\)](#) [Print](#) [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) [Previous](#) [Next](#) Foster care survivors fight to improve the system Foster care survivors fight to improve the system Rochelle Alvarado, right, and Palmira Ramirez speak with Nick Vottero, the community engagement coordinator for the New Mexico Child Advocacy Networks, a nonprofit dedicated to aiding foster children and youth who age out of the state's foster care program. Alvarado and Ramirez are part of a group of youth who are playing a key role in improving policies that affect kids in the foster program. Cynthia Miller/The New Mexican Foster care survivors fight to improve the system Foster care survivors fight to improve the system Santa Fe native Lauren Huichan, shown with her therapy dog, says she and other youth who spent time in the state's foster care system are working with the New Mexico Child Advocacy Networks to improve foster program policies 'so that other kids don't have to go through what we went through.' Cynthia Miller/The New Mexican Posted: Saturday, July 16, 2016 11:15 pm | Updated: 11:58 pm, Sat Jul 16, 2016. [Foster care survivors fight to improve the system](#) By Cynthia Miller The New Mexican The Santa Fe New Mexican The night she was taken into state custody was a "big mess," Palmira Ramirez said. "There were guns involved. There were policemen involved. There were bartenders involved." She and her two half-sisters hid when they heard the commotion, knowing that child welfare caseworkers wouldn't be far behind. Her two stepbrothers fled down the street to a relative's home, missing the social workers "by minutes," Ramirez said. The girls were discovered and divided, one sent to a great-grandmother's home and two placed with an aunt they hadn't seen in years. Ramirez, now 20, was 9 when she entered the state's foster care system, beginning a journey that would shuffle her to nearly a score of foster homes and residential centers in cities around the state: Las Cruces, Alamogordo, Rio Rancho, Albuquerque, Mora. Like many children who grow up in state custody, she never found a permanent home. Caseworkers came and went. Adoption procedures fell apart. She was always separated from her siblings, and she had little voice in the important decisions about where she would live and who would care for her. But she and other young adults who have aged out of the state's foster care system have been fighting to change that. Through New Mexico Child Advocacy Networks, a nonprofit dedicated to aiding foster children, these young people are playing a key role in improving policies that affect kids in a state system that operates largely out of the public's eye. Case files on abused and neglected children and their families are kept confidential under federal funding rules. Family court hearings involving children are closed to the public. The confidentiality rules are meant to preserve children's privacy, but they also shield deficiencies and injustices in a system that is meant to protect the nation's most vulnerable young people. The experiences of Ramirez and other youth involved with NMCAN offer a glimpse into that system and the difficult years after they turned 18 and were suddenly on their own, young adults with no family support, few skills and little knowledge of how to navigate the state services and benefits still available to them. "Kids really do fall through the system," said Santa Fe native Lauren Huichan, 24. State officials say New Mexico suffers from a combination of too few foster homes in some areas and overloaded social workers, despite heavy recruitment efforts to fill vacancies. A recent report by the Legislative Finance Committee said foster kids "are lingering in non-permanent care or have multiple placements meaning a lack of stability for children already experiencing trauma." Exacerbating the problem, New Mexico, which leads the nation in the percentage of children living in poverty, has among the highest rates of child abuse and neglect, state and federal reports say, and a high rate of drug use among parents and other caregivers. Huichan's advocacy work for foster kids began 10 years ago, through a youth program connected with the state Children, Youth and Families Department. She's also worked with other organizations, such as the Gerard's House program for grieving children in Santa Fe. Her efforts earned her some celebrity. In 2010, at the age of 18, she was invited to the TeenNick cable network's HALO Awards in Los Angeles, where she received red-carpet honors for her activism, and mingled with pop stars and actors. In Los Angeles, Huichan was a long way from the 22 foster homes, group homes, shelters and psychiatric centers where she had spent her teen years, sometimes locked down and often medicated. She was diagnosed with depression and PTSD, she said. "I was moved around so much because I was considered a runaway," Huichan said. "... I had just blown out of every placement." She lost contact with her twin sister for six years. The foster system is a particularly tough place for kids with disabilities or mental health issues. Robert Carbajal, 25, who was diagnosed with a mild form of a developmental disability and bipolar disorder, said he spent years doped up on medication in a foster home that CYFD eventually determined was abusive. Not long after he was born in El Paso, Carbajal's mother left him with some friends of her parents and then disappeared from his life, he said. His elderly grandparents took him into their home in Albuquerque, but they had a hard time caring for him. "I was a wild kid," he said. "I wasn't really controllable." Unable to handle a growing child with behavioral challenges, his grandparents turned him over to state custody when he was 5. He spent a few months in a mental health facility and then went to live in the foster home, where he stayed for more than a decade before caseworkers removed him and a half-dozen other foster kids the couple had collected. Carbajal's last two years in the foster system were spent in the home of a single mother and daughter. "There, I lived more of a normal life," he said. A normal life can be hard to come by in the foster care system. But for Ramirez, the confusion and instability of that system was the "lesser of two evils." As she was growing up in San Rafael, a tiny village in Cibola County not far from Grants, Ramirez and her motley pack of siblings — two half-sisters and two stepbrothers — were their own support system. Her mom had started using drugs and abusing alcohol, she said, "and not really caring anymore that she was our mom." Her dad wasn't around. She doesn't know him. "None of me or my sisters know our dads." The family had been investigated by state child protective services workers when she was 6, Ramirez said, but it was about a year later, when she was 7, that the troubles really began. That's when a new boyfriend began to lure her mom away from the responsibilities of motherhood and into a drug-fueled decline. There would be weeks or months when Ramirez's mom wasn't around much, "leaving us to kind of fend for ourselves and take care of each other." Ramirez had to help make sure the younger children got to school and that everyone was fed, she said, to fend off the social workers who had started coming around. The kids knew what would happen if their cover was blown: They'd be torn apart and put in foster care. "We were trying to keep the family together, because that was all we knew," Ramirez said. But foster care was inevitable, she added, because of how careless her mother had become. When state caseworkers did arrive during a violent scene at the home in the middle of the night, they placed her and one of her sisters with an aunt in nearby Milan. But the woman, whom they barely knew, had an abusive husband, Ramirez said, and before long, the aunt fled the home while the girls were at school. It would become a familiar scenario, Ramirez said: "You come home from school, and all your stuff is outside in a trash bag." She and her little sister bounced around to other caregivers, until it appeared they would have a permanent home with a former caseworker and his wife. The man had quit his job and took a new position in juvenile justice so he could take them in, she said. "We stayed there for a while. I was actually supposed to get adopted." But the couple decided to separate, she said, and the adoption fell through. She was 13 at the time. "That was kind of heartbreaking," she said. "I got shoved back into the foster system." It wasn't an easy transition. She said the foster mother who had planned to adopt her instead left her at a hospital. "I was shell-shocked. ... I just got abandoned again. "They put me in a psych hospital because they thought I was going to go crazy." She smiled. "But that ended up not happening." Resiliency is a common trait among the young adults involved with NMCAN. They're attending college and learning to live independently, and they've found a family there. Ramirez, who hopes to earn a degree in pediatric nursing, shares a home in Los Lunas with 22-year-old Rochelle Alvarado, also a native of the Grants area. "We call each other sisters," Ramirez said. They're both enrolled at Central New Mexico Community College. Alvarado is studying social work. She wants to work for CYFD some day. "I want to be that helping hand that my YTF is to me," Alvarado said, referring to her youth transitional specialist, a state worker who, like NMCAN, is helping to ease her path to adulthood. NMCAN began in 1990 as the New Mexico CASA Network to provide court-appointed volunteer advocates for children in the foster system. While it continues to support CASA programs, NMCAN has expanded its mission in recent years to help former foster youth build life skills and job skills, further their education, find housing and employment, deal with their years of trauma and become their own advocates, using their experiences to push for policy changes to benefit the 2,300 kids in state care. They're doing the work, Huichan said, "so that other kids don't have to go through what we went through." The group saw passage in 2014 of a bill that waives tuition and fees at state colleges and universities for students up to age 25 who have been in the foster care system. Their work also led to a "bill of rights" for foster children, legislation introduced by state Sen. Michael Padilla, D-Albuquerque, during the 2015 legislative session. The bill, which fell in line with the requirements for child welfare agencies under a 2014 federal law,

would allow children in state custody to participate in normal activities, such as athletic and art programs, and attend sleepovers and summer camps. It also would give kids 14 and older a voice in creating a plan for their future, and it would require the state to give each child a list of their rights to education, health care, visits with family, safety, participation in court hearings and access to their own documents. It passed in the Senate but didn't survive the House. Still, it inspired CYFD Cabinet Secretary Monique Jacobson, who had just stepped into the job, to meet with the youth and help them achieve some of their goals by changing policies and procedures in her agency. "It was a huge win to get it into administrative code," said NMCAN Executive Director Ezra Spitzer. "... Young people had a very direct role in that process." Jacobson said the new policies ease some of the restrictions for foster parents, giving them a greater role in making decisions for kids in their care, such as allowing them to join a sports team or simply go to the mall with friends. It also empowers the kids. "One thing I heard loud and clear is that they want a voice at the table," Jacobson said. She meets with children in the state's care, sometimes in groups and sometimes one-on-one, to listen to their concerns. One message from kids during such a session still sticks with her. "They said, 'What we wish people knew is that it wasn't our fault.'" Facing blame — from family members, foster parents and caseworkers — was a common thread in the stories of the NMCAN youth. Some of them are still battling the fallout as they try to build new relationships with their biological families. Jacobson said the agency is also working to increase the number of foster families in New Mexico, so that more kids can be placed in homes close to their biological families. Moving a child to a new city "should never happen," she said. "That's not best practice." After adding 100 families over the past year, Jacobson said, the state now has about 1,200 homes for foster kids. "But we are always looking for more." Her work in improving the system is far from over, she said. "In no way, shape or form do I think we've got it all figured out." Spitzer said the nonprofit also has work to do. Its next mission might be drafting new legislation that creates a way for foster kids to file a grievance without being routed through their state caseworkers. "I really think that's a missing ingredient," he said. "It's something we've been recently talking a lot about." Ramirez said the group is also working on a measure that would allow foster kids to visit with siblings who live in other homes, separated by decisions beyond their control. Ideally, Spitzer said, a child taken into state care will be able to go home quickly. "But sometimes they don't go home," he said, "and they don't get adopted." Those who enter as teens rarely are adopted, he said, and tragically, some kids get adopted and then return to the foster system. "We do these things to protect kids, but sometimes there's trauma inside that," Spitzer said. "... We have to find solutions." Source: http://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/foster-care-survivors-fight-to-improve-the-system/article_1eb904ae-52b6-596e-9af3-304a3d2a8206.html

If Democrats Think Mike Pence Is An Extremist, Will They Stop Supporting His Education Policies? Soon after the announcement that Indiana Governor Mike Pence would be the vice presidential candidate for the Republican Party, word came from Democrats that he was an extremist — and not just your garden-variety extremist. "The 'most extreme' vice presidential pick in a generation," an article in [USA Today](#) quotes a statement from John Podesta, Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman. Podesta elaborates, according to the reporter, calling Pence, "an early supporter of the Tea Party" and someone who "personally spearheaded" a religious liberty bill that "legalized discrimination" against gays and lesbians (which he later revised); and he was a leader in the effort to defund Planned Parenthood as a member of the U.S. House." "Mike Pence is even worse than you think," warns a report from left leaning news outlet [Salon](#), arguing he has "the most virulently anti-gay records of any government official" and has "also built his career on restricting abortion rights." According to an article in [Alternet](#), Pence is a favorite of [Charles and David Koch](#), the billionaire brothers who fund extreme right wing organizations such as [Americans for Prosperity](#) and the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) that writes extremist right wing laws that have been enacted in many states. Another opinion piece in the [Washington Post](#) criticizes Pence for "mocking" working moms. As for Clinton herself, according to [Politico](#), because the announcement of Pence's candidacy coincided with her appearance at the annual convention of the American Federation of Teachers, she focused some of her criticism of Pence on his record on education issues. In her address, Clinton "told thousands of cheering teachers union members that Pence is 'one of the most hostile politicians in America when it comes to public education.'" Clinton accused Pence of cutting "millions from higher education while he was 'giving huge cuts to corporations' ... Clinton also said Pence 'turned away millions of federal dollars that could've expanded access to preschool for low-income children.'" A more dispassionate look at Pence's education record by [Chalkbeat Indiana](#) reveals he "pushed for career and technical education, school choice, and changes to standards and tests." Despite Clinton's claim that Pence turned away "millions" in federal money for pre-k education, [which is true](#), Pence also, according to the Chalkbeat reporter, pushed "to create a small preschool pilot program" that got "Indiana off the list of just 10 U.S. states that spent no direct state funds to help poor children attend preschool." What's also on Pence's list of education policy accomplishments are a repeal of the state's adoption of Common Core Standards pushed by the Obama administration, a prolonged battle with the state superintendent over control of education policy, and lots and lots of "school choice" legislation, including more funding for privately operated charter schools and expansions of the state's voucher program that allows parents to transfer their students to private schools at taxpayer expense. In other words, what Pence adopted as his education policies resemble a hodge-podge of what is commonly referred to as "education reform." Indeed, organizations that espouse the reform agenda give Pence's education record rave reviews. "Mike Pence Is the Veep Education Reformers Need," declares the [Center for Education Reform](#). CER leader Jeanne Allen declares in her statement, "Mike Pence is a true pioneer of educational opportunity." Pro-reform [American Federation for Children](#) gushes, "Governor Pence is a longtime champion for educational choice, believing that every child, regardless of family income or ZIP code, deserves access to a quality education." At [Forbes](#), reform cheerleader Maureen Sullivan's list of "seven things" to know about Pence's education stance reads like a checklist from the reform movement, including charter schools, standardized testing, merit pay for teachers, vouchers, and curriculum geared toward workforce preparation. So, although Pence has strayed from reform orthodoxy at times — voting against the No Child Left Behind law passed under President George W. Bush and steering his state out of the Common Core (which he initially embraced) — he is generally recognized as an education reform leader, making him, in fact, aligned with many Democrats who'd never want to be caught dead supporting what Pence generally espouses. For decades, both Democrats and Republicans have dined at the salad bar of education reform, with Democrats taking a heaping helping of charter schools but light on the vouchers please, and Republicans insisting on standardization but hold the Common Core now that we've gotten a taste of it. Democrats eagerly sat alongside Republicans at the same education policy table in Indiana too. Most of the education policies Pence supported as governor have been a [continuation of policies](#) created by fellow Republicans — his predecessor Mitch Daniels and state superintendent Tony Bennett, who suffered a [humiliating defeat](#) during Pence's tenure. But those policies often drew the praise of former U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. In a visit to the state in 2011, Duncan and Bennett commended each other for their "efforts to overhaul education," according to [a local reporter](#). In another visit to the state a year later, Duncan "complimented," according to [a local news source](#), Bennett and Indiana's leadership on the state's expansion of charter schools and state takeovers of local schools — another popular item in the reform salad bar. A [New York Times](#) article from 2013 lumps Duncan and Daniels, along with former Michigan Governor John Engler, together in the education policy arena, writing, "They all sympathize with many of the efforts of the so-called education reform movement." Outside of the Obama administration, Indiana education leadership has drawn strong support from StudentsFirst, the education reform advocacy group created and formerly led by ex-Chancellor of Washington, DC schools and [avowed Democrat](#) Michelle Rhee. The leader of StudentsFirst Indiana state chapter has been "a key advisor to Governor Mike Pence," according to a [statement](#) from the organization. Now that StudentsFirst has merged with reform advocacy group [50CAN](#), which is also led by [avowed Democrats](#), no doubt that organization's agenda will continue in the Hoosier State. The organization [Democrats for Education Reform](#) (DFER) hail Pence's education priorities and claim the influence of prominent Democrats, including President Obama, have had a lot to do with them. So why have so many Democrats shared the education agenda of an extremist the party now generally abhors? When education journalist and [Washington Post](#) blogger Valerie Strauss recently asked education historian Diane Ravitch what she would most want to tell President Obama should they ever have a face-to-face meeting, Ravitch replied she would like to tell him, "I will never understand why you decided to align your education policy with that of George W. Bush." The fact that Democrats have been supporting an education agenda that was to a great extent conceived in [conservative Republican policy shops](#) has been well known among [careful observers](#) and thoroughly documented by Ravitch in her books, [The Death and Life of the Great American School](#), and [Reign of Error](#). "The irony today," Ravitch explains in her interview, "is that many of the leading figures in the Democratic Party support some of the same education policies as the right-wing extremists in ALEC." In an email to me, Ravitch elaborates on more recent collusions between Democrats and Republicans on education policy. "President Obama pulled the rug out [from under public education supporters] by aligning with DFER," she writes. "DFER money managers were big supporters of his. He was the inaugural speaker when they first met in NYC. After the election, they gave Obama a list of people they wanted in the Education Department. Top on it was Arne Duncan." As Dana Goldstein documented for [The Nation](#) in 2009, Obama made a decision at the outset of his presidency to listen "to only one side of" the debate on education policy in the Democratic Party. On the winning side were DFER and its wealthy backers from Wall Street who, according to Goldstein, conducted a "highly coordinated media campaign to call into question the work of

Obama education adviser Linda Darling-Hammond, once considered a top contender for the job of education secretary.” After “DFER’s anti-Darling-Hammond talking points,” got prominent attention in major media outlets, Goldstein explains, “Less than two weeks later, Obama appointed DFER’s choice to the Education Department post, Chicago schools CEO Duncan.” By the time Obama and Duncan rolled out Race to the Top and other education initiatives that directed the course of education policy across the nation, it had “become clear,” Goldstein writes, “that DFER’s idea of education reform is the one driving the Obama administration.” But the policy ideas never had roots in populist soil. As Goldstein explains, “Lacking a membership base, [education reform’s] lobbying arm is essentially top-down, financed by New York hedge-funders, supported by research conducted at Beltway think tanks, and represented on the ground by a handful of state and local politicians scattered across the country.” So for the past eight years, the Democratic Party’s education agenda has chiefly been based on an idea conceived in right wing policy shops then pushed into the party’s most powerful circles by a very small but wealthy group of individuals with the ability to push the right levers. Based on this understanding, it’s not a surprise that extremists such as Mike Pence have been eager to adopt much of this agenda. But in calling out Pence as an extremist, is Hillary Clinton signaling there may be “shifts in her party’s education agenda,” as [American Prospect’s](#) education journalist Rachel Cohen suggests? An op-ed for the Wall Street Journal, a consistent megaphone for education reform, seems to think so. Calling Clinton’s criticism “an opening,” the author seems to relish a debate on whether policies from an extremist like Pence are best for “low- and middle-income families.” Public schools advocates in the Democratic Party are eager to have that debate too. Source: <http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/df-dmcrats-think-mike-pence-is-an-extremist-will-they-stop-supporting-his-education-policies/>

Audit: Kansas foster care system puts children at risk MARGARET STAFFORD, Associated Press Published: July 27, 2016, 3:44 pm Updated: July 28, 2016, 10:55 am [Click to share on Twitter \(Opens in new window\)](#) [Click to share on Google+ \(Opens in new window\)](#) [21Share on Facebook \(Opens in new window\)](#) [21 Click to share on Pinterest \(Opens in new window\)](#) Phyllis Gilmore, Department for Children and Families Secretary, answers questions about the audit of her department at a Post Audit Committee meeting Wednesday, July 27, 2016 in Topeka, Kan. The Kansas Department of Children and Families continuing struggles to adequately oversee private foster care contractors is putting children in the system at risk, according to a state audit of the agency released Wednesday. (Emily DeShazer/The Topeka Capital-Journal via AP) KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — The Kansas Department of Children and Families’ continuing struggles to adequately oversee private foster care contractors is putting children in the system at risk, according to a state audit of the agency released Wednesday. Shortly after the 59-page audit was released, two Democratic senators called for department Secretary Phyllis Gilmore to resign. She defended the agency’s efforts to ensure children’s safety and said she did not intend to resign. The Legislative Post Audit found that the agency had implemented only one of nine recommendations it received after a 2013 assessment of services. The department also doesn’t ensure that background checks of individuals in foster homes, adoptive homes and those where children are returned to their families are as frequent and thorough as they should be; doesn’t complete all required monthly visits to foster homes; doesn’t determine if families have the financial resources needed to provide for the children; and approves nearly all requests for exceptions to rules governing foster care homes, auditors said. Phyllis Gilmore, Department for Children and Families Secretary, talks about the audit of her department at a Post Audit Committee meeting Wednesday, July 27, 2016 in Topeka, Kan. (Emily DeShazer/The Topeka Capital-Journal via AP) Some state lawmakers had sought the audit after reports that children died or were mistreated while in the agency’s care. The audit did not address allegations that the agency discriminates against same-sex couples when deciding where to place children. A second audit addressing privatization efforts at DCF is scheduled to be released later this year. Auditors said their findings “indicate that DCF continues to take a hands-off approach to monitoring contractors and perhaps focuses too much on whether federal outcomes are met and not on the specific steps needed to meet them.” Frequent turnover of DCF staff has led to low morale and affected employees’ ability to do their jobs effectively, auditors said, and some case-workers also complained about inadequate training. Auditors also criticized the agency’s record-keeping. Five children in the foster care system died during the 2015 fiscal year, with only one death attributed to mistreatment, according to a November report. Other causes of fatalities included illness and car accidents. One child died because of mistreatment in foster care in the 2014 fiscal year, while another child in the DCF system died that year because of mistreatment while in a family member’s care. Five children in DCF’s system died in total that year. Gilmore conceded the agency has room for improvement but contended its safety record was among the best in the nation. She cited a Child & Federal Services Review that found Kansas ranked second in the nation in protecting children from abuse and neglect, although not all states have completed the review. “That is borne out in our records, which show very few child deaths of those in custody from maltreatment,” Gilmore said in an interview before the audit was released. “We absolutely want no deaths. One is too many and grieves our heart greatly.” She agreed the agency’s turnover is too high and hoped a salary increase approved by the Legislature and an emphasis on improving staff training will help retain employees. Sen. Laura Kelly, D-Topeka, asks DCF Secretary Phyllis Gilmore a question after learning the results of an audit of the department Wednesday, July 27, 2016 in Topeka, Kan. (Emily DeShazer/The Topeka Capital-Journal via AP) But Democratic Reps. Jim Ward and Jarrod Ousley said in a statement that Gilmore should resign. “I’m not comfortable gambling the future of our children in unsafe home environments,” Ward said. “Now is the time to step up and get serious about improving a broken system that is failing Kansas kids. The first step toward that is getting new leadership at DCF.” Gov. Sam Brownback defended the agency and Gilmore. “The men and women at DCF work hard every day to protect our children through these complex and very personal cases,” he said in a statement. “It is important that we all provide them with our full support. Secretary Gilmore will continue to have my full support as she works to address the legitimate record-keeping and contractor accountability concerns cited in the post audit report and, most importantly, to improve the overall foster care system for Kansas children.” Source: <http://ksnt.com/2016/07/27/audit-kansas-foster-care-system-puts-children-at-risk/>

Ex-Children’s Home staffer accused of sexually assaulting 3 [Print Email](#) By [Pamela Sroka-Holzmann](#) | [For lehighvalleylive.com](#) The Express-Times Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#) on July 26, 2016 at 3:59 PM, updated July 26, 2016 at 6:50 PM 347 shares A former staff member at The Children’s Home of Easton is accused of sexually assaulting three teenage girls there over two years. Troy Bussey in 2008. (lehighvalleylive.com file photo) Troy Lowell Bussey, 33, of the 100 block of North Third Street in Easton, allegedly committed the acts between Jan. 1, 2013, and Feb. 1, 2015, while a staff member at the home at 2000 S. 25th St. in [Wilson Borough](#). Borough police said Bussey was in charge of the girls’ care and welfare at The Children’s Home during the time of the crimes. Anita Paukovits, executive director of the organization, said as soon as administrators learned of the accusations, Bussey was suspended and terminated. “This is totally against everything The Children’s Home believes in,” she said. “Safety is of the utmost importance for all of our children as we are in full cooperation with every possible authority so justice is served.” A female victim who was under age 16 told police she was placed with the organization in 2013 and the pair had sex at least 10 times. A second victim under age 17 told police she was placed at the home in 2015. She told police the pair were in a back office of the Cordina Cottage when Bussey grabbed her buttocks and later touched her breasts above her shirt while the pair were in a dining area. When it was time for her to go to bed, the girl told authorities Bussey picked her up, placed her into the bed and touched her genital area. A third victim under age 18 reported to police the pair had sex and Bussey touched her genital area. Paukovits said the organization has since made modifications following the alleged sexual assaults. “Changes have been implemented to make sure nothing like this occurs again,” she said. “The Children’s Home works very diligently to protect all the children and families we serve. We make every effort to prevent incidents like this from happening.” Bussey is charged with one count each of statutory sexual assault, aggravated indecent assault, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse of a person less than 16, and indecent assault of a person less than 16; and three counts each of institutional sexual assault, endangering the welfare of a child, and corruption of minors. Bussey was arraigned before District Judge Richard Yetter III, who set bail at \$150,000, \$100,000 and \$100,000 for all three cases, respectively. In lieu of bail, Bussey was sent to Northampton County Prison. The judge ordered Bussey stay away from all the victims and undergo a mental health evaluation. Bussey is tentatively due back in court for a preliminary hearing before Yetter on Aug. 5. According to its website, the Children’s Home is a private, nonprofit organization established in 1885 that provides care for children in need. It provides foster care, residential and group home services. Source: http://www.lehighvalleylive.com/easton/index.ssf/2016/07/childrens_home_employee_charge.html

‘Disturbed’ kids at city foster-care center ‘drugged’ at hospital By [Susan Edelman](#) and [Rachel Petty](#) [View author archive email the author Get author RSS feed View author archive Get author RSS feed](#) Name(required) Email(required) Comment(required) July 31, 2016 | 6:35am [Modal Trigger](#) The Nicholas Scoppetta Children’s Center Photo: J.C. Rice Dozens of kids housed in a city-run foster-care center are labeled “emotionally disturbed persons” and hauled next door to Bellevue Hospital, where some get drugs to sedate them, The Post has learned. “We call it ‘booty juice’ when they’re acting out,” said a 15-year-old girl at the Nicholas Scoppetta Children’s Center in Manhattan, using a slang term for medication typically shot in the buttocks to calm psychiatric patients. “Nobody likes to be sent to the hospital.” Social workers and safety officers in the First Avenue holding pen, which is run by the Administration for Children’s

Services, struggle to control outbursts and talk rebellious youths into cooling down. But in the last year, at least 50 kids were “EDP’d” and taken by EMS to Bellevue’s emergency rooms, internal reports show. “They’re doping them up,” an insider charged. “We call it “booty juice” when they’re acting out. Nobody likes to be sent to the hospital.” - a 15-year-old girl at the Nicholas Scoppetta Children’s Center The Post’s findings come as Mayor de Blasio — who has pledged to protect the city’s most vulnerable children — fights a federal class-action lawsuit filed in Manhattan last year against ACS. It charges that children in the foster-care system suffer physical and mental abuse, and some get put on mind-numbing doses of psychiatric drugs. ACS said it partners with Bellevue for mental-health services. “If it is determined by doctors that a child requires medication, families are consulted . . . Children are not medicated to sedate them, but only for medically necessary reasons,” said ACS spokeswoman Carol Caceres. But ACS’s Psychotropic Medication Unit has the power to “override” parents unwilling or unable to consent to give drugs. And experts said drugs can be administered to kids in crisis. “If someone is so agitated and out of control that they’re hurting themselves or others, they absolutely could be given an injection,” said Dr. Julie Holland, a psychiatrist and author of “Weekends at Bellevue: Nine Years on the Night Shift at the Psych ER.” She said kids or adults who refuse to take oral medication may get shots of an antipsychotic such as Haldol plus sedating drugs such as Ativan and Benadryl in the arm or buttocks. Bellevue Hospital, where a city-run foster-care facility is allegedly shipping “disturbed” kids for treatment. Photo: R. Umar Abbasi The 55-bed Children’s Center houses wards of the city, from newborns to 21-year-olds. They can spend days to months in the chaotic and dangerous place. ACS insisted the center sees “very few incidents that require the attention of the NYPD,” but incident reports document many cases of assault and vandalism. Some kids kick, punch, bite, scratch and spit at staff. Some break windows, toss furniture and damage property. Most are physically restrained but not charged with crimes, even when a staffer is injured. “They refuse to arrest because it makes it harder to place these kids,” the insider said. “The agency is covering everything up.” Among the uncontrolled youths taken to Bellevue: A girl who screamed and banged on the walls, igniting “a riot” with eight roommates. When cops arrived, one girl was pepper-sprayed. The girl who started the mayhem was sent to the psych unit. A boy who ran through the building “in a state of emotional crisis” last December, ripped down a Christmas wreath and tossed garbage. He kicked a radiator, breaking it, and tried to shock himself with the inner coils. A 20-year-old man who banged his head against the window in a sleeping room, then tried to jump out a second-floor cafeteria window to kill himself. He flipped tables and wrestled with cops who handcuffed him. He suffered an eye injury. A 17-year-old boy told The Post he was sent to Bellevue after threatening to attack a worker who unplugged a TV he was watching. “I wouldn’t do that to him. Why should he do that to me?” he asked. He said he didn’t get any drugs, but other kids said meds given at Bellevue include Benadryl, which can help someone relax, and drugs for bipolar and anxiety disorders. A 17-year-old girl said she was sent to Bellevue and “they had to up the dosage of my medication.” Photo: Shutterstock Kids warehoused at the center have been abused, neglected and removed from their parents but not yet placed in foster homes. They include children with autism, conditions such as diabetes, and pregnant girls or teen moms with babies. “It’s not a jail, but it might as well be,” an insider said. Kids, who attend public schools, are searched with metal detectors upon entry, must turn over cellphones and cigarettes and sleep in rooms with up to 12 beds. “Some kids come and go in the middle of the night,” one said. Those who leave without permission or miss the midnight curfew and fail to return after 24 hours “go AWOL.” Since Jan. 1, the center has called 911 more than 600 times and filed 474 complaint reports — mostly for missing persons, NYPD Lt. John Grimpel said Friday. Guards often break up squabbles and fistfights among kids. “There’s some tension with me and a couple of the girls,” said a 17-year-old girl staying at the center for the second time. Three others tried to “jump” her because she spoke to one of their boyfriends, she said. Marcia Robinson Lowry, the lead lawyer in the federal suit, says she is appalled that kids are sleeping in what was intended as an intake center. “Foster kids don’t do well in shelters. These are troubled kids, and staying in a place like that is likely to exacerbate the problem,” said Lowry, who is also executive director of the advocacy group A Better Childhood. She said she believes the wide use of psychotropic drugs on the kids are “a form of behavior control.” Leticia James, New York City Public Advocate Photo: David McGlynn The office of Public Advocate Letitia James said Friday that it has received numerous reports of “overmedicated” foster kids. James, a plaintiff in the suit, faulted de Blasio’s management of ACS, which oversees some 10,300 children. ACS, she said, “has failed at its singular responsibility, with persistent reports of children placed in harm’s way while under its watch.” Gregory Floyd, president of Teamsters Local 237, the union that represents ACS safety officers, blasted de Blasio for “a pattern” of going easy on kids who break rules and attack others. “All that behavior is being excused by this administration,” Floyd said. “I’m not saying incarceration is the answer, but they need to acknowledge the problem and get them the appropriate treatment or it will only get worse.” ACS said it’s trying to move older kids out of the downtown center. It has a 12-bed “youth reception center” in Brooklyn for those 14 and above, and aims to add 18 teen beds in Brooklyn and Staten Island by the end of September. It also plans to open “host homes” in each borough where 30 teens can stay while awaiting a permanent placement. Source: <http://nypost.com/2016/07/31/disturbed-kids-at-city-foster-care-center-drugged-at-hospital/>

Poor Discipline: Why Scared Straight Programs and Boot Camps Don’t Help Teens at Risk for Substance Use and Addiction POSTED: 8/2/16 [TEENS AND FAMILIES ADDICTION MYTHS Comments\(0\)](#) For over 30 years, programs like Scared Straight and juvenile boot camps for teens have been used as a way to try and help troubled youth. These programs utilize different methods that revolve around the same basic principle: that instilling a sense of consequence, discipline, fear, and pro-social behaviors in teens struggling with behavioral issues and substance problems will provide them with healthier, more structured lives, and deter them from committing crimes. Yet these programs have come under increased scrutiny in recent years. Experts who study the justice system have questioned if they’re truly effective. Additionally, staff members in boot camp programs have been accused ([and convicted](#)) of abusing the teens they’re supposed to be helping. The History of Scared Straight and Boot Camps Scared Straight programs started in New Jersey in the 1970’s, and were popularized by the 1978 Academy Award winning documentary [Scared Straight!](#), which followed a group of teens participating in a Scared Straight program. In this film – and in most of the Scared Straight programs – teens who are thought to be at high risk for delinquency are brought to a prison, shown the facilities, and then (often in screams), told by inmates the ways in which they’re destroying their lives by committing crimes and using drugs. These confrontational lessons reflect the inmates’ own experiences. In the documentary – and among many advocates of Scared Straight programs – it is claimed that there are low rates of re-arrest for teens who participate in these programs. In one study, it was suggested that [10 out of 12 adolescents](#) remained offense-free in the three month follow-up. Teen boot camps – military-like training programs frequently located in rural areas – operate in a similar manner. Boot camps often revolve around grueling physical activities and tough discipline, intended to instill a sense of order in adolescents and stamp out non-conforming or oppositional behavior. Developed in [Louisiana in 1985](#), boot camps gained immense popularity in the 1990’s. They were less expensive than putting juveniles in detention centers and thought to be more effective. Most adolescents in the boot camps complete the residential program without incident (i.e., without committing infractions that would have them removed from the program) – at rates as [high as 96 percent](#). By 1995, 30 states had a form of adolescent boot camps for juvenile offenders. According to the Science, They Don’t Work Though a few studies suggested that Scared Straight worked, many others showed less successful results. In fact, research showed that the re-arrest rate after Scared Straight was actually higher than for teens who never participated in these programs. In other words, teens participating in Scared Straight [were committing more crimes](#). The strict discipline provided by boot camps has also been shown to fail the troubled teens they’re supposed to serve. [Re-arrest rates](#) are high among graduates of boot camps, and many of these programs were – and continue to be – completely unregulated, without any mental health professionals on staff. There have even been a number of cases of [physical and sexual abuse](#) in boot camps and, tragically, a few [teens have died](#) while in the program. Some boot camps have been shut down as a result of abuse. By 2009 [only 11 states](#) retained boot camps for juvenile offenders. Scared Straight and boot camps fail for the reason they’re supposed to succeed: the threat or delivery of harsh negative consequences. Indeed, teens exposed to Scared Straight programs tend to idealize the structure found in prisons – an element that is often missing from juvenile offenders’ lives. For those attending boot camps, the rough conditions only seem to encourage more aggressive behaviors – obviously not what’s needed for teens already facing the legal system or suffering from a substance or behavioral problem. What You Can Do There’s no quick and easy fix for an adolescent struggling with substance use or a related behavioral disorder. Be proactive when helping your teen, and research what kind of program best suits their needs. There are many effective, safe treatment centers that offer help – but it’s important to make sure they have licensed health professionals on staff, and that the program uses evidence-based practices that take a health-promoting rather than a punitive approach. Addiction is a disease and, like other diseases, it cannot be cured through fear and punishment. Source: <http://www.centeronaddiction.org/the-buzz-blog/poor-discipline-why-scared-straight-programs-and-boot-camps-don%E2%80%99t-help-teens-risk>

State accused of segregating Minnesotans with disabilities in group homes Group home system limits options, class action says. By [Chris Serres](#) Star Tribune August 4, 2016 — 9:45am David Joles, Special to the Star Tribune Scott Rhude, 33, sat in a field of garbage, reaching for a piece of trash while on a work assignment with a sheltered workshop “enclave” Tuesday, April 28, 2015, near the landfill in Wilmar. Text size [comment](#) [51](#) share tweet [email](#) Print more

Share on: Share on LinkedIn Share on Google+ Share on Pinterest Copy shortlink: Purchase: [Order Reprint](#) Hundreds, and possibly thousands, of Minnesotans with disabilities are being forced to live in segregated group homes, according to a lawsuit filed Wednesday that asserts that they are cut off from mainstream society and prevented from living in communities of their choosing. In a class-action suit against the state of Minnesota, attorneys with Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid allege that the Department of Human Services maintains a “discriminatory residential service system” that funnels individuals with disabilities into nearly 3,500 group homes statewide, where they are surrounded by other people with disabilities and have little control over their daily lives, while depriving them of access to housing options that would enable them to live more independently. Advertisement: Replay Ad Ads by ZINC “People are stuck in these facilities, where they experience isolation, lack of control and an overall helplessness,” said Legal Aid attorney Sean Burke. “It’s no longer good enough.” A spokeswoman for the Department of Human Services declined to comment, saying Human Services Commissioner Emily Johnson Piper had not been served with the lawsuit as of late Wednesday. Minnesota has long stood out among states for its reliance on private group homes for adults who may have difficulty living independently. After the state began closing large public mental health hospitals in the 1970s, such small, four-bedroom group homes were seen as a more humane and cost-effective alternative. However, a Star Tribune investigation last year found that many people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are sent to group homes against their will, even when they are capable of taking care of themselves. Hundreds are placed more than 100 miles from their families, in settings that leave them isolated from friends, relatives and support networks. The homes are indirectly subsidized through Medicaid, the state and federal health insurance program, which covers the cost of their services. One plaintiff, Marrie Bottelson, 41, is an artist who would like to create an art studio in her own home. However, Bottelson, who has cerebral palsy, has lived in a group home for 13 years where staffing has severely limited her ability to become more involved in the community, the lawsuit states. Because of staffing patterns in the facility, Bottelson is forced to go to bed at 7 or 8 p.m. because there is no other way for her to receive care for her disability. For several years, Bottelson has asked case managers and county workers for help moving into an apartment with her best friend, but has been told repeatedly that there are no options other than her group home. “This is a person who could really be flourishing if she could actually have an apartment and an art studio,” said Justin Perl, Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid’s litigation director. Another plaintiff, Tenner Murphy, 32, has severe physical and cognitive disabilities as a result of a lifelong battle with degenerative brain cancer. Despite this condition, Murphy has developed hobbies, such as archery, and has many non-disabled friends in the community. When he moved to a group home, he was walking on a regular basis, yet the home’s managers made him use a wheelchair because they lacked the staff to assist him when he was unable to walk, the lawsuit alleges. The lawsuit alleges that such restrictions are a violation of a landmark 1999 U.S. Supreme Court ruling, known as Olmstead, that requires states to ensure that people with disabilities receive services in integrated settings. Under the ruling, public entities are required to provide community-based services when such services are appropriate and when they can be reasonably accommodated. Under pressure from a federal judge, Minnesota last year became one of the last states in the country to adopt a blueprint — known as an Olmstead plan — to expand community-based options for people with disabilities. Under that plan, the state planned to move 5,547 people by June 2019 into more integrated housing and pledged to greatly expand community alternatives for Minnesotans with disabilities, though attorneys allege the state still lacks a detailed plan for how to reduce its overreliance on group homes. “Our clients just want to live where they want and with whom they want, just like people without disabilities,” Perl said. “Unfortunately, the system Minnesota has created for them has needlessly segregated them from the rest of the society.” Source: <http://www.startribune.com/state-accused-of-segregating-minnesotans-with-disabilities-in-group-homes/389129591/>

Suit over NYC foster care system continues Hearing on state settlement on Friday [Story Comments \(1\)](#) Print [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) Posted: Thursday, August 4, 2016 10:30 am [Suit over NYC foster care system continues](#) by Christopher Barca, Associate Editor Queens Chronicle | [1 comment](#) Beatings, sexual abuse, neglect and malnutrition. That’s what countless kids in the city’s foster care system have experienced on a daily basis, according to Marcia Robinson Lowry. The executive director of A Better Childhood, Lowry is leading the class action lawsuit filed last July against the city, state and their respective agencies and commissioners that handle the foster care system. Despite nearing a settlement with the state and its Office of Children and Family Services — a fairness hearing, where a judge will consider any opposition to the settlement, is scheduled for Friday — she says the suit against the city continues. But instead of financial compensation, Lowry said all the 10 foster children listed as plaintiffs on behalf of the 11,000 kids in the system are reforms. “New York has some of the worst outcomes for kids in the country,” Lowry said. “Kids in New York City stay in foster care significantly longer than anywhere else in the country and are discharged at a far lower rate.” Some of the reforms being demanded are increased oversight, limitations on care agencies the city can contract with and an attempt to reduce caseloads of overburdened workers. In the proposed settlement with the state, many of those issues have already seen compromise. OFCS Commissioner Sheila Poole has agreed to hire a monitor to identify flaws in the system and cases of mistreatment, in addition to creating quarterly reports about the state of foster care in New York. A research expert will also be hired to review case records and evaluate the safety of foster children. City Administration of Children’s Services Commissioner Gladys Carrion, a defendant in the suit, told The New York Times in 2015 that the agency has taken “substantial strides” in reforming foster care in the five boroughs, an initiative that came directly from Mayor de Blasio. Source: http://www.qchron.com/editions/queenswide/suit-over-nyc-foster-care-system-continues/article_954882d5-e188-5626-b8c8-fdd23c87c6ab.html

Former group home worker faces new assault charge CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune 5 hrs ago Additional charges have been filed against a former employee of Charles Hall Youth Services who’s been accused of having sexual contact with a 15-year-old in the group home. The new charges against Ethmonia Barclay, 25, come as the result of a new interview with the victim. The incidents allegedly occurred about a year and a half ago. The victim told police in April 2015 that he and Barclay had sex at the home. That story was corroborated by statements from other residents, according to an affidavit filed in the original case. While preparing for trial, the victim told authorities about additional encounters between him and Barclay, according to a brief filed by Burleigh County Assistant State’s Attorney Marina Spahr. The teen was then interviewed at the Sanford Children’s Advocacy Center in May 2016, where he reported incidents of inappropriate touching, according to an affidavit filed in the newer case. Advertisement (1 of 1): 0:02 Pause Current Time 0:00 / Duration Time 0:00 Remaining Time -0:00 Stream TypeLIVE Loaded: 0% Progress: 0% 0:00 Fullscreen 00:00 Unmute Playback Rate 1 Subtitles subtitles off Captions captions off Chapters Chapters All of the alleged incidents took place from March 25, 2015, to April 14, 2015, when Barclay was employed at Charles Hall, according to the court documents. Barclay was responsible for supervising kids in the group home at the time. Barclay was initially charged in May 2015 with corruption or solicitation of minors. Now she also faces charges of sexual assault and sexual abuse of wards. Barclay could face a maximum of 15 years in prison, if convicted. The cases have been joined, and she is scheduled to go to trial on all charges on Oct. 11. Barclay’s attorney declined to comment on the case. Three calls and an email to Charles Hall Youth Services were not returned Friday. Reach Caroline Grueskin at 701-250-8225 or at caroline.grueskin@bismarcktribune.com Source: http://bismarcktribune.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/former-group-home-worker-faces-new-assault-charge/article_4810d4fe-04db-5b9d-96e7-c5f7307feebe.html

THE DRUG DOCS California’s top foster care prescribers are fueling the medication of vulnerable kids. Now, lawmakers are on the cusp of reining in the practice Story by KAREN DE SÁ and TRACY SEIPEL Photographs and video by DAI SUGANO PUBLICATION: AUGUST 7, 2016 THE DRUG DOCS California’s top foster care prescribers are fueling the medication of vulnerable kids. Now, lawmakers are on the cusp of reining in the practice Story by KAREN DE SÁ and TRACY SEIPEL Photographs and video by DAI SUGANO PUBLICATION: AUGUST 7, 2016 PART 6 of 7 F or years, few questioned how doctors treated the emotional trauma of California’s abused and neglected children — and nobody monitored how often they handed out psychiatric drugs that can turn fragile childhoods into battles with obesity and bouts of stupor. Now, a Bay Area News Group investigation into the prescribing habits of the state’s foster care doctors reveals for the first time how a fraction of those physicians has been fueling the medicating of California’s most vulnerable kids. Tomorrow: Part 7 Abandoned as a child, Tasia Wright wanted love and understanding. But her foster care doctor had a different idea of how to treat her trauma. A mere 10 percent of the state’s highest prescribers were responsible about 50 percent of the time when a foster child received an antipsychotic, the riskiest class of what are known as psychotropic drugs — with some of the most harmful side effects. The startling numbers are revealed as part of a new analysis of Medi-Cal pharmacy data, which the news organization obtained through a public records request. These same doctors often relied on risky, unproven combinations of the drugs, a practice widely rejected by medical associations and other states. In San Bernardino County, one psychiatrist prescribed antipsychotics to 328 foster children — 85 percent of the young patients to whom he gave a psychiatric drug in the five years the investigation examined. And when one antipsychotic didn’t work — or wasn’t enough — Dr. Warris Walayat routinely prescribed another. Many of the highest prescribers stand out for

other practices that raise questions about their judgment or objectivity: A psychiatrist who oversees treatment at a Riverside County group home for troubled children is a self-proclaimed “spokesperson for pharmaceutical companies.” A doctor training psychiatry residents at a San Diego children’s center once prescribed an antipsychotic to an out-of-control kindergartner. And a veteran Visalia child psychiatrist touts a drug approved to treat mania and schizophrenia as an effective “sleep aid.” Growing up in the foster care system, Rochelle Trochtenberg spent much of her youth in a heavily medicated state. She says her doctors weren’t especially cautious about the drugs, and when she was 18, she had a reaction that sent her to the emergency room. She was suffering from a side effect that caused much of her body to seize up. “I literally didn’t have the ability to move my body,” she recalls. “I was terrified.” The findings come as state lawmakers consider stepping up scrutiny of foster care prescribers — one of the final pieces of sweeping reforms in response to this newspaper’s 2014 investigation “Drugging Our Kids.” The series found nearly 1 in 4 adolescents in California foster care received psychotropic medication, often to control their behavior — not address the serious mental illnesses that many of the drugs were approved to treat. In the cases of seven of California’s highest prescribers, the state has been put on notice before — all were identified in 2010 as part of a ranking in a U.S. senator’s nationwide hunt for doctors “prescribing mental health drugs at astonishingly high rates.” But no action was taken; in fact, the state appears to have never disciplined a doctor for excessive prescribing to foster children. Rochelle Trochtenberg, a once-heavily medicated foster youth who now serves as California ombudsperson for foster care, called the reluctance to even monitor prescribers a failure of “staggering” proportions. “What I see in these numbers is: We don’t really treat, we use chemical restraints. We drug,” said Trochtenberg, who said doctors blithely prescribed multiple meds rather than help her recover from the deep pain and trauma of childhood abuse. “Medications are so overused — and so significantly — that it’s outrageous there’s such a lack of leadership in holding doctors accountable, and holding the system accountable.” The findings The prescription data, obtained from Medi-Cal benefit claims after more than a year of negotiations with state officials under the California Public Records Act, are limited. They omit dosage levels and diagnoses, which would reveal just how many of these drugs were prescribed for uses not approved by the FDA, a common and legal but sometimes controversial practice known as “off-label” prescribing. Nevertheless, the data reveal how the state’s most prolific prescribers helped sustain a drug-dependent system. To identify outlying prescribers, this newspaper consulted more than a dozen child psychiatrists and academic researchers across the country, ultimately focusing on the most extreme forms of prescribing found in the database: Physicians who gave their young patients multiple antipsychotics, or three or more drugs at once. The risks of administering multiple drugs to children, especially to their developing brains, have not been well-documented. But the side effects of even one antipsychotic — excessive weight gain, diabetes, extreme lethargy and tremors — can be debilitating. The data from July 2009 to July 2014 show: A select group of doctors used the riskiest drugs as regular treatment and often in dangerous combinations — Despite widespread concern over the use of antipsychotics on children, more than 100 doctors prescribed the drugs to at least 75 percent of their patients who received a psychiatric drug — more than double the average rate. And 56 prescribers gave two or more antipsychotics for more than 60 days to at least 11 of their patients. “This is definitely an outlier practice group,” said Dr. Chris Bellonci, a longtime child psychiatrist and researcher at Tufts University School of Medicine, widely known for his studies of the use of psychotropic drugs in foster care. “You can see what happens if all we have is a prescription pad. We’ll use it, and in these cases, perhaps, abuse it.” Dr. Cynthia Hunt, a Monterey psychiatrist, was the most prolific prescriber of the lengthy regimen of multiple antipsychotics, resorting to the combination for 50 of her young patients, covering 7 percent of the foster children statewide who received a similar treatment plan. Pasadena psychiatrist Dr. Eliot Moon accounted for another 6 percent of the dual prescribing, according to the data. Affiliations of many high prescribers raise questions about objectivity — An intensive review of the backgrounds and affiliations of 25 of the highest prescribers revealed seven conduct research for drug companies that manufacture and market psychotropics; 14 have worked in an outmoded residential group home industry that relies on sedation to maintain order among the troubled youth it shelters; and eight are spreading their treatment approaches by teaching the next generation of psychiatrists in medical schools. Prescribing by nonphysicians may be violating state law — “Physicians” are the only professionals who can receive authorization from the juvenile court to prescribe psychiatric drugs to foster children, but more than 600 nurse practitioners and physician assistants have prescribed the medications to thousands of patients, an apparent violation of state law that has gone wholly unnoticed. While state officials suggest nurse practitioners have legal authority to prescribe under the supervision of a physician, judges and children’s advocates say the court authorization process does not, and was never intended to, account for that. Retired Los Angeles Juvenile Court Judge Terry Friedman, the architect of that law, condemned the “alarming degree of noncompliance” as an example of the lax oversight tolerated for years. “Everything just sort of falls between the cracks because there’s been no serious enforcement of this law.” Tisha Ortiz, a former foster youth now attending Cal State East Bay, says the constant medication left her “so zoned out I couldn’t understand what was going on around me.” Although she played softball and kickboxed, her weight ballooned. The medication made her face and legs twitch and left her so lethargic she often fell asleep in school says Ortiz, 23. Doctors: Drugs often needed Psychiatrists who treat foster youth describe their urgent needs, suicide attempts, aggressive acts toward caregivers, and the depths of their grief and depression. Many doctors say medication is often the safest and most effective way to help a child in a crisis. “It’s kind of like if someone comes into the emergency room and is bleeding from an artery on their wrist, you don’t do marital therapy on them — you stop the bleeding,” said Dr. Michael Barnett, a psychiatrist who treats foster youth at two Visalia group homes and is one of the state’s highest prescribers of antipsychotics to foster youth. Eighty-five of the 104 foster youth to whom he prescribed a psychotropic drug received antipsychotics, the data show, and half were prescribed two or more for over a month. While the news organization reached out to more than two dozen of the highest prescribers, Barnett was one of only three who agreed to be interviewed. He said he wasn’t surprised to land high on the list because he prescribes low doses of the antipsychotic Seroquel as a sleep aid. “Whether the child is agitated because of bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, withdrawal off drugs, or agitated because they’re in a group home, a lot of times it’s difficult to tease out why they’re breaking things or punching holes in the wall,” Barnett said. “But I’m going to stop that behavior as quickly as I can to protect the child, so I will use any medication that I think will help with that.” However, as long-term treatments go, psychiatric drugs can be a blunt instrument, failing to address the source of a child’s pain and leaving scars that may last years, even a lifetime. Tisha Ortiz, a 23-year-old former foster youth now attending Cal State East Bay, has testified repeatedly before the Legislature about the impact of being heavily medicated throughout her childhood as she grew up in residential group homes. An examination of her foster care health records, which she shared with this news organization, revealed the names of psychiatrists who were among the state’s highest prescribers of aggressive combinations of medication. Among them was Riverside County psychiatrist Dr. Michael Ilas, who was Ortiz’s doctor when she was 15 and prescribed four medications, including lithium, used for bipolar patients; trazodone, used to treat major depressive disorder in adults but not approved for pediatric use; and the antipsychotics Abilify and Geodon. Ilas, who resorted to multiple antipsychotics for his foster care patients more than three times as often as the average doctor, declined to comment. The combinations of these drugs left Ortiz “so zoned out I couldn’t understand what was going on around me,” she said. Although she played softball and kickboxed, her weight ballooned. Her face and legs twitched, and in high school, she slept through first and second periods, failing her favorite class. When she saw psychiatrists, “they were all about upping or adding on more medication, and not about what was really going on with my mental health,” said Ortiz, who first entered foster care at age 4 and suffered flashbacks from sexual and physical abuse. “You really can’t treat trauma with just medications. It doesn’t help a child heal.” Children in the foster care system are issued “health and educational passports” that, in part, track their various prescriptions. According to an excerpt from one of Ortiz’s diagnosis and treatment documents, in January 2008, Ortiz, then 15, was diagnosed with bipolar and post-traumatic stress disorders and was prescribed four medications at once: lithium, trazodone and the antipsychotics Abilify and Geodon. Ortiz’s testimony has helped propel legislation through Sacramento that would identify doctors who prescribe psychotropic drugs inappropriately. State Sen. Mike McGuire’s Senate Bill 1174 — which faces key votes in the Assembly and Senate this month — would for the first time establish routine monitoring of prescribers and alert the state medical board about individual physicians whose patterns warrant an investigation. Last year, Gov. Jerry Brown signed a series of bills to hold the state’s judges, social workers, public health nurses and care providers more accountable for protecting foster children from inappropriate medications. But efforts to rein in prescribers ran head on into the powerful doctors’ lobby, delaying critical pieces of the legislative reform package. And the opposition this year has not wavered. Lobbyists for California psychiatrists fiercely defend their doctors’ treatment of foster children. They note that doctors already must undergo a newly mandated review process that state data suggest is reducing the use of antipsychotics and curbing questionable prescriptions. They also argue against identifying outlier doctors to the medical board, stating in testimony before the Legislature that the proposed law would single out doctors who work in juvenile halls, group homes or psychiatric inpatient units, and “may have a much higher prescription rate to children than a prescribing physician who provides services to the general population.” Hunt is one of those doctors. In a statement to the news organization, she said her high rates of prescribing multiple antipsychotics came as she was working with deeply troubled foster youth who were one step from being hospitalized or in a locked facility and suffered from serious mental illnesses. “I completely agree that it should be the exception that an adolescent has two or more antipsychotic medications,” said Hunt who worked in Merced at the time.

"In these youth, the combination of medications was necessary to keep them stable and to avoid another hospitalization. The plan was, and always is, to lower the medications for these children. To discontinue medication too quickly can also cause significant side effects or a return of symptoms." Walt Mancini/Southern California News Group Dr. Allan McDonald, a Los Angeles psychiatrist who landed among the highest prescribers of antipsychotics, said doctors can use more scrutiny: "We tend to operate in isolation." Dr. Linette Scott, chief medical information officer for the state Department of Health Care Services, said prescribing rates differ among doctors in any area of practice, such as cardiology and neurology, because specialists "will prescribe the medications that are used more rarely and carry additional risk." But Dr. Allan McDonald, a veteran Los Angeles County child psychiatrist who landed among the highest prescribers of multiple antipsychotics, said he welcomes more scrutiny. Doctors — and their patients — will only benefit from more feedback and review from peers, he said. "We tend to operate in isolation," said McDonald, 78, who still sees foster children at two group homes. He said he was surprised to learn he prescribed multiple antipsychotics to 76 foster children during the period reviewed, acknowledging, "The general rule among child psychiatrists is not to do that." There are explanations, he said. Sometimes a child is on two antipsychotics for a short period while a doctor switches drugs (the news organization's analysis suggested that was the case with about 60 percent of the children who received dual antipsychotics from McDonald). Other times, the list of medications can grow if doctors feel it's necessary to try new combinations to help a child who is not improving. But McDonald, who has treated some of the Los Angeles area's toughest-to-reach children over nearly five decades, said he believes the state has its share of doctors who overprescribe without thoroughly evaluating a child. "They are not working smart enough, not collecting enough reliable information, to support a diagnosis," McDonald said. "It is probably a sign that doctors are feeling desperate — you don't know what to do, you're throwing everything at it." Dr. Michael Barnett, a psychiatrist who treats foster youths at residential group homes in Visalia, says when a child is in crisis, it can be "difficult to tease out why they're breaking things or punching holes in the wall. But I'm going to stop that behavior as quickly as I can to protect the child, so I will use any medication that I think will help with that." Where are the high prescribers? Many of the highest prescribers of psychiatric drugs to the state's foster children can be found in California's Inland Empire, a sprawling region of San Bernardino and Riverside counties stretching east of Los Angeles to the desert. Here, child psychiatrists can spend hours on the road, driving from far-flung medical offices to residential group homes that house tough-to-place foster youth. NOT ENOUGH DOCTORS? Psychiatrists per 100,000 children: 4 in San Bernardino County 20 in Santa Clara County Number of high prescribers of anti-psychotics under one measure: 8 in San Bernardino County 2 in Santa Clara County This news organization's analysis showed the region was home to 25 percent of the state's highest prescribers in one measure — a group of 56 doctors across California who prescribed two or more antipsychotics to at least 20 children representing at least one-third of their foster care patients who received a psych drug. Twenty-three percent of the doctors from this high-prescribing group treated children in the Central Valley, and 16 percent practiced in Los Angeles. In contrast, only 10 percent from this group worked in the nine-county Bay Area. It isn't clear what's behind pockets of high prescribers, or whether doctors who choose to prescribe regularly influence colleagues to do the same. Another factor that could be driving doctors to rely on medications: too many patients, too little time. For example, with a rate of four child psychiatrists for every 100,000 children, San Bernardino County is well below the statewide average of 11. In Santa Clara County, there are nearly 20 per 100,000 children. But the news group's investigation found one more potential driver for some of this region's high prescribing: Many of these doctors are affiliated with clinical research firms that conduct paid trials for pharmaceutical companies interested in boosting sales of their drugs. Perhaps the most notable example was a group of doctors who, until recently, did business as Shanti Clinical Trials in an unremarkable medical office building, 2 miles west of Loma Linda University Medical Center. ANTIPSYCHOTIC MEDICINES Antipsychotic drugs are approved to calm or sedate mentally ill patients during psychotic "breaks" and allow patients to sleep or help make them more compliant. But they are often prescribed "off-label" to control the behavior of patients with no diagnosis of mental illness. Here are some of the antipsychotics being prescribed to foster children: Abilify Brand name for aripiprazole Approved to treat: Manic episodes of bipolar disorder in adults and children ages 10 to 17, schizophrenia in adults and children ages 13 to 17, and irritability from autism in kids ages 6 to 17. Possible side effects: Include weight gain, diabetes, tremors Geodon Brand name for ziprasidone Approved to treat: Schizophrenia and acute manic or mixed episodes associated with bipolar disorder; can be added to lithium for maintenance of bipolar disorder. Not approved for children under 18. Possible side effects: Include nausea, constipation, dizziness, restlessness, tremors, diarrhea, runny nose, cough, drowsiness. Risperdal Approved to treat: Schizophrenia in children ages 13 to 17 and acute bipolar mania in kids 10 to 17 years old. Possible side effects: Include weight gain, diabetes, bed-wetting and tremors. Seroquel Brand name for quetiapine Approved to treat: Schizophrenia in children ages 13 to 17, and bipolar mania in kids ages 10 to 17. Possible side effects: Include weight gain, diabetes and tremors. Zyprexa Brand name for olanzapine Approved to treat: Schizophrenia and bipolar disorder in adults and children ages 13 to 17. Sometime used with other antipsychotics or anti-depressants. Possible side effects: Include trouble speaking or swallowing, uncontrollable face movements, confusion, hallucinations, weakness, chills, sore throat, stomach pain, rigid muscles, increased thirst, swelling in hands or feet. Two of the highest prescribers of psych drugs in the California foster care system, Dr. Warris Walayat and Dr. Salvador Lasala, are listed as investigators at Shanti, which ran medication trials for childhood depression, attention deficits and bipolar disorder, among other research sponsored by some of the biggest names in the pharmaceutical industry. Walayat, who has offices listed throughout San Bernardino County and was a staff psychiatrist with the Riverside County Mental Health Department, was the state foster care system's most frequent prescriber of both antipsychotics and the mood stabilizers lithium and Depakote. None of the Shanti clinicians responded to repeated interview requests by phone, email or certified mail. And a visit in May to the clinic's address in the city of Colton found the office had been taken over by a new psychiatrist. Two other psychiatrists who worked at Shanti showed up in the news organization's data analysis, including Dr. Gurmeet Multani, who prescribed psych drugs to 196 foster children in less than two years. In 2010, he surrendered his medical license after being accused of having sex with five adult patients as well as the wife of a man he was treating for depression. The California Medical Board also accused him of writing prescriptions for drug addicts and people who were not his patients. He was found to have falsified his patient records in a failed attempt to deter investigators, state records show. Multani also came under fire that same year when the pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly found serious noncompliance issues in a drug trial he was conducting, including the underreporting of "adverse events" in patients. The drug, which combined antidepressant and antipsychotic medications, was being tested on children ages 10 to 17. Leemon McHenry, a legal consultant in California who researches cases against drug companies that have misrepresented their scientific findings, described the role of high-prescribing pharma researchers — particularly those treating foster children — as "extremely problematic." "Given the vulnerability of this particular patient population," he said, "we owe it to them to have less conflicted investigators." Questionable connections Of all the juxtapositions of interests and influence, one raised the deepest concerns: the presence of doctors with drug company connections at group homes. Foster children in those homes are often the most emotionally damaged and difficult to manage, so the temptation to medicate them is strong — even without the potential intrusion of other interests. Dr. Eliot Moon, who treats foster children at Hillside, a residential group home in Pasadena, also runs a firm out of a storefront in the Riverside County city of Wildomar that conducts clinical trials sponsored by 13 pharmaceutical companies. Moon and his firm received more than \$1.2 million from 2013 through 2015 from drug companies to conduct his research, according to the government's website that discloses pharmaceutical company payments to doctors. And Medi-Cal pharmacy records show he was the second-highest prescriber of multiple antipsychotics, using the combination on 46 foster children for more than 60 days in the five-year period examined. Repeated interview requests to Moon by phone, email, certified letter and visits to his offices were not answered. His dual role as a prescriber and paid researcher is not unique. About 80 miles to the south, Dr. Harinder Grewal oversees care for troubled youth "experiencing psychological, social, emotional and behavioral problems" at the Oak Grove Center in Murrieta. The group home's website also describes her as "a spokesperson for pharmaceutical companies such as Bristol-Myers Squibb, Pfizer, AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson." The state's data show Grewal prescribed an antipsychotic to 115 foster children during the examined period; 26 percent of them received multiple antipsychotics for more than 60 days. From 2010 to 2013, she received \$471,665 for drug company research, according to company disclosures compiled by the news outlet ProPublica. An identified high prescriber of Seroquel — the brand name for the antipsychotic quetiapine — Grewal is also listed as one of the investigators in a 2013 study published in the Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology that found the drug "generally safe and well tolerated in youth." Sponsored by the drug's manufacturer, AstraZeneca, the study listed two of its four authors as drug company employees. Seroquel is narrowly approved for older children and teens diagnosed with rare pediatric instances of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. But doctors often prescribe the medication "off-label" to treat children for everything from aggression to attention deficits. In 2010, AstraZeneca settled a federal lawsuit by paying \$520 million to resolve the U.S. Department of Justice's accusation that the company illegally marketed Seroquel to child and adolescent physicians and doctors treating the elderly. Discovery in the legal case revealed questionable science behind the Seroquel promotional campaign, including internal documents describing the "cherry-picking" of data, and unfavorable scientific findings that were "buried." Grewal didn't respond to repeated inquiries from a reporter about her work. But managers at Oak Grove and

Hillside said no foster kids in their care have been involved in clinical drug trials. That assurance was of little comfort to foster children advocates who reviewed the news organization's findings. "The prevalence of industry-funded, high-prescribing doctors at group homes may be the most troubling discovery," said Carmen Balber, executive director of Consumer Watchdog, a Santa Monica-based advocacy group. "Are doctors blind to a prescribing bias created by their financial ties to the drug companies? Or have group homes become testing grounds for some of the drug industry's most lucrative products? Either possibility is chilling." LINKS TO HIGH PRESCRIBERS Loma Linda University Medical Center data shows a cluster of high prescribers of antipsychotics to foster children with connections to the university and hospital, including Dr. William Murdoch, the chair of the psychiatry department and an associate professor. Murdoch was surprised to see his name so high on the list of California prescribers, saying his philosophy on prescribing is cautious, especially among young patients. Oak Grove Center At this Murrieta group home, Dr. Harinder Grewal oversees care for troubled youth "experiencing psychological, social, emotional and behavioral problems." Between 2010 and 2013, Grewal received \$471,665 for drug company research, according to company disclosures compiled by ProPublica. The group home's website describes Grewal as "a spokesperson for pharmaceutical companies such as Bristol-Myers, Squibb, Pfizer Inc., AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson." Shanti Clinical Trials This office in Colton until recently housed a firm that ran medication trials for childhood depression, attention deficit and bipolar disorder, among other research sponsored by some of the biggest names in the pharmaceutical industry. Two of the highest prescribers of psych drugs to foster children are listed as investigators at the clinic: Dr. Salvador Lasala and Dr. Warris Walayat, who state records show was the highest prescriber of antipsychotics to foster children from 2009-2014. Rancho Damacitas Tisha Ortiz, a 23-year-old former foster youth now attending CSU East Bay, has testified repeatedly before the Legislature about the impact of being heavily medicated throughout her childhood as she grew up in residential group homes. Ortiz spent two years of her childhood at this group home. The prescribing debate There is no dispute that many foster children have significant mental health needs, having been wrenched from abusive and neglectful parents, and then suffering the trauma of losing their families, no matter how troubled. But a fierce debate continues among psychiatrists about what medications are safe and appropriate to treat childhood trauma. Absent scientific evidence or research, prescribing often falls on a clinician's preference and personal experience. And those who most frequently opt for nonapproved drugs say they believe they are doing the right thing for kids. "If I see a 4-year-old and several other doctors have seen this child, and they're in the hospital because of out-of-control aggression, I may go ahead and prescribe medication even though it is not recommended," said McDonald, the Los Angeles-area psychiatrist. "I would start with an anti-anxiety medicine, and if it does not work, then I would look to an antipsychotic like Risperdal. ... If somebody called me up or wrote me a letter questioning my decision, I would explain the situation." Barnett, the Visalia group home psychiatrist, said he has successfully treated "a lot" of children with two — and even three — antipsychotics at once. He describes the drugs as an effective sleep aid, an "augmentation" to antidepressants, and safer than mood stabilizers and other medications that can become addictive. "I know it's not approved by the FDA or recommended and all that stuff," Barnett added. But he said the second antipsychotic can have a "booster effect," enhancing the first drug. "I cannot understand what is unsafe about two antipsychotics," he said. However, the simultaneous use of two antipsychotics is widely rejected by medical professional groups and in many states. Citing "significant risks," the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry states "there is no clear evidence to support the use of more than one antipsychotic in either adults or youths." County mental health departments in the Bay Area and Los Angeles discourage the use of two antipsychotics, as do the states of Illinois, Washington, Indiana, Texas, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan. If a child is on two antipsychotics for more than four weeks, "it's negligence," said Thomas Tarshis, an adjunct assistant professor at Stanford University School of Medicine and treating psychiatrist on the adolescent inpatient unit at Mills-Peninsula Medical Center in San Mateo. The news organization's review suggested that many doctors are finding another way. More than 2,600 prescribers gave no more than one mental health drug to their patients, often stimulants to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Several psychiatrists did not prescribe a single antipsychotic, even those treating children in residential facilities. Dr. Stuart Bair, of Sunnyvale, was one of them. With more than 40 years' experience, Bair said psychiatric medication does nothing to address traumatic childhoods. "In general, they are worse than the benefit," Bair said, "and do not deal with the pervasive underlying problems that these children have suffered." One 16-year-old boy Bair treated in a group home recently was on so much Seroquel for an unspecified "mood disorder" that he was overweight, could barely keep his eyes open and slurred his speech. He sat slumped in a chair most days, barely moving. Over a month's time, Bair tapered him off the drug and watched him come back to life, becoming a "lively and talkative" boy who cried and embraced Bair when the psychiatrist moved on to a new job. "There are doctors out there trying to do the right thing," said Anna Johnson, policy advocate at the National Center for Youth Law, which has sponsored a series of bills on the issue, including McGuire's. "But the good people in the system are being weighed down by the doctors who think multiple medications are the standard of care. That's a big myth." On two different occasions, Trochtenberg, the ombudsperson, received prescriptions for two antipsychotics when she was in foster care. Never, she said, did she feel that her doctors were especially cautious about the medications. Her clearest memory is a sudden reaction to a mix of Haldol and Trilafon when she was 18 that sent her to the emergency room. Suffering from what she was told was a common side effect known as tardive dyskinesia, her fingers seized up and became rigid, then her hands, arms and legs froze. "I literally didn't have the ability to move my body," she recalled. "I was terrified. I had no idea what was happening to me, and of course when I found out it was related to the medication, I wanted to stop it all." Sen. Mike McGuire, left, is pushing legislation to closely watch foster care prescribers with SB 1174, which faces crucial votes this month in the Legislature. But Christopher Castrillo, center, a lobbyist for the California Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, and Stuart Thompson, right, of the California Medical Association say the bill unfairly focuses on doctors who treat foster youth with the most severe needs. PROPOSED BILLS SB 253 Author: Sen. Bill Monning, D-Monterey Summary: Asks doctors to provide better justification for prescriptions before judges approve them. SB 1174 Author: Sen. Mike McGuire, D-Healdsburg Summary: Creates process for Medical Board to review and investigate doctors who prescribe psychotropic medications inappropriately. SB 1291 Author: Sen. Jim Beall, D-San Jose Summary: Requires county mental health plans to gather data and submit annual plans on how they serve foster youth. BILLS PASSED IN 2015 Gov. Jerry Brown signed three bills curbing the use of psychiatric drugs in foster care: SB 238 Author: Sen. Holly Mitchell, D-Los Angeles Summary: Requires foster parents, child welfare workers, group home administrators receive training on psychotropic medication, trauma and behavioral health. Also requires Department of Social Services to alert social workers when multiple medications, high dosages or prescriptions for children 5 and younger are prescribed. SB 319 Author: Sen. Jim Beall, D-San Jose Summary: Expands duties of foster care public health nurses to include monitoring and oversight of children prescribed psychotropic medication. SB 319 Author: Sen. Jim Beall, D-San Jose Summary: Requires state to identify and inspect group homes that may be inappropriately administering psychotropic medications. What's been done? In the legislative push for more scrutiny of doctors, McGuire, the North Bay Democratic state senator, is quick to point out that the California Medical Board received more than 8,000 complaints about doctors during the 2014-15 fiscal year. None of the reports, though, appear to have been made on behalf of a foster child. "No one's looking out for them," McGuire said. Seven of the high prescribers in the foster care data also turned up in 2010-12 as part of a broader U.S. Senate Finance Committee inquiry headed by Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, into the runaway costs and prescribing of painkillers and mental health drugs on the taxpayers' dime. It appears that identifying those doctors is all officials did. Instead of cracking down on them, the state Department of Health Care Services cautioned Grassley in a letter not to misinterpret the data and jump to conclusions. Walayat, Lasala, Barnett and Grewal all appeared on that list, among Medi-Cal's top prescribers of an antipsychotic. Reforms to prescribing practices in the foster care system only took shape years later after the newspaper's series "Drugging Our Kids" spotlighted the problem. The same day the series launched in August 2014, the state medical board answered a lawmaker's call to investigate high-prescribing doctors. But that one-time inquiry has produced no results to date. One reform affecting doctors has taken hold: In October 2014, California began requiring doctors to provide far more medical justification to prescribe antipsychotics to foster children and receive authorization from state pharmacists to do so. There are signs that the requirement is leading to fewer requests to prescribe the drugs amid hundreds of denials of unnecessary prescriptions. And statistics suggest the overall number of foster children on psychiatric drugs is dropping as well. Data compiled by the UC Berkeley's Center for Social Services Research show 12 percent of the state's foster kids were on a psychiatric drug in the first quarter of 2015 — a 1.5 percentage point decline from 2012. The state also cut spending on antipsychotics for foster children in the 2014-15 fiscal year by 10 percent from the previous year, shelling out \$22.9 million — its lowest bill in four years. But McGuire feels a more targeted approach is still needed. His SB 1174 stipulates that "repeated acts of clearly excessive prescribing, furnishing or administering psychotropic medications to a minor without a good faith prior examination of the patient and medical reason" should become priority cases for "investigation and prosecution." Doctors would be selected for review based on annual reports of foster children on three or more psych drugs for at least 90 days. In the most extreme cases, the state's attorney general would file a challenge to a physician's medical license. Physicians are known in the state Capitol as one of the toughest professional groups to regulate. Their lobbies are well-funded and their members are particularly resistant to anyone challenging their discretion. As to foster care prescribing, they say the state has already done enough. "I think

doctors have been getting the message that the practice of giving antipsychotic medications to foster children is at times problematic and will be subject to careful scrutiny," said Dr. Saul Wasserman, a San Jose child and adolescent psychiatrist who co-chairs the government affairs committee of the California Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, a doctors group that opposes McGuire's bill. Nonetheless, McGuire's bill is moving forward. In May it passed the Senate on a 35-3 vote but has been amended in the Assembly, so it requires approval in both chambers of the Legislature this month. One opponent, Sen. Richard Pan, D-Sacramento, echoed many of the lobbyists' sentiments, saying that increased accountability would result in fewer doctors willing to treat foster youth. "We have to be very careful we don't get into a situation where we're actually discouraging the few willing to take care of this population from deciding that they have even more reasons not to," said Pan, a pediatrician. But McGuire countered that rather than doctors being under fire, "those being punished now are the foster youth." From Trochtenberg's unique view as foster youth turned state official, it is clear: Something more must be done. "These are kids that are hurting — these are children who have been through what we know war veterans have been through," Trochtenberg said. "But where is the accountability? The person who has the authority to write a prescription is where we need accountability. "We still don't have that." How we gathered, reviewed the project data In the 2014 series "Drugging Our Kids," the Bay Area News Group reviewed a decade of data that revealed the widespread use of psychotropic medication on foster kids. Shortly after the publication, the news organization returned to the state Department of Health Care Services to begin months of negotiations for a new set of Medi-Cal prescription data. The resulting database provides a unique look at how individual doctors prescribed these drugs to children in foster care. What we reviewed The data are drawn from Medi-Cal pharmacy benefit claims and name individual prescribers but do not identify their patients. Overall, the data included information on 1,280 psychiatrists, pediatricians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants and other medical providers who prescribed psychotropic medication to foster children 17 and younger from July 2009 to July 2014. State officials excluded doctors who prescribed to 10 or fewer patients during the five-year period saying it was necessary to preserve patient privacy. For each prescriber, the data show the number of patients who received psychotropic drugs, how often those doctors prescribed multiple psychiatric drugs to their patients, and how often they chose the most powerful class of the drugs known as antipsychotics. Because of limitations in the data, it was not possible to learn whether the doctors saw patients to whom they did not prescribe drugs. For comparison, the state provided aggregate data for the overall pool of doctors and patients — 5,584 prescribers and 26,467 foster children — to yield a complete picture of average prescribing practices across California. How we defined 'top prescribers' To identify outlying prescribers, this news organization consulted more than a dozen child psychiatrists and academic researchers, and ultimately focused on what those experts deemed the most extreme forms of prescribing found in the database: Giving multiple antipsychotics or three or more psychiatric drugs at once to their young patients. The news organization reviewed doctors who prescribed two or more antipsychotics for 30-45 days and also for a longer period, 60-75 days, because the shorter period could represent a "cross-taper," a period of time when patients on medications which cannot be abruptly stopped are transitioning from one drug to another. Antipsychotic use in children is narrowly approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to treat the rare pediatric cases of schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and autism with irritability. Common side effects include rapid-onset weight gain and obesity, diabetes, irreversible tremors, and extreme lethargy. But in the foster care system, the drugs are widely used "off-label" — or outside of FDA-labeled approvals — a practice that is legal and common with many other types of drugs. The data did not include dose levels or diagnoses, but interviews with former foster youth, social workers, public health nurses, foster care providers and the doctors themselves reveal antipsychotics have been routinely used for behavior management, when children are difficult to control or threatening to harm themselves. While the use of even a single antipsychotic for children who are not mentally ill is increasingly questioned, the use of two at once is discouraged. Source: <http://extras.mercurynews.com/druggedkids/>

Guards allowed fights at youth prison [Patrick Marley](#) and [Catie Edmondson](#), Milwaukee Journal Sentinel 11:01 a.m. CDT August 7, 2016 Department of Corrections keeps quiet about log of prison incidents Lincoln Hills School for Boys is under investigation by federal officials for a variety of crimes, including abuse of juvenile inmates and intimidation of witnesses. (Photo: Mark Hoffman, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel) Madison — A guard at the state's troubled youth prison was fired in February after he got in a physical fight with a juvenile inmate and allowed other teens to throw punches at each other in an area that was out of the view of cameras, new records show. A second guard resigned amid the investigation, which found he had not stopped or reported fights at Lincoln Hills School for Boys. The Northwoods facility has been [under criminal investigation](#) for 19 months for suspicion of child neglect, prisoner abuse and misconduct in office. Another document recently released under the state's open records law details dozens of incidents that occurred at the prison in the second half of last year, many of which raise troubling questions about the staff's use of force and pepper spray. In one incident, staff sprayed a juvenile who was restrained. In another, staff blasted pepper spray into a room after an inmate prevented guards from seeing into the room. Top officials at the Department of Corrections kept mum for months about the log of incidents, even when directly asked if it existed. They didn't produce it seven months ago in part because the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel asked for a log of conduct reports, rather than incident reports. Department of Corrections spokesman Tristan Cook said in a statement the detailed accounting of hundreds of incidents at Lincoln Hills was a "tracking document" that was "not meant to serve as a comprehensive log of completed incident reports," as the Journal Sentinel initially requested. "I think that's completely absurd. The open records law does not require requesters to use magic words to get records," said attorney Christa Westerberg, the vice president of the Wisconsin Freedom of Information Council. "The department should not tie themselves in knots to avoid producing records." The Journal Sentinel recently acquired a copy of the log in response to a request for emails and attachments sent to and from John Ourada, who ran Lincoln Hills until he [abruptly retired](#) in December just days before investigators [raided](#) the facility. Ourada used the log to keep track of incidents at the facility, according to the Department of Corrections. Gov. Scott Walker and GOP lawmakers last year worked to sharply limit the public records law but [backtracked](#) in the face of public opposition. Since then Walker has emphasized the importance of open records and in March issued an executive order to [speed up the release of documents](#) requested by the public and news organizations. Despite that executive order, retrieving records from the Department of Corrections can be a [months-long process](#), and the Journal Sentinel has had to retain lawyers to get some of them. The department says producing records takes so long because the newspaper has asked for large amounts of records, many of which include sensitive information about juveniles that must be blacked out. The log documents hundreds of incidents over six months, painting a picture of the extent and frequency of fights and assaults at Lincoln Hills. In one incident, an inmate was put in restraints after becoming disruptive and arguing with staff. The inmate was then pepper sprayed "for safety," the log said. That practice appears to contradict widely established principles of when to use the chemical agent known as oleoresin capsicum, according to nationally recognized use-of-force expert Steve Martin. "Unless there is a high-level immediate threat, OC should not be used on a restrained inmate. There's not enough information here that would justify the use of OC spray," Martin said. "There may have been something extraordinary that compelled them to use it, but it's certainly not in this description." Martin, who served as a corrections expert for the U.S. Department of Justice for over a decade, reviewed the log at the Journal Sentinel's request. Another entry describes an incident in which staff used pepper spray on an inmate who refused to go into a bedroom. In another case, staff deployed pepper spray into an inmate's room after the inmate covered the window on the door to the room and became unresponsive. "(Pepper spray) should not be deployed unless there is a live, immediate threat of harm," Martin said. Cook, the department spokesman, said pepper spray is used to prevent physical harm to inmates and staff. In cases where staff can't see inmates in a room and they won't respond to verbal directives, pepper spray is sometimes used to avoid incurring injuries when staff members enter the room, Cook said. While the log captures many fights, others at the institution went undocumented. Some of those incidents are described in reports on internal investigations into two guards, Lance Glisch and Peter Vandre, who worked together in one of the living units scattered around the prison's campus. Glisch was fired in February and Vandre quit that month. An inmate and Vandre said they saw Glisch fight in the summer of 2015 in a part of the kitchen known as the "cut" that cannot be seen by the prison's cameras. The inmate who witnessed it said he saw Glisch deliver two body punches to the inmate he was fighting, and that inmate admitted he received bruises on his back and ribs. No one answered the phone at Glisch's home last week, but he described the incident to investigators as horseplay. Glisch acknowledged to investigators he knew two inmates were going to fight in November 2015, but decided to steer clear of it instead of stop it. "I didn't want anything to do with what was going on, so I went to the kitchen," he told investigators. Afterward, he said one of the inmates had injuries on his head and hand. He said he was present while Vandre and the inmate concocted a story about the inmate falling so he could get medical attention. In an interview, Vandre denied that, saying he suspected the inmates might have fought but had no way to prove it. He told investigators he did not report his suspicions to a supervisor because he did not think they would care. Vandre said Glisch and the inmates had conspired to make Vandre look like he had done wrong in that incident and others. Glisch "was the one doing all the bad things and I was just the collateral damage," Vandre said. "I always suspected him of not being on the straight and narrow." Asked by investigators if he had used a racial epithet at work, Vandre initially replied, "Not at this facility." Glisch and inmates said they had heard him use the word many times at Lincoln Hills, where a large portion of the population is African American. "I didn't try to use any of that, but it could have come out," Vandre told the Journal

Sentinel. "It probably slipped out once or twice." Also in his interview with investigators, Vandre admitted visiting a "lingerie football" themed website at work "as long as no one was around." Since those fights, the Department of Corrections has installed more cameras at Lincoln Hills, reducing the number of areas that aren't captured on film. Officials have also equipped staff with body cameras, provided more training and replaced leaders at the institution and Department of Corrections. The fights occurred in 2015, at a time when state Attorney General Brad Schimel's office was investigating the prison. Schimel spokesman Johnny Koremenos said protecting children is a top priority of the attorney general but provided no explanation for how the fights could occur at a time when his investigators were supposed to have an eye on the facility. Schimel has since [handed off the probe](#) to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The U.S. Department of Justice is also investigating whether there has been a pattern of civil rights abuses at the prison. Source: <http://www.jsonline.com/story/news/investigations/2016/08/06/guards-allowed-fights-youth-prison/88295652/>

How Populism Is Rewriting The Charter School Narrative In a political season that's been [dominated by populism](#) it should come as no surprise that a grassroots uprising is having an effect on education policy as well. Two recent events showcase exactly how the populist fervor in the nation is redrawing the education policy landscape, and more specifically, rewriting the story of the roll out of charter schools in our communities that's been enabled by laissez faire lawmakers and the [generosity of the Obama administration](#) and [wealthy private foundations](#). Both events – one which reflects a national response to the populist uprising, and the other, an example of the uprising itself – reveal how a grassroots rebellion against unregulated charter schools is shaking the foundations of the education policy establishment's narrative about these schools. NAACP Calls For A Charter School Moratorium First, university professor [Julian Vasquez Heilig](#) broke the story on his personal blog last week that the national NAACP has called for a nationwide "moratorium on the proliferation of privately managed charter schools." The NAACP resolution, which passed at the national convention in July but will not be official until the National Board meeting later this Fall, cites numerous problems posed by charter schools including their tendencies to increase segregation, impose "punitive and exclusionary" discipline policies on students, and foster financial corruption and conflicts of interest. (Disclosure: Heilig is a colleague of mine at [The Progressive](#).) Around the same time Heilig made his revelation, [The Atlantic](#) reported another prominent civil rights group the Movement for Black Lives – a coalition of over 50 black-led organizations aligned with Black Lives Matter – also is calling for a moratorium on charter schools. Other civil rights voices soon joined in support of the moratorium. Journey for Justice – an alliance of grassroots community, youth, and parent-led organizations in 21 cities across the country – declares in a [statement](#) that its constituency of largely African American local activists is "demanding the end of unwarranted expansion of charter schools." Another voice for civil rights, the Internet-based collective known as [Educolor](#), also issued a general statement in support of the MBL platform. At the Hechinger Report, [Andre Perry](#), a university professor and one of the early advocates for charter schools in New Orleans, explains, "Why the Black Lives Matter movement has to take on charter schools." Perry writes, "Many of the theories and practices many of us are fighting against in the criminal justice arena are still openly embraced by many charter schools." Specifically, he cites the tendencies of charters to practice "no excuse" models of education that enforce strict behavior codes and produce high rates of out-of-schools suspensions. Nashville Defeats Charter School Dark Money While the reputation of charter schools took a hit at the national level, those schools and what they've come to represent in communities were also rejected at the local level in a school board election in Nashville. A year and a half ago, I reported firsthand from Nashville on how local schools in the district were under assault by the twin forces of a rightwing agenda driven by the Koch Brothers and a collusion of business interests and private foundations intent on privatizing the schools. In my article for [Salon](#), I explained how three school board members – Will Pinkston, Jill Speering, and Amy Frogge – had determined to represent the will of their voters, rather than the interests of big money, and resist the onslaught of charters. "It's immoral to force this kind of change on people who don't want it," Pinkston told me in my interview with him. "It also diminishes the odds of success." In last week's board election, the three incumbents plus an open seat were targeted for takeover by the wealthy interests behind charter schools. As local blogger [TC Weber](#) explains, charter advocacy groups and the local Chamber of Commerce invested many hundreds of thousands of dollars to knock off their opponents and elect a pro-charter majority to the board. One of the pro-charter interests is Stand for Children that classroom teacher and popular blogger [Peter Greene](#) identifies as an "astroturf organization" backed by rich foundations and wealthy individuals connected to the investment industry. SFC's involvement included over \$700,000 to pay for campaign mailers and phone-banking and direct orchestration of volunteer and paid canvassers, which likely [violates federal election law](#). Despite the outpouring of cash and influence, as the [Knoxville news outlet](#) reports, the big money behind charter schools lost. "After spending a small fortune, all four candidates [charter advocates] backed in the Metro Nashville school board election and a handful of state GOP primary challengers lost their races." The results of the Nashville election reverberated to the national scene where education historian [Diane Ravitch](#), on her popular personal blog, called it, "A great lesson about how parents can beat Dark Money." Rewriting The Narrative The way pro-charter advocates have responded to these two events is telling. Regarding the civil rights groups' calls for a charter moratorium, the pro-charter response has been a hissy-fit driven by fiery rhetoric and few facts. Shaffar Jeffries, president of Democrats for Education Reform, a Washington D.C. based charter advocacy financed by hedge funds, [issued a statement](#) declaring the NAACP resolution a "disservice to communities of color." In a [nationally televised newscast](#), Steve Perry, founder and operator of a charter school chain, lashed out at Hilary Shelton, the bureau director of the Washington, DC, chapter of the NAACP, for being a sell out to the teachers' unions and for abandoning children of color. The contention that the NAACP has sold out to teachers' unions holds little water since that organization has been a [recipient of generous donations from pro-charter advocates](#) as well. And any argument that curbing charters is a de facto blow to black and brown school kids is more a rhetorical trope than a factual counter to the evidence NAACP cites, showing where charters undermine communities of color. Regarding the defeat of big money-backed pro-charter candidates in Nashville, the usual outlets for charter industry advocacy – Democrats for Education Reform and the media outlets Education Post and The 74 – have been totally silent. These responses are telling because the charter industry has heretofore been such masterful communicators. Advocates for these schools have long understood [most people](#) don't understand what the schools are. Even when presidential candidates in the recent Democratic Party primary [ventured to express an opinion](#) about charters, they [horribly botched it](#). So for years, the powerful charter school industry has been filling the void of understanding about charters with [clever language](#) meant to define what these schools are and what their purpose is. The schools, we've been told, are "public," even though [they really aren't](#). They're supposed to [outperform traditional public schools](#), but that [turns out not to be true](#) either. Even when the charter industry has tried to [cut the data even finer](#) to prove some charters outperform public schools, the claims turn out to be [grossly over-stated](#). We've also been told charter schools are a ["civil rights cause."](#) Now it turns out that's not quite the case either. Of course, charter school propagandists still have plenty of rhetorical arrows in their quiver. But what's abundantly clear is that while they've been completely free to write the charter school narrative in their own words, now the people are telling their version of the story. And the ending is no doubt going to look way different. Source: <http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/how-populism-is-rewriting-the-charter-school-narrative/>

Mercury News editorial: Rein in overdrugging of foster children Mercury News Editorial Posted: 08/09/2016 10:04:31 AM PDT Updated: 08/09/2016 08:14:18 PM PDT Drugging Our Kids [The full Bay Area News Group investigation, including a documentary video](#). Since 2014, this newspaper has been working to expose the harm done to foster children by doctors' improper use of powerful antipsychotic drugs to control their patients' behavior. Progress has been made, but as investigative stories Sunday and Monday by Karen de Sá and Tracy Seipel reveal, much work remains to provide proper oversight. California's top foster care prescribing doctors are still fueling the medication of our most vulnerable children at an unacceptable rate. This abuse needs to stop. Three bills being considered by the Legislature will help rein in the practice. The Assembly and Senate should pass the legislation, and Gov. Jerry Brown should sign them into law. On Monday, de Sá told the heartbreaking story of Tasia Wright's experience growing up in foster care in Southern California. Tasia, who is now 27, entered a residential group home at the age of 6 after her mother developed drug problems. In the 13 years she was at the group home, she was prescribed 23 different psychiatric drugs by three psychiatrists. One of the doctors who treated her was responsible for giving two or more antipsychotics to 46 foster children for longer than two months over a five-year period. The drugs often come with debilitating side effects for children. In Tasia's case, by the time she left the group home at 19, de Sá reported that she was morbidly obese and had Type 2 diabetes and medication-induced tremors. Advertisement The doctors who are prescribing the unproven combinations of the drugs are engaging in a practice that is widely rejected by medical associations in other states. The most important bill to attack the problem is SB 1174, authored by state Sen. Mike McGuire, D-Healdsburg. The legislation, which goes before the Assembly Appropriations Committee on Wednesday, would require the state Medical Board to investigate doctors who inappropriately prescribe antipsychotic medications. As McGuire points out, none of the more than 8,000 complaints to the state Medical Board about doctors during the 2014-15 fiscal year was on behalf of a foster child. When California accepts responsibility for the welfare of children, it has an obligation to look out for their best interests. San Jose Sen. Jim Beall has for years worked to improve the lives of the state's most vulnerable children. His SB 1291 would require county mental plans to gather data and

submit annual plans on how they serve foster children. The intent is to better identify problems and address them before they reach a crisis state. Sen. Bill Monning, D-Monterey, is pushing to get his SB 253 through the Legislature. Monning's bill would make doctors go to greater lengths to justify giving prescriptions before taking them to judges for approval. The reporting by de Sá and Seipel should be required reading for every member of the Legislature. Both houses should give bipartisan support to passing the bills for the governor's signature so that inappropriate drugging of foster children comes to an end. Source: http://www.mercurynews.com/opinion/ci_30224518/mercury-news-editorial-rein-overdrugging-foster-children

Arizona foster kids removed from 6 homes after sexual allegation *Yvonne Wingett Sanchez*, The Republic | azcentral.com 4:48 p.m. MST August 8, 2016 P.O.W.E.R. House Youth Facility(Photo: Screenshot) Story Highlights **The operator of the facility said 47 children were removed DCS confirmed an investigation is ongoing State officials removed dozens of children in foster care from six group homes amid an investigation by the Arizona Department of Child Safety. The group homes are all run by the same operator, P.O.W.E.R. House Youth Facility.** Doug Nick, a DCS spokesman, confirmed an investigation is underway and that the children have been "given other placements." Because of privacy laws he said he could not discuss the nature of the investigation, the timing of the removal of the children, when the probe began or other details. Glen Mayberry, CEO of P.O.W.E.R. House Youth Facility, told The Arizona Republic on Monday that P.O.W.E.R. reported to the state "alleged sexual contact" between two children at one of the homes. "Once we found out we followed all the mandatory reporting laws," Mayberry said. But Mayberry said state officials have not told him why they are investigating the facilities. He said one state official told him "there is an investigation for sexual contact" between minors. But "we have never been informed — officially — of what has happened," Mayberry said. Nick said 40 children were removed from the six homes. Mayberry said 47 children were removed. [AZCENTRAL Fed up with excuses, red tape 3 Arizona foster moms forge new path at Capitol](#) Mayberry said the facilities have been operating for 12 years, and during that time have not had claims of wrongdoing substantiated. Mayberry said the company operates five homes in the San Tan Valley area and one in Mesa. The number of children per home ranges from five to 10, he said. Around 7 p.m. Wednesday, "white vans started showing up and they started extracting the kids," Mayberry said. The process was traumatic for some of the kids, he said. Some cried, others posted angry messages on social media about their removal. He said multiple kids "ran away." Mayberry criticized the agency's approach to the children's removal, saying DCS forgot to remove seven children at one location. "They didn't have a plan. They came in and took all the kids, but left seven of them with us," he said. "We didn't get rid of those kids until Saturday night." He said the last of the children were removed at 9 p.m. Saturday. [AZCENTRAL 4 fixes for Arizona's broken child-welfare system](#) Across Arizona, hundreds of children under the state's care live in group homes, either because the state agency can't find relatives to take in the children or because there aren't enough foster families. Follow the reporter on Twitter, [@yvonnewingett](#), and Facebook. Reach her at yvonne.wingett@arizonarepublic.com or 602-444-4712. Source: <http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/2016/08/08/group-home-operator-dozens-foster-kids-removed-after-sexual-allegation/88411762/>

Investigation has resulted in 100 group homes in Prescott closing their doors By *Cindy Barks* Originally Published: August 12, 2016 6:02 a.m. [Cindy Barks](#) PRESCOTT – The head of an insurance-fraud investigative team made a strong case this week against the allegedly fraudulent practices of many of Prescott's sober living homes. Dan Kreitman, director of the special investigative unit for the Centene Corporation, told the city's Ad Hoc Committee on Structured Sober Living Homes Wednesday, Aug. 10, that his team had uncovered widespread insurance fraud, theft, and waste in Prescott. Photo by Cindy Barks Dan Kreitman, director of the special investigations unit for Centene Corporation, talks to the Prescott Mayor's Ad Hoc Committee on Structured Sober Living Homes Wednesday, Aug. 10, on the alleged insurance fraud at local group homes. The investigation has led to changes in the way the company pays its claims, Kreitman said, which, in turn, has brought about a dramatic drop in the number of group homes operating in Prescott. Kreitman estimates that as many as 100 have closed their doors in the wake of the investigation. Kreitman spent more than a half-hour Wednesday evening citing the instances of fraud, theft, and waste. Among his examples: • Sober living homes that were routinely charging as much as \$2,000 for daily urine drug screens – tests that Kreitman said should have cost about \$29. • Homes that were making claims for upwards of \$5,000 a day for equine treatments – "to go out and pet a horse." • Clients remaining in treatment for 14 or 15 months, "with no end in sight." Regularly, Kreitman said, "We're finding sober home living facilities with no end game. What we're finding is our members who are being shifted from facility to facility and who are testing positive for heroin from facility to facility." • Cases of brokers working with sober-living facilities "to bring members into your area for the sole purpose of making a dollar off of them – in our opinion not to help, but to hurt." All of the fraudulent practices apparently added up. Kreitman said group home insurance claims in Prescott and parts of California spiked by nearly 500 percent during 2015. "That raised our flags," Kreitman said after the meeting. Those red flags led the Centene Corporation, which recently acquired the previous major insurance provider Health Net, to send a team of investigators to Prescott twice in recent months. Kreitman attended Wednesday's ad hoc committee meeting as a part of an eight-member team of investigators. That investigation is ongoing, and Kreitman told the committee: "We will be a presence in this town for the near future, which is something that probably we didn't see from a Health Net perspective." After the meeting, he said, "We plan to stay as long as it takes." During the course of the investigation, Kreitman said Centene changed the "payment methodology" for sober living facilities, adding, "Since we have made those changes, I believe over 100 facilities in the Prescott area have closed their doors." While the City of Prescott had long estimated its total group homes at about 170, officials recently adjusted that to about 110. City Attorney Jon Paladini said Wednesday that the number likely is even lower now, based on the information from Kreitman. "It's probably under 100 now," Paladini said. Along the way, Kreitman said Centene had obtained enough evidence to approach the offending facilities, and some of those facilities are now assisting the investigation to help determine "how this fraud was perpetrated in your area – the brokers involved in this fraud." As the insurance company acquires that information, Kreitman said, "We will either give it to the Prescott Police Department or the FBI." While several of the ad hoc committee members commended Kreitman for his team's investigative work, committee member Doug Dolan, who operates licensed facility Recovery in the Pines as well as a sober-living component, voiced several concerns as well. "First off, thank you for cleaning up the ones that are abusing the system," Dolan told Kreitman. "I believe there is fraud, theft, and waste that needs to be cleaned up." For instance, he said, "If somebody's taking an instant (urine) test read, and they're charging \$2,000, that's asinine. And if somebody's charging you \$5,000 for some kind of equine treatment, I'll tell you as a treatment center owner, that's asinine." But Dolan said he believes urine drug screens are a "medical necessity," and that there are different levels of testing available. While an instant-read test is one of those options, he said, "That's not as reliable as sending it to a lab, (where there are different levels of testing). \$29 won't cover that cost." Dolan said his concerns center on the fact that "at the end of day, hopefully what we're talking about is the quality of care for the patient." He added that Centene's investigation had resulted in a delay in claim payments industry-wide. "There are some good programs not getting their insurance claims paid, and they're struggling because they're not getting paid," he said. Allowing that some sober living homes will take on any insured client with the attitude "let's give it a shot, and take the money," Dolan said others, such as his own Recovery in the Pines, take on clients based on whether they are ready to undergo treatment. Kreitman responded: "I feel like you are in the very small minority in this area. It's very unfortunate that people in this area have taken advantage of people who need help and have dragged your industry down the gutters." Meanwhile, Kreitman said Centene had resumed paying its claims under a restructured payment process that is a "Medicare-based payment structure." After the meeting, Kreitman said he believes Prescott is unique in the amount of fraud, theft, and waste. "It is worse here than other places we have been," he said. Although he was uncertain about the reason, Kreitman said the fraud likely stemmed in part from the fact that "there is not a lot of regulation." Source: <http://www.dcourier.com/news/2016/aug/12/insurance-investigator-fraudulent-group-homes-have/>

Albany police officer suspended after St. Anne Institute incident - Times Union Albany police officer suspended after St. Anne Institute incident Two Albany police officers suspended as brass looks into incident at St. Anne Institute By Brendan J. Lyons Published 10:55 pm, Friday, August 12, 2016 1 Albany An Albany officer has been suspended and another placed on administrative duty as the department investigates the circumstances that led to one of the officers allegedly slamming a girl to the ground last month during a police call at [St. Anne Institute](#), group home for troubled teenagers. Officer [Ervis Miftari](#) is suspended without pay and Officer [John Schueler](#) is on administrative duty pending the outcome of the internal investigation, Chief [Brendan Cox](#) said Friday. "We're going to do a thorough and fair investigation and what comes of that I don't know at this point," Cox said. The incident involving the young girl and Miftari took place in late July and was captured on videotape, the chief said. A person briefed on the case said the internal investigation is focusing on statements Miftari made to internal affairs investigators in relation to what was portrayed on the videotape. St. Anne Institute offers "a structured and supportive environment for young women ages 12-21 that are unable to live at home, attend public school or function in the community," according to its website. In 2002, the group home on North Main Avenue installed multiple additional video cameras after sex abuse charges were filed against an aide at the school. At the time, the [Times Union](#) reported cameras were installed in hallways to help monitor more than 125 residents who ranged in age from 12 to 18 and

stayed an average of six to eight months. The school for troubled women and girls often receives clients who are placed there by family courts throughout the state. Others are referred to the facility by school districts, and some of the clients attend classes at the school but don't live there. Albany police routinely respond to the school, often to help staff deal with an unruly student, officials said. Miftari is a uniformed patrol officer who joined the department almost three years ago. A spokesperson for St. Anne Institute did not respond to a request for comment Friday. Officer [Kevin Flynn](#), president of the Albany Police Officers Union, could not be reached for comment. blyons@timesunion.com • 518-454-5547 • @brendan_lyonstu Source: <http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/Albany-police-officer-suspended-after-St-Anne-9140277.php>

Drugging our kids: Which Inland facilities heavily rely on anti-psychotic drugs? [SHARE](#) . More from this story [SLIDE SHOW: Drugging our kids: Which Inland facilities heavily rely on anti-psychotic drugs? 4 Photos](#) » Nakai Painting 877-769-4468 [Riverside Yellow Pages THINGS TO DO](#) 800-514-7253 ADVERTISE YOUR JOB OPENING HERE . STAFF REPORT Published: Aug. 13, 2016 Updated: Aug. 14, 2016 12:03 p.m. Drugging our kids: Which Inland facilities heavily rely on anti-psychotic drugs? [Print Photo Share Pin It](#) 1 of 4 [More Galleries](#) _ Tisha Ortiz, a 23-year-old former foster youth now attending CSU East Bay, has testified repeatedly before the Legislature about the impact of being heavily medicated throughout her childhood as she grew up in residential group homes. Ortiz spent two years of her childhood at Rancho Damacitas group home. (Dai Sugano/Bay Area News Group) Dai Sugano/Bay Area News Group [Related article](#) » Editor's Note: Southern California Group's sister publications in the San Francisco Bay Area produced this report, the latest installment in their series investigating doctors' use of powerful anti-psychotic drugs to control the behavior of the state's foster children. The report [can be found here](#) and the complete series can be found here: extras.mercurynews.com/druggedkids/index.html For years, few questioned how doctors treated the emotional trauma of California's abused and neglected children – and nobody monitored how often they handed out psychiatric drugs that can turn fragile childhoods into battles with obesity and bouts of stupor. Now, a Digital First Media investigation into the prescribing habits of the state's foster care doctors reveals for the first time how a fraction of doctors has been fueling the rampant medicating of California's most vulnerable kids. The Inland facilities heavily using prescriptions are: Loma Linda University Medical Center: State data show a cluster of the highest prescribers of antipsychotics to foster children had a link to the university and hospital, including Dr. William Murdoch, the chair of the psychiatry department and associate professor. Murdoch was surprised to see his name so high on the list of California prescribers, saying his philosophy on prescribing is cautious, especially among young patients. Oak Grove Center: In Murrieta, Dr. Harinder Grewal oversees care for troubled youth "experiencing psychological, social, emotional and behavioral problems." Between 2010 and 2013, Grewal received \$471,665 for drug company research, according to company disclosures compiled by ProPublica. The group home's website describes Grewal as "a spokesperson for pharmaceutical companies such as Bristol Myers, Squibb, Pfizer Inc., AstraZeneca and Johnson and Johnson." Shanti Clinical Trials: This office in Colton until recently housed a clinic that ran medication trials for childhood depression, attention deficit and bipolar disorder, among other research sponsored by some of the biggest names in the pharmaceutical industry. Two of the highest prescribers of psych drugs to foster children are listed as investigators at the clinic, including Dr. Warris Walayat and Dr. Salvador Lasala. Walayat, who was a staff psychiatrist with the Riverside County Mental Health Department, was the highest prescriber of 2009-2014. Rancho Damacitas: Tisha Ortiz, a 23-year-old former foster youth now attending CSU East Bay, has testified repeatedly before the Legislature about the impact of being heavily medicated throughout her childhood as she grew up in residential group homes. Tisha Ortiz spent two years of her childhood at this group home in Temecula. Source: <http://www.pe.com/articles/editor-810549-sister-produced.html>

Foster home operators charged for not reporting alleged sex assault by Cody Combs Wednesday, August 17th 2016 Setup Timeout Error: Setup took longer than 30 seconds to complete. I-Team THREE RIVERS, Mich. (NEWSCHANNEL 3) – The I-Team is obtaining new information about the operators of an adult foster care facility that recently had its license revoked by state regulators. According to documents obtained by Newschannel 3's I-team through the Freedom of Information Act, the operators of the adult foster care home are accused of failing to report allegations of sexual assault to authorities. A The adult care facility was located on 59296 Noah Lake Road in Three Rivers, and housed approximately 6 adults with developmental disabilities and/or mental illness. Shoheli Talukder and MD Talukder are both facing "failure to report abuse" charges as a result of the state's investigation. "Resident A has been sexually abusing Resident B for months," reads the report issued by the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA). "Resident B informed me that Resident A had been bothering her for approximately the last three months," wrote Trooper Matthew Berry, who wrote about his on-site inspection of the home. The trooper then writes that Resident B said the told the Talukders about the alleged assault. "They asked Resident B not to call the police and yelled at Resident A," he wrote. The report also claims that the Talukders likely knew about Resident A's aggressive behavior as early as 2014. The charges faced by the foster care facility operators are considered misdemeanor. The Talukders are expected for a pre-trial conference on Friday. Newschannel 3 and the I-Team will continue to follow the case, and pass along any developments. Source: <http://wwmt.com/news/i-team/foster-home-operators-charged-for-not-reporting-alleged-sex-assault>

Staffer accused of assaulting resident of local group home Comment 0 0 By [Michael Randall](#) Times Herald-Record recordonline.com By [Michael Randall](#) Times Herald-Record Posted Aug. 19, 2016 at 8:52 AM Updated at 8:52 AM Updated at 9:08 AM John M. Walker By [Michael Randall](#) Times Herald-Record Posted Aug. 19, 2016 at 8:52 AM Updated at 9:08 AM SAUGERTIES – A staff member at the Ulster-Greene ARC residence in Saugerties was charged Thursday with assaulting one of the residents there. Saugerties police said staff members contacted them June 6 to report a possible assault on a resident. Saugerties detectives, assisted by the Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs, conducted a 10-week investigation. Police said the investigation concluded that John M. Walker, a residential specialist, had committed a series of attacks and abuse against one of the residents. Walker, 28, of Birch Street, Kingston, was charged with one count of first-degree endangering the welfare of an incompetent or physically disabled person, a felony; two counts of third-degree assault and one count each of second-degree endangering the welfare of an incompetent or physically disabled person and third-degree menacing, all misdemeanors; and second-degree harassment, a violation. He was arraigned in Town of Saugerties Court and released on his own recognizance pending a future court appearance. Michael Randall Source: <http://www.recordonline.com/article/20160819/NEWS/160819391>

Sex abuse, poor supervision alleged at Oregon foster program 1 / 6 foster care feb. 3, 2016 Oregon's then-interim human services director Clyde Saiki, left, and Dani Ledezma, a policy adviser for Gov. Kate Brown, prepare to testify to lawmakers in support of foster care reform legislation. Saiki is among those sued Thursday over treatment of two vulnerable preschoolers. Denis C. Theriault/staff [Denis C. Theriault | The Oregonian/OregonLive Print Email](#) By [Hillary Borrud | The Oregonian/OregonLive](#) T The Oregon Department of Human Services is investigating accusations that workers at a residential program for boys and young men in Eastern Oregon provided poor supervision and failed to report alleged sex abuse by a female staffer. In its amended license for the facility, obtained by The Oregonian/OregonLive, the department said it's investigating hiring practices and training at Eastern Oregon Academy, in Hines, which is about three miles from Burns. Officials cited concerns that staffers "may be inexperienced or immature and possibly colluding with children in care to elope from the facility, consume drugs and alcohol, and participate in sexual relationships." But the department has decided not to pull the approximately half-dozen foster children in its care. Instead, it's stationed at the facility 24 hours a day since launching its investigation July 14. The department has previously assigned employees to monitor licensed care facilities. But in recent cases, those employees were present only during daytime hours, agency spokesman Gene Evans said. Eastern Oregon Academy also serves youth from the Oregon Youth Authority. But the Oregon Youth Authority decided to remove the 11 residents under its jurisdiction on Aug. 10, pending the investigation, a state official said. "We plan to continue daily monitoring and will take further action if necessary," Reginald C. Richardson, the human services department's deputy director and interim head of child welfare, wrote to state lawmakers Friday. Richardson and Sen. Sara Gelser, D-Corvallis, visited the facility in mid-August. "I had to see for myself what the situation was like," Richardson wrote. "Children's safety is our number one priority, and I will continue in this hands-on role to make sure the youth residing there are safe and their needs met." Eastern Oregon Academy provides behavioral rehabilitation services for boys and young men ages 12 to 25, according to its website. Problems at the facility do not appear to be new: It was on a ["radar list" of troubled facilities the Department of Human Services maintained until December](#), although it was unclear Friday why or for how long human services officials included the facility on the list. Staff at Eastern Oregon Academy could not be reached for comment late Friday. The human services department faces a shortage of foster homes and space in residential programs, after losing about 400 foster homes and 100 residential beds over the past two years, spokeswoman Andrea Cantu-Schomus wrote in an email. Gelser said Friday that allowing youth to remain at Eastern Oregon Academy under human services supervision was appropriate given the shortage of other options. "When we're looking at the capacity issues in the system, if there isn't a direct danger to the kids, having them sleep in a hotel or DHS office isn't an ideal solution," Gelser said. "But having been out there, I believe at least in the short term having

the 24-hour onsite supervision by DHS will help with the issue." Gelser championed legislation in the 2016 legislative session to improve oversight in the foster care system. The legislation followed several scandals and a massive shakeup of senior human services staff. Meanwhile, local law enforcement officials are investigating an allegation that a woman who worked at Eastern Oregon Academy had sexual contact with one of the boys staying there, according to the facility's amended Department of Human Services license. The state is also investigating reported bad behavior by managers at the facility. After the human services department launched its investigation, the academy's program manager allegedly "yelled and threw papers at a resident during transport, shouted loudly at two residents prior to discharge, and at one point 'shoulder checked' a resident," according to the amended license. On another occasion, Eastern Oregon Academy managers allegedly grew frustrated with a resident who refused to get into a vehicle after a nature field trip — leaving the youth alone, for more than two hours, in woods some 40 miles from the academy. Eastern Oregon Academy also allegedly failed to report these incidents to DHS. Gelser said the current situation stems, in part, from years of state officials failing to spend enough on quality programs for foster children and other youth in state care. "It's the consequence of a complete disinvestment in the system," Gelser said. "And in order for people to provide service and care for our most traumatized kids and kids with the most complex needs, it costs more than just food and some beds." — Hillary Borrud hborrud@oregonian.com 503-294-4034; @hborrud Source: http://www.oregonlive.com/politics/index.ssf/2016/08/state_investigates_allegations.html

Youth prison staff were taught abusive tactics [Catie Edmondson](#) and [Patrick Marley](#), Milwaukee Journal Sentinel 12:10 p.m. CDT August 21, 2016 Lincoln Hills School for Boys and Copper Lake School for Girls are under investigation by the FBI for child abuse and neglect, intimidation of witnesses and other misconduct by officials. (Photo: Mark Hoffman, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel) Madison — Staff at the state's problem-plagued youth prison were taught to use abusive techniques when interacting with teenage offenders under the decade-long tenure of the facility's lead training officer, new records show. Investigators with the Department of Corrections determined that Dustin Meunier's failure to properly teach staff security techniques resulted in a "high volume" of injuries at Lincoln Hills School for Boys and Copper Lake School for Girls, including broken arms and wrists. Meunier, who was fired in May, hung up on a reporter without answering any questions. Documents released under the state's open records law reveal that Meunier engaged in serious and sweeping misconduct at Lincoln Hills School — including showing a video of another officer using unjustified force to train workers, failing to stop staff he witnessed abusing teens, overlooking incidents where excessive force was used and falsifying records. Those documents also show Meunier left a juvenile inmate unattended in a room full of pepper spray for more than five minutes and dragged a handcuffed inmate out of a van by his feet. Meunier, who was supposed to be the prison's sole use-of-force expert, was also unable to demonstrate an understanding of basic security techniques, investigators found. The records are among the first to provide insight into why incidents of excessive force — correctional officers breaking inmates' arms and wrists, putting their knees into youth and using pepper spray excessively — became common occurrences at Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake, which share a campus north of Wausau and are [being investigated](#) by the FBI for [assault, child neglect and other crimes](#). In recent months, top officials at Lincoln Hills and the Department of Corrections have been replaced and the vast majority of the institution's staff has been retrained, said department spokesman Tristan Cook. The superintendent of Lincoln Hills was responsible for ensuring staff got proper training, and the superintendent, security director and trainers were responsible for the curriculum, Cook said. People in those positions have been replaced in the past year and a half. [Wendy Peterson](#) became superintendent in May and soon afterward fired Meunier for misconduct and negligence after an internal investigation comprised of more than 5,000 pages of interviews and incident reports found that Meunier: Failed to contact nurses to ensure inmates received medical attention. Modified techniques for securing inmates without getting permission from his bosses and trained his fellow workers in his new techniques. He also trained workers how to use pepper spray even though he went years without getting certified for such training. Reviewed incidents that "appeared abusive" but did not mark them as inappropriate. He told investigators he was too busy to properly review them. Frequently did not make staff fill out required paperwork documenting incidents in which force was used. Timothy Johnson, who worked for more than two decades at Lincoln Hills, said he had no idea Meunier had taught him improper techniques. Meunier never told him to be cautious with juveniles with the use of force because juveniles' bones are particularly fragile, as he was supposed to do, Johnson said. "It was taught if you're going to use an application of force, go as hard as you possibly can. Don't hold back," Johnson said in an interview. "If he showed us a technique, we all assumed this is an authorized technique sanctioned by the state of Wisconsin," he said. Johnson [resigned in January](#) as investigators looked into his involvement in incidents where juveniles were injured. He said he didn't do anything wrong and argued his bosses were negligent and tried to make him a scapegoat. During training sessions, Meunier showed a video of Johnson putting his knee in the back of a young inmate and said it was the right way to control inmates. Johnson said he didn't know what incident was depicted in the video and was not told it was being used for training. Department of Corrections investigators found that between 2013 and 2015, putting knees into the backs of inmates was "repeatedly used by numerous staff during numerous incidents" even though the method "was not reasonable or necessary and was not justifiable under the circumstances." The probe of Meunier was sweeping, with internal investigators looking into 19 incidents that occurred between 2013 and 2015. They cleared him in three incidents, but found he violated numerous work rules for the others. Here's a look at some of the incidents: Broken wrist. In December 2014, Meunier supervised as Johnson and another officer handcuffed a disruptive juvenile inmate, who cried and screamed and told officers his wrist was broken, according to other inmates. The incident occurred at 9:30 p.m. on a Sunday, when no nurses were on site. Meunier called and left a voicemail with the health services office, even though he knew no one would hear it until the next day, he told internal investigators in October 2015. Doctors confirmed that the youth's wrist was broken and treated it the next day — but Meunier downplayed its significance. "There was no — no gross deformity, nothing looking out of place, nothing at all," he told internal investigators of the injury. He also said the incident was "nothing out of the ordinary" and "wasn't that big of a deal at the time." The Lincoln County Sheriff's Office reviewed the incident at the time, but found there was no evidence that Johnson intended to harm the inmate. Pepper spray. In July 2015, after an inmate barricaded himself in his room, Meunier and others briefly opened his door and two of them each blasted pepper spray into the room for one second. Meunier told the inmate to lie on the floor when he was ready to be removed. Several staff members exited the hallway because the pepper spray was so thick in the air. Others removed the inmate's roommate as the inmate laid on the floor. The inmate stayed in the room unmonitored for 5 and a half minutes and then crawled out when guards instructed him to leave, investigators found. He later became noncompliant, and officers directed him to the ground and removed his clothes so he could be searched, even though one of the officers was female. Meunier told investigators that he lost control of the incident, which he described as "being a cluster." He said he didn't know that two officers, rather than one, had used pepper spray and didn't realize the inmate had been left in the room unmonitored. A use-of-force review conducted by the Department of Corrections in April 2016 found the use of pepper spray was not justified. Leaving the inmate in the room for so long after pepper spray was used "is abusive since it appears he was intentionally left in the room for this period of time and that he was willing to cooperate with staff and exit his room," the review said. Use of force. Meunier conducted a use-of-force review of a September 2015 incident in which he was involved, even though such reviews are supposed to be independent. In that review, he wrote that all reports had been filed, but he and two others had not written required reports. Meunier did not document that officer James Schmidt had placed his knee on the head and neck of a juvenile inmate as he broke up a fight. "I must have overlooked it," Meunier told investigators. His review said health officials had evaluated the inmate, however there is no record of that. A subsequent review done by the department in December 2015 using video of the incident found Schmidt's actions were unjustified. Investigators concluded that by conducting a review of an incident in which he was involved, Meunier "placed himself and the facility in a position of undue scrutiny." Source: <http://www.jsonline.com/story/news/local/wisconsin/2016/08/21/youth-prison-staff-were-taught-abusive-tactics/89001716/>

"Treatment Centers" for Troubled Teens Are Gothic Nightmares [228 60 254](#) By [Nora Caplan-Bricker](#) — "Troubled teens" don't need this kind of help. AntonioGuillem / Thinkstock Most residential treatment centers that promise they can turn around the lives of troubled teenagers are dangerous places with a proven track record of making things worse, [according to a disturbing longread](#) published Tuesday by the Huffington Post. Reporter Sebastian Murdock tells the appalling story of a facility in Utah, formerly known as Island View, and now, under new management, called Elevations RTC. But the takeaway from his extensive reporting is that the options pushed on struggling parents may be hurting, not helping, their at-risk kids. The authoritarian tack that most centers take won't turn their charges into functional adults, Ira Burnim, legal director of the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, told HuffPo. "You can teach them to be compliant in an institution because they get the reward of ... getting out," he said, "but once they get out, it's the same old problem, and they haven't learned how to better manage their condition." Worse, these centers often deeply traumatize their inhabitants. A 2014 lawsuit against Island View's parent company, Aspen Education, alleged that the center "maintained a prison-like environment where physical and psychological torture were used against students," Murdock writes. As one former Island View resident, a 25-year-old named Michelle Lemcke, told him: "Long-term treatment facilities are like ... a jail without having

done anything illegal.” Anyone who wishes to understand the gothic list of abuses suffered by Island View’s teenage residents should read Murdock’s piece, but even a brief perusal is enough to make the blood run cold. A former staff member named Vlad Diaz who quit in 2008 told the journalist that he “wouldn’t treat a dog” the way he was ordered to handle the children. He claimed he saw multiple kids attempt suicide at the facility. One former resident told Murdock about being strip-searched on arrival; when he refused to remove his piercings, he said, “They restrained me on my back and physically removed each one of my piercings, which tore my flesh open ... I still have scars from it.” Teens were required to publicly criticize and humiliate one another during so-called Problem Solving Groups. They were harshly and physically restrained by staff; one family sued unsuccessfully in 2014 after the guards “mangled [a student’s] arm, causing severe and irreparable orthopedic and neurological damage,” per the suit. Murdock also found that staff’s policy was to sedate students with high doses of antipsychotics—drugs whose efficacy at combating conditions like depression and bipolar in adolescents has never been established. Perhaps worst of all, though, was the “time-out room,” described by Murdock as a “small white chamber, approximately 4 by 4 feet, with a large metal door,” where students were subjected to solitary confinement—a disciplinary tactic whose use on juveniles is [outlawed in federal prisons](#) because of its harrowing psychological effects. The doors remained unlocked when the students were inside, but staff monitored them from the other side. A site inspector for the Utah Department of Human Services told Murdock that the rooms were a place for struggling students to “cool off,” not a punishment—but that’s not what the reporter heard from Island View’s former charges. One of his sources, Emily Graeber, told him she can’t expunge the mental image of her friends trapped in the tiny cells. “I’m still really haunted by the screams,” she said. “Sometimes I have nightmares just from the screaming.” Much of this torture was probably legal. “The troubled-teen industry is almost entirely unregulated,” Murdock writes. “In 2011, a federal bill that would have banned physically abusing or starving children at such facilities died in committee. ... [L]ike most states, Utah has no rules outright prohibiting isolation, humiliation or physical restraint. So facilities like Island View still can—and do—isolate, humiliate and physically restrain children. In many states, they can withhold food and water as punishment.” So what should be done to reform nightmare institutions like Island View? Murdock suggests that the answer is to abandon this failed model altogether. Instead, parents of disturbed children should be able to get the support and expert guidance necessary to keep their young ones at home. There is a “virtual national consensus among people in the mental health field that children with mental health difficulties and behavioral problems should be treated at home,” Burnim, the mental health law expert, told Murdock. “I don’t think you need to legislate against RTCs. You just need to create an alternative that sells itself.” Of course, that’s easier said than done. Nora Caplan-Bricker is a contributing writer for DoubleX. Follow her on [Twitter](#). Source:

http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2016/08/24/the_huffington_post_publishes_a_horrorific_piece_about_troubled_teen_residential.html

John Oliver Slams Charter Schools And His Critics Totally Miss The Point Sometimes it takes a funnyman to make sense. Earlier this week, British comedian John Oliver devoted a “Back to School” segment on his HBO program Last Week Tonight to examining the rapidly growing charter school industry and what these schools are doing with our tax dollars. The Washington Post’s education blogger [Valerie Strauss](#) watched the segment and reports that while Oliver declined to address whether or not charters provide high quality education, he focused mostly on how often these schools are “terribly – and sometimes criminally – operated.” (You can see Oliver’s entire sketch [here](#).) Editors at [Rolling Stone](#) watched Oliver’s broadcast as well and report Oliver focused much of his attention on three states – Florida, Pennsylvania, and Ohio – that have “especially depressing charter track records – including negligence in the approval process and school executives embezzling funds.” For [some time now](#), I’ve reported on the alarming spread of charter school scandals in these states, and elsewhere, in [numerous articles](#) for [Salon](#). So very little of what Oliver exposes is new to the public. But because of the reach of HBO, Oliver’s international popularity, and his ability to turn serious subjects into very funny – even if upsetting – material, advocates in the charter industry mustered a strong defense with numerous blogposts and press releases calling Oliver’s anecdotes “[outdated](#),” his treatment of charters “[uninformed](#)” and [unfair](#), and his opinions too [disinterested in the needs of parents](#), especially from communities of color. None of Oliver’s critics seriously refuted the crux of his argument that there might be something fundamentally wrong by design, rather than by implementation or intent, with the idea that a “free market” of privately operated and essentially unregulated schools is a surefire way to improve education opportunities for all students. Indeed, charter schools are “here to stay” has become a [refrain among advocates](#) for these schools, even though there’s no doubt the controversy caused by this new parallel school system is just beginning, and no one can predict what the ongoing conflict will lead to. The charter industry is currently responsible for educating a small percentage of students – just 6–7 percent nationally and barely measurable in many communities, especially more well-to-do metropolitan and rural areas. A [minority of Americans](#) and [relatively few politicians](#) completely understand what charter schools are. And [most experts have mixed views](#) on the purpose of the schools. However, what charter advocates generally won’t admit is that many of the problems these schools cause are reflective of what inevitably seems to happen when an essential public service is privatized. The charter industry claims its schools are “public” institutions because they get tax dollars, but that’s like saying a defense contractor is a public business because it takes in revenues from the federal government. [Numerous experts](#) point out charter schools blur the line from what it means to be a public institution providing a public good and that, [by their very design](#), they expand opportunities to profiteer from public tax dollars and privatize public assets. People in communities affected by these schools are just beginning to see the [conflicts](#) these institutions cause, and it’s just a matter of time before government officials at all levels are forced to respond to the [increasing concerns](#) with these schools. Just consider recent actions taken by the Department of Justice to curtail the expansion of the private prison industry – a privatization trend that generally predates the rise of the charter industry. As [Mother Jones](#) reports, after “a [damning report](#) on the safety, security, and oversight of private prisons,” DOJ announced it would stop contracting with these institutions. Donald Cohen, who leads In the Public Interest, an organization that researches problems posed by privatizing public services, writes for [Huffington Post](#), privately operated prisons are fundamentally flawed because the business model they must follow encourages the companies to “actively seek new prisoners to fill facilities they own.” As ITPI has [previously reported](#), “in an effort to provide the service with fewer resources while also maximizing profits, [private prison] companies often cut corners, reducing the quality, effectiveness, and accessibility of the service.” “The more contractors can cut costs on running their facilities, the wider their profit margins,” writes Aman Banerji for the [Roosevelt Institute](#). “No wonder ... private prisons contracted by the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) contain one or more security deficiencies, health service deficiencies, and a greater number of food grievances.” This clear and obvious conflict of interest – between serving the public and rewarding private enterprise – led to a misalignment with DOJ’s mission to hold an essential function of government to the high standards the public demands. If the charter school industry believes it can avoid this conflict, it’s kidding itself. More than one attentive blogger has noticed the striking similarities between charter schools and the private prison industry. In one of these posts, [Mitchell Robinson](#) notes that charters, like private prisons, differ from the public counterparts by not being locally managed or controlled, not providing the same level of services and programs, and not answering to the same level or degree of regulation and oversight. Over the years, the US Department of Education has rewarded charter schools with over [\\$3.3 billion in federal funds](#), and with passage of the most recent federal education law, the every Student Succeeds Act, USDoe will send [\\$333 million more](#) to these schools before the current fiscal year is over. Remarkably on the actions DOJ took to end tax dollars going to the private prison industry, Banerji concludes, “It offers an opportunity to contest the privatization of state services beyond the prison system.” Let’s hope reexamining the role of charter schools is the next step. Source:

<http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/john-oliver-slams-charter-schools-and-his-critics-totally-miss-the-point/>

Parents of disabled urge Malloy to scrap privatizing group homes By: [Keith M. Phaneuf](#) | August 23, 2016 [View as "Clean Read"](#) [Share](#) [Email](#) [Print](#) Parents of intellectually disabled adults expected to be transferred from state-run group homes to private care reacted Tuesday with a mix of anger and appeals for compassion. About three dozen parents, unionized caregivers and their clients argued at SEIU 1199 headquarters in Hartford that the planned privatization of 40 state-run homes would weaken care and shatter the bonds formed between workers and clients. “We’re talking about love here; we’re not talking about money,” said Lindsay Mathews of New Haven, whose 51-year-old son, George, has resided at the state-run Brook Street group home in Hamden for the past 20 years. Keith m. Phaneuf / CTCMirror.org Lindsay Mathews of New Haven, whose 51-year-old son, George, has resided at the state-run Brook Street group home in Hamden for the past 20 years. George cannot perform simple tasks, such as putting toothpaste on a brush or adjusting the water temperature in the shower, Mathews said. “Almost everything that has to happen to him is done by someone else,” she said. “These are the people we depend upon to keep our children alive.” Critics of the private, nonprofit group homes for the developmentally disabled say they receive insufficient state funding to provide comparable care. They struggle with employee turnover rates that typically exceed 20 percent — which is a big problem given the close bonds clients seek to form with their caregivers. “To take the staff away would be death for Arthur,” Martha Carney of Hamden said of the staff at the Brook Street home, where her adult son, Arthur, resides. “Please, Governor Malloy, come visit our home.” Chris McClure, spokesman for the governor’s budget office, disagreed with the assertions regarding privatization. “Let’s be clear — there should be no service level reductions involved here,” he said. “This is closely following national trends.” Since

2009, the number of individuals served directly by the state Department of Developmental Services in community-living settings have dropped from 15 percent to less than 10 percent, he said. "This step will save taxpayer dollars without affecting service levels," McClure added. "We deeply value all the work of our employees, and while we know this transition will be difficult, we are doing everything we can to make the state operate more efficiently than ever before." The Malloy administration unveiled plans last week to privatize 40 group homes and a host of services for the intellectually disabled and eliminate the need for 605 state jobs, saving Connecticut almost \$70 million annually by next fiscal year. Those changes are planned to comply with a major reorganization and savings initiative the governor and the General Assembly ordered in May when they adopted the latest state budget. The administration, which already has laid off 113 DDS employees, would eliminate another 492 workers in two stages, most happening after Jan. 1. That means 25 percent of the full-time positions at the state agency are being eliminated. "Personally I think he (Malloy) should be arrested today and put on trial," Mathews said. "These folks can't speak for themselves." Keith M. Phaneuf / CTMirror.org Martha Carney, whose son Arthur resides at the Brook Street group home. Carney said many parents are frustrated with legislators as well, adding that those she spoke with about the new state budget offered no assurances that things would change. DDS Commissioner Morna Murray said her department "is working very hard to maintain current levels of services for the individuals we support in a budget environment that requires we provide high-level services more efficiently," adding that many states have turned to privatization. "While we know these changes are extremely difficult for individuals, families, and staff, they are necessary for us to maintain critical supports. We are committed to carrying out these transitions in the most effective and compassionate manner possible, and to maintaining the highest quality of care to the largest number of individuals we can support." But Debbie Albers, an 1199 member who runs the department's Manchester Supporting Living program, said state workers' have knowledge of their clients built over decades of service. "I am their family," said Albers, who has worked at the Manchester facility for 29 years. "We're like a family and we really need these staffs," said Robert Osborne, a client at Manchester. "We don't know what's going to happen." Source: <http://ctmirror.org/2016/08/23/parents-of-disabled-urge-malloy-to-scrap-privatizing-group-homes/>

Foster care film questions priority of privatized system: Money or children? [PRWeb](#) August 23, 2016 10:25am "Foster Shock" gives former foster children a voice, to say what no one would listen to while they were in the system, and shows the salaries that swelled behind it all PALM BEACH, Fla. (PRWEB) August 23, 2016 The Florida Department of Children and Families has long been questioned by [newspapers](#), lawmakers and families for the abuse, neglect and death of children in its care. Now one child advocate is asking to what extent do these tragedies fall on a privatized system. Florida became the first state to fully privatize child welfare, when Jeb Bush was governor, giving state funds to private companies, who subcontract with even more private companies. DCF has an annual budget of \$3 billion, yet as many child advocates attest, most foster children live below the poverty line. In her documentary, "[Foster Shock](#)," Mari Frankel, a Guardian ad Litem (GAL) and board member of Adopt-A-Family, discloses the six-figure salaries of the CEOs of these private companies and gives a platform to executive directors of non-profit organizations, who say when child welfare becomes a business, children become dollar bills. The film, set to screen in Orlando Sept. 2, also tells the stories of children who grew up in foster care, looking forward to the day when they "aged out" of foster care, children who were dependent on the system, but say they were not protected by the system. "It is a Guardian ad Litem's responsibility to speak for the child," says Frankel, speaking to her stirrings for the film. "There is unacceptable and then there is horrendous. What has happened to these children goes way past unacceptable. It is horrendous." Her first case as a GAL involved an 11-year-old boy with developmental disabilities, who was taken from his mother because of drug abuse, Frankel says, and placed in a therapeutic foster home. She remembers visiting him one day with his therapist. She says the boy told them he was being sexually abused by a man who was living with the foster mother. She says when she asked the therapist if he was going to report the abuse, he said no, he did not believe the boy. "No charges were ever filed against the man. No charges were filed against the foster mother. No one was fired. No one was reprimanded," Frankel says. "That is why I did this documentary." Frankel did report the abuse and the boy was removed from the home, but the very next week, another boy was placed in the same home. Too often, Frankel says, she has seen that nothing a foster child says is believed, so the narratives she shares in her film, she verifies with case files and court documents. Foster Shock will be screened at the Central Florida Film Festival on Sept. 2. Five days later, DCF will hold its annual summit in Orlando. When asked if DCF would like to comment on the documentary or the issues it raises surrounding privatization, DCF Communications Director Jessica Sims shared a link to the department's website, saying the system is privatized, but did not comment further than that. Frankel says the intent of the documentary is not to cast blame, but to catalyze change. Too often stories of foster children are so hard to bare, many turn away, but Frankel hopes by making this film, legislators and citizens will fight for more oversight, so foster children stop being abused. Foster Shock will screen during the [Central Florida Film Festival](#) (CENFLO). The showing is on Sept. 2 at 1:30 p.m. at West Orange Cinema, located at 1575 Maguire Rd., Ocoee, Fla. The film is one hour. Moviewatcher Passes are tickets available through the film festival beginning at \$25 per day. A Moviewatcher Pass includes admission to all festival screenings for the day purchased, a coupon to redeem one medium popcorn and one medium soft drink, and three ballots to case for your favorite short, documentary or feature film. Mari Frankel has served as a community advocate for the State of Florida Guardian ad Litem Program for the last six years. For the last 15 years, she has been on the board of Adopt-A-Family, a non-profit that assists formerly homeless and income-challenged working families. Mari specifically assists with their after-school program, Project Grow, which serves children in grades K through five, to build their social, emotional and educational skills. Foster Shock is a Miss Mari Film. Brian Bayerl is the award-winning cinematographer and editor of Foster Shock. His work has been seen on PBS, Showtime and in numerous feature films, as well as premiering at the Sundance Film Festival and SXSW in Austin. Bayerl's films have been screened at prestigious locations such as the Andy Warhol Museum, the Whitney Museum and the British Museum in London. Portrait of America was screened in three countries and won Best Film at London's Raindance Film Festival. Source: <http://www.benzinga.com/pressreleases/16/08/p8382519/foster-care-film-questions-priority-of-privatized-system-money-or-child>

Uganda to close the largest chain of commercial private schools over non-respect of basic education standards For immediate release Kampala, 12 August 2016 The Ugandan Minister of Education and Sports, Hon Janet Museveni, [formally announced](#) on Tuesday during a session of the parliament that the Government will soon close the schools operated by the largest and most controversial chain of commercial private schools worldwide, Bridge International Academies (BIA), which runs 63 nursery and primary schools in Uganda. Hon Museveni indicated having based her decision on technical reports from the Ministry that revealed that the schools did not respect national standards, in particular that "material used could not promote teacher pupil interaction" and that "poor hygiene and sanitation [...] put the life and safety of the school children in danger". "This decision, which is backed up by field visits of Ministry officials, confirms the grave concerns we have had about Bridge," reacted Salima Namusobya, the Executive Director of the Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER), a Ugandan NGO monitoring the realisation of the right to education in the country. "We have long been worried that BIA schools did not respect the Government Guidelines on Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards for Schools for example regarding infrastructure, purposefully used unqualified teachers in order to reduce costs, in violations of Ugandan laws, and were developing a massive for-profit business without the agreement and proper oversight of the authorities." Bridge International Academies is a for-profit commercial chain of low-cost private schools backed up by [investors](#) such as Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook) and Pierre Omidyar (eBay), as well as the World Bank, and the US and British Governments. It aims at providing education to 10 million pupils by 2025 and already runs over 450 schools in Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria and soon Liberia and India. The company has been particularly criticised for using a non-transparent system of entirely scripted and standardised curriculum mostly designed in the USA, delivered by untrained teachers reading the script from a tablet, while selling this scheme as "world-class education" to poor people in developing countries in a bid to seek profits. The decision to close BIA schools follows several [statements](#) from United Nations (UN) human rights bodies as well as a [report](#) from a UK parliament watchdog that criticised BIA, suggesting that the development of these schools may lead to human rights breaches. "The Ugandan education system suffers from many shortcomings. However, it does not mean that any investors can come in and make profit out of the situation by delivering low-quality education while disregarding national authorities and standards. International treaties and a [recent resolution](#) from the UN Human Rights Council make clear that it is the duty of the government to close schools that are sub-standard or that lead to commercialisation of education, and we applaud the Government for upholding its obligations," said Frederick Mwesigye, Executive Director of the Forum for Education NGOS in Uganda (FENU). "While it was unavoidable in this case, it is highly regrettable to have to come to the point where some schools have to be closed. The Government now has to ensure that all children have access to free quality education and no child's education be disrupted. They made the wise decision to wait until the end of the term (early September) to close the Bridge schools, and we call on the authorities to use that time to help find alternative school for the children, while developing plans to build and improve the public education system," added Saphina Nakulima, from ISER. BIA has faced a series of controversies in the last three months revealing some of the company's

corporate approach to education. Adding to a previous [statement](#) from May 2015 that demonstrated that, contrary to what it claims, Bridge charged fees that were unaffordable by the poorest and that there was no solid evidence about the quality of the schools, it recently emerged that the company: can be resorting to [intimidation tactics](#) such as the arrest of an academic researcher based on allegations which could not be proven, in order to avoid independent inquiry about its model; is [considering](#) using the data it collects on children for various commercial purposes, including "credit scoring and brokering to financial loan and other products" and "creation and brokering of low-cost health insurance"; is [resisting](#) requests from the Government of Liberia for an independent randomised analysis of its schools' results in Liberia. The decision of the Ugandan Government is also relevant for its neighbour, Kenya, where BIA has the largest number of schools. A few months ago, the Kenyan Government [halted](#) the development of Bridge schools over [similar allegations](#) that the company was not respecting [minimum national educational standards](#). According to Abraham Ochieng, from the East African Centre for Human Rights (EACHRights), "the situation in Kenya is unfortunately very similar to Uganda. It seems that only a handful of the 405 BIA schools in the country are registered, the curriculum they use has not been approved by the authorities, and they employ low-paid untrained teachers. Given that BIA started operating in Kenya in 2009 and seems to still not be complying with the Government's requirements, and while recent revelations have shown the commercial motive of the company, it has become urgent to take action." Camilla Croso, the President of the Global Campaign for Education, emphasised that "as they realise that commercialisation of their schools is far from being the solution to the education challenges they face, and is in fact detrimental, governments must now increase their funding to education in order to fulfil their obligations to realise the right to education, in particular by spending at least 20% of their budget or 6% of their GDP on education." The 18 organisations that support this statement have declared that they are ready to work with the Governments of Uganda, Kenya, and other interested authorities to support the development of a quality public education system rather than a commercial system driven by foreign companies. Source: <http://globalinitiative-escr.org/groundbreaking-news-uganda-to-close-the-largest-chain-of-commercial-private-schools-over-non-respect-of-basic-education-standards/>

Fort Worth mom questions how infant died in foster care Foster care death under investigation Foster care death under investigation FORT WORTH — A young mother who had her children removed from her care following a Child Protective Services investigation is now asking how her 10-month-old daughter ended up dead while in foster care. Promise Waggoner died late Monday night, according to the Tarrant County Medical Examiner. A cause of death is pending. The girl's birth mother, Trynisha Huey, says she's devastated. "It hurts because in two months she would've been a whole year. My baby is gone," said Huey as she fought back tears during an interview on Tuesday. The mother said she lost custody of Promise, and her older sister, Erica, after coming under scrutiny for allegedly having drugs in the home, and also not feeding her child. Although Huey denies the charges, the children were removed earlier this year in the 323rd District Court in Tarrant County. % Trynisha Huey (Photo: WFAA) % A CPS spokeswoman said an email that a "...thorough and rigorous investigation" was underway by Residential Child Care Licensing into what happened at the foster care home in south Fort Worth. Fort Worth police confirmed that the Crimes Against Children Unit was leading the investigation but cautioned that no criminal charges have been filed. Huey said she was told by authorities her daughter was put to bed at about 7 p.m. and found unresponsive when an adult checked on her a couple of hours later. She said Promise was born premature but that her health was now fine. She fears for her older child's safety, who remains in foster care. "Can I have my oldest child back? Can I have her back?" she said. Her attorney, Oni Groves, said she's working to file paperwork that would ask for the court to revisit the case. "This tragedy is contrary to what anyone could imagine occurring on the Department's watch," she said in an email. Police say their investigation is ongoing. Source: <http://www.wfaa.com/news/local/tarrant-county/mom-questions-how-infant-daughter-died-in-foster-care/306232220>

Fort Collins disability board walks out during dad's public comment about group home abuse Foothills Gateway board criticized after walking out during remarks by parent Keith Liddle By [Jennifer Brown](#) | [jbrown@denverpost.com](#) PUBLISHED: August 25, 2016 at 5:41 pm | UPDATED: August 26, 2016 at 8:04 am YouTube Screenshot Keith Liddle addresses Foothills Gateway CCB. He spoke for 5 minutes & 16 seconds before he was interrupted and the subsequent walkout. They walked out on him before he was done speaking. The full version of this video is at the top of the playlist. Original recording date is 08/16/2016 in Fort Collins, CO Parents whose children have developmental disabilities are outraged after a community board that manages their benefit money walked out of a meeting while a father was speaking about his son's treatment at a group home. The walkout by the [Foothills Gateway](#) board in Fort Collins was recorded by an audience member and [posted on YouTube](#), then distributed by e-mail to hundreds of parents. In the video, board president John Haley raises a hand and tells parent Keith Liddle that his "five minutes is up." Liddle, a frequent speaker at board meetings, responds, "OK, let me go ahead and read this." Haley repeats two more times that Liddle's time is up and then abruptly calls for a recess. The entire board stood and walked out of the room while Liddle continued reading his prepared remarks for three more minutes. The exchange sparked uproar from parents and a letter to the board from Sen. Irene Aguilar, a Denver Democrat who sponsored legislation this year that requires periodic state audits of Colorado's 20 community-centered boards that manage state and federal disability funds. The [new law](#) also requires boards to post financial documents on their websites and allow public comment at their meetings. "I encourage your board to develop alternative strategies to intervene in situations like this where families are having difficulty abiding by your expectations," Aguilar wrote. "Despite your history with this parent, I found the behavior of the board disrespectful." The senator said the board's treatment of a parent "begs the question" of whether people with intellectual and developmental disabilities "are being treated better." The board president, in a three-page letter distributed by e-mail to the parent group, said Liddle continues to bring up the same issues even though Foothills Gateway and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment resolved the neglect case involving Liddle's son in August 2014. "While the board is willing to listen to new issues of concern with regard to services and supports to the individuals we serve, we feel that this constant focus on incidents that are many years past are neither acceptable nor productive," Haley wrote. The board allocates 10 minutes at the beginning of its meetings for public comment, and did so prior to the new law. "Each speaker, at the chair's discretion, may speak for up to five minutes," the letter said. Liddle said he was the only person signed up to speak at the Aug. 16 meeting. Friction between parents and the state's 20 boards have reached a [high point](#) this year after a [Denver city audit](#) of mill levy funds found misspending by Rocky Mountain Human Services, the board that serves Denver County residents with disabilities. The boards determine who is eligible for Medicaid and other public funds and help families arrange therapy, in-home care and group home placement. Highlands Ranch resident Dawn Caldwell, whose 15-year-old son has severe disabilities, said the video made her sick to her stomach. "How could you treat a human being this way, much less a taxpayer and a customer?" she said. "How are you treating people when there is not a camera?" "Really the message seems to be if you make waves at any given point in time then they'll do their best to silence or ignore you," said Stacy Warden of Broomfield, whose son has cerebral palsy. Liddle's 29-year-old son is non-verbal and has the function of a 2-year-old due to spinal meningitis as an infant. In 2014, a state investigation found his son was neglected at a group home and state officials asked Foothills Gateway for a "plan of action" to correct several issues. After staff noticed a rash on Liddle's son, he did not see a doctor for 11 days and then was diagnosed with shingles. The state also found staff was negligent in placing him with an abusive roommate. During his public comment at the board meeting last week, Liddle was again asking the board for a copy of a "rebuttal letter" it wrote to the state after the investigation. Liddle said the board's attorney told him Foothills Gateway is not required to release the letter. Liddle plans to return to the board's meeting next month to finish reading his statement. Source: <http://www.denverpost.com/2016/08/25/fort-collins-disability-board-dads-public-comment-group-home-abuse/>

Letters: Old-school TLC better than kids' boot camp Updated: August 26, 2016 — 3:01 AM EDT Share Tweet Tumblr Email | Comment [REPRINTS](#) KATIE FALKENBERG / Los Angeles Times A student works on a painting at KinderPrep, a weeklong summer program in Santa Monica, Calif., for children who are about to enter kindergarten. ISSUE | EDUCATION Old-school TLC better than boot camp Many things separate the rich from the rest of us: mansions, yachts, private jets, and the \$1,000 "weeklong boot camp" for their preschoolers ("Boot camp gets kids ready for kindergarten," Wednesday). I'd like to suggest another, equally good - if not better - educational tool: parenting. Read to your children daily from the day they are born; it bonds parent and child. Have them pick up their toys from the time they can bend over without falling on their heads; it teaches responsibility. Give them instructions and consequences when they don't follow through; it instills respect for authority. Discipline them when they misbehave; it demonstrates cause and effect. Talk and listen to your child; it imparts self-confidence and self-worth. Eat and do things with them; it gives them unconditional love. And turn off your cellphone; nothing says, "I don't care about you," like a parent who chooses his or her phone over his or her child. **Children don't need a replacement parent, such as a prekindergarten boot camp, when parents are doing their jobs.** [Carol Heim, Westmont Source: http://www.philly.com/philly/opinion/20160826_Letters_Old-school_TLC_better_than_kids_boot_camp.html]

Morgantown foster care provider charged with felony abuse Posted by [sunshinewiles](#) on August 25, 2016 in [Local News](#) MORGANTOWN, W.Va. — A foster parent faces felony abuse charges. A West Virginia State Police Crimes Against Children unit investigation led to the arrest of a Morgantown woman.

According to Sgt. Adam Scott, Kristina Singleton, 43, injured a 7-year-old girl living in Singleton's foster care home. Scott received findings of a WV DHHR Institutional Investigation Unit report after Singleton's foster home was investigated for abuse. The girl had severe, belt shaped, bruising on her rib cage and legs. Children in Singleton's home told investigators she used belts, hands, flyswatters and plastics, wood and metal spoons to hit the children as punishment and that the victim was most severely punished. Singleton initially denied the abuse before Scott said she admitted to physically disciplining children but not causing injuries. She was charged with one felony count of child abuse resulting in injury. Source: <http://wajr.com/morgantown-foster-care-provider-charged-with-felony-abuse/>

Do Treatment Centers for Troubles Teens Inflict More Harm Than Good? By [Abbie Kraft](#), Parent Herald | August 29, 9:11 PM A member of the gallery staff looks through a section of a rubber room which forms part of a new exhibition at the Bethlem Gallery on February 18, 2015 in London, England. (Parents would only want what's best for their kids, thus those who are faced with troubled teenagers would opt for treatment centers. Though it may seem like the right thing to do, it was revealed that taking teens to treatment centers can do more harm than good. Advertisement One write up from [Huffington Post](#) revealed that troubled teens that were sent to treatment centers are actually going through tough times. It was then mentioned that treatment centers can actually do more harm than good especially when it comes to their mental health struggles. Sebastian Murdock noted that the treatment centers are making it worse for troubled teens, thus they don't tend to lie low when it comes to aggression. It was then mentioned that the staff treated the teenage patients so bad, up to a point that some of them would opt to commit suicide. Murdock mentioned that the treatment facility already lasted for a long time, yet nothing has changed over the years. Teenagers are still being tormented and parents were paying double for their child to be treated unjustly. Sebastian Murdock specifically mentioned Island View, which charged parents around \$10,000/month for their kids. Though Murdock's write-up may only be one person's opinion, Vlad Diaz, an ex-employee from the facility backed his claims. According to Diaz, he already witnessed several suicide attempts during his 11 months of employment. Diaz also added that the treatment center's way of tending the confined teens is quite shocking. He then shared that one of the reasons on why the treatment facility was the fact that he can't stand to see the teens being treated like animals. Empowering Parents then added while sending a troubled teen to teen boot camps may be ideal for some parents, it was mentioned that one of the best ways to help a troubled child is to work with them in going through tough times. The website also noted that there are not guarantees that troubled teen programs "Your child isn't a digital camera that you can mail away and get fixed and returned to you in working order," the website mentioned. "You have to change the dynamic within your family if you want to see results." Source: <http://www.parentherald.com/articles/63974/20160829/parenting-talk-does-treatment-centers-for-troubles-teens-inflict-more-harm-than-good.htm>

Widespread abuse uncovered during investigation into Rhode Island boarding school Published September 01, 2016 [Associated Press](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Email](#) [Print](#) St. George's School in Middletown, R.I. (AP Photo/Steven Senne, File) An independent investigator looking at sexual abuse at the elite Rhode Island boarding school St. George's issued a report Thursday documenting widespread abuse there in the 1970s and 1980s. ADVERTISEMENT Among the findings is that at least one in five girls who attended the school in the 1970s was abused by athletic trainer Al Gibbs. It also found 10 school employees sexually abused at least 51 students in the 1970s and 1980s, and at least 10 students were abused by fellow students. "In the 1970s and 1980s, St. George's School betrayed the trust of the many St. George's students who became the targets of sexual abuse when they came to the school, and likewise betrayed the trust of parents who sent those students to St. George's with the expectation that it would be a safe place for them to live and learn," according to the report by Boston lawyer Martin Murphy. Murphy was hired in January by the school and the survivors' group SGS for Healing. Gibbs was fired in 1980 after being caught taking photographs of a naked girl in his office, but the report found that he was paid a \$1,200 annual grant for "distinguished service" that continued until he died in 1996. The school acknowledged in December that he abused 17 students, but the report said that number was at least 31. Another teacher received a recommendation from the dean of the faculty despite his firing in 1988 for inappropriate sexual contact with a student, the report said. The report also suggested that the school's current headmaster did not appropriately handle reports of sexual misconduct by a teacher in 2004 and should have fired him rather than put him on leave. It also criticized the current board of trustees for "victim shaming" by issuing a statement earlier this year that cast doubt on the credibility of a student who accused the teacher of molestation. Attorney Eric MacLeish, a St. George's alumnus who represented dozens of victims at the school, called the report the most comprehensive recounting to date of sexual abuse at an American boarding school. State police previously conducted their own investigation and said they wouldn't bring charges for a variety of reasons, including the statute of limitations and changes in the laws since some of the abuse occurred. Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2016/09/01/widespread-abuse-uncovered-during-investigation-into-rhode-island-boarding-school.html>

Gazette editorial: Don't fall prey to high-priced, unregulated private 'academies' September 10, 2016 Good-hearted parents who pay large fees to send their troubled teens to fundamentalist residential "academies" need to be cautious. Some such schools have ominous records. Two years ago, state officials closed Miracle Meadows Seventh-day Adventist school, in Harrison County, because a teacher allegedly choked a student unconscious and locked another in handcuffs, and because student residents alleged sexual abuse by fellow students. Miracle Meadows chief Susan Gayle Clark pleaded guilty to misdemeanor child-neglect charges and was sentenced this year. ADVERTISINGinRead invented by TeadsRecently, a Kanawha County case was in the news. Parents are suing ministers who operated the former Blue Creek Academy, near Clendenin, alleging that students were starved, beaten and sexually abused. One student said he was beaten with a board if he failed a test or didn't memorize scripture, and was put on a diet of beans and water. A long report on the Daily Beast site is titled "Rapes, Daily Beatings and No Escape: Christian School Was Hell for These Boys." It says parents paid \$1,000 a month to send sons to the unlicensed Blue Creek school, which promised in advertisements to "watch God move as he helps us snatch troubled souls out of Satan's hand." The site says Blue Creek students suffered "isolation, physical beatings and mistreatment, and at least two students reported sexual abuse by another student." It says boys were "bunkered in dilapidated quarters that were infested with rats and mice." They weren't permitted to speak in public, except to sing hymns for churches and the elderly; they weren't taken to the doctor and their calls home were monitored. The national report continued: "Like thousands of other religious private schools around the country — many of which become havens for abuse — Blue Creek Academy operated unlicensed, unregulated, and wholly unmonitored by the state." State schools Superintendent Michael Martirano forced closure of the academy two years ago — and its principal moved to Montana, where he opened a Christian "ranch" in a three-bedroom house. Parents must be extremely wary of unregulated schools that prey on parents' worries and desires to give their children the best opportunities. - See more at: <http://www.wvgazetteemail.com/gazette-editorials/20160910/gazette-editorial-dont-fall-prey-to-high-priced-unregulated-private-academies#sthash.ZlcCnq3.dpuf>

Tehachapi Mountain Boys Home closes following citations BY DARLA A. BAKER dbaker@tehachapinews.com Updated 22 hrs ago Amid a slew of health and safety violations, Tehachapi Mountain Boys Home closed its doors after voluntarily surrendering its operating license with the California Department of Social Services. The group home, located on Highline Road, was a privately held company operated by Annie R. Pritchard. It was licensed in April 2007 to serve six ambulatory boys between the ages of 12 and 17 with 24-hour, non-medical care and supervision, including two clients placed by Merced and Fresno counties. "They surrendered their license at the end of May following 12 complaint investigations," Michael Weston, a spokesman for the state Department of Social Services, said Thursday. As of May 31, the group home was assessed an estimated \$33,150 in civil penalties resulting from cited violations issued in March and April 2016, according to the state Department of Social Services website. Also, according to its website, Department of Social Services-licensed evaluators made a total of 32 visits to the home since May 2012, which resulted in the group home receiving 15 Type A citations and 108 Type B citations. Type A citations are classified as having an immediate health, safety or personal rights impact, whereas Type B citations are classified as having a potential impact. According to Weston, the average number of annual visits per group home is based on many factors, including the number of previously issued citations. Weston stated that the number of citations issued at the Tehachapi Mountain Boys Home was "a high number." In addition, the group home was subjected to three unannounced inspections since opening, the latest on March 28. During this inspection, citations were written for faulty fixtures, furniture equipment and supplies, expired food and sanitation of building and grounds. In addition, civil penalties were assessed for lack of documentation, including minutes from the board of directors' meetings, posting of complaint procedures, a written disaster and mass casualty plan of action, personnel records on the administrator, records of cash resources and personal property of clients, and proof of mandatory training of child care staff members. "We did not receive proper training," said Becky Gage, who served as a child care worker for 19 months until the group home's closure. "In fact, I found a phony CPR license with my name on it, and I snagged a copy of it and gave it to Community Care Licensing." According to the CDSS website, on April 20, the group home received an additional citation for Pritchard's deficiency in maintaining the hours necessary to manage and administer the facility. "In the last eight or nine months prior to her shutting down, I did not see her (Pritchard)," Gage said. According to CDSS spokesman Weston, Tehachapi Mountain Boys Homes was classified as a

Level 12 group home. The rate level is based on the experience and expertise of the staff at the group home. The higher the rate level, the higher the basic rate paid to the group home per child, per month, with Level 14 being the highest. "The average basic rate for Level 12 would be \$9,182 per child, per month," said Weston, adding that this rate of pay had the potential to increase on a case-by-case basis, depending on the needs of the child, including therapeutic services. Weston said this money comes from a variety of sources, including federal, state and education funds, in addition to private parties who place their own children. Children in group homes who are under court jurisdiction may be placed there due to violations of law or as dependent children removed from their homes because of abuse, neglect or abandonment. Weston stated that children are placed in group homes by placement agencies based on the needs of the child. According to Weston, even though the group home has closed and surrendered its license, Pritchard may still face further actions. "The department is still actively involved in the investigation of the group home," Weston said. As of press time, Pritchard had not responded to requests for comment. Source: http://www.tehachapinews.com/news/tehachapi-mountain-boys-home-closes-following-citations/article_bcf588a-76aa-11e6-a268-f79da2c9a316.html

Long Island Abuse Case Reveals Risks of Out-of-State Foster Care By NIKITA STEWART and JOSEPH GOLDSTEIN SEPT. 13, 2016 [Continue reading the main story](#) [Share This Page](#) [Continue reading the main story](#) [Share Tweet Email More Save](#) Photo Cesar Gonzales-Mugaburu's house in Ridge, N.Y. Over the course of 20 years, he brought more than 100 children into his home. Credit Gordon M. Grant for The New York Times The website features photographs and short biographies of children, some with special needs. Choices can be narrowed by gender, age, race and ethnicity. The State of Washington turns to sites, like the Washington Adoption Resource Exchange, to help find adoptive parents for children. The state's goal is to keep the children near family and familiar surroundings, but if officials cannot find a suitable match, they consider homes out of state — even across the country in New York. That is how Washington first found Cesar Gonzales-Mugaburu, who lives in Ridge, N.Y., on Long Island. He reached out after seeing children online in 2009. Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu eventually took in three boys from Washington, two of whom he adopted. They were among more than 100 children he cared for over some 20 years, a vast majority of whom came from New York City. But Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu, a foster parent trusted by so many social workers, is now in jail awaiting trial on charges of [sexually abusing five of his adopted sons](#) and endangering the welfare of two foster children. Advertisement [Continue reading the main story](#) Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu's arrest prompted questions about why it took so long for the alleged abuse to be revealed. But it also drew attention to the practice of sending foster children far from the communities they knew — in this case, nearly 3,000 miles — to find a home. Some states use such long-distance placement because their own systems are struggling to find a place for children with special needs. Advocates say such long-distance arrangements can be positive because they can help children find homes more quickly. But effective oversight of even local foster care providers has proved a difficult task for many child welfare agencies nationwide; distance adds another obstacle. [Continue reading the main story](#) Advertisement [Continue reading the main story](#) Records obtained by The New York Times show that social workers in Washington were confused about the status of a 2014 investigation into abuse in Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu's home across the country. At that time, they continued to actively guide Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu in his efforts to adopt a third boy because they did not know details of the investigation. "#1 Do you know anything about the investigation," Amy Herring, a social worker in Washington, wrote in an email to Erin Coyle, who at the time was a director at SCO Family of Services, a nonprofit foster care agency in New York that monitored Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu on behalf of Washington. "#2 Do you know when the adoption paperwork may be done by?" Ms. Coyle "is no longer employed by the agency," SCO said. Ms. Coyle did not respond to requests for comment through messages left by phone and sent via Facebook. For his part, Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu, who was licensed to run a therapeutic home for special needs children, continued to be paid. From September 2010 through January 2016, when he was arrested, he received nearly \$145,000 from Washington for caring for children placed with him, in addition to money he received from New York City for caring for local foster children. Photo Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu has pleaded not guilty to charges of sexual abuse and endangering the welfare of a child. Credit New York Police Department Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu, 60, has pleaded not guilty to charges of sexual abuse and endangering the welfare of a child. His lawyer, Donald Mates Jr., said the allegations were false. The first mention of Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu's name in Washington State's records was in late 2009, and was positive. He was interested in adopting a boy listed on an adoption website. Advertisement [Continue reading the main story](#) Lori Whittaker, a social worker, wrote in a case file in December 2009 that the staff thought he would be a "good placement." Also, Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu had told them that none of the child's special needs "scare me." (The children's names, as well as confidential information, were redacted from files given to The Times.) Soon after, on Feb. 3, 2010, another social worker, Veronica L. Mo, wrote something similar and said he had also asked about another child. Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu traveled to Washington to meet one of the boys, according to the records. He soon took another child. Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu was a one-man operation used by several different agencies that considered his home a safe haven for boys who were developmentally or physically disabled, or had severe behavioral problems. That dependency proved blinding for those agencies, law enforcement officials have said. Mr. Mates said that nothing was overlooked and that his client is innocent. Over the past 20 years, Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu had been the subject of 30 to 40 complaints about abuse or other mistreatment of children, and the police or social services had investigated them all, Mr. Mates said. "Each and every time that an investigation was done, no charges were brought," he said. Today's Headlines Wake up each morning to the day's top news, analysis and opinion delivered to your inbox. Please verify you're not a robot by clicking the box. Invalid email address. Please re-enter. Receive occasional updates and special offers for The New York Times's products and services. Thank you for subscribing to Today's Headlines. An error has occurred. Please try again later. You are already subscribed to this email. [View all New York Times newsletters](#). See Sample Manage Email Preferences Not you? [Privacy Policy](#) And records suggested that the authorities at Washington's child welfare agency were more directly involved in monitoring Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu than was New York City's child welfare agency. Although New York's agency sent more than 90 boys to him, it had outsourced oversight of Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu to the nonprofit SCO Family of Services. Through the years, there were several different agencies involved, like the boys' schools, hospitals where they went for care, and a residential treatment center called Little Flower in Suffolk County. A developmentally disabled boy from Washington whom Gonzales-Mugaburu adopted left his direct supervision to live at Little Flower. There, in 2014, he told a psychotherapist about horrific abuses inside Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu's home on a quiet cul-de-sac. The therapist, Amy D'Antonio, alerted the authorities about the allegations, prompting an investigation by Suffolk County Child Protective Services. Ms. D'Antonio had helped the young man, who was 18 years old at the time, reconnect with his biological family in Washington. She said Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu objected, once approaching her in the parking lot of the treatment center and telling her that the teenager did not have the mental capacity to make such a decision. Advertisement [Continue reading the main story](#) Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu told her the boy was a "compulsive and pathological liar," said Ms. D'Antonio, who in March sued Little Flower, her former employer, saying the agency should have acted more quickly to prevent further abuse of children in his care. Little Flower has disputed the claims in her lawsuit and says it "fully supported" her efforts to contact the authorities. Photo A car driving past the entrance to Little Flower, a residential treatment center in Suffolk County. A boy told a psychotherapist at Little Flower that Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu had abused him. Credit Heather Walsh for The New York Times Yet while that investigation was underway, social workers in Washington were trying to place a third child with Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu. At the same time, Washington officials began to question why the state was paying Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu for a child who was no longer in his direct care. Questioned, Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu became indignant, according to entries that social workers placed in his case file. He told Ms. Herring, the Washington social worker, that he resented being treated "like a crook and it hurts him." "He reported that it also angers him deeply. They make him feel 'dirty and undervalued,'" the entries read. Washington later found that Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu had, in fact, been overpaid. But Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu continued to complain. On Jan. 12 this year, Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu told Ms. Herring that he felt "once again insulted" over the disputed payments, according to records. But two days later, Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu shifted the conversation. He told Ms. Herring that he was under investigation. "He reported that two 'troubled boys' are causing problems for him, and he wanted to make sure that the SW was aware of what is going on," she wrote, using shorthand for social worker. At that point, one young man after another, including the 18-year-old adopted son from Washington, were coming forward with allegations of abuse. Two boys, 11 and 13, told the authorities about sexual misconduct in the home. Unlike allegations by boys in the past, theirs were believed, mostly because the boys did not have severe disabilities or emotional problems, said Detective Lt. Robert Donohue, commander of Suffolk County's special victims unit. Advertisement [Continue reading the main story](#) Much of the blame for the failure to alert other agencies has been placed on SCO Family of Services in New York, which coordinated the placement of boys in Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu's home, with most coming from Long Island and the surrounding area. It has acknowledged that it could have taken more aggressive action after previous complaints. "Internal and external reviews have concluded that SCO had no knowledge of sexual abuse or misconduct in this home," the agency said. "Our review of this former foster parent, however, suggests that there were other issues with the home, and in retrospect and knowing what we know now, a decision to close the home should have been made earlier." It was child welfare officials in Washington who were most dependent on getting straight answers and accurate updates from SCO about conditions at Mr. Gonzales-Mugaburu's home and the status of

investigations. Norah West, a spokeswoman for the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, said, "We rely on information from the agency that is contracted to ensure the well-being of the child in that receiving state." The mother of the 18-year-old boy, whom The Times is not naming to protect her son's identity, grew up in the foster care system herself. She said she had struggled with mental illness and substance abuse, and could not believe her son had suffered in a system that she thought would help him. "I can't believe they put him with someone like that," she said. "Look what I did to my son." Source: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/14/nyregion/long-island-abuse-case-reveals-risks-of-out-of-state-foster-care.html?_r=0

Caregiver charged with abusing autistic teen in group home Updated Sep 13, 2016 (0) NEWARK, Del. (AP) — Delaware State Police have arrested a caregiver they say hit a 13-year-old autistic resident of a group home where she works. The agency said in a news release that the caregiver worked at the Manor Group Home, which is owned by the Christina School District. Police say the caregiver was seen repeatedly hitting the boy, who is autistic and doesn't speak. Troopers say another staff member intervened and stopped the assault. Authorities say a school nurse wrote on an injury report that she saw redness and bruising on victim's right upper arm and scratches on the back of his neck. Officials say warrants were obtained and on Tuesday, 53-year-old Harrietta Kanda of New Castle was arrested. She is charged with felony child abuse and endangering the welfare of a child. Source: http://www.dailyprogress.com/caregiver-charged-with-abusing-autistic-teen-in-group-home/article_36ff1483-7dbe-5a2d-ac60-0fcaa7241d9b.html

Sitka Academy closes its doors Created on Wednesday, 14 September 2016 02:00 | Written by [Colin Staub](#) | [inShare](#) [Share](#) [JW DISQUS](#) [VIEW COMMENTS](#) Loss of students from CYFS program prompts school district to shutter facility Sitka Academy, a program operated by the Newberg School District to serve youths in the care of Chehalis Youth and Family Services, is not operating during this school year due to a lack of students to attend its classes. The academy was attended solely by youths living in CYFS group homes, which a Department of Human Services spokesperson and an attorney for CYFS both confirmed are no longer housing residents. The state agency notified CYFS in June of its intention to revoke the Newberg care provider's license to operate residential youth homes. The notice cited a number of incidents that came to light during a long investigation, including alleged neglect, maltreatment, lack of supervision, failure to follow procedures in mandatory reporting and protection of residents' health and safety, and financial mismanagement. CYFS has since appealed the state's decision and will contest the findings in a hearing set for this fall, but in the meantime DHS has relocated all residents of the three group homes that together housed 16 youths. "DHS began moving children upon filing an intent to revoke in June 2016," DHS spokesperson Andrea Cantu-Schomus confirmed in an email. A fourth CYFS home was shut down by DHS last fall through the same process, with similar incidents cited for the closure. For several years young people living in CYFS homes who were enrolled in public schooling received education through the Long Term Care and Treatment (LTCT) program provided by the Willamette Education Service District (WESD). Admittance into that program was automatic for students living in the group homes, Newberg School District spokesperson Claudia Stewart said. Education service districts are used to provide programs that are in limited demand and may not be cost effective for an individual school district to hire full-time. ESDs serve multiple school districts, meaning personnel are shared in an effort to reduce costs for each district. The LTCT program aims to tailor teaching to the issues the youths in CYFS homes face. "To be admitted to a group home, it's indicative that they have social, behavior and academic struggles," Stewart said. But in April 2015, the WESD told the Newberg district it would no longer provide that program for Newberg students, and that beginning in the 2015-2016 school year the district would have to find another option to educate that population. The school district could not find another program to contract with, Stewart said, so it began developing its own in-house program to educate the youths. New employees were hired and trained and when the YMCA branch on Sitka Avenue closed in August 2015 the school district leased the building to open the LTCT program. The facility was remodeled and furnished with new equipment, and was dubbed Sitka Academy. It opened in September 2015 to 35 students, a number that Stewart said fluctuated by five or six students during the year, although those who left were quickly replaced. Staffing also fluctuated from 10 to 12 employees, based on how many students there were and whether they required an individual aide. All in all, startup and operational costs for Sitka Academy came to \$800,000, made up of federal funding as well as from the Newberg School District general fund. The school district hoped to expand the program so it could serve other school districts as well (similar to the WESD). "We built this program to continue to operate," Stewart said. But beginning in about April (two months before the state issued the intent to revoke notice) the numbers of students began to decline, Stewart said. In the intent to revoke notice, DHS said new admissions to the group homes were officially closed on May 19. The school year closed with 12 students at Sitka, Stewart said, only a third as many as the program opened with. The dwindling population raised questions about whether Sitka would have anyone to serve in the coming school year — questions that elicited few solid answers. Stewart said school district officials "were asking those questions for at least two months, and there was just not a clear answer." And with about a dozen staff members slated to work in that program, a decision had to be made. There were vacant staff positions in other departments that the Sitka employees could be moved into if the program was going to shut down, Stewart said. Then the news of the state's intention to revoke CYFS's license came in June. With the Sitka program populated entirely by residents of those group homes, DHS told the district there would not be any students to serve, and the school district made plans to close Sitka and move the staff members into other departments. But once CYFS appealed the state's move to revoke its license, a protective seal was ordered by the Department of Justice that barred release of most information about the case. At that point DHS stopped talking to the school district, Stewart said. In early August the school district received further confirmation from CYFS there would be no students to attend the Sitka program in the fall. All the staff members who worked in the one-year-old program have been reassigned to other school departments, Stewart said, adding that there are not yet any alternative plans for the Sitka building. There's also no definitive answer on whether the program will start back up. After all, CYFS has not actually had its license revoked (see sidebar), and if it wins its appeal youths could potentially move back into the group homes. "We've been hearing mixed messages about the residential program starting up, meaning that (the Newberg School District) would need to start up the (Sitka) program to provide services for kids," Stewart said Monday. "Despite efforts, there is no clear answer from CYFS or DHS because of the ongoing litigation." Last week the Oregon Department of Education contacted the school district, Stewart said, advising it to hold off on taking action with the Sitka building due to the potential for the program to start back up mid-year. That would presumably be the case if CYFS wins the appeal and retains its license. "So the future of the Sitka (LTCT) program remains unclear and the school district remains in a holding pattern," Stewart said. Attorney Connor Harrington, representing CYFS, said that while the residential services program no longer has any youth to serve for now, CYFS "is focusing on serving the community through its Chehalis Counseling Center, Youth Opportunity Occupation Program (YOOP) and (Lucky Finds) thrift store, which are all currently operating." CYFS Executive Director Deborah Cathers-Seymour noted the YOOP program provides education to a population that was not served by Sitka Academy: youths who have dropped out and are not enrolled in public education through the school district, and who are working to earn their GED, to receive community college credit or other certifications. The program also teaches employment skills to help students enter the workforce, she said. YOOP has two facilities, in Newberg and McMinnville, and has more than 100 youth participants right now, Cathers-Seymour said. Many of those enrolled in YOOP programs "struggle with poverty, homelessness and behavioral concerns," she said. "They have not been successful in mainstream public school settings and have typically dropped out." As for the youths who were moved out of the group homes by DHS, it's unclear where they have been relocated to. DHS declined to comment due to the protective order. Source: <http://www.pamplinmedia.com/nbg/142-news/322597-202390-sitka-academy-closes-its-doors>

Child dies in foster care; removed from home after falsified drug test By [Brianna Smith](#) Published: September 15, 2016, 3:19 pm Updated: September 15, 2016, 6:14 pm According to a new lawsuit, a 3-year-old died after being removed from his family because of a falsified drug test by Accurate Diagnostics of Laurens County. Elijah Jack Oberdier was removed from his parents home in January of 2015, after a hair strand drug test result given to Laurens County DSS said Oberdier had marijuana in his system. Elijah went to live with family members and was taken to visit other family in Western North Carolina. While there, Elijah died inside a house fire. A year and a half later, Elijah's parents were charged with Unlawful Neglect of Child, even after it was proved Elijah's test results were falsified by Lynn Craig, the owner of Accurate Diagnostics Laurens County. 7 other families have now filed lawsuits against Lynn Craig, Accurate Diagnostics, and DSS because of children being pulled from family members over falsified drug tests. Watch at 6 for a full interview. Source: <http://wsps.com/2016/09/15/child-dies-in-foster-care-removed-because-of-falsified-drug-test/>

Long Island abuse case reveals risks of out-of-state foster care Originally published September 14, 2016 at 9:42 pm Back to story Restart gallery More Cesar Gonzales-Mugaburu's house in Ridge, N.Y., last March. During the course of 20 years, he brought more than 100 foster children into his home. Gonzales-Mugaburu, a foster parent trusted by so many social workers, is in... (GORDON M. GRANT/NYT) More When the state of Washington can't find local placement for children in need, it reaches out to out-of-state foster care. Cesar Gonzales-Mugaburu from New York took in three boys from Washington,

two of whom he adopted. Now he waits trial on charges of sexual abuse. Share story By [Nikita Stewart](#) and [JOSEPH GOLDSTEIN](#) The New York Times The website features photographs and short biographies of children, some with special needs. Choices can be narrowed by gender, age, race and ethnicity. The state of Washington turns to such sites, like the Washington Adoption Resource Exchange, to help find adoptive parents for children. The state's goal is to keep the children near family and familiar surroundings, but if officials cannot find a suitable match, they consider homes out of state — even across the country in New York. That is how Washington first found Cesar Gonzales-Mugaburu, who lives in Ridge, New York, on Long Island. He reached out after seeing children online in 2009. Gonzales-Mugaburu eventually took in three boys from Washington, two of whom he adopted. They were among more than 100 children he cared for over some 20 years, a vast majority of whom came from New York City. But the foster parent, trusted by so many social workers, is now in jail awaiting trial on charges of sexually abusing five of his adopted sons and endangering the welfare of two foster children. Gonzales-Mugaburu's arrest prompted questions about why it took so long for the alleged abuse to be revealed. But it also drew attention to the practice of sending foster children far from their communities — in this case, nearly 3,000 miles — to find a home. Some states use such long-distance placement because their own systems are struggling to find a place for children with special needs. Advocates say such long-distance arrangements can be positive because they can help children find homes more quickly. But effective oversight of even local foster-care providers has proved difficult for many child-welfare agencies nationwide; distance adds another obstacle. Records obtained by The New York Times show that social workers in Washington were confused about the status of a 2014 investigation into abuse in Gonzales-Mugaburu's home. At that time, they continued to guide Gonzales-Mugaburu in his efforts to adopt a third boy because they did not know details of the investigation. “#1 Do you know anything about the investigation,” Amy Herring, a social worker in Washington, wrote in an email to Erin Coyle, who at the time was a director at SCO Family of Services, a nonprofit foster-care agency in New York that monitored Gonzales-Mugaburu on behalf of Washington. “#2 Do you know when the adoption paperwork may be done by?” Coyle “is no longer employed by the agency,” SCO said. Coyle did not respond to requests for comment through messages left by phone and sent via Facebook. For his part, Gonzales-Mugaburu, who was licensed to run a therapeutic home for special-needs children, continued to be paid. From September 2010 through January 2016, when he was arrested, he received nearly \$145,000 from Washington for caring for children placed with him, in addition to money he received from New York City for caring for local foster children. Gonzales-Mugaburu, 60, has pleaded not guilty to charges of sexual abuse and endangering the welfare of a child. His lawyer, Donald Mates Jr., said the allegations were false. The first mention of Gonzales-Mugaburu's name in Washington state's records was in late 2009, and it was positive. He was interested in adopting a boy listed on an adoption website. Lori Whittaker, a social worker, wrote in a case file in December 2009 that the staff thought he would be a “good placement.” Also, Gonzales-Mugaburu had told them that none of the child's special needs “scare me.” (The children's names, as well as confidential information, were redacted from files given to The Times.) Soon after, on Feb. 3, 2010, another social worker, Veronica Mo, wrote something similar and said he had also asked about another child. Gonzales-Mugaburu traveled to Washington to meet one of the boys, according to the records. He soon took another child. Gonzales-Mugaburu was a one-man operation used by several different agencies that considered his home a safe haven for boys who were developmentally or physically disabled or had severe behavioral problems. That dependency proved blinding for those agencies, law enforcement officials have said. Mates said that nothing was overlooked and that his client was innocent. Over the past 20 years, Gonzales-Mugaburu was the subject of 30 to 40 complaints about abuse or other mistreatment of children, and the police or social services investigated them all, Mates said. “Each and every time that an investigation was done, no charges were brought,” he said. And records suggested that the authorities at Washington's child welfare agency were more directly involved in monitoring Gonzales-Mugaburu than New York City's child welfare agency. Although New York's agency sent more than 90 boys to him, it had outsourced oversight of Gonzales-Mugaburu to the nonprofit SCO Family of Services. Through the years, there were several different agencies involved, like the boys' schools, hospitals where they went for care and a residential treatment center called Little Flower in Suffolk County. A developmentally disabled boy from Washington whom Gonzales-Mugaburu adopted left his direct supervision to live at Little Flower. There, in 2014, he told a psychotherapist about horrific abuses inside Gonzales-Mugaburu's home on a quiet cul-de-sac. The therapist, Amy D'Antonio, alerted the authorities about the allegations, prompting an investigation by Suffolk County Child Protective Services. D'Antonio helped the young man, who was 18 at the time, reconnect with his biological family in Washington. She said Gonzales-Mugaburu objected, once approaching her in the parking lot of the treatment center and telling her that the teenager did not have the mental capacity to make such a decision. Gonzales-Mugaburu told her the boy was a “compulsive and pathological liar,” said D'Antonio, who in March sued Little Flower, her former employer, saying the agency should have acted more quickly to prevent further abuse of children in his care. Little Flower has disputed the claims in her lawsuit and says it “fully supported” her efforts to contact the authorities. Yet, while that investigation was under way, social workers in Washington were trying to place a third child with Gonzales-Mugaburu. At the same time, Washington officials began to question why the state was paying Gonzales-Mugaburu for a child who was no longer in his direct care. Questioned, Gonzales-Mugaburu became indignant, according to entries that social workers placed in his case file. He told Herring he resented being treated “like a crook and it hurts him.” “He reported that it also angers him deeply. They make him feel ‘dirty and undervalued,’” the entries read. Washington later found that Gonzales-Mugaburu had, in fact, been overpaid. But Gonzales-Mugaburu continued to complain. On Jan. 12 this year, Gonzales-Mugaburu told Herring, of SCO, that he felt “once again insulted” over the disputed payments, according to records. But two days later, Gonzales-Mugaburu shifted the conversation. He told Herring he was under investigation. “He reported that two ‘troubled boys’ are causing problems for him, and he wanted to make sure that the SW was aware of what is going on,” she wrote, using shorthand for social worker. 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It has acknowledged that it could have taken more aggressive action after previous complaints. “Internal and external reviews have concluded that SCO had no knowledge of sexual abuse or misconduct in this home,” the agency said. “Our review of this former foster parent, however, suggests that there were other issues with the home, and in retrospect and knowing what we know now, a decision to close the home should have been made earlier.” It was child-welfare officials in Washington who were most dependent on getting straight answers and accurate updates from SCO about conditions at Gonzales-Mugaburu's home and the status of investigations. Norah West, a spokeswoman for the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, said, “We rely on information from the agency that is contracted to ensure the well-being of the child in that receiving state.” The mother of the 18-year-old boy, whom The Times is not naming to protect her son's identity, grew up in the foster-care system herself. She said that she had struggled with mental illness and substance abuse, and that she found it unthinkable her son had suffered in a system she thought would help him. “I can't believe they put him with someone like that,” she said. “Look what I did to my son.” Nikita Stewart JOSEPH GOLDSTEIN Source: <http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/long-island-abuse-case-reveals-risks-of-out-of-state-foster-care/>

Teenage Girl Dies After Incident at For-profit Group Home The 15-year-old was a resident at a Delaware facility owned by AdvoServ, which has faced decades of reports of abuse. by [Heather Vogell](#) ProPublica, Sep. 20, 2016, 3:56 p.m. [4 Comments](#) [Print](#) [Print](#) This is part of an ongoing investigation [Restraints](#) Do you know a child who has been forcibly restrained or secluded at school? Help us investigate by [sharing your story](#). Update, Sep. 20, 2016: The Maryland Department of Human Resources said late Tuesday that it has terminated its contract with AdvoServ after determining “it is in the best interest of the children in our care” to move the children to other providers. “Our Department is moving swiftly, and with great care and consideration, to evaluate and identify placements that are the best fit, and that meet the unique needs of each child,” spokeswoman Katherine Morris said in a prepared statement. She did not say how many Maryland children are still in AdvoServ's care and how long it will take to remove them all. A teenage girl died last week after an incident at a group home in Delaware run by a for-profit company, AdvoServ, whose [long record of problematic treatment](#) ProPublica chronicled last year. Attorney Chris Gowen, who has a lawsuit against AdvoServ concerning a different teen, said he has learned workers were manually restraining the girl when she became unresponsive. He and his clients have spoken to current and former workers about the incident. “While we await further information we do hope that a full investigation into this latest incident occurs,” he said. AdvoServ did not answer questions about the death. A spokesman declined to say whether the girl was being held down — manually restrained — before staff called 911. “Our staff is heartbroken over the loss of a young woman in our care, and our deepest sympathies go out to her mother and extended family,” the company said in a brief statement. The spokesman said mechanical restraint devices, which include wrist and ankle cuffs, were not involved in the Delaware death and are not used in group homes in that state anymore. The girl, whose name state police did not release, died Wednesday in a Delaware hospital, two days after an ambulance took her from the home for youth with developmental or intellectual disabilities

and serious behavior challenges. Delaware state police and regulators also haven't said what happened to the 15-year-old from Maryland. The state medical examiner's office is conducting an autopsy, but a spokeswoman said the results will not be made public. Maryland is one of several states that send difficult cases to AdvoServ because they cannot find beds and schooling closer to home. The company, which is owned by a private equity firm, is based in Delaware and reported last year that it cared for roughly 700 children and adults in that state, Florida, and New Jersey, and was expanding into Virginia. Gowen filed a lawsuit this summer in Delaware against AdvoServ, on behalf of a young resident who says he was left unsupervised and raped repeatedly by other clients at AdvoServ homes during more than four years there. His neck was also injured during a restraint performed by workers. "[W]e learned of a significant number of instances where improper restraints were used involving our client," Gowen said. Delaware state police and the state agency charged with licensing group homes and investigating abuse in institutions are looking into the girl's death. Asked whether Delaware regulators were taking steps to sanction the company or putting extra precautions in place to ensure children's safety there, Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families spokeswoman Dawn Thompson said the agency had begun an inquiry: "Once completed we will determine any next steps if warranted." The girl is not the first child to die under questionable circumstances at AdvoServ's homes and schools. In 2013, Paige Lunsford, 14 and autistic, died at the company's Florida complex after a night in which she was restrained – at times latched to a bed and chair – while she vomited repeatedly. And in 1997, 14-year-old Jon Henley, who was autistic and had epilepsy, was found dead in his bed one morning after an apparent seizure. An autopsy revealed low levels of anti-seizure medication in his blood. Regulators in multiple states have fielded decades of complaints of abuse, neglect and inadequate medical care at AdvoServ facilities. Leslie Seid Margolis, a managing attorney with Disability Rights Maryland, said she has raised concerns about AdvoServ's care in Delaware dating back a decade. Her agency, which represents people with disabilities, has received multiple complaints about AdvoServ – including two that came in last fall alleging sexual and physical abuse. Margolis said that a few years before, she had obtained a copy of AdvoServ's policies for its Delaware homes – which she described as "draconian." They outlined the use of measures including wrist, waist and ankle restraints. Unrestrained While evidence of abuse of the disabled has piled up for decades, one for-profit company has used its deep pockets and influence to bully weak regulators and evade accountability. [Read the story.](#) What Happened to Adam It took one mother seven years to learn that the for-profit school she trusted with her son had strapped him down again and again, one time after not picking up his Legos. [Read the story.](#) "Every kind of restraint you could imagine," she said. "It was horrifying." Maryland eventually told AdvoServ it could no longer use mechanical restraints on children from the state. A former worker for AdvoServ in Delaware, who asked that his name not be used, said he left three years ago in part because he felt staff did not receive enough training in deescalating conflicts or restraining clients. The company had been trying out new restraint procedures that were supposed to make restraints less forceful by involving more staff members. But, he said, with too few staff often available to carry out the restraints as planned, "It just becomes unsafe." In response to the worker's comments, AdvoServ's spokesman pointed out that he left three years ago, but did not elaborate further. The company is one of the few group home operators that still use restraint devices to confine clients who become aggressive. As ProPublica has reported, AdvoServ staff used such mechanical restraints on clients at its 200-bed campus northwest of Orlando [roughly 28,000 times](#). Florida officials said in June that they were moving clients out of AdvoServ's complex and stationing an investigator there to provide extra oversight during the transition, which they expected to take months. If you have information about AdvoServ, email reporter [Heather Vogell](#). Like this story? Sign up for our [daily newsletter](#) to get more of our best work. Source: <https://www.propublica.org/article/teenage-girl-dies-after-incident-at-for-profit-group-home>

Man accused of assault on group home resident pleads guilty The Associated Press Updated 22 hrs ago (2) PAPILLION — A man who worked at a Bellevue group home for developmentally disabled people has been convicted in the sexual assault of one of the residents. Adrian Galbreath, 39, pleaded guilty Monday to attempted sexual assault and two counts of abuse of a vulnerable adult. Prosecutors lowered the assault charge in exchange for Galbreath's pleas. He's scheduled to be sentenced Nov. 21. Court records say Galbreath worked at Hands of Heartland and had invited the group home resident to Galbreath's Bellevue apartment on Sept. 23 last year. Authorities say Galbreath pushed down and began to assault the man after the man became intoxicated. A Hands of Heartland official has said Galbreath is no longer an employee. Source: http://journalstar.com/news/local/911/man-accused-of-assault-on-group-home-resident-pleads-guilty/article_79bf33ba-abe9-5d57-b167-c1a1c40d1803.html

Stories of abuse at N.J. group homes spark lawmakers to demand action 1 / 24 Bill would provide oversight for developmentally disabled TRENTON - Monday, September 19, 2016 Chaired by Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttie, the state Assembly Human Service Committee meets to discuss a bill that would provide stronger oversight and investigative power of group homes and other housing for people with developmental disabilities. Aileen Rivera, who has a son Daniel, now 31, who she described as "a little boy in the inside," shows a graphic photograph of her son after she says he was beaten while living at a Northern New Jersey development center. At left is Martha Cray, of Roselle Park, mother and advocate, with Family Alliance to Stop Abuse and Neglect, NJ, (Michael Mancuso | For NJ.com) [Michael Mancuso | For NJ.com Print Email](#) By [Susan K. Livio | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com](#) The Star-Ledger Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#) on September 19, 2016 at 6:40 PM, updated September 19, 2016 at 11:51 PM [comments](#) TRENTON — If a child came home from day care or school with bruises, burns and broken bones, parents would rightfully demand an explanation and administrators would expect to be held accountable. So why do people with developmental disabilities deserve any less of a response? Gus Egizi of Hammonton politely but firmly posed this question Monday to members of the Assembly Human Services Committee as they debated a bill that would impose stricter rules on state licensed group home operators. Egizi said his 37-year-old son, Michael, suffered a sunburn so bad he needed hospital care, as well as multiple bruises and injuries while under the care of group home and hospital staff. He's hired lawyers to get answers, but those requests have been ignored. "This would not be tolerated if it had happened at a day care center or a school," Egizi said. "This is a human rights issue. This is a civil rights issue." Aileen Rivera, a councilwoman from Wayne, said her 31-year-old son still suffers from the anxiety from enduring beatings, being restrained for hours and humiliated when a worker urinated on him. "There is an urgency to this bill," Rivera said. "Lives depend on it." The committee approved the bill by a 6-0 vote that would require: Six unannounced inspections at a group home every year; Drug testing for group home employees; Family and guardian notification within an hour after a medical emergency; Investigators to seek input from families or guardians and provide them progress reports during investigations. The bill (A2503) is named for Stephen Komninos, a 22-year-old man who died in 2007 when he was left unsupervised against medical orders, and choked to death on a bagel. [Panel OKs new inspection rules for disabled](#) Both bills require the state to make unannounced site visits, and in the event a disabled person is harmed, the agency responsible must in most cases notify the family or guardian within two hours "The protections afforded by this bill are too late to save Stephen's life. He did not survive the system," said Thomas J. Komninos of Upper Saddle River [said of his son](#). "But today you will hear about others who have, so far, survived. Please do what is right for these people. Let's start giving them the same rights and protections enjoyed by all the other people in New Jersey. Tom Baffuto, executive director for The Arc of New Jersey, a statewide advocacy organization that has group home providers in each county, said he was "crushed" to hear the stories about their loved ones' abuse and neglect. But the remedy offered through this bill won't help and could make conditions worse, Baffuto said. The state Department of Human Services does not have the staff to perform six unannounced visits a year, and adding more inspectors will divert money away from services, Baffuto said. Three inspections is more reasonable and was included [in the bill's first iteration in 2014](#), he said. The same committee passed a similar bill two years ago, but chairwoman Valerie Vainieri Huttie (D-Bergen) who is also the sponsor, said she abandoned that measure in order to meet with interested parties and develop "more comprehensive legislation." It's hard enough to attract a group home workforce when the average starting salary is a meager \$10.50 an hour. Requiring applicants pay for the test will deter applicants, Baffuto said. "Sometimes even with the best of intentions, things that look good on paper are virtually impossible to operationalize," Baffuto said. Susan K. Livio may be reached at slivio@njadvancemedia.com. Follow her on Twitter [@SusanKLivio](#). Find [NJ.com Politics on Facebook](#). Source: http://www.nj.com/politics/index.ssf/2016/09/stories_of_abuse_and_neglect_at_group_homes_sparks.html

Child care home in Jackson County license suspended [Jon Szerlag](#) 3:52 PM, Sep 20, 2016 3:53 PM, Sep 20, 2016 A judge's gavel is seen on February 2, 2009 in Miami, Florida. Joe Raedle Copyright Getty Images After investigating complaints into a group child care home in Jackson County, The Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) and the Bureau of Community and Health Systems issued an order of summary suspension and notice of intent to revoke the child care group home license. In a press release it states, the department received a complaint on Sept. 16 on the location, at 3800 Dormay. The license that is suspended belonged to Lisa Riggins, who has held a license to operate a group child care home since Oct. 27, 2011. The license was for 12 children. The investigation into the complaint found violations of the Child Care Organizations Act and administrative rules regarding caregiver and child care home family and caregiver responsibilities, states the release. LARA took emergency action to protect the health, welfare and safety of the children involved. The summary suspension order prohibits Riggins from operating a group child care home at the location, or any other address or location. She also

cannot accept children for care after 6 p.m. Sept. 16, according to the release. The order also requires Riggins to inform all of the parents of children in her care that her license has been suspended and that she can no longer provide child care. According to the release, Michigan law defines a group child care home as "a private home in which more than 6 but not more than 12 minor children are given care and supervision for periods of less than 24 hours a day unattended by a parent or legal guardian, except children related to an adult member of the family by blood, marriage, or adoption. Group child care home includes a home in which care is given to an unrelated minor child for more than 4 weeks during a calendar year." Riggins has the right to appeal the suspension, and the case will be forwarded to the Michigan Administrative Hearing System for a hearing date. Source: <http://www.fox47news.com/news/local-news/child-care-home-in-jackson-county-license-suspended>

Courage House Claimed to Save Sex-Trafficked Girls. Instead, It Used Them As Funding Bait While Playing Evangelical Christian Missionary

Courage House received about \$9,100 in government support per month per girl it took in. [Elizabeth Nolan Brown](#) Sep. 20, 2016 9:40 am Courage Worldwide/Facebook Once girls arrived at the house, they were expected to hand over their cellphones. Internet access was also strictly limited—Jenny's rules. For "her girls" to stay in good graces, they were expected to do as she said, go where she told them to, and be available when she wanted to show them off in photos or at events. It's the kind of controlling, exploitative situation police warn us that runaway teens are likely to end up in at the hands of human traffickers. But in this case, control came via the people ostensibly helping—and accepting a lot of private and government money to help—these girls, under the auspices of an organization called Courage Worldwide. Founded in 2011 by Jenny T. Williamson (on direct orders from God, or so she claims), the Sacramento-based organization provided housing and services for formerly sex-trafficked young women at a California group home (Courage House) as well as a sister site in Tanzania. For her work as CEO of the nonprofit, Williamson paid herself \$115,000 in 2015, according to the organization's tax report. The group reported net assets of \$1.4 million that year. In addition to accepting donations from numerous local businesses, it received about \$9,100 in government support per month per girl it took in. Most of the girls that lived at Courage House were referred by social workers or probation officers. Once at Courage House, the girls were supposed to be able to heal in comfort and privacy. Instead, they found themselves cut off from the outside world, with services and staff lacking (one former employee said she was told there was only money for two of the six girls per month to see a psychiatrist), while being subjected to the invasive publicity demands of Williamson, [according to a Sacramento Bee expose on the group](#). "Public documents show that Williamson voluntarily closed the six-bed facility, effective June 14, amid a flurry of state inspections that found numerous violations, including inadequate staffing levels and no current administrator working at the home," the paper reported in August. "Williamson is appealing many of the citations, and is adamant that the closure is only temporary." So temporary, apparently, that Williamson didn't bother telling her donors about the shutdown until after the Bee contacted them. A former Courage House employee told the newspaper that the group had been cited by the state 16 times between January and June of 2016, for violations including breaching residents' privacy and inadequate staffing. Last fall, it was cited for giving tours of the group home and holding lunches there, for forcing residents to attend Christian church services every week, and for not respecting residents' freedom of religion. In interviews with The Bee, six ex-employees and a former business associate described a volatile environment for workers and high turnover among line staff at Courage House. The former workers singled out Williamson as a temperamental leader with no child-development background who micromanaged her trained staff and became so swept up in her own publicity and expansion plans that the core mission began to falter. The workers described a corporate organization in which staff members were frequently countermanded or abruptly fired for raising questions about "the vision," or for expressing concerns over the corporate office's sharing of clients' confidential information in fundraising or publicity efforts. Several ex-employees said they were upset by the use of identifiable images of Courage House girls on the company's Facebook page. It sounds like Williamson acted more like the proverbial controlling pimp or madam than someone truly dedicated to helping exploited teenagers. Which would be gross enough for the sheer hypocrisy of it, but imagine how much it could also have further messed up these girls, assuming they did come to her because they had been forced or coerced into prostitution. Now the people who "rescued" them are employing the same sort of isolating and controlling techniques they escaped, treating them more like Courage Worldwide products than people, and publicizing their images and past horror stories to the whole community. DeAnne Brining, a licensed therapist who had contracted with Courage House, described the situation as "abusive" and said Williamson routinely "paraded the girls around" for marketing purposes. Another former employee told the Bee "everything was a photo op." (Read the whole damning expose [here](#).) The publicity efforts, at least, worked: Williamson can be seen on the Courage Worldwide website posing alongside people like former San Francisco Giants pitcher Jeremy Affeldt and actresses Julianne Moore and Eva Longoria. She's been honored by the FBI and L'Oreal. Williamson complained to the Bee that caring for trafficked youth has left her tired. "It is difficult to love someone that does not love herself," she said. Courage Worldwide's [website](#) still touts the organization's expansion plan, which includes opening 10 new cottages for underage sex-trafficking victims, in both the U.S. and Tanzania. "Sex trafficking has become a 'cause celebre' in the evangelical community," [notes Broadly](#). And as it has, church-backed "abolition" efforts and Christian group-homes for "rescued" girls have proliferated, with many evangelicals seeing the sex-trafficking angle as a new way to attack long-time opposition to prostitution and pornography. "The numbers of [houses] have surged because the issue has for ten-plus years been promoted by entities like the US federal government, which provides significant funding for rescue efforts," [Laura Agustín, anthropologist and author of Sex at the Margins: Migration, Labour Markets and the Rescue Industry](#), told Broadly. "It is not surprising that opportunists leap on the bandwagon, with or without good intentions." In the past few years, a number of high-profile rescue groups have been exposed for shady behavior. The most well-known was [Somaly Mam, whose fraudulent foundation](#) had been celebrated by everyone from Hillary Clinton to Nicholas Kristof to Meg Ryan before it crashed in a haze of half-truths and distortions. Then Chong Kim, the poster-victim for several sex-trafficking rescue groups (and subject of the 2012 film *Eden*), [was also found to be fudging many details](#) about her alleged abuse. Think things are better in other countries? Anne Elizabeth Moore's [excellent](#) comic book [Threadbare: Clothes, Sex, and Trafficking](#), published earlier this year, shows how rescue organizations in places like Cambodia "save" women from the sex trade only to exploit them in garment factories. A 2015 [report from Truthout](#) looked at 50 of the most prominent (and well-funded) anti-human-trafficking organizations in America—groups with a net worth of about \$686 million, or \$13.7 million per group, per year. "The US anti-trafficking movement seems to be one of the few reliable growth areas in the United States' post-recession economy besides low-wage service work," Truthout reported. Its analysis found many of the groups were secretive about budgets and funding, promoted unsourced or patently false statistics about human trafficking, and offered dubious claims about the services they provide and the impact of their efforts. "All in all," concluded Truthout, "the impact numbers presented by anti-trafficking organizations—their justification for existence and, of course, funding—are simply absurd." Source: <http://reason.com/blog/2016/09/20/courage-house-claimed-to-save-but>

Why we should do everything possible to avoid foster care and keep kids with their families [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Email](#) [7Comments](#) [Print](#) 1/1 File Photo/Staff Advocates for foster children, including Dallas CASA, announced a Stand Up for Children campaign in 2008 in Dallas. By Cherylee Gillispie Contributor Published: 20 September 2016 02:35 PM Updated: 20 September 2016 03:25 PM When I read about the crisis in Texas foster care system, all I can think about is my beautiful younger sister Nannette. Nannette got out of foster care, but she didn't survive. She became a statistic, a victim of the consequences of what experts call adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs. Research has shown that ACEs accumulate over time, and the number of these experiences in childhood predicts morbidity and mortality in adulthood. It doesn't say it on her death certificate, but Nannette died from too many ACEs. When I was 12 and she was 11, our mother needed treatment for alcohol addiction. But, in those days — as is true today — the foster care payment system gave priority to placing kids in foster care instead of providing treatment that their parents needed in order to care for the children themselves. What happened to Nannette and to me was unspeakable child abuse in the home of foster parents who were paid to take care of us. What we wanted was for our mother to get better and for her to take care of us. What we got from the foster care system was abuse from our foster father and neglect by the system. A bill before Congress would turn those priorities around, helping parents who are in treatment to become clean, sober, and better parents, so they can keep their kids. The Family First Prevention Services Act has passed out of the House but hit opposition in the Senate from Texas group home providers who want to protect the status quo. The legislation increases standards for residential care so kids aren't warehoused in group homes without getting the care they need. Over time, the Family First Act shifts some funding from foster care to programs that can provide treatment for parents so that they can safely care for their own kids. That's exactly what Nannette and I longed for so many years ago. My childhood experience drove me to succeed. I worked very hard to get through college and raise three wonderful boys. My family now includes a caring husband, beautiful daughters-in-law, seven fabulous grandchildren and even a new great-grandbaby. But my passion has become advocating for Texas abused and neglected children as a Court Appointed Special Advocate for more than three years. I have the responsibility to make sure that children in foster care have a caring adult who advocates for what is best for them. For the kids I work with, the best for them is to stay with their parents

whenever possible. The trauma of separating from their parents just adds to their number of ACEs, and the vast majority of children who are removed in Texas are in the system because of their parents' substance abuse and mental health treatment needs, according to scientific reports and unpublished data presented by the Administration on Children Youth and Families officials. It's no longer news that the Texas foster care system is in crisis. There are not enough foster placements so kids are sleeping in social work offices. More kids are coming into the system. It is astonishing to me that in the midst of this crisis, our state policymakers don't support legislation to prevent kids from needing foster care in the first place. We need a different track for families reported for neglect, with family-based treatment centers providing on-site substance abuse and mental health services. Various studies show that family-based treatment is not only more cost effective than placement in foster care. It reduces trauma and ACEs scores so children can thrive. This legislation will save money and lives.

Cherylee Gillispie is an advocate for abused and neglected children as a court appointed special advocate and volunteer with nonprofit children and family agencies in the Dallas area. Email: Cherylee2177@gmail.com Source: <http://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/latest-columns/20160920-why-we-should-do-everything-possible-to-avoid-foster-care-and-keep-kids-with-their-families.ece>

Foster care system doesn't meet two-thirds of requirements, audit finds Phyllis Gilmore, secretary of the Department for Children and Families, answers questions in July about the audit of her department at a Post Audit Committee meeting in Topeka. EMILY DESHAZER/THE CAPITAL-JOURN File photo i By Gabriella Dunn gdunn@wichitaeagle.com [LinkedIn Google+ Pinterest Reddit Print Order Reprint of this Story](#) Topeka The state's foster care system complies with only about a third of the federal requirements assessed by state auditors, according to a report released Wednesday. The findings come after a [July audit](#) that found the state system failed to ensure the safety of kids in foster care. The July findings prompted some Democrats to call for the resignation of the secretary for the Department for Children and Families, which oversees Kansas' privatized foster care system. Wednesday's report found that the Department for Children and Families did not consistently meet requirements aimed at providing stability for children. For example, sometimes a child's schoolwork is disrupted because the system does not try to keep the child in the same school district or school. The state also didn't meet requirements for the percentage of children who should be adopted within one to two years after entering into foster care, according to the audit. But it did consistently meet federal requirements about placing children with relatives and siblings. Three-part audit These audits are part of a three-part investigation. The first audit focused on safety concerns. The second part, released Wednesday, focused on compliance with applicable state and federal laws governing the foster care system. The final portion of the audit will research foster care costs, resources and outcomes. That audit will be released next year. Wednesday's findings showed the Department for Children and Families did not meet all federal requirements related to monitoring and paying the private companies it contracts with to provide foster care. And self-reported data showed Kansas met or exceeded about half of the federal outcome requirements for fiscal year 2016, which ended in June. A federal audit revealed the Department for Children and Families was in compliance with about a third of the areas assessed and "not in substantial compliance" with the other two-thirds.

The audit in July revealed that foster parents received initial background checks, but other people in the home did not; not all children received monthly case-management visits; and the Department for Children and Families did not ensure that licensed foster homes had enough money to care for the child. Addressing issues Phyllis Gilmore, secretary of the Kansas Department for Children and Families, spoke Wednesday to legislators about efforts to resolve the issues highlighted in the July report and ways it's already working to resolve the issues brought up in Wednesday's report. She talked about bolstering social worker recruitment and training and gave updates on regulation changes at the state level. One included expanding background checks for everyone over the age of 10 in a child's home. The state previously required background checks only for foster parents. Gilmore also said the agency plans to receive real-time updates on arrests or charges against people living in the child's home. And the department will submit an improvement plan to the federal government about how it will address areas where it was not in compliance. She also tried to address concerns from legislators by emphasizing lower rates of abuse and maltreatment. "Children are not suffering maltreatment while they're in custody," Gilmore said. "There's lots of trauma when they're removed from the home, (but) while they're in custody in Kansas, children are safe by all measurements." Sen. Laura Kelly, D-Topeka, disagreed. "I have to take exception with 'children are not in maltreatment,'" Kelly said, citing a Topeka case in which a child was being abused. "You need to be very careful making those blanket statements that are not true." Gabriella Dunn: [316-268-6400](tel:316-268-6400), gabriella_dunn Read more here: <http://www.kansas.com/news/politics-government/article103311982.html#storylink=cpy>

Grand jury probing foster care; new charges filed in NY case By [FRANK ELTMAN](#) Sep. 22, 2016 2:09 PM EDT Share article 2 photos FILE - This undated file photo provided by the Suffolk County District Attorney's office in... Read more i By: [FRANK ELTMAN](#) (AP) RIVERHEAD, N.Y. [Copyright 2016 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.](#) 40.917-72.662 RIVERHEAD, N.Y. (AP) — A special grand jury has been empaneled to investigate New York's foster care system following the arrest of a Long Island man on child sex abuse charges. The man had welcomed dozens of boys into his Ridge home, dating back two decades, before allegations of sex abuse surfaced, creating questions about oversight over the foster parent system. Suffolk County District Attorney Thomas Spota said Thursday the special grand jury, which has been meeting since mid-August and may not conclude its work until early 2017, is "assessing all of the facts and circumstances involving how he was able to take all these boys in." It also is investigating other possible crimes involving the suspect. It was not clear if the grand jury would file additional criminal charges or issue a report on its findings, with recommendations for changes in the foster care system. Various governmental agencies and private foster care organizations are being examined. Spota also told reporters the grand jury would investigate how the suspect was able to obtain some of the children in his care from out-of-state foster care agencies, including Washington. Undo Cesar Gonzales-Mugaburu, 60, was arrested last winter and charged with victimizing seven children as young as 8. One count in an indictment alleges he sexually abused a dog in front of a child. On Thursday, a new indictment was unsealed accusing him of abusing one additional child and added charges involving some of the children identified as victims in the initial charges. A prosecutor also said it was likely some charges from the first indictment may be dropped because some of the alleged crimes happened too long ago to fall under statute of limitations laws. Defense attorney Donald Mates entered a not guilty plea on behalf of his client; Gonzales-Mugaburu is being held without bail. Mates told reporters after the arraignment that his client denies ever abusing children, and suggested the alleged victims were lying. Spota said previously that statute of limitations laws prevented prosecutors from filing charges involving other abuse allegations. Since the scandal erupted, separate investigations have been started by state, city and Long Island officials. Questions remain about how Gonzales-Mugaburu was able to keep getting children placed in his home despite years of concern about his conduct. Before his arrest, Gonzales-Mugaburu was the subject of nine previous investigations involving alleged abuse dating to 1998, according to a spokeswoman for Suffolk County. Each of those inquiries led to a finding at the time that the allegations weren't credible, and none of them immediately led to the removal of children from his split-level ranch home on eastern Long Island. A break came in January, when detectives said two brothers who lived in the house came forward with credible stories of abuse. Once Gonzales-Mugaburu was in custody, others felt more comfortable coming forward, authorities said. SCO Family of Services, an agency that placed 72 New York City children in Gonzales-Mugaburu's care over 20 years, said it never uncovered evidence of sexual abuse or improper sexual behavior in the home. But the organization's chief strategy officer, Rose Anello said in July that there were other issues with the home, particularly around 2013, "and in retrospect and knowing what we know now, a decision to close the home should have been made at that time." She said those issues involved Gonzales-Mugaburu being uncooperative and unwilling to accept staff guidance on parenting style, but none of the issues then hinted at anything like the allegations uncovered this year. Following the Gonzales-Mugaburu arrest, the city's Administration for Children's Services temporarily halted placing children in SCO foster homes, but announced in July that a review of 370 homes operated by SCO uncovered no indications abuse was occurring at any of those sites. ____ This story has been corrected to show children stopped being placed in SCO foster homes, not SCO facilities. Source: <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/9540df69180c45008ea91bc9835498e4/ap-newsbreak-da-grand-jury-probing-ny-foster-care-system#>

Fort Lauderdale Finally Shuts Down Troubled Group Home; Director's \$2.25 Million Mansion for Sale Friday, September 23, 2016 at 8:54 a.m. By [Antonia Noori Farzan](#) [EXPAND](#) Chrysalis Health executive director Manuel Menendez's home, which is currently for sale. Photo by Antonia Farzan A A [Facebook](#) [74 Twitter](#) [4 More shares](#) [recommend reddit email](#) - 1 For at least six years, Crescent House, a Fort Lauderdale group home for teenage boys, was the source of [constant calls to the police](#). Neighbors found crack cocaine baggies littering the streets and said that kids pelted their cars with rocks. This summer, the city finally shut down the facility, which was run by Chrysalis Health, a for-profit company. But similar issues still persist at the five other group homes run by Chrysalis, Broward County public defenders say. "When I've visited in the past, I was shocked at the manner in which these homes are being run," Chief Assistant Public Defender Gordon Weekes says. "The lack of supervision, the autonomy that these children have to go out whenever they want, wherever they want... The kids could literally sleep all day and not go to school." Kids who end up in a group home are typically there because they've been abandoned,

abused, or neglected by their families, so placing them in a situation where they have minimal oversight and receive little in the way of therapeutic treatment is a recipe for disaster. (New Times documented the consequences, including rampant drug use and teen prostitution, in a [lengthy investigation](#) last year.) Related Stories [After New Times Investigation, City Moves to Close Fort Lauderdale Group Home With Lax Supervision at State-Contracted Group Homes, Teen Prostitution and Drug Use Are Rampant](#) "We're talking about kids that are really on the cusp," Weekes says. "They just shut them down and marginalize them, and as a result, they detach." Meanwhile, as the city of Fort Lauderdale has been working to shut down Crescent House, Chrysalis Health executive director Manuel Menendez bought a mansion. According to Miami-Dade County property records, Menendez and his wife own a waterfront four-bedroom home in Coral Gables, which is valued just short of \$1 million, as well as a South Miami mansion that's currently for sale for \$2.25 million. The listing on [Zillow.com](#) notes that it has six bedrooms, eight bathrooms, a home office, and a theater. Oh, and a "resort-style pool area" with a changing cabana, wet bar, outdoor kitchen, and tennis and basketball courts. So \$2.25 million is a pretty good deal, considering. ADVERTISING [inRead invented by Teads](#) Reached by phone, Menendez initially declined to comment, then admitted that he'd purchased the house with the intention of flipping it. "I'm a real estate investor," he said. "I haven't gotten a raise from Chrysalis in fifteen years." Furthermore, he added, the money the company makes off group homes doesn't even cover its administrative costs. (According to tax filings, Chrysalis receives more than \$3 million a year from ChildNet, the nonprofit that contracts with the state to handle child welfare services in Broward and Palm Beach, for running residential group homes.) Menendez also claims that the City of Fort Lauderdale's decision to shut down Crescent House was motivated by complaints from neighbors who were solely concerned about the group home's impact on their property values. "Most of them don't even live there — they're just investing in the real estate," he said. "It's unfortunate because these kids need a place to go." Source: <http://www.browardpalmbeach.com/news/fort-lauderdale-finally-shuts-down-troubled-group-home-director-s-225-million-mansion-for-sale-8104099>

Payson woman sentenced for sexual abuse of 5 boys at treatment center By [Gephardt Daily Staff](#) - September 24, 2016 [Share on Facebook](#) [Tweet on Twitter](#) Katherine Lynn Estep. Photo: Juab County NEPHI, Utah, Sept. 24, 2016 (Gephardt Daily) — A former employee of Journey Ranch, a Mona residential treatment center for troubled teenage boys, has been sentenced to prison for sexually abusing five of the juvenile residents. Katherine Lynn Estep, 45, of Payson, on Friday was sentenced to seven terms of one to 15 years in prison, with those terms to run concurrently. Estep in June pleaded guilty to seven counts of forcible sexual abuse, a second-degree felony. Additional charges were dismissed. The original charges she faced were five counts of forcible sodomy, a first-degree felony; 10 counts of forcible sexual assault, a second-degree felony; and two class C misdemeanor counts of providing electronic cigarettes to minors. Estep admitted touching boys age 16 and 17 inappropriately, according to court documents. Police said she also engaged in sex acts with the teens, and threatened two with "demerits" if they did not cooperate. The center, in Juab County, advertises that it treats boys, age 13 to 18, who suffer from moderate or severe behavioral problems and mental health issues. Estep rewarded the boys with use of her phone, e-cigarettes, pills or candy, according to charging documents. The court recommended Estep undergo therapy, according to sentencing documents: "Court recommends to the Board that the defendant participate in psychotherapy to address psychological nature of her physical symptoms as well as address her thinking errors through a cognitive restructuring therapy." Source: <http://gephardtdaily.com/top-stories/payson-woman-sentenced/>

Suit: Westchester Med Center 'taunted' young psych patients Michael Virtanen, The Associated Press 7:51 a.m. EDT September 27, 2016 Federal suit claims hospital staff provoked youngsters to justify medication, restraints that extended Medicaid-funded hospital stays A doctor who trained for four years at the psychiatric unit of the Westchester Medical Center said in a lawsuit Monday that adolescent patients were routinely provoked and prodded into acting out, then restrained and drugged to extend their hospitalization and Medicaid payments. Dr. Alfred Robenzadeh said supervisors at the Valhalla hospital retaliated against him when he tried to address what he says was chronic patient abuse that increased the severity of diagnoses, with usual two-week inpatient stays often extended days or weeks. He alleges the practice defrauded Medicaid. When he complained, he said he was told to "keep your head down and do not make any more waves." [LAWSUIT: Read the federal claims](#) In his 22-page complaint, Robenzadeh charged that "the nursing staff's first and preferred response to the provoked behavior was to seek an order from a physician for the administration of chemical or physical restraints to sedate the patient." In one instance, he said he was called in to administer medication to a disruptive youngster and found that the nursing staff was "encroaching on the inpatient's space and using provocative and threatening language and tone." Instead, he said he used de-escalation techniques to calm the boy. "Great, now we can't even touch him," he said the nurse told him. Westchester Medical Center officials did not return calls for comment. The lawsuit was filed under federal and New York state whistleblower laws. It seeks damages, including payment for lost employment and business opportunities, and litigation costs. It asks the court to order the hospital to certify his completion of four years of specialty training in psychiatry, saying the defendants have refused to do that. Robenzadeh said his training was terminated this year. He said allegations against him of improper moonlighting and later violating patient privacy in defending against those allegations were trumped up. His complaint named five doctors he says joined in retaliation against him and the hospital's director of labor relations. "The excessive use of force resulted in extended, unreasonable and unnecessary inpatient treatment days, for which the hospital is reimbursed by Medicaid," the lawsuit said. "Rather than using de-escalation techniques that would not require the administration of chemical or physical restraints, the nursing staff's first and preferred response to the provoked behavior was to seek an order from a physician for the administration of a chemical or physical restraint to sedate the patient." In addition, he said male patients, particularly those from residential treatment facilities who did not have parents, were particularly at risk. "Male patients were treated as second class and as troublemakers who were assumed to be aggressive and much more likely to be physically injured by staff," he said. "If the patient's complexion was any shade of brown, their concerns, e.g., pain, stress or hunger, were neglected because the culture of the unit devalued them as patients." Robenzadeh said that he proposed studying inpatient metrics to determine why stable patients were having incidents shortly before scheduled discharges and whether it was from policy and practice. Instead, he said, he was "marginalized," stymied in attempts to moonlight as other graduate trainees did, given more hospital patients than they had, and ultimately suspended and terminated from the fellowship program. Staff writer Jorge Fitz-Gibbon contributed to this report. Source: <http://www.lohud.com/story/news/local/westchester/2016/09/26/westchester-medical-center-lawsuit/91130228/>

Employee at Liberty Hill treatment center for children arrested for drug possession by CBS Austin Kathleen Redlin, 30, is charged with possession of a controlled substance in a drug free zone, a second degree felony. (Photo courtesy: Williamson County Sheriff's Office) An employee at a Liberty Hill treatment center for children was arrested Monday for possession of drugs. According to the arrest affidavit, Kathleen Redlin, 30, is charged with possession of a controlled substance in a drug free zone, a second degree felony. It happened at the [Meridell Achievement Center](#), a private charter school which describes itself on its website as a residential treatment center that specializes in psychiatry and neuropsychiatry for children and adolescents. Court documents say an employee of the school contacted police after they received an anonymous tip that Redlin had drugs in her locker at the school. The locker was searched and several baggies believed to contain methamphetamine and marijuana were found. Redlin admitted to school officials that the drugs belonged to her, police say. The affidavit says officers questioned Redlin and asked if the purse found in the locker with drugs inside of it was hers -- and she admitted it and the drugs were hers, and that a glass pipe in the bag was used to smoke the meth. The meth weighed out to approximately 3.1 grams. The marijuana weighed approximately .05 ounces, according to court documents. Officials with [Meridell Achievement Center](#) says Redlin is no longer employed by the center. Source: <http://keyvetv.com/news/local/teacher-at-liberty-hill-treatment-center-for-children-arrested-for-drug-possession>

Foster care is not good for children By Jessie Wagoner jessie@emporia.com Updated Sep 28, 2016 [0](#) Last week the Department for Children and Families dealt with the controversy of a negative audit of the foster care services provided through the state. The report, released by the Legislature's post-audit team, found many areas of concern regarding the safety of children in foster care in Kansas. After reading through the audit report, it is obvious there are areas for improvement. Is foster care good for children? No. No, of course foster care is not good for children. If foster care was good for children we would sign all of our children up rather than sending them to summer camp. Foster care is a system designed to be used in the most serious of situations as a temporary solution. It is not intended to be where children are raised for an indefinite period of time. Yet the number of children in foster care in Kansas continues to climb at alarming rates and they are remaining in foster care waiting for reintegration or adoptive placements for far too long. Could DCF make improvements to ensure children in foster care are safer? Absolutely! But, until the state begins to value children more than saving money, that is not likely to happen. Privatizing foster care has resulted in foster care agencies bidding against one another, each contractor promising to do more with less. This has led to higher caseloads and unrealistic expectations for front-line workers. In the end it is children and those front-line workers that pay the highest price while the state saves a buck. Governor Sam Brownback has led the state into a financial crisis that has resulted in cuts to preventative services that not only keep children in their homes, but

also help to reintegrate children faster. Mental health services, drug and alcohol treatment and prevention services and programs like Parents as Teachers have all been cut. All services that promote healthy families. As the Legislature places blame on DCF, it is time they turn their pointed fingers back to themselves. It is our elected officials who determine the budget. It is our elected officials who have approved budgets that don't meet the needs of our most vulnerable citizens and it is now our elected officials who should bare some responsibility for the failures of a system they have created. Some day the children in foster care in Kansas will be old enough to vote. It is our responsibility to vote with them in mind in November. Jessie Wagoner Reporter Source:

http://www.emporiagazette.com/opinion/editorials/article_d9b61d7f-8563-5059-b8b7-0ff91720ba6.html

NYC juvenile detention aide faces 16 years for raping teen girl - NY Daily News Brooklyn juvenile detention center aide faces 16 years in prison for 'repeatedly' abusing, raping teen girl NYC juvenile detention aide faces 16 years for raping teen girl BY [Leonard Greene](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Wednesday, September 28, 2016, 10:17 PM | Barry Proctor, 47, faces 16 years in prison for abusing and raping a teen girl "repeatedly for his own sexual gratification." (Frances Twitty/Getty Images/Getty Images) BY [Leonard Greene](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Wednesday, September 28, 2016, 10:17 PM An aide at a Brooklyn juvenile detention center was convicted Wednesday on charges of raping and sexually abusing a teenage girl in his care. Barry Proctor, 47, of the Bronx, faces up to 16 years in prison for taking advantage of the girl, first by targeting the troubled teen, then by grooming her for sex. Proctor had been charged with abusing two other girls at the center, but was acquitted on those charges. The conviction stemmed from Proctor's abuse of one of the underage girls over the course of several weeks in 2014, said Patricia Gunning, a special prosecutor for the New York State Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs. Gunning said there were four separate instances during which he abused the girl. [Teens incarcerated on Rikers Island will move to Bronx facility](#) "This victim, already traumatized by violence in her life, was entrusted to the state's care," Gunning said. "In that setting, this defendant targeted her and abused her repeatedly for his own sexual gratification." The Ella McQueen center serves as a 14-day processing facility for teens — generally between 13 and 18 — bound for a juvenile detention center, according to its website. The incidents were non-forcible, but the victims cannot legally consent to the sexual activity, according to the New York State Justice Center, which investigated the case. Source: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/brooklyn/nyc-juvenile-detention-aide-faces-16-years-raping-teen-girl-article-1.2810906>

Drugging Our Kids: Governor signs bills to curb psych drugs prescribed to California foster youth Share this: [Click to share on Facebook \(Opens in new window\)](#) [Click to share on Twitter \(Opens in new window\)](#) [Click to email this to a friend \(Opens in new window\)](#) [Click to print \(Opens in new window\)](#) By [Tracy Seipel](#) | tseipel@bayareanewsgroup.com PUBLISHED: September 29, 2016 at 3:08 pm | UPDATED: September 30, 2016 at 5:07 am Capping years of efforts to stop California's foster care system from overmedicating the state's most vulnerable children, Gov. Jerry Brown on Thursday signed a controversial bill that for the first time puts doctors who recklessly prescribe psychiatric drugs at risk of losing their medical license. The measure is part of a series of sweeping legislative reforms inspired by this news organization's [series "Drugging Our Kids"](#) that disclosed the state's dependence on psychotropic medications to control troubled children in the country's largest child welfare system. Senate Bill 1174, by Sen. Mike McGuire, will require annual monitoring of high-prescribing doctors and allow the California Medical Board to crack down on violators — a major victory for foster youth advocates who for years had no voice to speak out against their doctors' orders. "This bill ensures the state takes a no-tolerance approach to over-prescribing and that the Medical Board and attorney general get the data they need to protect California's 66,000 foster youth," said McGuire. The Healdsburg Democrat held a series of oversight hearings to champion the rights of foster youth who said they were being overmedicated. McGuire's bill was the focus of a tense legislative battle in Sacramento with one of the state's most powerful interests — psychiatrists who argued the bill would unfairly single out doctors who treat children with severe mental health needs. A Bay Area News Group analysis of five years of prescribing data revealed a fraction of the doctors may be fueling the medication use. A mere 10 percent of the state's highest prescribers were responsible about 50 percent of the time when a foster child received an antipsychotic, the riskiest class of the drugs with some of the most harmful side effects. Veteran child psychiatrist Michael Barnett, whom the news organization's analysis identified among the higher prescribers of antipsychotics, said he supports the new oversight but will continue to prescribe the drugs — even two at once — when he believes it will help his young patients. "There are definitely times where you could easily rationalize prescribing two antipsychotics to an individual," he said. "I will still do that. And if they want to give me a speeding ticket (under the new law SB 1174) or ask me about it, I will tell them about it." McGuire's bill was one of three sent to Brown's desk this year, after the governor signed three separate bills last year in the first wave of legislation spurred by this news organization's series. On Thursday, Brown also gave his blessing to Senate Bill 1291, by Sen. Jim Beall, D-San Jose. It will require more transparency and tracking of mental health services for foster kids in every California county. "We cannot allow our foster care system to strictly rely on dosing foster children with mind-altering medications to manage their behavior," Beall said in a statement Thursday. "We must ensure that less invasive and safer available treatments are the first options for our children rather than a pill. The system must provide foster youth with the services that address their trauma instead of depending on drugs to mask their trauma." Beall's legislation responds to recent state audit findings that revealed the foster care system has failed to adequately oversee the use of psychotropic drugs on foster children. Advocates for foster youth, including the National Center for Youth Law, which sponsored the bills, celebrated the signings after years of pushing policy makers and state officials for reforms. Policy director Anna Johnson said the nonprofit group is "grateful to our legislative champions for holding accountable the doctors who are overmedicating foster youth" and counties that she said "failed to provide services that will help foster youth deal with trauma, abuse and neglect." But the governor also vetoed one of the group's measures, saying it was too similar to legislation he signed last year. Senate Bill 253 by Sen. Bill Monning, D-Carmel, sought to create more rigorous court oversight before doctors can prescribe potentially harmful psychotropic drugs to foster children. The governor's veto was a blow to National Center for Youth Law attorney Bill Grimm, who has always considered SB 253 the linchpin of legislative reforms to curtail the inappropriate, harmful impact of psychotropic drugs — before they can be prescribed. Still, the new laws are especially meaningful to current and former foster youth, such as Sarah Pauter, of San Diego. Growing up in foster care, she was so over-medicated with antidepressants, anticonvulsants and mood stabilizers that she went from being a straight-A high school student to attending a center for the learning-deficient. She is particularly pleased that Beall's bill will force counties to provide better mental health alternatives to medications, and she is thrilled that McGuire's bill will finally "hold psychiatrists accountable" for dangerous prescribing. "Finally," she said, "we have a law that says, 'If you don't do right by these foster kids, there will be consequences.'" Source: <http://www.mercurynews.com/2016/09/29/drugging-our-kids-governor-signs-bills-to-curb-psych-drugs-prescribed-to-california-foster-youth/>

Brown signs two more laws to curb overuse of meds on foster youth - SFGate Brown signs two more laws to curb overuse of meds on foster youth Published 4:41 pm, Thursday, September 29, 2016 1 California Gov. [Jerry Brown](#) Thursday signed two more bills to protect traumatized foster children from psychiatric care that is overly reliant on risky medications — cementing what is now the most comprehensive set of laws in the nation. Following three laws passed last year, the additional legislation will subject overprescribing physicians to stepped-up investigations and ensure that counties offer mental health services for foster children that include non-drug treatments. Brown vetoed a bill that would have enhanced juvenile court oversight of prescribing. But the courts have already launched a sweeping set of new standards requiring doctors to justify their prescriptions before judges approve them, and ensuring that foster children have a say in whether they want to take the untested drugs. "Unfortunately, the excessive prescribing has become the norm and it has impacted thousands of lives of California's most vulnerable youth — foster kids," said one of the bills' authors, state Sen. [Mike McGuire](#), D-Healdsburg. "These five pieces of legislation will finally provide foster youth with the protections they need from serial overprescribers and these mind-numbing drugs." Another bill author, state Sen. [Jim Beall](#), D-San Jose, said overmedication has for too long been overlooked as one of the major problems in the foster care system. Now, "it's become clear that if you just keep medicating them, they can't think clearly, they can't study and they can't be successful." Beall said the new laws are necessary because "the medication was so overprescribed, in so many different ways, and with no controls and no monitoring," adding: "So we hope to get that out of the way now, and frame a more successful foster care system in California." Lobbyists for doctors and the group home industry pushed back against the bills, arguing they overreached and could potentially harm children who needed medications. But an equally powerful lobby of foster youth also consistently showed up at policy committee hearings, testifying about debilitating side effects they suffered from antipsychotics, antidepressants and mood stabilizers, including severe lethargy, rapid-onset weight gain and irreversible tremors. McGuire said the legislation "wouldn't have been a reality without hundreds of foster youth mobilizing to fight." The two bills signed into law Thursday add more heft to related protections passed last year in California. Those laws enhanced scrutiny of residential group homes where prescribing is the highest; expanded public health nursing to monitor prescriptions, and funded training for professionals who work with and care for foster children. The six-bill package resulting in five new laws followed an exposé published in the [San Jose Mercury](#)

[News](#) and extensive advocacy by the nonprofit National Center for Youth Law. Lobbyists representing physicians and group homes argued against many of the legislative changes, saying they will drive professionals from the field and curtail their professional authority. McGuire's bill — which will hold outlying physicians responsible for their prescribing practices through greater enforcement by the state's licensing agency — led to the most bitter fights. Physician groups said the new law will unfairly affect psychiatrists treating youth in residential programs and juvenile halls. Sen. Beall's bill will hold counties more accountable for providing mental health treatment for foster youth. That means more than just a bottle of pills, said California's ombudsperson for foster care, Rochelle Trochtenberg, who was taken from her parents due to abuse, and spent her teenage years in the Los Angeles County child welfare system. "If you have a child with diabetes, you don't just give them insulin and keep feeding them sugary foods that makes them sicker," she said. "If you translate that to kids in foster care, their medical condition is often trauma, and you're not treating that trauma if you're not treating an array of issues." Karen de Sá is a [San Francisco Chronicle](#) staff writer. Email: kdesa@sfgate.com Source: <http://www.sfgate.com/politics/article/Brown-signs-two-more-laws-to-curb-overuse-of-meds-9458861.php>

Gagging Kentucky's social workers won't save its children Bevin administration inherited crisis in child protection, but concealing shortcomings makes things worse. Satirical tweet about warning sent to employees of Cabinet for Health and Family Services. One of a few satirical tweets about warning sent to employees of Cabinet for Health and Family Services. 1 of 2 in [LinkedIn Google+ Pinterest Reddit Print Order Reprint of this Story](#) Governors come, governors go, but the secrecy and stonewalling around Kentucky's beleaguered child-protection bureaucracy is forever. Latest example: A memo [warning](#) employees that unauthorized contacts with news media could result in disciplinary action including firing. The warning comes at a time when the opioid crisis is devastating Kentucky families and overwhelming the decimated ranks of social workers who risk their safety to rescue children from sometimes violent situations. State officials insist the memo, which went out Sept. 23, was just a routine reminder and not a response to child-protection workers' recent public complaints about dangerous working conditions and untenable caseloads. All employees of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, not just those working in child protection, received the memo. Even so, the warning was clumsy and insensitive coming just two days after child-protection workers had [testified](#) about their concerns to a legislative committee. A social worker told lawmakers that she was "terrified" about speaking out because "most of us have been conditioned for retaliation." Child-protection workers also are [expressing concerns](#) on a Facebook page. In response, cabinet officials pledged that "the days of retaliation for workers making constructive criticism are over" and promised openness and transparency. Bevin administration officials strengthened their credibility by saying that caseloads are higher than previous administrations have admitted. They said they are working on a more accurate count and on ways to better support case workers and children. But then out came that memo from a [cabinet](#) that fought, unsuccessfully, for years to keep secret the records of how it handled cases in which children died of abuse or neglect. No wonder the memo drew cries of hypocrisy. Stress and low pay have long taken a toll on child-protection ranks, but the turnover has worsened. In [Louisville](#), one-third of workers have resigned or retired this year. Statewide a record-high almost 8,000 children are in foster care in Kentucky. A long overdue pay raise for child-protection workers (supervisors are now making \$40,800 a year) took effect in September and is a step in the right direction. The state also should unfreeze funding for relatives who care for children of unfit parents and extend the aid to out-of-state family and qualified friends. The cost of foster care is more than double the \$300 monthly stipend for Kinship Care which has been frozen for three years. Placing children in foster care because a grandparent on a fixed income can't afford to take them in is the height of false economy. The crisis in child protection has been building for a long time and was inherited by the Bevin administration which has been in office less than 10 months. But falling into old familiar patterns of talk-without-action and trying to hide the cabinet's shortcomings will only make a bad situation worse. Source: <http://www.kentucky.com/opinion/editorials/article104998836.html>

WATCHDOG: Louisiana children sent out of state for psychiatric care [Lex Talamo](#), alexa.talamo@shreveporttimes.com 12:03 p.m. CDT October 1, 2016 --> Due to a lack of facilities that can meet mental and behavioral needs of children, Louisiana is sending her children to out-of-state facilities. (Video by Lex Talamo) Buy Photo The Outdoor Wilderness Learning Center in Dubach helps children with mental and behavioral problems learn skills by connecting with nature. (Photo: Henrietta Wildsmith/The Times) Buy Photo Lonnie is a transgender adolescent with mental and behavioral issues severe enough to qualify for residential psychiatric care. But Louisiana doesn't have a facility that is adequate for meeting his behavioral needs. So he will be sent to an out-of-state facility, according to the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services — the seventh child this year the department has referred to another state. Lonnie is not the boy's real name. Privacy requirements prevent the department from identifying him or his home parish. "We don't want to send children out of state. But if it's in the best interest of the child, we will make that choice," DCFS Secretary Marketa Walters said. "When we send a child out of state, it's because we haven't found a facility in the state." It's been well documented that [Louisiana lacks a sufficient number of mental and behavioral health care services](#) for children. That means dozens of Louisiana children needing residential psychiatric or therapeutic treatments are sent each year to out-of-state facilities, which often are not required to adhere to the same standards for supervision or safety as in-state facilities. RELATED: [Children's mental health service shortage puts them at risk](#) State agencies said they place children in other states as a last resort and closely monitor the well-being of their out-of-state wards — though the number of out-of-state placements has declined in recent years. But several Louisiana child advocates voiced concerns about the safety of children placed in other states, citing previous litigation against out-of-state facilities alleging violations of children's rights. "States should be developing their own resources," said Rick Wheat, CEO for Louisiana United Methodist Children and Family Services in Ruston. "As long as Louisiana's leaders [are willing to accept gaps in services](#) for children and are willing to fund out-of-state placements, the child welfare system in Louisiana will continue to languish, and our children will pay for it." Buy Photo Rick Wheat, president and CEO of the Louisiana United Methodist Children's Home in Ruston (Photo: Henrietta Wildsmith/The Times) A children's mental health crisis More than 70,000 children in Louisiana received mental or behavioral services through Medicaid in 2014, including 2,000 children in Bossier Parish and 4,000 in Caddo Parish, according to Louisiana Department of Health data. Children with needs severe enough to require residential treatment interventions are placed in therapeutic foster care homes, therapeutic group homes or psychiatric residential treatment facilities, none of which have been able to absorb the need in the state. The state has 10 therapeutic group homes — with a total of 85 beds — for the entire state. And Magellan, the former single statewide management organization for Medicaid-funded specialized behavioral health services, has been sending children to psychiatric residential treatment facilities [out-of-state](#) for years, according to the Louisiana Department of Health. RELATED: [More homes needed for drug-exposed babies than ever before](#) The number of children placed out of state fluctuates. As of July, the Louisiana Department of Health reported 15 children in out-of-state care, a decline from the peak of 41 children sent out of state in 2014. In the past five years, [DCFS](#) reported sending a total of 13 children out of state. Both departments said they closely monitor children in out-of-state facilities. "It's not that we send a child out of state and abandon them. We have people check up on them," Walters said. Buy Photo The Outdoor Wilderness Learning Center uses nature to help teach skills to children with severe mental and behavioral needs. (Photo: Henrietta Wildsmith/The Times) Yvonne Domingue, who heads DCFS's Behavioral Health and Placement Services, said welfare staff travel monthly to see children in treatment and meet with members of the out-of-state team. "Although the face-to-face visits occur only once a month, communication between caseworkers and treatment facilities is fluid," Domingue said. "Reports between the treatment provider and the caseworker can happen on an as-needed basis, as does communication between the worker and the youth." LDH's spokesperson Samantha Faulkner said staff from the Healthy Louisiana plans — the five Bayou Health plans available for children eligible for Medicaid — review monthly reports about children from out-of-state facilities to ensure children are receiving therapeutic interventions that meet their needs. Faulkner said the health department won't place children in unlicensed facilities. Walters said she isn't aware of a single facility DCFS has used that hasn't met standards. But Wheat said out-of-state facilities may adhere to standards that are different from Louisiana's. The Louisiana Department of Health's requirements for the staff-to-child ratio for psychiatric residential treatment facilities is [1 to 4](#) during the day, whereas Texas requirements for the same types of facilities are 1 to 5 (if no child requires treatment during the day) or 1 to 8 (if at least one child requires treatment.) Similarly, Louisiana requires a staff to child ratio of 1 to 6 at night, whereas [in Texas](#) the ratios can be up to 1 to 24 (if no children require treatment at night and the caregiver stays awake) or 1 to 16 (if no children require treatment and the caregiver sleeps during the shift), according to Texas licensing requirements. Louisiana also requires all therapeutic group homes to have a ratio of [1 staff to 5 children at all times](#), with at least two staff present at any time. Wheat also cited several cases — including the 1974's [Gary W. v. Louisiana](#) and 2015's [M.D. v. Perry](#) — where U.S. District Court judges have ruled that out-of-state facilities violated children's rights and did not adequately monitor children's care, resulting in "serious safety incidents." As recently as December 2015, a U.S. District Court judge ruled that certain Texas facilities had to change child supervision or be shut down. "They were sending them to so called residential treatment centers, which we proved at a long trial to have been bad," said Stephen Dixon, an attorney who worked the 2015 case. "That's

where we were putting Louisiana children, into a system that had serious problems.” Buy Photo A children's room at a therapeutic group home in Louisiana. (Photo: Henrietta Wildsmith/The Times) Dixon, who also works as a lawyer for the New York-based nonprofit Children's Rights, said children placed in any out-of-state facility face additional challenges to recovery, including more barriers to communicating with their attorneys, caseworkers and families. Beth Salcedo, co-founder of the state's only therapeutic group home for adolescent victims of sex trafficking, was surprised to hear children were being sent out of state. Her home, which can house up to 10 girls, had vacancies as of September 2016. Salcedo said only one of the young women currently residing in the program had been referred by DCFS, though Salcedo frequently hears about underage victims of sex trafficking recovered by undercover police operations—or “stings.” “You hear about stings, but no one calls and asks about placement. I’ve wondered where they go,” Salcedo said. “I didn’t know there were girls being placed out of state. I have no idea why that is happening.” Faulkner said the health department places a child in out-of-state facilities for two main reasons: state psychiatric residential treatment facilities have refused placement because they can't provide for the child's needs, or a stakeholder in the child's treatment plan thinks an out-of-state facility has better programming for the child's needs. A solution that's not a last resort The Louisiana Methodist Children's Home in Ruston is one of the in-state facilities able to provide care to children with severe needs. The home provides therapeutic care for children, in part, through its Outdoor Wilderness Learning Center, which offers a high ropes course, equine-assisted psychotherapy, kayaking and team-building activities from its location in Dubach. Buy Photo The Louisiana United Methodist Children's Home in Ruston (Photo: Henrietta Wildsmith/The Times) Patrick Blanchard, director of development and public relations for the home, said the 800-acre outdoor center highlights the progress some of the most troubled children can make when given the right resources. “We had a 16-year-old boy who came to us with 51 foster care placements before he came here. But you take him and put him next to a horse, and he's a kid again,” Blanchard said. David Wheeler, vice president of clinical services at the children's home, said a major benefit for Louisiana's children placed at in-state facilities is proximity to their family, which makes routine family visits more feasible. Wheat said family involvement during children's treatment – unless prohibited by the treatment center – is critical to the child. Buy Photo The Outdoor Wilderness Learning Center offers equine-assisted therapy to help children with emotional and behavioral issues engage in the world in a productive way. (Photo: Henrietta Wildsmith/The Times) “The closer a child is to her or his family or foster family, the easier it is for the family to participate in treatment,” Wheat said. “What we know for certain is that the more a family participates in treatment, the greater chance of a successful outcome.” Karla Venkataraman, Deputy Assistance Secretary of Child Welfare for DCFS, said the department chose to send “Lonnie” to another state because the out-of-state facility would better address his behavioral needs than the available in-state facilities, but also because the out-of-state facility had a history of successfully working with transgender youth questioning their identities. Walters said her decision to sign the waiver for Lonnie stemmed from the department's mission to always do what is “in the best interest of the child.” “There isn’t a treatment facility in Louisiana that can treat that child. We are sending the child to a very specialized center,” Walters said. Following the state's transition away from Magellan in January, all five Bayou Health plans for children have been tasked with identifying out-of-state networks—already. RELATED: [Children's mental health service provider in transition](#) Buy Photo Patrick Blanchard at the Outdoor Wilderness Learning Center's maze, which is used in team-building activities. (Photo: Henrietta Wildsmith/The Times) Joshua Brett, spokesperson for AmeriHealth – one of the state's Bayou Health plans – said his agency has committed to keeping children as close as possible to family but also will ensure they receive quality care if an out-of-state facility is needed. “If a member needs treatment out of state, we will work with the member and their family to find a suitable accredited and licensed Medicaid provider,” Brett wrote in an email. Wheat said better alternatives to identifying out-of-state facilities would include: Increasing funding to established in-state therapeutic group homes and psychiatric facilities. Providing start-up funds and provisional licenses so more therapeutic group homes can be established in parishes. Recruiting more child and adolescent psychiatrists to the state, which currently averages less than eight [for every 100,000 children](#), according to the [American Academy of Child and Adolescent Development](#) Buy Photo The Outdoor Wilderness Learning Center in Dubach helps children with mental and behavioral problems learn skills by connecting with nature. (Photo: Henrietta Wildsmith/The Times) Richard Carbo, spokesman for Gov. John Bel Edwards, said the governor is aware that the state's children are being placed out of state but said resources are limited because of the state's ongoing budget crisis. “Often times, a child's needs can best be met by an out-of-state facility,” Carbo wrote in a statement. “However, it is a priority of the governor to ensure Louisiana's children get the best help here at home as possible, and he'll continue to work with state agencies to make improvements.” Source: <http://www.shreveporttimes.com/story/news/2016/10/01/watchdog-louisiana-children-sent-out-state-psychiatric-care/85994498/>

Foster Parent, Former Teacher on Trial for Child Abuse Nicole Gomez-Vilchis is former teacher at Van Dyke Public Schools. By [Barb Hall \(Patch Staff\)](#) - September 30, 2016 3:48 pm ET [Share](#)[Tweet](#)[Google Plus](#)[Reddit](#)[Email](#)[Comments](#)0 MACOMB COUNTY, MI – A former teacher and foster parent is on trial for abuse that allegedly happened more than two years ago. Nicole Gomez-Vilchis, 29, is accused of abusing a 15-month-old girl in 2014. The child and her brother were placed in foster care with Gomez-Vilchis and her husband Hugo in 2013 when the children were removed from their parents' home due to drug use, the [Macomb Daily](#) reports. The trial, in Macomb County Circuit Court, began Wednesday and is expected to continue next Tuesday. If convicted, Gomez-Vilchis faces 10 years in prison. At one point, Gomez-Vilchis was ordered by a judge to have no contact with children, but that order was rescinded when she gave birth to her own child, the Macomb Daily reports. School officials say she is no longer employed by the Van Dyke Public Schools in Warren where she was a middle school teacher. Get free real-time news alerts from the St. Clair Shores Patch. Subscribe According to testimony, the incident allegedly occurred in June of 2014. The report states that Gomez-Vilchis abused the child, now three years old, by squeezing her very tightly when the child became fussy after being put to bed for her a nap. Gomez-Vilchis denied the abuse at first but, according to testimony of police officers, later admitted to squeezing the girl. The two children were removed from the home the day after the alleged abuse occurred. Source: <http://patch.com/michigan/stclairshores/foster-parent-former-teacher-trial-child-abuse>

State revokes licenses of two St. Paul youth group homes Assaults, neglect and 911 calls were common at youth homes. By [Chris Serres](#) Star Tribune October 5, 2016 — 9:03pm Text size [comment](#) [share](#) [tweet](#) [email](#) Print more Share on: [Share on LinkedIn](#) [Share on Google+](#) [Share on Pinterest](#) Copy shortlink: Purchase: [Order Reprint](#) State regulators will shut down two St. Paul-based group homes for troubled children, citing a broad range of “serious and chronic” licensing violations that exposed youth to assaults, serious injuries and inadequate medical care. The Vintage Place Inc., a nonprofit with a long history of run-ins with state regulators, failed to report incidents in which residents ran away and assaulted one another, resulting in some cases in serious injuries and medical treatment. At times, children at one of the homes went completely unsupervised, with no staff on duty. In an extensive and unusual order issued Monday revoking the operator's licenses, the Minnesota Department of Human Services cited more than a dozen incidents last year in which police or emergency medical personnel were called to respond to assaults, damaged property and threatening behavior. Employees also failed to report at least seven cases in which residents ran away or went missing from the two group homes. “The nature and severity of the ongoing violations unacceptably jeopardize the health and safety of children in your program to receive services that are crucial to their well-being and development,” the revocation order said. Established in 2002, Vintage Place cares for troubled boys at two group homes, each housing up to six children, on St. Paul's East Side. It has a history of regulatory violations dating back more than five years. In a 2011 licensing review, it was cited for 27 violations, from failing to report critical safety incidents to lacking a daily schedule of residents' activities. In more recent years, Vintage Place employees have gotten into fights with residents. In 2013, a staff member grabbed a resident by the throat and threw him onto a bed; later the next year, a staff member punched a resident in the jaw during an altercation, state records show. Roberta Opheim, state ombudsman for mental health and developmental disabilities, questioned why regulators had not acted sooner. “How many kids over these five years were subjected to substandard care?” she asked. “These types of citations and the chronicity of the problem should not be allowed, especially when [public] funds are being used to pay for it.” In early June of this year, state licensing investigators visited the Vintage Place North home at 1853 Cottage Ave. E. in St. Paul and discovered that no staff were present to supervise the children. An employee told investigators that if staff needed to leave the home while residents were away at school, they posted a sign on the front door telling children to walk to the other Vintage Place facility, approximately a mile away. In interviews, children told regulators that on several occasions they had returned to the home on Cottage Avenue E. and “no one was there.” State investigators also found the group homes repeatedly failed to provide adequate health care. Medical records indicated that one child went without lithium, an antipsychotic medication, for eight days after the child's supply had run out, while another child did not receive anti-depressants as prescribed for five days. The licensing revocation takes effect Oct. 17, though Vintage Place still has 10 days to appeal the order and can continue to operate until the appeals process concludes. Telephone calls and e-mails to the group homes were not returned Wednesday. According to its website, Vintage Place “teaches youth the values necessary to become a well-adjusted and contributing member of society through a family setting.” The group homes target boys, ages 10 to 18, who have been involved in the juvenile court system or

have been diagnosed with a behavioral or mental health problem. "Many of the youth have not had a fair opportunity to succeed in life," the website says. The move to shut down Vintage Place is highly unusual. Since 2011, the state has revoked the license of only one other children's residential services facility. Staff researcher John Wareham contributed to this report. Twitter: @chrisseres Source: <http://www.startribune.com/state-revokes-licenses-of-two-st-paul-youth-group-homes/39602871/>

Federal Government Continues To Feed Charter School Beast Despite Auditor's Warning Politicians always promise they will rid government of "waste, fraud, and abuse," so let's hope at least one political leader or policy maker will denounce our federal government's new gift of nearly a quarter-billion dollars to charter schools. The cash dump to charters, courtesy of taxpayers, is from the U.S. Department of Education. As [Education Week](#) reports, the money is going to eight states and 15 charter school networks from the Charter Schools Program, a federal government operation that doles out millions every year to start new charter schools. This money is the latest installment of an over [\\$3 billion](#) gravy train the federal government has funded to help launch over 2,500 charter schools across the nation. Regardless of how you feel about these schools, you should be concerned about how this new government outlay to charters will be used, based on the extensive track record of financial malfeasance in these schools. Indeed, shortly after the USDE announcement, the Department's own auditor warned that the money is very much at risk of ending up in the pockets of fraudsters and con artists rather than in the classrooms of diligent students and dedicated teachers. Again [Education Week](#) reports, the audit by the agency's inspector general's office examined 33 schools in six states and concluded that because of a general lack of oversight of charters there was a "risk that federal programs are not being implemented correctly and are wasting public money." The risk stems from the "cozy relationships," the EdWeek reporter's words, between charter schools and companies that operate them, called Charter Management Organizations (CMOs). Of the 33 charter schools the [audit](#) examined, 22 had examples, sometimes multiple examples, of how CMOs take advantage of the unusual business relationship they have with their client charters to exploit federal education funds and redirect precious taxpayer dollars to private interests that have nothing to do with education. In one of the more egregious examples the audit found, "the CEO of one CMO in Pennsylvania had the authority to write and issue checks without charter school board approval and wrote checks to himself from the charter school's accounts totaling about \$11 million." At another Pennsylvania charter, a vendor that supplied services to the school was owned by the charter school's CMO and received \$485,000 in payments from the school without charter school board approval. In Florida, a charter and a CMO that shared the same board entered into an expensive lease agreement for the school building, then expanded the facility, extended the lease, and increased the rental payments to the CMO. One CMO the audit examined, which operated three charters in Michigan and one in New York, required the charter schools to remit all federal, state, and local funds to the CMO and gave the CMO total responsibility, with no oversight by the charter board, for paying school expenditures. The auditor's report doesn't provide the names of these schools, so we don't know if they have received federal grant money in the past or are some of the ones getting the new money. However, three of the six states the audit looked at – California, Texas, and Florida – are the same states the Department of Education just decided to send more money to. The other three – Michigan, Pennsylvania, and New York – have received federal money for charters in the past, either sent to the state or to charter organizations operating in the state. These states, and presumably many others the feds send charter money to, often don't sufficiently track how the money is used, according to the audit. Of the six states examined, half could not provide consistent funding data on charter schools with CMOs, a third could not identify which charter schools used CMOs, and a third that tracked whether charter schools used CMOs had unreliable information because charter schools self-reported their operations. The federal auditor's revelations on charter school waste, fraud, and abuse is yet another dose of reality in a long line of factual reporting about these schools. A study released last year by the [Center for Media and Democracy](#) found "charter spending is largely a black hole." That's because the "flexibility" charters have been granted by the government is often being used not to create education innovations but to "allow an epidemic of fraud, waste, and mismanagement that would not be tolerated in public schools," the CMD report found. Based on its extensive research on charters, CMD examined the [list of new award grantees](#) and noted Florida, that's getting a grant of \$58,454,516, has closed over 120 charter schools in a little over a decade. Texas, which is getting \$30,498,392, has "an unknown number" of charter schools "housed in churches" and "closely tied to, religious groups." Tennessee, which is getting \$15,172,732, is famous for having a statewide online charter school that is so bad, the [state education chief](#) tried to get rid of it but couldn't because of political maneuvering by the charter lobby and lack of regulatory accountability. California, which is getting \$27,329,904, has some of the worst charter school scandals in the nation, according to a report from the [Center for Popular Democracy](#), which uncovered over \$81,400,000 in fraud, waste, and abuse in the state. CPD call the alarming figure "likely just the tip of the iceberg." Louisiana, another grantee getting \$4,836,766 from the feds, has been ripped off by "tens of millions of dollars in undiscovered losses" from charter schools in the 2013-14 school year, according to another [CPD analysis](#). "The state has insufficiently resourced financial oversight," CPD contends, and has yet to put into place adequate reporting, staffing, and auditing. Three other states – Georgia, Massachusetts, and Washington – are getting the money just when they are deeply embroiled in heated controversies over charter schools. [Georgia](#) has a ballot initiative in November on whether to allow the state to operate an Opportunity School District that would summarily take over local schools and hand them over to charter operators. [Massachusetts](#) also has a November ballot initiative, called Question 2, that would allow the state to lift the cap on the number of charters allowed to operate in the state. And in [Washington](#), a charter school battleground for over 20 years, court rulings, legislative shenanigans, lawsuits, and counter lawsuits related to charter schools continue to rage across the state. No doubt, this new money – over \$41 million altogether for these three states – may now sweeten the pot if pro charter forces get their way. Regarding the individual CMOs the Department is sending money to, one of them, Uncommon Schools, is a charter chain which used to be led in part by the current head of USDE, Secretary [John King](#). Uncommon is getting \$8,004,576. No conflict of interest there. Another recipient – the Denver School of Science and Technology charter chain in Colorado, with a grant of \$4,043,361 – has paid out between \$20 to \$50 million to a for-profit corporation owned by two of the charter chain's director, according to [another CPD analysis](#). A charter school chain in [Indiana](#) getting \$1,923,866 is plagued with financial problems, low enrollment, and controversy over how the CEO spends money. No doubt the infusion of federal cash will help. The federal auditor's report recommends the convening of a formal oversight group to look into charter school financial malfeasance, more rigorous review of charter school operations by federal agencies, and legislative changes in Congress to firm up government oversight. **Here's another recommendation: Stop federal funding to expand these schools.** Source: <http://educationopportunitynetwork.org/federal-government-continues-to-feed-charter-school-beast-despite-auditors-warning/>

Is foster care protecting children? Andrew Setterholm, asetterholm@postbulletin.com Updated Oct 8, 2016 (1) 6 remaining of 7 Welcome! We hope that you enjoy our free content. The tragic death of 4-year-old Eric Dean in 2013 shocked Minnesotans to make changes to the state's child protection system. Some of the bigger changes took effect statewide earlier this year, and in some cases, the results have been drastic — and some are cause for concern, according to child protection employees at Olmsted County and the state of Minnesota. +1 This photograph of Eric Dean was taken by his daycare provider, Mindy DeGeer, and presented as evidence during the May 2014 trial of Eric's stepmother, Amanda Peltier. Eric's case came to light in 2014, after a [series of articles](#) published by the Minneapolis Star-Tribune. At the time he was killed in 2013, Eric was living at home with his mother, despite more than a dozen reports of abuse. Pope County investigated just one of those reports and found no maltreatment. In May 2014, Eric's mother, Amanda Peltier, was convicted of first-degree murder and [sentenced](#) to life in prison. Later that year, the state jumped into action to address the glaring inadequacies of the system. In the years following, increased attention on child protection has driven a sizable increase in the volume of reports of child abuse. The state's changes also have had noticeable effects in 2015 and 2016: county child protective services are receiving more reports of abuse and, with new guidelines for screening reports, they are investigating more of those cases. Olmsted County is seeing another effect of the changes: More children are being placed in foster care. The county last year placed 195 children in out-of-home care. Foster care placements related to child protection cases increased 50 percent from 2014 to 2015, according to Olmsted County Jodi Wentland, director of the county's Child and Family Services Department. The state's changes to the system have provided consistency said James Koppel, Minnesota assistant commissioner for child and family services. Would the state's child services department be concerned if out-of-home placements for children continue to rise? "Absolutely," Koppel said. Following changes to the state's child protection system, Olmsted County is receiving more reports of child abuse and investigating a greater share of those reports. County staff have noticed another trend: More children are being placed in foster care. The data period for this trend is short because the changes are so recent, but it is enough to worry staff members at both the county and state levels. "I would say that, in general, a foster care placement for a child or children is a trauma. We consider that a trauma," said James Koppel, Minnesota assistant commissioner for child and family services. In addition to the immediate trauma of foster placements, children can experience mental health effects and negative outcomes later in life, Wentland said. Children who "age out" of foster care have higher likelihoods of incarceration and unemployment. The leading cause of homelessness among 18- to 24-year-old Minnesotans is aging out of foster care, Koppel said. "That cannot continue," Koppel said. "We cannot let our foster care system fail the very

children that we have chosen to take out of homes due to maltreatment. We cannot fail those children in our foster care system." Out-of-home placements also are more expensive for counties and the statewide system. Spending on child protection statewide has increased 20 percent since 2014, according to a report compiled by Olmsted County. But state funding to county programs has not kept pace with changes in the system; local tax revenue has paid for about 75 percent of the spending increase, the county report said. Olmsted County [last month redirected](#) \$600,000 in funding from its Child and Family Services department budget to accommodate increased costs for out-of-home placements. More attention Reporting on Eric Dean's death placed intense scrutiny on the state's child protective services. Lawmakers were pressured to review which reports of child abuse were accepted for further review — "screened in" — by county child protection agencies for assessment or investigation, when law enforcement became involved in cases and whether past reports of abuse should be considered in determining responses to reports. In 2014, Gov. Mark Dayton assembled a task force to address the issue: the [Governor's Task Force on the Protection of Children](#). Department of Human Services Commission Lucinda Jessen chaired the task force, and Gov. Dayton appointed legislators and experts from across the state, including Mower County Sheriff Terese Amazi. The task force made [93 recommendations](#) for changes to state law and county policies. The first was to revise Minnesota's Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act to state "child safety" as the paramount consideration for decision making. A second significant change was to repeal a statutory provision that prevented consideration of dismissed reports when caseworkers reviewed a new report of abuse. The task force also revised screening guidelines for child protective services, the framework for deciding which cases are reviewed and investigated. The screening guideline was reviewed by the Minnesota Legislature and became law on Jan. 1. The most immediate effects of the screening change have been an increase in the number of reports accepted for review by county child protection agencies and the intensity of counties' responses to those reports. County caseworkers have two paths of action available when a report of child abuse is received: Caseworkers can conduct a family assessment or a family investigation. A family assessment focuses on connecting parents and children with social services. Investigations take a forensic approach and involve law enforcement. An investigation also results in a legal finding — or no finding — of child maltreatment. The state's new screening requirements already have driven an increase in investigations. More than 36 percent of reports this year have resulted in investigations, Koppel said, compared to about 26 percent last year. Of those investigations, Koppel said 47 percent of cases have resulted in a finding of child maltreatment. Many, but not all, of those cases where maltreatment was discovered led to a child being placed in a foster care situation. The combined effect of counties taking more reports, screening in those reports and handling more reports as investigations could be contributing to the outcomes Olmsted County is experiencing — more children being placed in out-of-home care. "We're seeing both things, so it's a compounding effect of more reports screened in and a higher percent of the reports screened in going to an investigation," Koppel said. Olmsted County still conducts more assessments than investigations, but the balance is shifting. In 2013, the county screened in 412 cases; it conducted investigations in 77 of those cases. In the first half of this year, it has conducted 78 investigations in 269 total cases. Child protective services statewide screened in about 19,500 reports in 2013 and 20,000 in 2014. The state saw a dramatic increase in 2015 with more than 24,000 screened-in reports, and this year is on pace to show another jump to about 26,000 screened-in reports, Koppel said. Philosophical shift Investigations and out-of-home placements are what child protection workers call "back-end" services — resource-intensive responses to serious issues. Front-end services aim to address serious issues before they occur by providing social, economic and health supports, Wentland said. "There's a philosophical shift, or a philosophical pressure that's happening, at a state level around the use of out-of-home care," Wentland said. Wentland has tried to balance the department's resources to cope with new requirements while also directing adequate funding to front-end services. "My perspective, from an Olmsted perspective, we need to do even more work to try to slow this entry into (out of home) placement," Wentland said. "In clarifying that, children need to be safe. It's paramount. So placement decisions need to be around (keeping) children safe." Investing in front- and back-end services is not a "one or the other" situation but a careful balance, Wentland said. The county's investments in workforce development, education and housing could have direct effects on reports of maltreatment and out-of-home placements. "We can't do that on our own," Wentland said. "It's not going to happen in six months or a year. This is a long-term commitment for us." Supporting prevention +1 [Buy Now](#) Paul Fleissner The state's changes have seemed reactionary, said Olmsted County Community Services director Paul Fleissner. "The whole system is moving toward a reaction of pulling kids (out of homes)," Fleissner said. While the county has seen past successes in focusing on front-end services, those services are not tied to reliable funding sources. Mandated changes, such as the screening guidelines, are directly tied to funding allocated to counties. "What I've been concerned about is we've spent more time looking at what's wrong than at what's working," Fleissner said. Koppel said the changes at the state level have provided consistency that was lacking in the child protection system. "I believe that we did not have consistent practices around the state on how we treated calls and how we screened calls, how we screened cases. I think there are more consistent responses now across the state," he said. As for front-end services, the state has one prevention program, the Parent Support Outreach Program. The program has an annual statewide budget of \$2 million. "That's the part that to me we ultimately need to be focused on is preventing families from entering our child protection system that is very expensive and in which children have already received, or in many cases experienced, trauma — and in too many cases (will) experience more trauma," Koppel said. Reaction to changes Olmsted County's child and family services workers regularly have updated the county's decision-makers, the Board of Commissioners, said board member Sheila Kiscaden. The move toward foster placements for children is worrying, she said. "We generally don't believe that that out-of-home placement for children is the solution," Kiscaden said. "There's real consequences to children when you take them out of their home. You might be protecting their physical safety, but there are mental health effects," Kiscaden said. The state's reforms made it clear — child safety is paramount, Koppel said. As counties continue to enact the 93 recommendations of the governor's task force, agencies at the state and county levels will continue to monitor another measure, in addition to safety: well being. "(Well being) includes that a child is safe, but it's much more aspirational, which is that a child is actually developing and has assets and is headed in a much more positive direction," Koppel said. "We want to make sure nothing bad happens to a child, but we strive for the well being." Source: http://www.postbulletin.com/news/local/is-foster-care-protecting-children/article_6c3900e4-8e3e-5f20-b1a9-c471753c80ad.html

A Baby Nearly Dies in Foster Care, Reigniting Questions About Connecticut's DCF By [Jeff Tyson](#) & [Lucy Nalpathanchil](#) • Oct 10, 2016 Related Program: [Where We Live](#) [Share](#) [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Google+](#) [Email](#) Connecticut DCF Commissioner Joette Katz with Governor Dannel Malloy Dannel Malloy / Creative Commons Listen... / 49:04 The state [Department of Children and Families](#) is back in the news facing sharp criticism over multiple issues. This hour, we dig into them and we'll examine what, if anything, needs to change within DCF. The [Connecticut Health Investigative Team reports](#) that adoptive parents are being asked by DCF to give up custody of their children so the kids can receive intensive mental health care. We find out more about this practice of "trading custody for care." Also -- the state Child Advocate will join us to talk about a [recent and troubling report](#) about the near death of a baby that DCF had placed with a relative unfit to care for him. The child advocate says the case shows major systemic failures within the department. DCF Commissioner Joette Katz declined to come on the show to talk about this issue and others, but we are still going to talk about them. And we want to hear from you. Who holds DCF accountable when cases like the near starvation of a baby surface? Are they really just "outliers" as the agency suggests? Plus, the United Way has put out a new [report that highlights the economic challenges](#) facing many working families in Connecticut. We talk with the report's author about the findings and how Connecticut compares to other states. Source: <http://wnpr.org/post/baby-nearly-dies-foster-care-reigniting-questions-about-connecticuts-dcf>

Mom Blames Youth Ranch for Son's Death By ERIK DE LA GARZA [Share This](#) WACO, Texas (CN) — A grieving mother sued a Texas youth ranch, claiming it created a "Lord of the Flies atmosphere" that culminated when her 16-year-old son was kicked to death. Elizabeth Acevedo says in her Oct. 7 federal lawsuit that Brookhaven Youth Ranch did little to protect her disabled son from being kicked to death in 2014 at the nonprofit residential treatment center in West, Texas. She sued Brookhaven Youth Ranch, its foundation, its executive director Dennis Cooke, five security guards, and the teenage boy, "A.S.," who she says was convicted of murder "and sentenced to a lengthy prison term." Acevedo says her son, Cristian Cuellar, fought with A.S. in a violent game called "King Pin," in which the stronger child attempted to restrain the weaker child on the floor to pin them. She says A.S. was older than Cristian, 6 inches taller, and outweighed him by more than 45 lbs. "Moreover, he had a documented history of physical aggression and anger management difficulties," the mother says in the complaint. However, she adds: "The staff at the youth ranch would simply observe this child-on-child violence, without making any attempt to intervene, creating a 'Lord of the Flies' atmosphere at the youth ranch." After breaking up the initial fight and separating the boys, a security guard tasked with supervising Cuellar "lost track of him," setting up the fatal incident when, "predictably," A.S. attacked Cuellar "again, as staff at the facility routinely allowed," Acevedo says. "Because the facility was understaffed, there were insufficient security officers to immediately break up the fight," according to the complaint. By the time guards arrived, A.S. had thrown her son to the floor "then viciously kicked Cristian in the head, killing him," his mother says. Brookhaven executive director Dennis Cooke told Courthouse News on Tuesday that he had no knowledge of the lawsuit and declined

comment. Cooke and others at the center were not issued summonses until Tuesday because of the Columbus Day holiday, according to court records.

Acevedo claims that Cooke knew that children at the center were regularly assaulted, but he and his staff did little to prevent violence. Brookhaven describes itself online as serving up to 61 teens between the ages of 13 and 17, referred mostly by two Texas agencies and various counties. Its mission is to provide a "therapeutic sanctuary where children feel safe, parents feel reassured and referral sources feel appreciated and included in the effort to provide a compassionate, healing environment," the website states. A spokesman for the Texas Justice Juvenile Department noted in an email that it no longer contracts with the ranch, and Acevedo says state agencies have cited the center numerous times for resident-on-resident violence. An investigation of her son's death by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services found that a staff member "was not aware of the child's ongoing activity" on the date of the attack. "As a result, the child was involved in a physical altercation with another resident," according to [the letter](#) sent from a licensing investigator to Brookhaven's executive director in 2015. The state recommended the center implement a system to ensure that all residents are accounted for. Acevedo said that in her son's case, the measures taken, if any, "were woefully ineffective," and said the staff was "wholly untrained and incapable of preventing violence at the facility." She seeks punitive damages for wrongful death, negligence, gross negligence, and civil rights violations. She is represented by Jeffrey Edwards in Austin. Source: <http://www.courthousenews.com/2016/10/12/mom-blames-youth-ranch-for-sons-death.htm>

Maryland's Move to Pull Children From Group Homes Came Too Late for Teenager Who Died After unannounced inspections revealed deficiencies, Maryland stopped placing young people at Delaware facilities owned by AdvoServ. by [Heather Vogell](#) ProPublica, Oct. 13, 2016, 7:59 a.m. [0 Comments](#) [Print](#) [Print](#) This is part of an ongoing investigation [Restraints](#) Do you know a child who has been forcibly restrained or secluded at school? Help us investigate by [sharing your story](#). Spur Reform in 2016 Support ProPublica's mission to expose abuses of power and corruption. Once again, government actions against a controversial for-profit company's chain of group homes for the disabled may have come too late to protect a child. ProPublica has learned that Maryland had begun pulling about 30 children out of homes owned and managed by AdvoServ in August, but hadn't yet relocated a teenage girl when she died a month later after being manually restrained by staff. Maryland's Department of Human Resources had also stopped placing children in AdvoServ homes, following inspections that identified deficiencies in quality control, record-keeping, and conditions in residential and common areas. Last year, ProPublica chronicled AdvoServ's [long record of problematic treatment](#), its use of [mechanical restraints](#), and its efforts to weaken regulation as it took in more people with developmental or intellectual disabilities and behavior challenges. Maryland, which plans to terminate its contract with AdvoServ at the end of this month, isn't the only state to have increased its scrutiny of the company since the ProPublica series. In March, Delaware placed the company on probation, a spokeswoman for the state's Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families said. In June, Florida officials said they had begun moving clients out of the company's facility in the state, and stationed an investigator there. Through a spokesman, the company declined to comment on the decisions by Maryland and Delaware regulators. AdvoServ's shortcomings add to the growing concerns about for-profit companies taking over delivery of human services, from prisons to hospice care, that were traditionally provided by government or non-profit agencies. The teenager's death, in particular, points to the limits of state officials' ability to safeguard the disabled people they place in group homes run by private contractors — even when such care is paid for with public money. Kevin Huckshorn, a national behavioral health consultant, said it matters less whether care providers are public or private — and more whether the public agency paying for services is keeping a close enough watch. "It's out of sight, out of mind," she said. "If you're not able to do due diligence on oversight and monitoring, anything can happen." She added that, because of the problems that have surfaced publicly, regulators should have been on alert for issues at AdvoServ homes. "That should have upped the ante," she said. Fractured authority and multiple players — which at times have included as many as a dozen government agencies — have clouded oversight of the company's operations. AdvoServ has expanded in the past two decades despite a stream of complaints of abuse and neglect. As far back as the 1990s, the state of New York pulled its children from AdvoServ's predecessor, Au Clair, because its inspectors had found children living in trailers that reeked of [urine and feces](#). Officials elsewhere have repeatedly backed off from sanctioning the company, which is aided by well-connected lobbyists that include prominent former state legislators. In 2012, for example, Florida reneged on plans to bar an AdvoServ home, where both adults and a child had allegedly been punched and kicked, from accepting new clients for a year. Now owned by a private equity firm, Delaware-based AdvoServ reported last year that it cared for about 700 children and adults in that state, Florida, and New Jersey, and was expanding into Virginia. The company said then it had about 60 people age 21 or younger in its Delaware program. When Delaware officials put AdvoServ on probation in March, they established a new oversight committee with representatives from several state agencies. They also increased visits by state workers to the company's facilities, strengthened requirements for reporting complaints involving children, and tightened rules about documenting when a child left AdvoServ grounds, Delaware spokeswoman Dawn Thompson said in an email. Eight Delaware youth remain in AdvoServ homes, Thompson said. She did not provide details on why the company was placed on probation. The state has received eight complaints this year regarding alleged abuse of children at AdvoServ, as well as two complaints that resulted from the teenage girl's death, Thompson said. Most of the complaints were filed by the company. Maryland is one of several states that send difficult cases to AdvoServ homes in Delaware when they cannot find beds and schooling closer to home. Maryland's contract allows the state to pay AdvoServ up to \$7.5 million a year to care for children referred either from its foster care program or after their parents had sought the agency's help. This past June, a lawsuit was filed against AdvoServ in state court in Delaware, alleging that a teenage boy from Maryland was left unsupervised and raped repeatedly by other clients during more than four years in the company's homes. His neck was injured during a restraint performed by workers, according to his lawyer, Chris Gowen. The case is pending. In early August, Maryland assembled a team of officials to make an unusual unannounced visit. Unrestrained While evidence of abuse of the disabled has piled up for decades, one for-profit company has used its deep pockets and influence to bully weak regulators and evade accountability. [Read the story](#). What Happened to Adam It took one mother seven years to learn that the for-profit school she trusted with her son had strapped him down again and again, one time after not picking up his Legos. [Read the story](#). The inspections, conducted on three days, prompted the pull-out of children and moratorium on new placements. As of this week, Maryland officials had moved 20 people under age 21 to new placements, with nine remaining at AdvoServ homes. Officials expected to move most of them by the end of this week and will have all removed before the state's contract ends October 31. About a month after the inspection, a 15-year-old girl from Hyattsville, Maryland, became unresponsive while being restrained at a group home in a quiet stretch of old Delaware farm country southwest of Wilmington pocked with new housing developments. The girl, whose name has not been released, died in a Delaware hospital two days later. Maryland then ordered its staff to visit AdvoServ homes every day. The girl was not the first teenager to die at an AdvoServ home. In 1997, a 14-year-old autistic boy with epilepsy was found dead in his bed with low levels of anti-seizure medicine in his blood. In 2013, a 14-year-old autistic girl died at the company's Florida home after a night in which she was restrained — at times fastened to a bed and chair — while she vomited repeatedly. "The safety of our children is DHR's top priority and we are taking this case very seriously," Maryland spokeswoman Katherine Morris said in an emailed statement, referring to the 15-year-old girl's death. The company said in a brief statement last month that it was "heartbroken over the loss of a young woman in our care." Source: <https://www.propublica.org/article/maryland-move-pull-children-from-group-homes-too-late-teenager-who-died>

In Privatization Battle, Unions Go To Court To Block Conversions Of Group Homes Jane Vasseur Of Enfield, Sister Of Group-Home Resident Parents, siblings and guardians rally against privatizing group homes Thursday in Hartford, as unions file for court injunction blocking the conversions. Parents, siblings and guardians rally against privatizing group homes Thursday in Hartford, as unions file for court injunction blocking the conversions. [Josh Kovner](#) [Contact Reporter](#) Court filings are mounting in the battle to prevent at least 30 state group homes from going private. Two unions representing state workers who have, or face, losing their jobs in the conversion, asked a judge on Thursday to block the transfer at least until a labor board considers the unions' assertion that the contract prevents state workers from losing their jobs over privatization. Representatives of the private sector lamented what they said was an "obstructionist" position by the unions. Toting placards urging the state not to disrupt relationships between workers and clients that have formed over many years, parents, siblings and guardians of some of the group-home residents joined current and former employees of the state Department of Developmental Disabilities and union organizers at a rally Thursday outside the Superior Court's civil division on Washington Street. Gov. Dannel P. Malloy has ordered the conversion of at least 30 state-run group homes and the closing of two regional institutions to save money, and to reflect a national trend toward the privatization of services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Some parents whose loved ones are in state care have expressed deep opposition to the move, saying that in some cases relationships formed with state workers over many years have kept their sons and daughters alive, and they say they distrust the private contractors who have been chronically underfunded by the state. "And they want to do this around the Christmas holidays - rip our families apart?" said Jane Vasseur of Enfield, whose brother, Billy, lives at Grey Pond group home in Simsbury. "They're selling our kids at half price -- this is the way I see it as a

parent," said Lindsay Mathews, whose son, George Griffin, lives at a state group home in Hamden. She was referring to the cost of care in private group homes, which is half the state rate. Nearly 90 percent of the roughly 16,700 clients of DDS already receive services through private contractors. There are examples throughout the private sector of people with highly complex medical needs, including feeding and respiration tubes, being well cared for in private group homes, say parents with children in private care. The private sector also cares for clients with a range of difficult behaviors, including self-injury and Pica disorder, which is an appetite for non-edible objects or substances, advocates say. Local 1199 of the Service Employees International Union also represents workers in private group homes in Connecticut. Those workers haven't had raises in several years, and many qualify for Husky insurance, and must work at least two jobs to support themselves and their families. David Pickus, president of Local 1199 said, the union doesn't see this as a public-private battle. "If it was the private group homes that were being disrupted in this manner, we'd be furious at that as well," Pickus said. The state is "rushing ahead with this conversion without considering its obligation to bargain with the union," he said. The last contract, which has expired but has been extended, prohibits layoffs from private conversions, said Pickus, but state officials have argued that the provision no longer exists. The union has filed a prohibitive-practice complaint with the state Board of Labor Relations and has requested an accelerated hearing. In the petition for an injunction filed Thursday, the union is asking for a temporary halt to the conversions until the labor board can rule. Mathews has filed a separate request for an injunction on behalf of her son, and a hearing is scheduled for Monday at Superior Court in New Haven. Lawyers for advocates who support private care said a key issue is whether the state has neglected the private sector. "The idea that state-run facilities are inherently superior to private group homes is simply not supported by our experience in Connecticut," said lawyer David Shaw, who represented the Arc Connecticut in cases that closed the Mansfield Training School and helped dozens of former residents of the Southbury Training School move to private community settings. "I think the question for the court will be whether the state has provided sufficient support [to the private sector] to enable them to provide adequate care," Shaw said. Gian-Carlo Casa, a former state policy and budget official who now heads the trade group representing dozens of private group-home operators, said the private sector has demonstrated that it can match the state's quality of care and do it for significantly less money. "It is unfortunate that the union is taking an obstructionist position on a plan that experience and research shows will only benefit the individuals in state care," Casa said Thursday. He said the lower cost of private care "could allow the state to provide services for many more families who are languishing on waiting lists." The federal government is also pushing states to close outmoded institutions and place clients in less restrictive, community-based settings. Advocates in Connecticut who support private care nonetheless acknowledge that the state's underfunding of private vendors has caused high turnover and driven qualified and talented people out of the field. Source: <http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-group-homes-private-state-injunction-1014-20161013-story.html>

Local parents ask for public ratings of group homes By Bayne Hughes Staff Writer Updated 18 hrs ago [0 Buy Now](#) By Bayne Hughes Staff Writer James Perdue prev next Two Decatur parents asked state Mental Health Commissioner James Perdue for better group home ratings and more notice of pending closures during his visit to Decatur on Wednesday. They did not leave the meeting satisfied. Suzanne Johnson and Jennifer Chase, parents of two group home residents who are developmentally disabled, said they were concerned after Perdue's town hall meeting at the Mental Health Center of North Central Alabama that the state Department of Mental Health is more interested in protecting group home providers than in protecting the disabled clients. Perdue also told Mayor-elect Tab Bowling that he would be willing to work with the city on the use of the Mental Health Center of North Central Alabama's request for a \$30,000 city allocation. Chase told Perdue she received 12 hours' notice in April before the state shut down the group home on Diane Street Southwest, where her daughter was living. Chase said her daughter was happy and she was pleased with her care, so they were unaware the group home was even possibly facing closure. Her daughter has adjusted well to the new home, but Chase said she lives in fear she will be blindsided again after the traumatic experience. "We need to know when a group home receives a low rating," Chase said. Johnson's daughter wasn't involved in the closure of nine group homes in Decatur, but she said the state Department of Mental Health's website doesn't include ratings or grades of the licensed group homes. This prompted Johnson to unsuccessfully call Perdue's department. "They weren't allowed to tell us or direct us to the good homes," Johnson said. "It was like they didn't want to be responsible." Perdue said some people want a rating system for group homes similar to the health ratings for restaurants, but it's not that simple, especially when there's a shortage of group providers. "Ratings can be misleading," Perdue said. "A restaurant can get a 97, but you've still got a problem if you find a fly in your soup." Perdue said it's important to make sure the ratings "don't cause undue alarm. We also need to maintain the privacy of the individual provider." Perdue admitted his department needs to do a better job of managing the group home providers. This includes making sure they follow rules like not hiring convicted felons and not allowing medication to be left unlocked in the refrigerator, he said. The Mental Health Center's request for the city allocation has been a controversial issue since the City Council cut the funding in 2014 as part of budget reductions. The center's last allocation was \$28,000 in 2013. The council refused to add the allocation back in the fiscal 2016 and 2017 budgets. However, Bowling made funding the center's request a campaign issue in the municipal election in which he was elected mayor on Oct. 4. At least two of the newly elected council members also have said they support adding the Mental Health Center's request to the new budget. Bowling asked Perdue to help the Decatur mental health center get a match to a city allocation through the federal Medicaid program. He believes the \$28,000 match would create almost \$94,000 for the center. "A long-term healthcare facility isn't an option, but that would be a lot of money to add to the bucket and help more people," Bowling said. Perdue said he doesn't want to micromanage the local Mental Health Center, but putting the allocation up for the federal match creates federal government oversight that might not be worth the trouble. New Mental Health Center Executive Lisa Coleman said her center would keep a city allocation local to help indigent Decatur residents with psychiatric care. She said it's hard to say how many patients an allocation would help because the cost varies with the amount of care required for each patient. Coleman said her center would need permission from Perdue on the state level to submit the city allocation for the potential Medicaid match. "It's a very complicated process," Coleman said. bayne.hughes@decaturdaily.com or 256-340-2432. Twitter @DD_BayneHughes. Source: http://www.decaturdaily.com/news/morgan_county/decatur/local-parents-ask-for-public-ratings-of-group-homes/article_6a3eacea-746b-5541-8d61-fd30b0f2385d.html

Grand jury probing foster care; new charges filed in NY case Updated: Thursday, September 22, 2016 @ 2:11 PM Published: Thursday, September 22, 2016 @ 1:50 AM By: Associated Press FILE - This undated file photo provided by the Suffolk County District Attorney's office in Riverhead, N.Y., shows Cesar Gonzales-Mugaburu. The Suffolk County prosecutor tells the Associated Press that a special grand jury has been empaneled to investigate the foster care system and "all the facts" surrounding the Gonzales-Mugaburu case. Gonzales-Mugaburu was arrested in the winter of 2016 and charged with victimizing multiple children in Ridge, N.Y. (Suffolk County District Attorney's Office via AP, File) Riverhead — A special grand jury has been empaneled to investigate New York's foster care system following the arrest of a Long Island man on child sex abuse charges. The man had welcomed dozens of boys into his Ridge home, dating back two decades, before allegations of sex abuse surfaced, creating questions about oversight over the foster parent system. Suffolk County District Attorney Thomas Spota said Thursday the special grand jury, which has been meeting since mid-August and may not conclude its work until early 2017, is "assessing all of the facts and circumstances involving how he was able to take all these boys in." It also is investigating other possible crimes involving the suspect. It was not clear if the grand jury would file additional criminal charges or issue a report on its findings, with recommendations for changes in the foster care system. Various governmental agencies and private foster care organizations are being examined. Spota also told reporters the grand jury would investigate how the suspect was able to obtain some of the children in his care from out-of-state foster care agencies, including Washington. Cesar Gonzales-Mugaburu, 60, was arrested last winter and charged with victimizing seven children as young as 8. One count in an indictment alleges he sexually abused a dog in front of a child. On Thursday, a new indictment was unsealed accusing him of abusing one additional child and added charges involving some of the children identified as victims in the initial charges. A prosecutor also said it was likely some charges from the first indictment may be dropped because some of the alleged crimes happened too long ago to fall under statute of limitations laws. Defense attorney Donald Mates entered a not guilty plea on behalf of his client; Gonzales-Mugaburu is being held without bail. Mates told reporters after the arraignment that his client denies ever abusing children, and suggested the alleged victims were lying. Spota said previously that statute of limitations laws prevented prosecutors from filing charges involving other abuse allegations. Since the scandal erupted, separate investigations have been started by state, city and Long Island officials. Questions remain about how Gonzales-Mugaburu was able to keep getting children placed in his home despite years of concern about his conduct. Before his arrest, Gonzales-Mugaburu was the subject of nine previous investigations involving alleged abuse dating to 1998, according to a spokeswoman for Suffolk County. Each of those inquiries led to a finding at the time that the allegations weren't credible, and none of them immediately led to the removal of children from his split-level ranch home on eastern Long Island. A break came in January, when detectives said two brothers who lived in the house came forward with credible stories of abuse. Once Gonzales-

Mugaburu was in custody, others felt more comfortable coming forward, authorities said. SCO Family of Services, an agency that placed 72 New York City children in Gonzales-Mugaburu's care over 20 years, said it never uncovered evidence of sexual abuse or improper sexual behavior in the home. But the organization's chief strategy officer, Rose Anello said in July that there were other issues with the home, particularly around 2013, "and in retrospect and knowing what we know now, a decision to close the home should have been made at that time." She said those issues involved Gonzales-Mugaburu being uncooperative and unwilling to accept staff guidance on parenting style, but none of the issues then hinted at anything like the allegations uncovered this year. Following the Gonzales-Mugaburu arrest, the city's Administration for Children's Services temporarily halted placing children in SCO foster homes, but announced in July that a review of 370 homes operated by SCO uncovered no indications abuse was occurring at any of those sites. ____ This story has been corrected to show children stopped being placed in SCO foster homes, not SCO facilities. Source: <http://www.whio.com/news/national/grand-jury-probing-foster-care-new-charges-filed-case/17m4FFBabA14DnZruKzEaM/>

Foster care worker convicted of sex crimes against foster child KSNW-TV Published: October 14, 2016, 9:03 am Updated: October 14, 2016, 10:24 am WICHITA, Kan. (KSNW) — A former family support worker with Saint Francis Community Services is being sentenced for child sex crimes. Bridgett Martinez was convicted of consensual sexual intercourse, lewd fondling, or sodomy with a foster child. The charges stemmed from an incident that occurred on May 23rd, 2016. Saint Francis Community Services of Salina says Martinez was placed on administrative leave when they found out about the charges back in July and was terminated on July 8th. Saint Francis Community Services released the following statement to KSN Thursday evening: A statement from The Very Reverend Robert N. Smith, Dean and CEO: "Saint Francis Community Services is aware of criminal charges filed against, and the sentence given by the court to, one of its former employees, Bridgett Martinez. Ms. Martinez was employed by Saint Francis Community Services as a Family Support Worker. Saint Francis Community Services placed Ms. Martinez on administrative leave immediately upon learning of her arrest. Her employment with Saint Francis Community Services ended July 8, 2016. The mission of Saint Francis Community Services is to serve those who are vulnerable and at risk. We condemn the actions of anyone who takes advantage of individuals and violates the laws which protect them. Saint Francis Community Services extends its heartfelt sympathy to the victim in this case." Source: <http://ksn.com/2016/10/14/foster-care-worker-convicted-of-sex-crimes-against-foster-child/>

Science backs how much foster care sucks — kids suffer more health problems Science backs how much foster care sucks BY [Nicole Lyn Pesce](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Monday, October 17, 2016, 1:14 PM [facebook](#) [Tweet](#) [email](#) Children in foster care are vulnerable to health and emotional problems. (Juanmonino/Getty Images) BY [Nicole Lyn Pesce](#) NEW YORK DAILY NEWS Monday, October 17, 2016, 1:14 PM Now it's a scientific fact that foster kids have a hard-knock life. Children in the U.S. foster care system suffer significantly higher risks of emotional and physical health problems, the [journal Pediatrics](#) reported Monday, such as depression, asthma and obesity. University of California, Irvine sociologists surveyed more than 900,000 children. They found those in foster care were seven times more likely to be depressed, five times more likely to be anxious, and six times more prone to behavior problems than other kids in the general population, including those in single-mother and economically disadvantaged families. Foster kids were also three times more likely to have attention deficit disorder. "No previous research has considered how the mental and physical well-being of children who have spent time in foster care compares to that of children in the general population," said study co-author Kristin Turney, UCI associate professor of sociology, in the report. [Kate Middleton records children's mental health PSA](#) And the suggested physical impact for the [more than 400,000 kids in foster care](#) was perhaps even more striking than the expected emotional fallout. Foster children were also three times more likely to have hearing and vision problems. They were twice as likely to develop asthma, become obese and experience speech problems or learning disabilities. "Foster care children are in considerably worse health than other children," noted Turney. The report suggests this stems from any maltreatment they have endured, as well as risk factors such as poverty, parental drug and alcohol abuse and neighborhood disadvantage that likely led to their foster placement. The report advises pediatricians to take note of this in treating children who have been in foster care, and calls for more research for this vulnerable group. "This is typically a difficult-to-reach population, so having access to descriptive statistics on their living arrangements, physical well-being and behavior provided an excellent opportunity to help identify the health challenges they face," Turney wrote. Source: <http://www.nydailynews.com/life-style/health/science-backs-foster-care-sucks-article-1.2833834>

Kevin Morrison: Stop and understand the life of a foster child [Story Comments](#) Print [Create a hardcopy of this page](#) Font Size: [Default font size](#) [Larger font size](#) [Share3](#) [Previous](#) [Next](#) kevin morrison Kevin Morrison, Tulsa County assistant public defender. Editor's note Tulsa County's public defenders help people accused of crimes who otherwise wouldn't be represented in court. This is fifth in a series that takes a look at some of these men and women and their difficult jobs. Each is dedicated to provide the best legal representation possible. To read past stories, visit tulsabusiness.com. Posted: Monday, October 17, 2016 12:00 am [Kevin Morrison: Stop and understand the life of a foster child](#) By Ralph Schaefer TBLN Correspondent TulsaWorld.com | [0 comments](#) Kids see the darnedest things but often suffer from those experiences. They end up on the deprived child docket in the Tulsa County Juvenile Court. They then face the possibility of being removed from their natural home. They just want and need to tell their story, and that responsibility falls to Kevin Morrison, Tulsa County assistant public defender. "We study the facts when the case is presented," he said. "Our first order of business is to have a meeting with our clients — the children — to learn their viewpoint. "Our job is misunderstood by people. Our job is to make sure the child's wishes are represented in court. Our position always will be to try to do what the child desires and get that outcome." The child may or may not want to go home with the parent. There is an increasing trend to leave kids in the home unless there is a need for judicial intervention due to neglect, abuse or other unfitness at home. Unfitness is sexual or physical abuse and is the most commonly understood, Morrison said. But there is parental drug and/or alcohol abuse as well as domestic violence that has reached a point where there is a safety risk for the children. These conditions result in children having Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) reactions, Morrison said. The court has the ability to order one or the other parent out of the home so the children can remain while issues are resolved, he said. The law allows parents no less than 90 days to take corrective action, but some cases are open ended. Oklahoma statutes provide that after a child has been in foster care for a defined period the state can file a motion to terminate parental responsibilities. The period out of the home could be as short as six months for very young children, but experience has shown that time extends to between nine and 12 months in difficult cases. Some cases last longer because parents are unable or unwilling to work on their issues. "Most kids want to go home," Morrison said, "but they want their parents to get help. Something to change at home. They don't want to be hit anymore. They don't want mommy and daddy disappearing to the back room to use drugs." Children react in different ways when they first meet with Morrison. He finds they will talk to him because he explains that he will represent them in the court proceedings so they don't personally have to attend. He tells them that it is his job to get them back with their parents — if they want. By the time intervention occurs, most have a recognition there is a problem at home and many have a heightened awareness about their situations. "I tell people the children know their parents better than anyone and their viewpoint should be trusted," he said. Morrison paused as he thought about the most significant challenge he has faced during his two decades at the Tulsa County Juvenile Court. That time includes working on the district attorney's side. "I think the greatest challenge is avoiding burnout," he said. "It's not that we get burned out. It's that we sometimes get overburdened. We deal with cases involving sexual and physical abuse daily. We look at pictures of children badly injured by parents or others. Some pictures include molestation by parents on a daily basis. That creates a pretty high level of stress. "Our legal system is adversarial by nature, and that is the way it is supposed to work. Everyone has an interest and an advocate that works against each other." Morrison doesn't get a lot of invitations to talk about his role at the juvenile court, but if he would, the message would be there are too many children in the foster care system. These children probably go to public schools, he said, and are likely struggling in class. "I live in Collinsville and am on the school board," Morrison said. "There are many people in that community who are fostering children. It is a point of emphasis that I put into the schools — that they need to understand these are kids with troubles." Many have PTSD and are acting out behaviors and symptoms, and people should be compassionate and help them. Morrison's message would be to pay attention to what is going on around them. "We live in neighborhoods where we see children being neglected, children we suspect are being abused because it happens everywhere — not just in north Tulsa where everyone assumes that it happens," he said. "Pay attention if you see something. Say something. If you see a child in need, try to help them, their parents. If you see something that looks dangerous to the child, call police. "Be vigilant. Not that I need more cases, but things to which people subject their children are surprising." Adam Daigle 918-581-8480 Follow Adam Daigle on Twitter at [@adamdaigleTW](#) Source: http://www.tulsaworld.com/business/tulsabusiness/kevin-morrison-stop-and-understand-the-life-of-a-foster/article_4e841644-5e11-572b-9b83-d47db53e0fda.html

Foster care raises children's risk of mental, physical health problems Written by [Honor Whiteman](#) Published: Today Published: Today [email](#) Children in the United States who have been in foster care are at significantly higher risk of mental and physical health problems, including learning disabilities,

depression, asthma, and obesity, compared with children who have not been in foster care. This is the finding of a new study published in the journal *Pediatrics*. Researchers say children in foster care have much worse health than children in the general population. In 2014, more than [650,000 children](#) in the U.S. spent time in foster care. On average, children in foster care spend 2 years waiting to be adopted. Previous studies have suggested that children in foster care may develop physical and [mental health](#) issues, primarily as a result of the trauma they have experienced, such as abuse and neglect. However, the authors of the new study - including Kristin Turney of the University of California-Irvine - note that no research has compared the health of children in foster care with that of children in the general population. With this in mind, Turney and team analyzed 2011-2012 data from the National Survey of Children's Health, which included more than 900,000 children across the U.S. Of these, around 1.3 percent had been in foster care. The researchers used logistic regression models to compare the risks of mental and physical health problems of children who had and had not spent time in foster care. Foster care 'a risk factor for health problems in childhood' On looking at the risks of physical health problems, the researchers found children who had been in foster care were twice as likely to have [asthma](#) and [obesity](#) and three times as likely to have hearing and vision problems, compared with children who had not spent time in foster care. When it came to mental health, children who had been in foster care were found to be at seven times greater risk of [depression](#) and five times greater risk of [anxiety](#). Behavioral problems were six times more likely among children who spent time in foster care, the team reports, and they were also at three times greater risk of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder ([ADHD](#)), and twice as likely to have learning disabilities and developmental delays. Turney says their [study](#) makes an "important contribution to the research community" by being the first to demonstrate that the health of children in foster care is much worse than children in other living conditions. "Our findings also present serious implications for pediatricians by suggesting that foster care placement is a risk factor for health problems in childhood," she adds. "This is typically a difficult-to-reach population, so having access to descriptive statistics on their living arrangements, physical well-being and behavior provided an excellent opportunity to help identify the health challenges they face. This study expands our understanding of the mental and physical health of these highly vulnerable children, but we must take a closer look if we are to understand how foster care really affects child well-being." Kristin Turney Source: <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/313512.php>

Panhandle group home director arrested on sex charges Photo: WJHG By Associated Press | Posted: Tue 7:56 AM, Oct 18, 2016 | Updated: Tue 7:57 AM, Oct 18, 2016 By: Associated Press October 18, 2016 PANAMA CITY, Fla. (AP) -- Authorities say the director of a group home for foster children in the Florida Panhandle is accused of having sex with a child. According to a Bay County Sheriff's Office report, 34-year-old Bryan Meeder was arrested over the weekend on lewd and lascivious battery. He's the director of Claire's House and officials say the alleged abuse took place while the girl lived in the home. The News-Herald reports the girl told investigators she came to live in the home when she was 13 and began a sexual relationship with Meeder when she was 14. She says it continued through her 18th birthday. Investigators obtained text messages and recordings of conversations between Meeder and the girl. An investigation is continuing. Records don't show whether Meeder has a lawyer. Source: <http://www.wctv.tv/content/news/Panhandle-Group-home-director-arrested-on-sex-charges-397425251.html>

Families ask judge to stop planned privatization of group homes WTNH Staff Published: October 17, 2016, 6:08 pm Updated: October 19, 2016, 11:22 am [Click to share on Twitter \(Opens in new window\)](#) [Click to share on Google+ \(Opens in new window\)](#) [Share on Facebook \(Opens in new window\)](#) [Click to share on Pinterest \(Opens in new window\)](#) (WTNH) — Families of some developmentally delayed adults are fighting a move to privatize some of Connecticut's group homes. One of those families has asked a judge to stop Gov. Malloy from going through with it. The state announced its plans to let private companies take over 40 of its 60 group homes, in an effort to trim money from the state budget. This comes after two unions announced they would file an injunction to stop the conversion of those state facilities into the private sector. In response, the head of the CT Community Nonprofit Alliance, Gian-Carl Casa released a statement saying: It is unfortunate that the union is taking an obstructionist position on a plan that experience and research shows will only benefit the individuals in state care. The high quality of care already being delivered by private providers to thousands of individuals with some of the most challenging and complex needs is equal, if not superior, to state facilities. And the lower cost of private care could allow the state to provide services for many more families who are languishing on waiting lists. Change is difficult. For the union to suggest that only state employees can deliver quality care is simply false, and ignores the fact that private providers already deliver care to the majority of individuals receiving state-supported services. We are confident that private, community-based agencies can provide care that individuals now living in state facilities need and deserve." Some parents and guardians say they've had experience with private group homes, and that the move is not a good idea. "My brother was actually put in a private group home 20 years ago, and it was a total disaster. He was put into apartments, not supervised 24/7. He's in no way appropriate to be unsupervised. He was roaming the community," said Jefferey Wong. Group homes in line for privatization will do so by January 1st. Source: <http://wtnh.com/2016/10/17/families-ask-judge-to-stop-planned-privatization-of-group-homes/>

Audit slams state agencies for drugging foster kids During a recent hearing at the Capitol, State Auditor Elaine Howle revealed the findings on her department's audit regarding the prescribing and oversight of psychotropic medications to children in foster care. (Oct. 19, 2016) Lilia Luciano, KXTV 6:22 AM. PDT October 20, 2016 During a recent hearing at the Capitol, State Auditor Elaine Howle revealed the findings on her department's [audit](#) regarding the prescribing and oversight of psychotropic medications to children in foster care. "The state authorized medications in dosages that exceed what's in the guidance - multiple meds - excessive meds - than the guidance. Key overarching issues," Howle said. Tisha Ortiz risked getting late to class to be at the hearing. She's studying criminal justice at California State University, East Bay. She sat among other former foster youth as she awaited her turn to testify. "How is it my fault that I was abused? It's not," Ortiz asked. "How is it my fault that I'm in a group home? It's not my fault. The foster care system is a pretty dark place." California has, according to the auditor, the highest population of foster youth in America. Senator Mike McGuire, who called for the audit and led the hearing, noted that in 2006 only one percent of foster kids were on psych meds. That number has increased to 1 in 8 children today, McGuire noted. Often being the children of drug addicted parents, many foster children begin life at a disadvantage. Some of them are abused sexually, emotionally and physically and that's how they end up in the hands of the state. For children like Ortiz, this life comes with increasing challenges. Ortiz said she suffered abuse at a group home. "My mom had just passed away," Ortiz said. "She (a staff member at the group home) told me if she ever caught me crying, I'd be in serious trouble. I would hide in the showers just to cry. One time she got upset that I was crying and pulled me to the side and said, 'Stop it, no one cares. No one is going to have empathy or sympathy for you ever. Why do you even care that your mother passed away when you weren't even close.'" Sometimes kids with behavioral problems, as many foster kids show, get into the mental health system, where they end up on prescription drugs that many say have no place in the body of a child. Dr. Stuart Bair has worked with children in foster care for decades and has observed doctors resort to pills over therapy. "It's an easy fix or at least a superficial easy fix for a lot of systems, and a lot of doctors say, 'Okay, here's the medication,'" Bair said. "'It will shut the kid up,' - very, very few of these kids have psychotic disorders for which these medications are clearly indicated.'" Ortiz's case is not rare. According to [Howle's report](#), 12 percent of children in foster care are taking psychotropic meds, including antidepressants, antipsychotics and mood stabilizers, among others. When children under the age of 5 are excluded, the rate blows up, said Bill Grimm, a senior attorney at the [National Center for Youth Law](#). "Then you have a problem of about 25 percent or higher of every child in foster care between 6 and 17 being on one or more psychotropic medications, and that's a huge problem," Grimm said. "Then when you look at the types of medications knowing that, at least our data seems to suggest, that half of those children are on antipsychotic medications that are only FDA-approved for a very, very limited diagnosis." "The audit concludes that the state and its counties have failed to adequately oversee the prescribing of these medications," Howle said. I asked Howle about those findings and she told me "we found that these children are receiving medications in excess of the dosages required or recommended in guidance." "The prescribing was a problem and certainly the follow-up," Howle said. "And then the other piece was in conjunction with receiving a medication like this, a child should be receiving mental health services, counseling services, and we didn't see evidence of that happening for many of these children, so they were essentially being given medications, not being seen frequently enough and then not being provided the health services they need." The audit found that in as many as 65 percent of cases, children are getting the meds without parental, guardian or court authorization, which, according to Grimm, is illegal. "In California, before a prisoner - before somebody convicted of a felony, somebody, in fact, who might have victimized and sexually molested a child in foster care - before that prisoner can be administered a psychotropic med against their will, we have a much more rigid process in place," Grimm said. "Our prisoners are entitled to more protection of their rights than our children in foster care who'd done nothing wrong, nothing that would allow them to be punished in any way." Ortiz said she often complained about the side effects of her medication. "They made me severely disabled. I couldn't wake up without wanting to go back to sleep," she said. "I couldn't function on those medications. Even with just one medication,

all I wanted to do was sleep all day. "One time when I was pretty drugged up, I couldn't wake up in the morning, I was feeling very sick," she added. "I wanted to puke, and a staff member was upset that I wasn't waking up for school and decided to throw me and my bed against the wall because I wasn't waking up to go to school." "The antipsychotics are clearly the biggest problem at this point," Bair said. "Medication's side effects typically include serious sedation, movement disorders, and sometimes irreversible movement disorders. Sometimes where you just feel like you can't sit still and you're jumping around, which then looks as if you're more agitated when in fact it's a side effect of medication." I asked if this could possibly motivate another prescription. "Exactly. Exactly," Bair said. "Then there are the long-term metabolic problems of increased risk of diabetes and obesity." Ortiz said she went from 175 to 225 pounds while on the meds. "I still sometimes get the facial tics. I'll feel them; they're kind of embarrassing, especially around the eyes. I'll feel them mostly around the eyes, I'll get the facial tics. Definitely the heart problem I still suffer from, it's permanent now," she said. "The weight gain, I've been fluctuating with weight. It wasn't until recently, like the last six months, I completely came off medications, because before it was really hard to come off all those medications." Ortiz decided to share her medical records with me. On her health and education passport, I noticed that at the age of 15, she was given Lithium, usually prescribed for bipolar disorder, which she wasn't diagnosed with. Simultaneously she was prescribed an antidepressant named Trazodone. I am far from an expert on medicine, but a simple Google search will show this drug has a major interaction with lithium. A [drugs.com warning](#) reads "The risk of interaction might outweigh the benefits." Ortiz was also on Geodon, a powerful antipsychotic to treat schizophrenia and bipolar disorder; none of these diagnoses appear on her records. Among its long list of [side effects](#), according to the National Center for Biotechnology Information, the drug may cause heart rhythm problems, a life-threatening neurological disorder, serious skin reactions, twitching, uncontrollable muscle movements, tiredness, sleepiness, increased hunger, thirst, weight gain and on and on. Dr. Bair described it as "trying to think through glue, so when you get these medications, your brain is fogged up and the things that kids need to do – they need to get educated, they need to learn how to develop peer relations." Bair thinks these side effects could significantly inhibit those processes. "We know things are not going well, so you have a kid who has essentially pharmacologically induced lack of development, immaturity," Bair said. "And you also have a young person who may be 20, 30, 50 pounds overweight who wasn't able to learn anything in school because he or she was dead on her feet most of the time, doesn't know how to establish age-appropriate relationships either with his or her peers or with the adult world in general. It's not fair." Ortiz was also placed on [Abilify](#), with its own long list of side effects, including specific effects for teenagers like increased mental and emotional problems and thoughts of suicide. I looked up her doctor's name on the [ProPublica Dollars for Doctors database](#), showing how much money doctors got from pharmaceutical companies, and just within a year of the study, her doctor had received [\\$90 dollars in meals](#). Another doctor who switched her to a new antipsychotic, after she landed in the hospital likely from the side effects, got [\\$168 dollars](#) in food and beverage from the producers of this new medication. It doesn't sound like a lot of money but [research](#) shows even a little incentive goes a long way. "Doctors who receive payments from the medical industry do indeed tend to prescribe drugs differently than their colleagues who don't," according to the [ProPublica](#) study. It's that simple. "What happened a number of years ago was that there was move afoot to make doctors think that there was bipolar disorder all over the place in kids," Bair said. "If you have bipolar disorder, it's kind of a straight shot antipsychotic. The pharmaceutical companies were really big on this and said 'let's increase our market by having an entirely new patient population that is under 18.'" And that kind of medication isn't cheap. "Out of the 12 most costly drugs nationwide, three of the 12 were antipsychotic meds," Bair said. "That is one of the highest group of classes of drugs that are given to children in foster care. This is no doubt that these drugs are some of the most costly that are handed out to patients whose care is paid for by Medicaid. We don't even know how much money in California is spent on alternatives to medication." What we do know, thanks to a Mercury News [study](#), is that over a decade, the state spent more than 226 million in taxpayer dollars on psych meds for foster children. "These are human beings. What we know is foster youth already have challenges related to their long-term success of their life," McGuire said. "We are the guardians. The state of California are the guardians of these youth and we failed them. It's unacceptable." McGuire's [bill](#) seeking to increase doctor accountability was recently signed by Governor Brown. "It would confidentially turn over the medical records and prescription rates of California's foster youth to the Medical Board," McGuire said. "The Medical Board would then be able to confidentially investigate serial over-prescribers via the medical and prescription records of foster youth. In addition, the bill would allow the attorney general to open up a case to go after a serial over-prescriber." I met with Jennifer Kent, Director of the Department of Health Care Services, which oversees the medical needs of children in foster care. She said her department agrees with the audit's findings. "I think, like all audits, it always provides room for improvement, points out places where we can make changes in our system to either deliver services in a better way or more efficient way," Kent said. "In this particular audit, we agree with the findings, and so we've already made most of the changes. There are some that are still in process that we are making." Kent acknowledged that this population needs more scrutiny and that her department welcomes the opportunity to work with the Department of Social Services to gradually fix the issues. Source: <http://www.abc10.com/news/local/california/audit-slams-state-for-drugging-foster-kids/326887120>

Maryland girl dies in Delaware facility for disabled youth [Meredith CohnContact Reporter](#) The Baltimore Sun A Maryland girl died in a Delaware facility for disabled youth just ahead of being transferred. A 15-year-old Maryland girl died at a facility in Delaware for severely developmentally disabled youths, authorities said Tuesday, after the state already had decided to sever ties with the operators. The Maryland Department of Human Resources said that it had canceled its contract with AdvoServe effective Oct. 31, but had not found appropriate places to send all of the 31 youths housed in company institutions when the girl died. The unidentified girl died at the Bear, Del., facility in mid-September, authorities said. Neither AdvoServe nor the Department of Human Resources would provide more information Tuesday. "Understandably, our agency and caseworkers were hit hard by this tragedy," Department of Human Resources spokeswoman Katherine Morris said in a statement. "The death of a child is never news that is easy to process," she said. "We are taking this case very seriously, as the safety and well-being of youth in our care is our top priority. DHR is in close contact with the authorities in Delaware who are investigating this incident." [Sun Investigates: Group Homes A two-month investigation by The Baltimore Sun highlighted troubles at a LifeLine Inc. group home for disabled foster children, where a 10-year-old died in July. The Sun showed that state regulators were left in the dark about significant problems at LifeLine, including the founder's conviction... A two-month investigation by The Baltimore Sun highlighted troubles at a LifeLine Inc. group home for disabled foster children, where a 10-year-old died in July. The Sun showed that state regulators were left in the dark about significant problems at LifeLine, including the founder's conviction... Read more stories](#) The Delaware State Police and the office of the medical examiner are investigating, according to the Delaware attorney general's office. There have been no charges. Morris said the Department of Human Resources had canceled its contract and instituted a moratorium on new placements "as a result of an intensive review of the program, including several unannounced visits DHR made to AdvoServ." She did not specify when the decision was made to cancel the contract, but said it was before the girl died. All but one of the Maryland youths has been placed elsewhere, Morris said. One was moved from a AdvoServ facility in Florida to another in that state. Maryland's three-year contract with AdvoServ was approved in 2012 with two one-year extensions, according to documents provided by the Department of Human Resources. The contract was scheduled to expire in February. Payments to AdvoServe were not supposed to exceed about \$7.9 million a year and were capped at about \$39.8 million. It's unclear how much was paid to the company. AdvoServ declined to answer questions about the death. "Our staff is heartbroken over the loss of the young woman in our care, and our deepest sympathies go out to her mother and extended family," the company said in a statement. This is not the first time that a child has died in a group home managed by a state contractor. Damaud Martin, a 10-year-old Baltimore boy, died in July 2014 at a Laurel-area group home for disabled foster children. Maryland health regulators later said that they found serious violations at the LifeLine group home, including conflicting records on his care and miscommunication between staff and the emergency responders and medical personnel who labored to save him. However, they said none of the violations contributed to his death. That conclusion surprised child advocates who called the investigation flawed. Advocates for youth say the latest incident demonstrates the difficulty of providing services for children with the sometimes severe emotional and behavioral problems. Washington attorney Chris Gowen has filed a lawsuit on behalf of another Maryland child who he alleges was assaulted at a AdvoServ facility. "The state of Maryland has a real challenge to find alternative placements for youth with severe disabilities, and the answer to that challenge can't be to send them all out of state to a school that takes anyone," he said. Leslie Seid Margolis, a managing attorney with Disability Rights Maryland, said she's been warning the state of Maryland about AdvoServ's practices for years. She cited the company's use of a type of restraint prohibited under Maryland law. She said her group, a federally mandated advocate for people with disabilities, will investigate the death and determine what went wrong and how to prevent harm in the future. Maryland routinely sends children out of state when appropriate facilities are not available in the state. She called it a "system failure" that youths have to be sent away from home, in some cases far from home, for proper services and education. Margolis said some parents don't have the support or resources to care for their children and they have to allow them to be placed in

facilities such as AdvoServ's. The company has facilities in Delaware, New Jersey, Florida and Connecticut. "I only wish Maryland had removed the kids sooner," she said. meredith.cohn@baltisun.com Source: <http://www.baltimoresun.com/health/blog/bs-hs-child-death-20161018-story.html>

Youth justice study finds prison counterproductive New report documents urgent need to replace youth prisons with rehabilitation-focused alternatives October 21, 2016 | Editor's Pick Popular Credit: iStock The youth prison model should be replaced with a continuum of community-based programs and, for the few youth who require secure confinement, smaller homelike facilities that prioritize age-appropriate rehabilitation, according to a report released today. [Show more](#) By Adam Schaffer, HKS Communications [Email](#) [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) A new report, published by Harvard Kennedy School's [Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management \(PCJ\)](#) and the [National Institute of Justice \(NIJ\)](#), documents ineffectiveness, endemic abuses, and high costs in youth prisons throughout the country. The report systematically reviews recent research in developmental psychology and widespread reports of abuse to conclude that the youth prison model should be replaced with a continuum of community-based programs and, for the few youth who require secure confinement, smaller homelike facilities that prioritize age-appropriate rehabilitation. The authors, who are leading youth justice researchers and former youth correctional administrators, find that the current youth prison model, which emphasizes confinement and control, often exacerbates youth trauma and inhibits positive growth while failing to address public safety. Rather, the paper argues, programs work best when youths are in their home communities with rehabilitative programs or in smaller, homelike facilities that promote opportunities for healthy decision-making and development. Corrections agencies should provide a range of options depending on the individual's needs, from smaller secure facilities to noncustodial programs. Annual youth imprisonment costs are approximately \$150,000 per individual, yet recidivism rates remain close to 70 percent. The report examines the experiences of several states that have pursued alternative models and finds community-based approaches can reduce recidivism, control costs, and promote public safety. "Youth in trouble need guidance, education, and support, not incarceration in harmful and ineffective youth prisons," said PCJ Senior Fellow [Vincent Schiraldi](#), a co-author of the report. Previously, Schiraldi directed juvenile corrections in Washington, D.C., and served as commissioner of probation in New York City. "We now know from research and on-the-ground experience that youth prisons are not designed to best promote youth rehabilitation. This report offers concrete alternatives for policymakers across the country to maintain public safety, hold young people accountable, and turn their lives around." "Juvenile-justice systems must have the clear purpose of giving each youth the tools he or she needs to get on the right path to a successful adulthood and to reintegrate into the community," said Patrick McCarthy, president and chief executive officer of the [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#) and a co-author of the report. Like Schiraldi, McCarthy is a former director of youth corrections — in his case, in Delaware. "By closing traditional youth prisons and leveraging increased political will to reform our country's dependence on incarceration, states can use the savings to begin implementing a new, more effective approach to serving young people." The report, authored by McCarthy, Schiraldi, and Miriam Shark, a former associate director at the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is one of several emerging from the [Executive Session on Community Corrections](#) at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. The Executive Sessions convene individuals of independent standing to take joint responsibility for rethinking and improving society's responses to an issue. "The Future of Youth Justice: A Community-Based Alternative to the Youth Prison Model" will be presented today at the U.S. Department of Justice. A panel discussion with leading experts on community-based models for juvenile justice can be viewed via [livestream](#) from 10 a.m. to noon (EDT). This event is hosted by the United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. Source: <http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2016/10/youth-justice-study-finds-prison-counterproductive/>

Henry A. Giroux | The United States' War on Youth: From Schools to Debtors' Prisons Wednesday, 19 October 2016 00:00 By [Henry A. Giroux](#), Truthout | News Analysis font size [decrease font size](#) [increase font size](#) [Print](#) [Tweet](#) (Image: [Lauren Walker / Truthout](#); adapted from photo by [US Government / Wikimedia Commons](#)) [Support your favorite writers by making sure we can keep publishing them! Make a donation to Truthout to ensure independent journalism survives.](#) If one important measure of a democracy is how a society treats its children, especially poor youth of color, there can be little doubt that American society is failing. As the United States increasingly models its schools after prisons and subjects children to a criminal legal system marked by severe class and racial inequities, it becomes clear that such children are no longer viewed as a social investment but as suspects. Under a neoliberal regime in which some children are treated as criminals and increasingly deprived of decent health care, education, food and housing, it has become clear that the United States has both failed its children and democracy itself. Not only is the United States the only nation in the world that [sentences children to life in prison without parole](#), the criminal legal system often functions so as to make it more difficult for young people to escape the reach of a punishing and racist legal system. For instance, according to a [recent report published by the Juvenile Law Center](#), there are close to a million children who appear in juvenile court each year subject to a legal system rife with racial disparities and injustices. This is made clear by Jessica Feerman, associate director of the Juvenile Law Center in her report "[Debtors' Prison for Kids? The High Cost of Fines and Fees in the Juvenile Justice System](#)." In an [interview with the Arkansas Times](#), Feerman said: Racial disparities pervade our juvenile justice system. Our research suggests that we can reduce those disparities through legislative action aimed at costs, fines, fees, and restitution ... In every state, youth and families can be required to pay juvenile court costs, fees, fines, or restitution. The costs for court related services, including probation, a "free appointed attorney," mental health evaluations, the costs of incarceration, treatment, or restitution payments, can push poor children deeper into the system and families deeper into debt. Youth who can't afford to pay for their freedom often face serious consequences, including incarceration, extended probation, or denial of treatment -- they are unfairly penalized for being poor. Many families either go into debt trying to pay these costs or forego basic necessities like groceries to keep up with payments. [To read more articles by Henry A. Giroux and other authors in the Public Intellectual Project, click here.](#) According to the report, sometimes when a family can't pay court fees and fines, the child is put in a juvenile detention facility. Such punitive measures are invoked without a degree of conscience or informed judgment as when children are fined for being truant from school. In her [article in Common Dreams](#), Nika Knight pointed to one case in which a child was fined \$500 for being truant and because he could not pay the fine, "spent three months in a locked facility at age 13." In many states, the parents are incarcerated if they cannot pay for their child's court fees. For many parents, such fines represent a crushing financial burden, which they cannot meet, and consequently their children are subjected to the harsh confines of juvenile detention centers. Erik Eckholm has [written in The New York Times](#) about the story of Dequan Jackson, which merges the horrid violence suffered by the poor in a Dickens novel with the mindless brutality and authoritarianism at the heart of one of Kafka's tales. Eckholm is worth quoting at length: When Dequan Jackson had his only brush with the law, at 13, he tried to do everything right. Charged with battery for banging into a teacher while horsing around in a hallway, he pleaded guilty with the promise that after one year of successful probation, the conviction would be reduced to a misdemeanor. He worked 40 hours in a food bank. He met with an anger management counselor. He kept to an 8 p.m. curfew except when returning from football practice or church. And he kept out of trouble. But Dequan and his mother, who is struggling to raise two sons here on wisps of income, were unable to meet one final condition: payment of \$200 in court and public defender fees. For that reason alone, his probation was extended for what turned out to be 14 more months, until they pulled together the money at a time when they had trouble finding quarters for the laundromat. Not only do such fines create a two-tier system of justice that serves the wealthy and punishes the poor, they also subject young people to a prison system fraught with incidents of violent assault, rape and suicide. Moreover, many young people have health needs and mental health problems that are not met in these detention centers, and incarceration also fuels mental health problems. Suicide rates behind bars "are more than four times higher than for adolescents overall," according to the [Child Trends Data Bank](#). Moreover, "between 50 and 75 percent of adolescents who have spent time in juvenile detention centers are incarcerated later in life." Finally, as the "Debtors' Prison for Kids Report" makes clear, kids are being sent to jail at increasing rates while youth crime is decreasing. The criminal legal system is mired in a form of casino capitalism that not only produces wide inequalities in wealth, income and power, but it also corrupts municipal court systems that are underfunded and turn to unethical and corrupt practices in order to raise money, while creating new paths to prison, especially for children. Debtors' prisons for young people exemplify how a warfare culture can affect the most vulnerable populations in a society, exhibiting a degree of punitiveness and cruelty that indicts the most fundamental political, economic and social structures of a society. Debtors' prisons for young people have become the dumping grounds for those youth considered disposable, and they are also a shameful source of profit for municipalities across the United States. They operate as legalized extortion rackets, underscoring how our society has come to place profits above the welfare of children. They also indicate how a society has turned its back on young people, the most vulnerable group of people in our society. There is nothing new about the severity of the American government's attack on poor people, especially those on welfare, and both political parties have shared in this ignoble attack. What is often overlooked, however, is the degree to which children are impacted by scorched-earth policies that extend from cutting social provisions to the ongoing criminalization of a vast range of behaviors. It appears that particularly when it comes to young people, especially poor youth and youth of color, society's obligations to justice and social responsibility disappear. Modeling Schools After Prisons We live at a time in which

institutions that were meant to limit human suffering and misfortune and protect young people from the excesses of the police state and the market have been either weakened or abolished. The consequences can be seen clearly in the ongoing and ruthless assault on public education, poor students and students of color. Schools have become, in many cases, punishment factories that increasingly subject students to pedagogies of control, discipline and surveillance. Pedagogy has been emptied of critical content and now imposes on students mind-numbing teaching practices organized around teaching for the test. The latter constitutes both a war on the imagination and a disciplinary practice meant to criminalize the behavior of children who do not accept a pedagogy of conformity and overbearing control. No longer considered democratic public spheres intended to create critically informed and engaged citizens, many schools now function as punishing factories, work stations that mediate between warehousing poor students of color and creating a path that will lead them into the hands of the criminal legal system and eventually, prison. Under such circumstances, it becomes more difficult to reclaim a notion of public schooling in which the culture of punishment and militarization is not the culture of education. Hope in this instance has to begin with a critical discourse among teachers, students, parents and administrators unwilling to model the schools after a prison culture. Many schools are now modeled after prisons and organized around the enactment of zero tolerance policies which, as John W. Whitehead has pointed out, put "youth in the bullseye of police violence." Whitehead [argues rightfully](#) that: The nation's public schools -- extensions of the world beyond the schoolhouse gates, a world that is increasingly hostile to freedom -- have become microcosms of the American police state, containing almost every aspect of the militarized, intolerant, senseless, overcriminalized, legalistic, surveillance-riddled, totalitarian landscape that plagues those of us on the "outside." Not only has there been an increase in the number of police in the schools, but the behavior of kids is being criminalized in ways that legitimate what many call the school-to-prison pipeline. School discipline has been transformed into a criminal matter now handled mostly by the police rather than by teachers and school administrators, especially in regard to the treatment of poor Black and Brown kids. But cops are doing more than arresting young people for trivial infractions, they are also handcuffing them, using tasers on children, applying physical violence on youth, and playing a crucial role in getting kids suspended or expelled from schools every year. The Civil Rights Project [rightly argues](#) that public schools are becoming "gateways to prisons." One estimate suggests that [a growing number of young people will have been arrested for minor misbehaviors](#) by the time they finish high school. This is not surprising in schools that already look like quasi-prisons with their drug-sniffing dogs, surveillance systems, metal detectors, police patrolling school corridors, and in some cases, police systems that resemble SWAT teams. While there has been a great deal of publicity nationwide over police officers killing Black people, there has been too little scrutiny regarding the use of force by police in the schools. As Jaeh Lee [observed in Mother Jones](#), the "use of force by cops in schools ... has drawn far less attention [in spite of the fact that] over the past five years at least 28 students have been seriously injured, and in one case shot to death, by so-called school resource officers -- sworn, uniformed police assigned to provide security on k-12 campuses." [According to Democracy Now](#), there are over 17,000 school resource officers in more than half of the public schools in the United States, while only a small percentage have been trained to work in schools. In spite of the fact that violence in schools has dropped precipitously, school resource officers are the fastest growing segment of law enforcement and their presence has resulted in more kids being ticketed, fined, arrested, suspended and pushed into the criminal legal system. In 2014 over 92,000 students were subject to school-related arrests. In the last few years, videos have been aired showing a police officer inside Spring Valley High School in Columbia, South Carolina throwing a teenage girl to the ground and dragging her out of her classroom. [In Mississippi schools](#), a student was handcuffed for not wearing a belt, a black female student was choked by the police, and one cop threatened to shoot students on a bus. Neoliberalism is not only obsessed with accumulating capital, it has also lowered the threshold for extreme violence to such a degree that it puts into place a law-and-order educational regime that criminalizes children who doodle on desks, bump into teachers in school corridors, throw peanuts at a bus, or fall asleep in class. Fear, insecurity, humiliation, and the threat of imprisonment are the new structuring principles in schools that house our most vulnerable populations. The school has become a microcosm of the warfare state, designed to provide a profit for the security industries, while imposing a pedagogy of repression on young people. According to the US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, a disproportionate number of students subject to arrests are Black. [It states](#): "While black students represent 16% of student enrollment, they represent 27% of students referred to law enforcement and 31% of students subjected to a school-related arrest." Too many children in the United States confront violence in almost every space in which they find themselves -- in the streets, public schools, parks, and wider culture. In schools, according to Whitehead, "more than 3 million students are suspended or expelled every year." Violence has become central to America's identity both with regards to its foreign policy and increasingly in its domestic policies. How else to explain what [Lisa Armstrong revealed in The Intercept](#): "The United States is the only country in the world that routinely sentences children to life in prison without parole, and, according to estimates from nonprofits and advocacy groups, there are between 2,300 and 2,500 people serving life without parole for crimes committed when they were minors." The predatory financial system targets poor, Black and Brown children instead of crooked bankers, hedge fund managers, and big corporations who engage in massive corruption and fraud while pushing untold numbers of people into bankruptcy, poverty and even homelessness. For example, according to [Forbes](#), the international banking giant HSBC exposed the US financial system to "a wide array of money laundering, drug trafficking, and terrorist financing ... and channeled \$7 billion into the U.S. between 2007 and 2008 which possibly included proceeds from illegal drug sales in the United States." Yet, no major CEO went to jail. Even more astounding is that "the profligate and dishonest behavior of Wall Street bankers, traders, and executives in the years leading up to the 2008 financial crisis ... went virtually unpunished." Resisting Criminalization of School Discipline and Everyday Behavior Violence against children in various sites is generally addressed through specific reforms, such as substituting community service for detention centers, eliminating zero tolerance policies in schools, and replacing the police with social workers, while creating supportive environments for young people. The latter might include an immediate stoppage to suspending, expelling and arresting students for minor misbehaviors. Legal scholar Kerrin C. Wolf has [proposed a promising three-tier system of reform](#) that includes the following: The first tier of the system provides supports for the entire student body. Such supports include clearly defining and teaching expected behaviors, rewarding positive behavior, and applying a continuum of consequences for problem behavior. The second tier targets at-risk students -- students who exhibit behavior problems despite the supports provided in the first tier -- with enhanced interventions and supports, often in group settings. These may include sessions that teach social skills and informal meetings during which the students "check in" to discuss how they have been behaving. The third tier provided individualized and specialized interventions and supports for high-risk students -- students who do not respond to the first and second tier supports and interventions. The interventions and supports are based on a functional behavior assessment and involve a community of teachers and other school staff working with the student to change his or her behavior patterns. Regarding the larger culture of violence, there have also been public demands that police wear body cameras and come under the jurisdiction of community. In addition, there has been a strong but largely failed attempt on the part of gun reform advocates to establish policies and laws that would control the manufacture, sale, acquisition, circulation, use, transfer, modification or use of firearms by private citizens. At the same time, there is a growing effort to also pass legislation that would not allow such restrictions to be used as a further tool to incarcerate youth of color. In short, this means not allowing the war on gun violence to become another war on poor people of color similar to what happened under the racially biased war on drugs. And while such reforms are crucial in the most immediate sense to protect young people and lessen the violence to which they are subjected, they do not go far enough. Violence has reached epidemic proportions in the United States and bears down egregiously on children, especially poor youth and youth of color. If such violence is to be stopped, a wholesale restructuring of the warfare state must be addressed. The underlying structure of state and everyday violence must be made visible, challenged and dismantled. The violence waged against children must become a flashpoint politically to point to the struggles that must be waged against the gun industry, the military-industrial-academic complex, and an entertainment culture that fuels [what Dr. Phil Wolfson describes in Tikken Magazine](#) as "fictive identifications" associated with "murderous combat illusions and delusions." Violence must be viewed as endemic to a regime of neoliberalism that breeds racism, class warfare, bigotry and a culture of cruelty. Capitalism produces the warfare state, and any reasonable struggle for a real democracy must address both the institutions organized for the production of violence and the political, social, educational and economic tools and strategies necessary for getting rid of it. Americans live at a time in which the destruction and violence pursued under the regime of neoliberalism is waged unapologetically and without pause. One consequence is that it has become more difficult to defend a system that punishes its children, destroys the lives of workers, derides public servants, plunders the planet and destroys public goods. Americans live in an age of disposability in which the endless throwing away of goods is matched by a system that views an increasing number of people -- poor Black and Brown youth, immigrants, Muslims, unemployed workers and those unable to participate in the formal economy -- as excess and subject to zones of social and economic abandonment. As Gayatri Spivak [rightly observes](#), "When human beings are valued as less than human, violence begins to emerge as the only response." At issue here is not just the crushing of the human spirit, mind and body, but the abandonment of democratic politics itself. Violence wages war against hope, obliterates the imagination, and undermines any sense of critical agency and collective struggle. Sites of Resistance Yet, resistance cannot be obliterated, and

we are seeing hopeful signs of it all over the world. In the US, Black youth are challenging police and state violence, calling for widespread alliances among diverse groups of young people, such as the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), worker-controlled labor movements, the movement around climate change, movements against austerity and movements that call for the abolition of the prison system among others. All of these are [connecting single issues to a broader comprehensive politics](#), one that is generating radical policy proposals that reach deep into demands for power, freedom and justice. Such proposals extend from reforming the criminal legal system to ending the exploitative privatization of natural resources. What is being produced by these young people is less a blueprint for short-term reform than a vision of the power of the radical imagination in addressing long term, transformative organizing and [a call for a radical restructuring of society](#). What we are seeing is the birth of a radical vision and a corresponding mode of politics that calls for the end of violence in all of its crude and militant death-dealing manifestations. Such movements are not only calling for the death of the two-party system and the distribution of wealth, power and income, but also for a politics of civic memory and courage, one capable of analyzing the ideology, structures and mechanisms of capitalism and other forms of oppression. For the first time since the 1960s, political unity is no longer a pejorative term, new visions matter and coalitions arguing for a broad-based social movement appear possible again. A new politics of insurrection is in the air, one that is challenging the values, policies, structure and relations of power rooted in a warfare society and war culture that propagate intolerable violence. State violence in both its hidden and visible forms is no longer a cause for despair but for informed and collective resistance. [Zygmunt Bauman is right in insisting](#) that the bleakness and dystopian politics of our times necessitates the ability to dream otherwise, to imagine a society "which thinks it is not just enough, which questions the sufficiency of any achieved level of justice and considers justice always to be a step or more ahead. Above all, it is a society that reacts angrily to any case of injustice and promptly sets about correcting it." It is precisely such a collective spirit informing a resurgent politics within the Black Lives Matter movement and other movements -- a politics that is being rewritten in the discourse of critique and hope, emancipation and transformation. Once again, the left has a future and the future has a left. Source: <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/38044-america-s-war-on-youth-from-schools-to-debtors-prisons>

The Grandma Suing a Utah Prison Over Her Teenage Grandson's Suicide by [Sirin Kale](#) Oct 24 2016 2:11 PM Brock Tucker (left). Photo courtesy of Janet Crane Janet Crane alleges her intellectually disabled grandson spent most of his life being bullied, beaten and abused in various Utah facilities. Now she's fighting for justice. Before he hanged himself at age 19, Brock Tucker had experienced a life marked by instability and tragedy. As a toddler, Tucker was left brain damaged after a near fatal drowning accident. After an adolescence shunted between institutions ill-equipped to deal with his complex needs, he ended up in a federal penitentiary. According to the civil complaint filed by his grandmother, Janet Crane, Tucker was just five foot six and weighed 140 pounds when he was sent to the Central Utah Correctional Facility for auto theft and related charges at the age of 17. He resembled a child in both outlook and appearance: He had an IQ of only 70 and was highly impressionable, according to his neuropsychologist. Despite this, Tucker did have something going for him: A grandma who loved him tenaciously. Entering the Central Utah Correctional Facility (or Gunnison, as it is colloquially known), Tucker intended to use his time productively by studying for his high school diploma. Crane claims that she was not allowed to see Tucker once in his two years at Gunnison. Denied all visitation privileges, Tucker spent more than 154 days in solitary isolation. Court filings document how he spent his time: He tattooed himself; he converted to Hinduism; he contracted hepatitis. His mental condition deteriorated, and he was diagnosed in prison with unspecified psychosis and major depressive disorder. The complaint states that sometime in the afternoon of October 2, 2014—two months before he was due for parole—Tucker put a towel over his cell door's window and hung himself from his top bunk bed. He'd recently received a letter from Central Utah Academy informing him he'd be graduating high school. "Brock's siblings and I, we'll never be the same," Crane says over Skype. "It's with us every day. Someone will make a comment or I'll see a picture, and the memory of his youth will go through my mind." Her voice cracks. "He never even had a life." Now the 69-year-old is filing suit against the individuals and state agencies she believed failed her grandson. Read more: [Here's Who Profits Off of Mass Incarceration After Private Prisons Close](#) When Tucker was 12 years old, he began getting into trouble with the law, mostly for stealing cars: He'd recently moved with Crane and his two siblings to a deprived neighborhood. His grandma argues that Tucker was physically coerced into joining a gang, and that—as a result of the impulse control disorder resulting from his brain injury—he was impressionable and easily influenced. According to court filings, Tucker was in and out of juvenile institutions from the age of 13 after Utah's Division of Child and Family Services was awarded custody over him. Crane alleges that his time in two juvenile facilities in particular was characterized by repeated abuse. In 2008, he was sent to Futures Through Choice, a nonprofit that incarcerates juveniles on behalf of the state of Utah. Crane alleges that Tucker was physically assaulted by a staff member while in the care of Futures Through Choice. "One of the staff members repeatedly lifted Brock up," Crane's complaint reads, "and squeezed him until he could not breathe, then released Brock long enough to catch his breath." During the assault, the same staff member told Brock he was going to make him "cry like a bitch." According to Crane's court filings, the assault was substantiated by Utah's Child Protection Ombudsman. Brock with his nephews. Photo courtesy of Janet Crane. A 14-year-old Tucker later ran away from the facility. "He was on the run for almost a month," says Crane, bitterly. "This mentally challenged boy, running the streets. He was so hungry, and he slept behind trash bins. It was cold." In May 2009, Tucker found himself at Provo Canyon School, a for-profit facility run by Pennsylvania-based corporation Universal Health Services. For most of the preceding year, Crane alleges that Tucker received no mental health treatment. Throughout Tucker's life, doctors and psychologists gave him different, and at times conflicting, diagnoses and treatment. After Tucker began exhibiting behavioral problems in early adolescence, Crane took him to Dr. David Nilsson, a neuropsychologist. "Truth is, I don't think anyone including Dr. Nilsson could ever give Brock a definitive diagnosis. He didn't quite fit this; he didn't quite fit that," Crane says. After tests, Dr. Nilsson ascertained that Tucker had an impulse control disorder, low IQ, and brain damage. According to Crane's civil complaint, Dr. Nilsson advised courts that a traditional reward/punishment system would exacerbate Tucker's illness, mandating a neurofeedback program instead. One time we went to see him and he could hardly talk and was shaking. Ostensibly, Provo Canyon should have been able to deal with Tucker's health needs—the school [offered a](#) neurofeedback program—but Crane alleges that this was not the case. "It was horrific. They would just randomly put him on different drugs. One time we went to see him and he could hardly talk and was shaking," Crane says. She also claims that Provo Canyon school staff physically abused Tucker repeatedly. On one occasion, Tucker was allegedly knocked unconscious after having his head repeatedly beaten into concrete by a staff member. The Child Protection Ombudsman again confirmed the assault allegation, but no protective action was taken. After two months at Provo Canyon, Crane alleges that Tucker attempted suicide for the first time. Between 2009 to 2011, Crane says that Tucker bounced between institutions and became involved in gang activity. In March 2012, Tucker found himself in a familiar place: a courtroom. This time, he was being tried as an adult for auto theft and related charges. Despite Dr. Nilsson's warning—reported in the civil complaint—to the court that a federal penitentiary would "break him" in August he was sentenced to a two to five year sentence in Utah State Prison. It's clear that Crane is haunted by her failure to save her grandson. "They never even gave him a chance," she says tearfully. Repeatedly, she tells me she "fought" for Tucker: But over time, he lost hope. "We walked outside [from one courtroom appearance] and Brock had tears in his eyes. He rarely cried. And he just said, 'Grandma, it doesn't do any good, no matter how hard I try. It doesn't matter. I give up.'" After serving just over two years in prison, Tucker hanged himself. [For More Stories Like This, Sign Up for Our Newsletter](#) Utah's suicide rate is consistently [higher](#) than the national average. No one is quite sure why, and explanations range from the Midwest's [cultural history](#) of self-reliance, high rates of [gun ownership](#), or even lower oxygen levels on account of the [altitude](#). What's certain is that Utahns are dying in their thousands, and many of them are young people. In 2014—the year Tucker killed himself—suicide was the [leading cause](#) of death for Utahns aged 10 to 17. The number of teenagers killing themselves has [tripled](#) in the last ten years. The World Health Organization [identifies](#) the following as indicators that someone might be at risk of committing suicide: A history of suicide attempts, mental illness, being incarcerated, and being a male aged 15-49. Tucker matches all these criteria. Crane directly blames the authorities at Gunnison for Tucker's death. "You're mentally ill, they've got you in solitary confinement and they're prescribing you drugs..." She tails off. "I mean, I have it in writing from Dr. Nilsson to the court, 'If you put this kid in prison he will wind up getting killed or will commit suicide.'" Despite this, Crane's court complaint states that the Utah prison system opted to keep Tucker in isolation for more than 154 days of the last year of his life. Crane alleges that Brock was alone in a cell and allowed out for at most an hour a day. He couldn't make phone calls, watch TV, receive visitors, exercise, or use the library. He couldn't even write letters, as his commissary privileges had been revoked—meaning that he was unable to purchase writing materials. No pens, no TV, no radios or books. How long is it going to take you to go crazy? "Imagine going into your bathroom," Crane asks me over Skype. "Maybe your bathroom is even bigger than Brock's cell. Now lock the door and have no contact with another human being. No pens, no TV, no radios or books. How long is it going to take you to go crazy?" Having worked variously as a nurse and paralegal throughout her career, Crane has many unanswered questions about Tucker's death. She recounts being told by medical workers after Tucker's death that he bled heavily in the emergency room. But if Tucker hung himself, why was there so much blood? "I went to the hospital where he was taken and they told me they couldn't resuscitate him because of all the blood. They just kept pumping up blood,"

Crane explains tearfully. "I'm like, Where did all the blood come from? You don't bleed when you hang yourself. No one can answer these questions for me." Janet Conway is from the Salt Lake City law firm that's taken on Crane's case. It's a huge case, involving ten separate suits against a mixture of institutions and individuals on the basis of federal and state laws. Crane is suing the Utah Department of Corrections, Futures through Choice, and Universal Health Services (which owns and operates Provo Canyon school). All were contacted by Broadly and declined or ignored requests for comment. She's also suing individuals who worked at Central Utah Correctional Facility and senior staff at Utah's child protection agencies, including the Division of Children and Family Services and Juvenile Justice Services. Conway tells me that were it not for Crane's scrupulous note-taking—a product of her career as a nurse and paralegal—the case wouldn't stand a shot. "Prisons have become the warehouses for the mentally ill, because we're not giving them proper support," Conway tells me over the phone. She says that the authorities repeatedly failed to give Tucker basic medical care, even after he was diagnosed with mental illness. It is [estimated](#) that 80,000 to 100,000 inmates are currently being held in solitary confinement in the USA, many of whom have serious mental illnesses. This form of imprisonment is known to [devastate](#) those with [mental illness](#) and exacerbate their condition. Given the circumstances of Tucker's confinement, Dr. Nilsson's warning that Tucker would attempt suicide didn't look like medical conjecture—it looks like a prediction. Crane tells me repeatedly throughout the course of our Skype that she's not doing this for the money—this is about change. "Children are dying across the USA in these for-profit programs," Crane argues. "I want all for-profit residential facilities for children abolished. I don't want any state to put a child in a for-profit program, because there are no safeguards, none." She stresses the last word. "And I want solitary confinement completely abolished. It's barbaric." I have to believe this is Brock's purpose in life. To change the world for the better. Although Conway's hopes are couched in stoic legalese, her ambitions are equally impassioned. "I'm going to fight the good fight, otherwise things will never change," she argues. "This is how we treat our mentally ill. It's got to stop. These entities are big businesses, and the only thing that gets their attention is a public embarrassment or a hit to their pocket book. That's what this case is about." Crane and Conway are taking on organizations with enormous legal resources—Universal Health Services, for example, is a Fortune 500 company. CEO Alan B. Miller is a leading figure in the healthcare industry, and has won [prestigious awards](#). Conway estimates the civil suit will take between three and five years, and it's possible they won't win: The deck is stacked against them. "It's a little like Erin Brockovich," I comment unthinkingly. Conway laughs. "Yes, that's exactly what it's like. It is like Erin Brockovich." Source: https://broadly.vice.com/en_us/article/grandma-janet-crane-suing-utah-prison-teenage-grandson-suicide

Foster Parent Pleads Guilty to 5 Child Sex Charges - Story Foster Parent Pleads Guilty to 5 Child Sex Charges Published 10/25 2016 03:37PM Updated 10/25 2016 03:37PM Clarence Garretson, 65/Copyright 2016 Nexstar Broadcasting, Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. FORT SMITH, Ark. – A Van Buren man pleaded guilty in court Tuesday morning to five counts of Interstate Transportation of a Minor with Intent to Engage in Criminal Sexual Activity, his attorney announced. Clarence C. Garretson, 65, appeared with his attorney before the U.S. District Court in Fort Smith. The FBI began their investigation in May 2016, when the first minor came forward. Minor #1: The first minor girl said that she had been raped by Garretson when he took her on a multi-state trip two years ago in 2014. Garretson was an over-the-road truck driver for C & T Trucking company in Van Buren, and he had requested and received a "rider waiver" from the trucking company so that the minor could accompany him on the trip. The girl was ten-years-old at the time of the incident and Garretson was 63. Garretson stipulated and agreed in the plea agreement that he transported the girl in interstate commerce with the intent to engage in sexual activity with her, and the sexual activity he engaged in with her was Rape, a Class Y felony. During the course of the investigation, it was learned that in 1998 Garretson and his wife were approved by the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) to operate a foster home and later to become an adoptive home. The FBI Special Agent learned that DHS had received a report in 2002 from a foster child, living in Garretson's home at that time, that she had been sexually assaulted by him. Based on that information, the agent began locating individuals who had been in foster care at the Garretson residence. Minor #2: The second minor girl was interviewed in June 2016. This minor was a foster child in the home from 2000 to 2004. She said Garretson had taken her on over-the-road truck trips when she was his foster child. Garretson stipulated and agreed that he transported the minor in interstate commerce with the intent to engage in sexual activity with her, and that the sexual activity he engaged in with her was Violation of a Minor in the First Degree, a Class C felony. At the time of the offense, she was between 13-18 years old, and the conduct engaged in was sexual intercourse. Garretson stipulated and agreed that the second minor was a foster child in his care, custody, and control when he transported her in interstate commerce with the intent to engage in sexual activity with her. Minor #3: In 1999, DHS placed the third minor and his two older sisters in the Garretson home, and the third minor was legally adopted by them in 2001. This minor was interviewed by the FBI Special Agent in July 2016 and disclosed that Garretson had taken him on long distance truck trips starting in the summer of 2001 when he was 11 years old and that he had sexually assaulted him on multiple trips during summer vacation from school in 2002 and 2003. Garretson stipulated and agreed that he transported the minor in interstate commerce with the intent to engage in sexual activity with him, that the sexual activity he engaged in with him was Rape, a Class Y felony. Garretson stipulated and agreed that the minor was in his care, custody and control when he transported him in interstate commerce with intent to engage in sexual activity with him. Minor #4: In 1999, DHS placed the fourth minor and her two siblings in the Garretson home and she remained there until 2004. She was interviewed by the FBI Special Agent in July 2016 and disclosed that she was sexually assaulted by Garretson on an over-the-road trip to California during the summer of 2000 when she was 13 years old. Garretson stipulated and agreed that he transported the minor in interstate commerce with the intent to engage in sexual activity with her, that the sexual activity he engaged in with her was Rape, a Class Y felony, and that the girl was in his care, custody, and control when he transported her in interstate commerce with intent to engage in sexual activity with her. Minor #5: This fifth minor was born in 1993, and was interviewed by the FBI Special Agent in September 2016. She stated that Garretson transported her and her siblings between Arkansas and California as a favor to her family since their parents lived in different states. She disclosed that in 2002, when she was 9 years old, Garretson had her sleep nude or partially nude in the bed with him inside the truck and engage in sexual activity with her. Garretson stipulated and agreed that he transported the girl in interstate commerce with the intent to engage in sexual activity with her, and that the sexual activity he engaged in with her was Rape, a Class Y felony. He stipulated and agreed that the girl was in his care, custody and control when he transported her in interstate commerce with the intent to engage in sexual activity with her. The aftermath: Garretson was charged in a superseding indictment by a federal grand jury on October 4, 2016. Sentencing will be held at a later date. The maximum penalty for count one of the superseding indictment is a maximum term of imprisonment for Life; a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment for 10 years; a maximum fine of \$250,000; both imprisonment and fine. The maximum penalty for counts two, four, eight, and eleven are a maximum term of imprisonment of 15 years per count; a maximum fine of \$250,000 per count; both imprisonment and fine. The defendant's sentence will be determined by the court after review of factors unique to this case, including the defendant's prior criminal record (if any), the defendant's role in the offense, and the characteristics of the violations. "Today's guilty plea sends a clear cut message to those who want to take advantage of our children. We will find you and you will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," stated Diane Upchurch, Special Agent in Charge at the FBI in Little Rock. "Garretson's actions are horrifying and the FBI and the United States Attorney's Office will work doggedly to put these predators behind bars. I commend the FBI personnel and the USAO in their efforts to bring justice to these young people." This case was investigated by the FBI and assisted by the Van Buren Police Department. Source: <http://www.fox16.com/news/local-news/foster-parent-pleads-guilty-to-5-child-sex-charges>

State shuts down Philly program after teen's death in fight with staff Updated: October 25, 2016 — 1:08 AM EDT 162Share Tweet Tumblr Email Comment [REPRINTS](#) The Wordsworth Academy's residential treatment program for troubled youths in West Philadelphia is ordered to be closed. by Chris Palmer, Staff Writer Chris Palmer Staff Writer Pennsylvania officials on Monday ordered the closure of **Wordsworth Academy's residential treatment program** for troubled youths in West Philadelphia, less than two weeks after a teenager died in a fight with staff. Kait Gillis, spokeswoman for the Department of Human Services, said the agency "issued an order for revocation of [Wordsworth's] license and emergency closure." She said department officials would be on site every day until all 83 residents are relocated. Debbie Albert, Wordsworth spokeswoman, said the process could take weeks. Launched in 2006, Wordsworth's residential program - just one aspect of the company's services - treats young people ages 10 to 21 who have emotional, behavioral, or academic difficulties, Albert said. In the Oct. 13 incident, a 17-year-old boy died after staff members tried to restrain him, according to police. The teen had barricaded himself inside a room, and had broken furniture and fixtures, police said. When staff members entered, the teen began "yelling and striking" them, police said. Staff members - whom police did not identify - tried to "gain control" of the boy but he lost consciousness, police said. Medics pronounced the boy dead at 9:36 p.m. Police have not identified him or said where he was from. No charges have been filed in the incident, and the Medical Examiner's Office said Monday afternoon that the cause of the teen's death had not been determined. The Philadelphia Defenders Association had been planning to ask a Family Court judge during special hearings this week to move or transfer all of its juvenile clients from the program. Keir Bradford-Grey, the association's chief defender, said her

office was concerned about the safety of the approximately 30 young people it represents at the facility, each of whom was sent there by a judge for treatment after an arrest or due to family issues such as neglect or abuse. "One kid dying in a placement [facility] with staff not being trained well enough to handle issues involving youth is enough for us," Bradford-Grey said Monday. "To me, that place is not equipped to handle youth that need redirection in their life." Martin O'Rourke, spokesman for the First Judicial District, said those hearings would continue and would help determine where the affected youths would be sent. The courts had called for the hearings prior to the state's action, to determine whether children should remain at Wordsworth, O'Rourke said. Lisa Campbell, assistant chief of the defender association's juvenile unit, said the association had made similar requests for mass transfers in the past. In 2007, for example, it requested that youths be removed from the Chad Youth Enhancement Center near Nashville after a Philadelphia youth, Omega Leach, was strangled there by a staff member. Albert, the Wordsworth spokeswoman, said the rest of Wordsworth's services - which include special education schools, individual and family therapy, and foster care - would continue to operate. The residential treatment facility is at 3905 Ford Rd. in the River Park section. It is one of three Wordsworth campuses in the region, according to the school's website. cpalmer@phillynews.com 215-854-2817 @cs_palmer Source: http://www.philly.com/philly/news/20161025_State_shuts_down_W_Phillly_program_after_teen_s_death_in_fight_with_staff.html

Ex-Beacon Light employee accused of having relationship with student By RUTH BOGDAN Era Reporter r.bogdan@bradfordera.com Updated Oct 26, 2016 An ex-employee at Beacon Light Behavioral Health Systems has been criminally charged on allegations he had a romantic relationship with a student who lived there. Brian Malachi McLaughlin, 29, of 431 W. Washington St., Bradford, was not on duty Monday night, when the allegations took place, according to John Policastro, director of corporate Communications, **Journey Health System & Beacon Light Behavioral Health System**. Court records said on Monday night, Bradford City Police responded to a report that two juveniles females ran away from the Beacon Light shelter at 8 School St. It was one of these two girls — a 16-year-old — that McLaughlin was allegedly developing a relationship with. As Policastro explained, "Beacon Light maintains multiple group homes for children throughout the Bradford community. These homes treat children with various behavioral health challenges when they have been removed from their families by the court system or their home county. Beacon Light employs staff 24/7 in these homes, in therapeutic, night watch and direct care roles." Regarding the search, "the staff on duty followed policy in notifying both Beacon Light management as well as the local police," Policastro stated. "Within a few hours, both clients were located and safely returned to the group home. Our processes that are in place for when a client is absent from a facility were then followed," he noted. Policastro indicated that employees learned one of the juveniles who ran away may have had contact with an employee when she left the group home. McLaughlin does not normally work at the home where the girl was living, Policastro said. Bradford City Police contacted Bradford Township Police when they learned one girl may have formed a relationship with a male employee who lives in Bradford Township, court records said. Bradford Township Police went to McLaughlin's home, but McLaughlin was not there. He was asked by telephone to return home to talk to police about the missing teen. Court records said the teen told police she left 8 School St. and went to the home of another juvenile who lived nearby. They walked to McDonald's, where the teen met with McLaughlin and went with him in his car. McLaughlin and the teen had discussed her running away before she did it, court records stated. The pair drove around for awhile, then parked at the McDowell Sports Center Fieldhouse parking lot on Campus Drive; they moved to the back seat and were kissing when he received the phone call from his father informing him the police wanted to talk to him, court records stated. He dropped her off in Bradford City and drove home. McLaughlin is no longer employed at Beacon Light. Policastro stated, "According to policy, when the accusations were made against an employee, the staff member in question was immediately suspended. Given the nature of the charges and subsequent arrest, the individual's employment was terminated." In his statement, Policastro described the training Beacon Light staff members undergo, as well as the policies in place to keep group home residents safe. He explained, "We are confident that the group home staff followed policy and protocol during the initial runaway incident, but are deeply disturbed to learn of the charges filed against an off-duty staff member. We will continue to cooperate fully with the investigation and have a zero tolerance policy against any staff/client interactions insinuated in the charges. "We utilize multiple levels of supervision, policy, training and accountability in our staff, and want to stress that these criminal allegations were made to an individual not on duty at the agency at the time the incident occurred. We have treated and helped thousands of children with mental illness diagnoses in our group homes over the years and take every accusation against staff seriously. We employ nearly 600 people in our clinical companies, each of whom undergo extensive background checks prior to employment, and every two years after, along with undergoing dozens of hours of training each year. We take the safety and treatment of our clients with the utmost seriousness and will continue to work with local law enforcement and other oversight agencies in the ongoing investigation." McLaughlin was arraigned early Tuesday morning before Magisterial District Judge Dominic Cercone on charges of interference with custody of children, a second-degree felony; institutional sexual assault, corruption of minors and unlawful contact with a minor, all second-degree felonies, court records stated. He was committed to McKean County Jail in Smethport in lieu of 10 percent of \$25,000 bail. He is scheduled to appear in Central Court on Nov. 3. Source: http://www.bradfordera.com/news/ex-beacon-light-employee-accused-of-having-relationship-with-student/article_008e9c68-9b25-11e6-8c2f-2bae3c968776.html

In wake of teen's death, Council to hold hearings on facilities for troubled youth Updated: October 28, 2016 — 1:09 AM EDT The exterior view of Wordsworth Academy in West Philly. by Tricia L. Nadolny, Staff Writer Tricia L. Nadolny Staff Writer Three days after the state ordered a West Philadelphia residential treatment facility to close its doors following the death of a 17-year-old patient, City Council voted Thursday to hold hearings on that facility and others that care for troubled youth. "The question becomes: There were 80 kids there. What happens to them?" said Councilman Curtis Jones Jr., who visited Wordsworth Academy last year. The facility cared for youths with emotional, behavioral, or academic difficulties. It was closed after the Oct. 13 death of a teen who, state documents allege, stopped breathing when staff members restrained his legs and punched his rib cage. The reports describe hazardous living conditions, including broken heating and air-conditioning units, holes in walls, and rusted bathroom facilities. The documents also allege that staff members were not properly trained in restraining children. Jones, whose district includes Wordsworth and who called for the hearing, said he visited the facility after developing concerns about the private Community Umbrella Agencies (CUAs) that the city's Department of Human Services contracts with to manage its cases. Wordsworth, which operates the residential facility as well as other programs, is one of those CUAs. Jones said his visit did not raise any red flags. "It was clean. The young people there seemed, on the surface, well taken care of," he said. "But that's when I was there." He said that if there were problems, he wished the facility had been open about them. "What concerns me is, that kid never gets a do-over," Jones said. In other business at Council's weekly meeting Thursday, members voted to hold a hearing on Rebuild, the program expected to launch next year that will pour an estimated \$600 million into revitalizing parks, recreation centers, and libraries. Specifically, members are focused on ensuring those projects will be staffed with a diverse workforce. Though some on Council have long voiced concerns about a lack of diversity on city-funded projects, in particular those contracted to unions, Rebuild seems to be stimulating the discussions. "I want to make sure those individual projects are diverse and inclusive," said Councilman Kenyatta Johnson, who called for the hearing. "When people in the neighborhoods see we're doing ribbon cuttings and I'm asked the question, 'How can people from the neighborhood work on these particular projects?' ... we want to make sure there's a strategic plan." Lauren Hitt, Mayor Kenney's spokeswoman, said in a statement that the mayor's office is working on an agreement with the building trades that would help increase diversity in the construction industry. She said Rebuild staff members are also working to better understand the challenges facing minority- and women-owned businesses, which also create barriers that keep construction managers, contractors, and unions from reaching diversity goals. "We concur with Council that diversity must be a core principle of Rebuild's implementation," Hitt said. In a rare move, Council members on Thursday also asked all Council staff, lobbyists, guests, and media to leave the caucus room so the group could discuss a matter in executive session. The members emerged after about 15 minutes. Council President Darrell L. Clarke declined to say what was discussed other than an "administrative" matter. Sources later said the group talked about the increasing number of honorary resolutions, which eat up time during each week's Council session, being introduced by members. Without discussing the topic, Clarke insisted the meeting was not in violation of the state Sunshine Act, which limits when public bodies can meet in private, because the group was not discussing legislation. Jane Roh, his spokeswoman, did acknowledge that Clarke failed to properly announce the executive session before it took place, as required by law. She said he did announce it, but so quietly that many people apparently did not hear him. "President Clarke recognizes that he should have announced more clearly and loudly that City Council was going into executive session to discuss an administrative matter," Roh said. "He regrets the error." lnadolny@phillynews.com 215-854-2730 Source: http://www.philly.com/philly/news/politics/20161028_In_wake_of_teen_s_death_Council_to_hold_hearings_on_facilities_for_troubled_youth.html

Treatment center president charged with DUI after crash Another employee of center faces drug possession charges Updated: 6:34 PM EDT Oct 27, 2016 [Kristen Carosa News Reporter](#) LEBANON, N.H. — The president of a residential treatment center in Plymouth has been put on a leave after he was

charged with driving under the influence after a crash Wednesday morning. Advertisement Police said Jeffery Caron, 48, was arrested after he crashed into a utility pole in Lebanon. His passenger, Kellen Fitzgibbon-Bizel, 31, who is also an employee of the center, was also arrested. Police said he had prescription drugs that were not prescribed to him. "A single vehicle drove into a telephone pole on Dartmouth College Highway," Chief Richard Mello said. "Two occupants were in the vehicle. Both sustained injuries that were not life-threatening." A witness captured the crash on cellphone video. "Showing that it was traveling over the double yellow line," Mello said. "It nearly had a head-on collision a few moments before the actual accident, and then the video shows the vehicle trailing off to the right side of the road and then eventually striking and taking down a telephone pole." Caron was arrested at a hospital and charged with misdemeanor reckless driving and driving under the influence. Fitzgibbon-Bizel is facing five felony counts of possession of a controlled drug. Both men work for **Mount Prospect Academy** in Plymouth, an all-boys residential treatment center. Officials there said that the men been put on leaves of absence. According to staff members, Caron is the organization's president and Fitzgibbon-Bizel is the director of facilities. The organization said it's reviewing the incident, but wouldn't comment further. "Certainly given the rush-hour commuter traffic, school traffic on a school day, there are a lot of things that could have happened, and we are fortunate that this wasn't a lot worse," Mello said. The men were released after posting \$10,000 bail. They are scheduled to be back in court in January. Source: <http://www.wmur.com/article/2-arrested-on-dui-drug-charges-after-slaming-into-pole-in-lebanon/7659846>

Montco Child Care Agency Must Pay \$5.35 Million in Child Sex Abuse Case After being sexually abused in her foster home, a 7-year-old girl was returned to the same home just months later, and was abused again. By [Justin Heinze \(Patch Staff\)](#) - October 28, 2016 3:21 pm ET A Montgomery County foster care agency must pay \$5.35 million in damages for repeatedly placing a young girl in a foster home where she was sexually assaulted, according to litigators. Lawyers with Kline and Specter P.C. said that Presbyterian Children's Village, based in twice placed the child, who was 7 years old at the time, in the home of Walter and Deborah Scott, where she was sexually abused. Walter Scott, now 61, later pleaded guilty to sexually assaulting three different children in his care. A Philadelphia jury ruled in a civil trial Friday that Presbyterian must pay \$5 million in compensatory damages and \$350,000 in punitive damages to the victim for placing her in that situation. "This verdict is a message that child safety must be protected," said Nadeem Bezar, who tried the plaintiff's case with Emily Marks, both attorneys with Kline & Specter PC of Philadelphia. "This is a message from the jury to PCV and all foster care agencies that they must be diligent." In November 2012, the child was placed in the care of Deborah and Walter Scott for three days, litigators said. When she was moved to a new foster home, she reported the abuse to her new foster mother. Despite knowing about the report, Presbyterian continued to place children with the Scotts, even after hearing another child make the same allegations, according to the suit. They then placed the original child with the Scotts for a second time in late February of 2013. The child reported abuse for a second time, and officials soon were able to identify two more victims. Source: <http://patch.com/pennsylvania/lansdale/montco-child-care-agency-must-pay-5-35-million-child-sex-abuse-case>

Camera Catches Shoving Match with Group Home Worker Before Teenager's Heart Stopped A video shows a healthy 15-year-old going into her bedroom at a for-profit **AdvoServ** facility. Thirty-two minutes later, she had no pulse. Nobody's saying what happened. by [Heather Vogel](#) ProPublica, Nov. 2, 2016, 8 a.m. [3 Comments](#) [Print](#) [Print](#) This is part of an ongoing investigation [Restraints](#) Do you know a child who has been forcibly restrained or secluded at school? Help us investigate by [sharing your story](#). As she waited in a Delaware hospital for her daughter to die, Carla Thomas watched a silent video of the teenager's last conscious hour. The video showed Janaia Barnhart, 15, bouncing down the stairs of the group home where she lived, Thomas said. The girl from Hyattsville, Maryland, had mental illness and threw tantrums, but on that September morning her expression suggested the mischievous laugh her mom knew well. Ahead of her carrying a black garbage bag was an employee of AdvoServ, the for-profit company that owned the home. The worker stepped toward the bedroom where the girl kept her most prized possessions — her MP3 player, movies, magic markers, karaoke machine. Seeing Janaia coming, the worker threw back an arm, shoving her hard against the hallway wall. Janaia, who was 5 feet, 6 inches tall and 227 pounds, shoved back. Both disappeared into the room, which was just big enough for a twin bed and dresser. Four more workers rushed in behind them. Thirty-two minutes later, according to Thomas, paramedics arrived to find Janaia on the floor, naked, with no pulse. Since then, Thomas has buried and mourned her daughter. But she has no idea what happened in those 32 minutes. "I still don't have an inkling, nothing," Thomas said in an exclusive interview with ProPublica. Janaia's death represents another setback for AdvoServ, part of a growing, government-funded industry that provides housing and care nationwide for hundreds of thousands of people with developmental or intellectual disabilities. Both Maryland and Delaware had already sanctioned the company, which is [besieged with complaints](#) about its treatment of a vulnerable population and the conditions of its homes. Thomas's questions about her daughter's death have only multiplied since AdvoServ chief executive Michael Martin played the video for her on his laptop. The footage didn't show the inside of Janaia's bedroom. And during four crucial minutes, a worker opened a closet door and blocked the view of the room's entranceway. A photo of Janaia Barnhart, from a pamphlet handed out at her funeral. (Courtesy of Julia Arfaa) Staff at AdvoServ gave Thomas conflicting stories, acknowledging workers pinned Janaia down in her bedroom but never explaining why she lost consciousness. Doctors at the hospital told Thomas they did not know why the otherwise physically healthy teenager's heart had stopped. Thomas and her lawyer, Julia Arfaa, say that Delaware officials have stymied their efforts to secure basic information. The state attorney general's office told Arfaa that, while a police investigation was ongoing, it would not allow release of a recording of workers' call to 911. "Releasing the 911 tape at this time could potentially jeopardize the investigation, because the call contains potentially sensitive information," said Carl Kanefsky, spokesman for the attorney general's office. The office will decide whether to file criminal charges after law enforcement agencies have finished their investigations, he said. A Delaware medical examiner refused Arfaa's request for initial autopsy findings. Last week, a spokeswoman for the medical examiner said it has not completed the autopsy and will notify Janaia's family when it does. Delaware state police won't elaborate on the circumstances of the girl's death or even release her name. "We're blocked," Arfaa said. Through a spokesman, AdvoServ declined to discuss what happened to Janaia. The company, which specializes in clients with behavior challenges, said in a statement at the time of her death that its employees were "heartbroken" over her loss. One worker who was in the home that day, Tosha Skinner, told ProPublica in a brief interview that Janaia was subjected to a "wrap-up behavior" intervention shortly before she stopped breathing. Skinner was present but didn't participate, she said. It's not clear what Skinner meant by "wrap-up behavior." For years, AdvoServ has used ["wrap mats"](#) which resemble full-body straitjackets, on some of its clients. Critics say such mechanical restraints traumatize patients, and most residential programs no longer use them. Delaware bans such tactics in most cases, and Maryland officials have instructed AdvoServ for years not to mechanically restrain children or teens. An AdvoServ spokesman said last week that no "wrap up" procedure involving mechanical restraints was used on Janaia that day. There were no wrap mats in the house, he said. For Thomas, the timing of her daughter's death magnified the pain. The day after the incident, a Maryland official called to say the state had found Janaia a new home — something Thomas had been pushing for. [Maryland began removing its 31 students](#) from AdvoServ homes after an unannounced inspection in August found holes in walls, ripped mattresses, dirty kitchens, and broken furniture. [One bedroom reeked of urine](#). A bathroom lacked hot water. Maryland's contract with the company ended Monday. Janaia's death adds to the tragic toll of the privately run residential programs, tucked away in neighborhoods across the country, that have largely replaced state institutions for the profoundly disabled and mentally ill. A ProPublica review last December found that at least 145 kids have died from avoidable causes in residential facilities over 35 years. At least 62 died after being restrained. In the last five years or so, however, as most group home providers adopted less hands-on methods for handling conflicts, restraint-related deaths became exceedingly rare — with news articles reporting only one or none a year. Owned by a private equity firm, Delaware-based AdvoServ reported last year that it cared for about 700 children and adults in that state, Florida, and New Jersey, and was expanding into Virginia. It had about 60 people age 21 or younger in Delaware programs. Delaware put AdvoServ on probation in March, and increased visits by state workers to company facilities. A lawsuit pending against AdvoServ in state court in Delaware alleges a teenage boy from Maryland was left unsupervised and raped repeatedly by other clients during more than four years in the company's homes. Workers dislocated a vertebra in the boy's neck while restraining him, according to his family. AdvoServ has grown in the past two decades despite a stream of complaints of abuse and neglect. As far back as the 1990s, the state of New York removed its children from AdvoServ's predecessor, Au Clair, because its inspectors had found children living in trailers that [smelled of urine and feces](#). Officials elsewhere have repeatedly backed off from disciplining the company, which is aided by well-connected lobbyists that include prominent former state legislators. The company in recent years successfully lobbied against a Congressional bill that would have limited the use of restraints in schools. Janaia was not the first teenager to die under AdvoServ's care. In 1997, a 14-year-old autistic boy with epilepsy was found dead in his bed at the company's Florida facility with low levels of anti-seizure medicine in his blood. In 2013, a 14-year-old autistic girl died at the same Florida complex after a night in which she was restrained — at times fastened to a bed and chair—while she vomited repeatedly. In that case, video of the girl's final hours was accidentally deleted, AdvoServ officials said. Thomas, a certified medical assistant for the elderly

who lives in a Maryland suburb, has learned more about the company's problematic track record since her daughter's death. "If I knew it was that bad, I would have signed her out," Thomas said. Born in Washington, D.C., Janaia was diagnosed in first grade as bipolar and schizophrenic, with attention deficit disorder. She was hospitalized more than 20 times when she became a danger to herself or others, and lived in residential treatment centers in Maine, Tennessee and Maryland. At one facility about five years ago, Thomas said, a worker put Janaia in a chokehold and dragged her across the floor. Janaia sometimes attended schools, but they struggled to deal with her disorders. For all her troubles, Janaia had playful moods when she teased others and played pranks. She earned A's in classes, when she tried. She loved Michael Jackson, animals, dancing and flowers. She was affectionate — a "hugger" — and needed to be reminded sometimes not to invade people's personal space. She had no serious medical problems, having outgrown childhood symptoms of asthma. Her family called her "Nae Nae." "She had her moments," her mother said, "but she was very lovable." In recent years, too, Thomas was pleased that her daughter was learning to recognize that her temper was about to flare. Janaia would let her mother know that she needed help. "It's like a teakettle when you boil it," Thomas said. "She knew when she was ready to explode." Janaia's mother, stepfather, brother and two sisters had started taking her out more, even bringing her with them on a skiing vacation last winter. Though AdvoServ bills itself as a last resort, Thomas said it was a less restrictive setting than earlier placements. She said the state sent Janaia there three years ago largely because AdvoServ offered schooling. Janaia Barnhart was living in this home on a quiet country road southwest of Wilmington when the incident occurred. (Heather Vogell/ProPublica) At AdvoServ, Janaia lived with other girls in a modest ranch home with white siding and maroon shutters on a quiet country road southwest of Wilmington, just a half-mile from the historic mansion where AdvoServ's founder first opened a boarding school for autistic children in 1969. On a typical day, the home and its basketball court out back bustled with activity, as workers came and went and buses ferried the girls in the white house and an adjacent brick one to school. Sometimes, girls burst out of the homes and ran into the neighborhood, according to a local resident. Workers would chase them and often restrain them. Onlookers watched with unease, hoping no one would get hurt. "When I see that going on, I do try to keep my eyes on them," one said. Thomas visited her daughter once a month, bringing electronics, music, supplies for arts and crafts, and foods, such as canned ravioli and instant oatmeal, that her daughter preferred over what AdvoServ provided. Sometimes, they'd stay in a hotel for the weekend and get her hair done, or go clothes shopping. This summer, Thomas worried that Janaia was backsliding. Other girls in the home were bullying her, Thomas said. During a fight with two of them, Janaia had grabbed a plastic fork and stabbed one in the ear. Police viewed Janaia as the aggressor and arrested her, her mother said. AdvoServ responded by having Janaia spend time after school in an adult home, instead of the youth home where she slept. Thomas wanted the state to find her daughter a new facility. The mother worried Janaia wasn't supervised well enough and feared the consequences if she tangled with other girls again. Thomas didn't like the adult language and behavior Janaia was picking up from the older clients. On the doorstep of her brick row house in Wilmington last week, Skinner — the AdvoServ employee — said she saw Janaia every day at the group home. "Janaia was my baby," she said. "She was my child, every single day. This is crazy." After Skinner cited the "wrap-up behavior" used on Janaia, she was asked to explain what the term meant. She said she had "nothing to hide" but didn't know if she was allowed to talk to a reporter. After calling a supervisor, who advised her not to speak, she went inside her house and closed the door. Attempts to reach other workers involved were unsuccessful. On Monday September 12, Thomas was driving to work in Washington, D.C., when her cell phonerang. An AdvoServ staff member told her that when two workers went to Janaia's room to help her dress, the girl had lost control of her bladder and bowels and passed out. Workers had called 911 and Janaia had gone into cardiac arrest. Thomas turned her car around, picked up Janaia's older sister and drove frantically toward Delaware. En route, she learned that her daughter was being moved to the Nemours Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington. At the hospital, Thomas said she spoke to Janaia's case manager at AdvoServ, who told her a different version of events: Her daughter, the case manager said, had been placed in a hold before becoming unresponsive. She then headed for the intensive care unit, where a phalanx of AdvoServ administrators greeted her at the elevator and expressed their sympathies. A doctor told Thomas that her daughter appeared to be brain-dead, and was on a respirator. For the next two days, Thomas kept vigil at her Janaia's bedside. She didn't leave to shower or rest. Unrestrained While evidence of abuse of the disabled has piled up for decades, one for-profit company has used its deep pockets and influence to bully weak regulators and evade accountability. [Read the story.](#) What Happened to Adam It took one mother seven years to learn that the for-profit school she trusted with her son had strapped him down again and again, one time after not picking up his Legos. [Read the story.](#) On the second day, a Delaware detective told Thomas he had watched the video and interviewed staff. According to the workers, as recounted by the police officer to Thomas, Janaia had been very aggressive that morning. Family visits were a privilege residents could lose, and workers were considering punishing her by not letting her see her mother that Friday as planned. She became angry. Ordered to clean her room, she attacked the staff member carrying the trash bag and grabbed her hair. The other staff members hurried to pull the girl off the worker, and put her in a hold until she calmed down and was talking to them. They were helping change her out of her soiled clothes. Janaia, who was lying down, asked them to take her glasses and put them on the dresser. She then turned her head to the side and passed out. Workers dialed 911. The workers told police they had done a proper hold with one worker on each arm and leg, and no one pressing on her chest. The detective told Thomas that the workers' stories matched, and that it appeared there was no foul play, she said. Delaware state police declined comment on what the workers told them. Thomas, however, is skeptical. On the video, Janaia did not look angry until the worker shoved her. Thomas said that it would be unusual for her daughter to lose control and then suddenly calm down and start talking. And the bedroom was so small it seemed impossible that the four heavyset women she saw on the video could perform the restraint as they described it to police, Thomas said. "I'm not buying that," she said. Workers were supposed to be trained to defuse such conflicts before they occurred — instead of escalating them, she added. "They're trained to deal with behaviors like this." She pressed AdvoServ officials until Martin showed her the video. He told her specifics such as the exact time when police had left the group home that evening. But he said he didn't know what had happened in the fateful 32 minutes in her daughter's bedroom. "It was amazing," she said. "He had hands-on every single detail, but he can't tell me nothing." Thomas searched for clues as she waited in her daughter's hospital room. She found a fingernail-shaped nick on one of Janaia's fingers and a bruise on a knuckle. There was an unexplained mark in the center of Janaia's chest that looked like a puncture wound. On Wednesday September 14, Janaia's heart stopped. Thomas stayed with the body for five hours. She rubbed her daughter's hair and cut a lock as a keepsake, noticing dried blood in one ear. As the hours ticked past, dark bruises emerged on her daughter's left leg, below the knee. A nurse told her bruises often became more pronounced after death. The white house near the unincorporated community known as Kirkwood was silent on a recent day. A single SUV was parked in the driveway and no one came to the door. Thomas said AdvoServ returned Janaia's clothes, neatly laundered, and other possessions. Among the items was a composition book her daughter kept as a journal. Thomas noticed several sheets had been ripped out. Scrawled on a remaining page was a haunting passage that reminded Thomas how hard her daughter had tried to curb her temper and pay attention to the adults in her life. "I listen to my mom and dad," Janaia wrote, according to Thomas's recollection. "Because if you don't listen, you get hurt." Source: <https://www.propublica.org/article/camera-shoving-match-group-home-worker-before-teenager-heart-stopped>

[HEAL HOMEPAGE](#)